

**The transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter movement:
From London to Sydney**



(A photograph taken at 'Invasion Day' in Central Sydney, 26th January 2020).

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Abstract

Drawing on the diverse cases of London and Sydney, this thesis explores the transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter movement. While a substantive body of Black Lives Matter scholarship has emerged from the US, the issue of transnationalism poses a gap in current literature, which I attend to by recognising that ideas of Black Lives Matter travel. I argue, the transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter movement is understood through the diverse adoption and adaptation of Black Lives Matter, creating different political sites of struggle. Thus, illuminating the ways that Black Lives Matter has been adopted by a range of actors across place and adapted to embody diverse forms of racial violence, such as, racialised policing, neoliberal urbanism, and environmental racism. Using a multi-sited ethnographic approach over a period of ten-months, including 30 semi-structured interviews between August 2019 and June 2020, this thesis draws on the perspectives of Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal Black Lives Matter activists in London and Sydney, examining how a transnational Black Lives Matter movement is both possible and necessary, as well as anti-racist and decolonial possibilities. I employ an intersectional approach to transnationalism, informed by Black Marxist, Black Feminist and decolonial scholarship, in analysing the different ways that Black Lives Matter is shaped across place by Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal activists. This reveals the diverse ways that Black Lives Matter feeds into long-standing anti-racist and decolonial struggles and enables agency and resistance. As such, London and Sydney are used as exemplars for wider-transnationalism and provide crucial insight into how ideas of Black Lives Matter travel. This thesis not only makes intellectual contributions to the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter, but also to work on social movements, the study of intersectionality, policing, neoliberal urbanism, environmental racism and the geographies of race and place.

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Chapter 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Ferguson and the start of a movement

Black Lives Matter emerged as a hashtag on Twitter in 2013, following the acquittal of White police officer George Zimmerman for the shooting of Black teenager Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida (Lebron, 2018, p. xi). On July 14th, 2014, Eric Garner, a Black man, died from an asthma attack in Staten Island, New York, after White police officer Daniel Pantaleo put Garner in a chokehold, arresting him for suspicion of selling single cigarettes (Jee-Lyn Garcia and Sharif, 2015, p. 27). The events were captured on social media and show Eric Garner screaming “I can’t breathe”. On August 9, 2014, White police officer Darren Wilson shot and killed Black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, which led to the first Black Lives Matter protests in Ferguson (Black Lives Matter, N.D). Brown (whom later was proven to be unarmed) was fatally shot by Wilson after he attempted to escape arrest for allegedly stealing a box of cigars worth just \$48 (Smit et al., 2018 p. 3120).

While these deaths at the hands of law enforcement led to the rise of Black Lives Matter and so-called hashtag activism on social media (Bonilla and Rosa, 2015), the shooting of Mike Brown in Ferguson sparked the first large physical protests of Black Lives Matter. The first wave of Ferguson protests lasted for over two weeks (August 9th-25th 2014) and more than 155 people were arrested in this time (Keating et al., 2014). These protests were initially met with a repressive and increasingly militarised police response but were eventually quashed when the National Guard was deployed “to respond to the protests which were presented as being orchestrated by ‘outsiders’” (El-Enany, 2015, p. 3). This provided political justification for the use of military force to disperse protestors.

Ferguson became a key strategic place for Black Lives Matter, with many smaller scale protests happening throughout the rest of 2014. The second wave of large-scale protests occurred on November 24th, 2014, following the Grand Jury’s decision not to indict Darren Wilson for the shooting of Trayvon Martin (Ruck, 2014). Law enforcement responded with tear gas, and the National Guard was once again deployed in Ferguson. These protests were replicated across multiple cities in the US,

and some stood in solidarity internationally, with protests taking place in cities in the US, UK, and Canada, thus marking the early transnationalism of the movement (Almasy and Yan, 2014). Protests in Ferguson continued into 2015, with smaller-scale protest a continual feature. One year on from the shooting of Trayvon Martin on August 9th, 2015, the third wave of large-scale Ferguson protests began. These protests lasted for three days, and more than 120 protesters were arrested as they blocked main highway Interstate 70, and St Louis County declared a state of emergency, where county police took over operations in Ferguson (Swaine, 2015). These three waves of mass protest in Ferguson were by no means the last but are particularly important in understanding why Ferguson resonates with activists worldwide.

While many recent fatal acts of police brutality certainly hold significance in the origins of Black Lives Matter in the US, this is not a new phenomenon, as people of colour have long suffered at the hands of the police. There is a much longer history of police violence toward African Americans, which has been documented as far as the establishment of the US as an independent nation (Bass, 2001, p. 156). Black Lives Matter did first emerge in response to recent cases of racialized police brutality; however, the movement has since expanded its focus to represent other diverse forms of racial violence and beyond the geographic scope of the US. Black Lives Matter has held protests and events worldwide, from the US, to Ireland, the UK, Holland, France, Germany, Australia, Brazil, South Africa, and Palestine (Davis, 2016; Winsor, 2016), with such protests representing resistance toward a wide range of racial violence across diverse contexts.

More recently, the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, at the hands of White police officer, Derek Chauvin, on 25th May 2020, saw the largest Black Lives Matter protests emerge in cities across the world, both in solidarity with George Floyd and in efforts to draw attention to racial violence in each context (McCurry, Taylor, and Safi, 2020). The death of George Floyd in Minneapolis was a significant event in the evolution of Black Lives Matter (Cappelli, 2020). George Floyd, whose fatal last words were “I can’t breathe”, sparked Black Lives Matter protests across the world, where activists from the US, Europe, South Africa,

Australia, Indonesia, West Papua and so on,¹ took to the streets in solidarity with George Floyd and in attempts to draw attention to issues of racial violence in their own contexts (Bonnett, 2022; McCurry et al., 2020; Westerman et al., 2020). However, despite the emergence of Black Lives Matter in different contexts, the transnationalism of the movement remains largely neglected within current scholarship.

1.2 The transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter movement

The Black Lives Matter movement has started to gain significant attention from scholars in recent years (Camp and Heatherton, 2016; Davis 2016; Lebron, 2018; Lowery, 2017; Ransby, 2018; Taylor, 2016). When I began the research for this thesis in 2018, Black Lives Matter was popularly known as a movement predominantly in the US, with a lesser known, but still significant presence in different international contexts. However, at the time of writing in 2022, Black Lives Matter has emerged into a much more visible transnational movement, and it becomes apparent that I am writing in a different time now, to when I first began in 2018.

Since these events, a new wave of scholarship has emerged on Black Lives Matter in relation to a wide range of issues such as: policing (Bernstein, 2021; Skoy, 2021, Solomon et al., 2021), health (Anderson-Carpenter, 2021; Russell, 2022; Leitch et al., 2021; Neyman and Dalsey, 2021), racial capitalism (Issar, 2021; Marston, 2021; Mullings, 2020), environmental issues (Lennon, 2017; Pellow, 2016), gender (Bell et al., 2021; Isom et al., 2021; Littlechild, 2021), and sexuality (Babu, 2022; Bowman, 2021; Jackson, 2021). This recent literature offers insight into the wide-ranging issues that Black Lives Matter has sought to represent. However, much of this work focuses on the parochial context of Black Lives Matter in the US and does not attend to how ideas of Black Lives Matter travel across different transnational contexts.

Relevant to this thesis is the field of Black Geographies,² which has gained significant traction in recent years. Black Geographies has gone beyond the

¹ This list is not exhaustive.

² As Noxolo (2022, p. 1235) points out, 'Black Geographies' is not always named so, however if scholarship works to expose the ways that space and place are made manifest through Blackness, then this marks contribution to the field of Black Geographies.

documentation of (Black) exclusion within geographical thought and has sought to centre itself on Black spatial knowledge contributions and agency (Noxolo, 2022, p. 1232). As Allen et al. (2019, p. 1001) suggest, Black Geographies illuminate the ways that Black agency shapes space and how Black spatial experiences are translated into wider geographical visions of society. Thus, Black Geographies is unsettling and disruptive to the White and colonial underpinnings of Geography and demonstrates some of the ways that Black geographers “carve out spaces for their scholarship [...] within the discipline” (Hawthorne, 2019, p. 1; also see Hawthorne and Heitz, 2018, p. 148). While Black Geographies has its roots in the US (Noxolo, 2022, p. 1233), there have been some excellent contributions to the field by scholars in both Britain (e.g., Elliott-Cooper, 2021; Hirsch, 2020; Noxolo, 2022) and in Australia (e.g., Kelly and Lobo, 2017; Lobo, 2016; Williams., et al, 2022).

Adam Elliott-Cooper (2021) in *Black Resistance to British Policing* goes beyond a singular analysis of racialized experiences of police violence and provides insight into connections between the histories and futures of Black resistance to British policing. He exposes how contemporary forms of racialized policing in the context of racism and anti-immigration are connected to colonial policing methods used both internally within Britain and externally in the colonies. However, a key tenet of Elliott-Cooper’s (2021) book suggests that in order to understand anti-racist struggles in 21st century Britain, as characterised through movements like Black Lives Matter, it is vital to draw on connections with alternative Black liberation struggles of the past and present, in order to challenge evolving forms of police violence and technologies. While in the Australian context, Kelly and Lobo (2017) contribute to the field by illuminating the ‘quiet’ and ‘noisy’ ways that Aboriginal people demonstrate agency through street protests and holding vigils in attempting to reclaim access to public space in the urban contexts of Broome (Western Australia) and Darwin (Northern Territory). As such, the Black Geographies literature provides important contributions to the study of transnational Black Lives Matter activism.

The fieldwork for this thesis was undertaken prior to death of George Floyd and the global protests that followed,³ however this provides unique insight into

³ Fieldwork was undertaken between August 2019-June 2020.

how Black Lives Matter evolved from a predominantly US based movement, with a lesser-known transnational take-up, into one of global proportion. By straddling the time before and after the death of George Floyd, this thesis can explore how the literature and popular debates have taken on new meaning following the death of George Floyd. As such, this thesis seeks to understand how a transnational Black Lives Matter movement is possible, through investigating Black Lives Matter activism in the diverse urban sites of London and Sydney. In attempting to understand this, my main argument is: the transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter movement is understood through the diverse adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter across different place. As such, I demonstrate how ideas of Black Lives Matter are reshaped by place, but also how Black Lives Matter reframes narratives of long-standing place-based racial violence.

The transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter movement marks a gap in current literature, and by drawing on the cases of London and Sydney, my research shows how and why diverse international cities are key arena's for thinking through the meaning and implications of Black Lives Matter. Through an approach shaped by ideas on intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Davis, 2016; Ransby, 2018), Black Marxism (Davis, 2016; Taylor, 2016) and decolonial ideas (Jacobs, 2010; Mamdani, 2020), this thesis examines the different ways that Black Lives Matter has been shaped and reshaped by four key issues: alliances and solidarities, policing, neoliberal urbanism, and environmental racism. These key issues reflect central themes in race politics that were found in the field through a multi-sited ethnographic approach in London and Sydney.

This thesis seeks to make several wider contributions to the field. Through being amongst the first academic work to explore the transnational take-up of Black Lives Matter, I contribute to Black Lives Matter scholarship by exploring different manifestations of Black Lives Matter in international contexts outside of the US. I also add to work on social movements (Chernega, 2016; Roberts and Jesudason 2013) by examining how Black Lives Matter as a decentralized organizing principle and as an intersectional movement makes transnationalism possible. I make contributions to the work intersectionality (Anthias, 2012; Purkayastha, 2012) through investigating how intersectionality is lived through different place, and how transnational

alliances and solidarities through Black Lives Matter enable a form of transnational intersectionality. As such, an intersectional approach reveals how and why transnational solidarities are possible between diverse Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal people across place. I contribute to work on policing, neoliberal urbanism and environmental racism through exploring how different long-standing place-based struggles reshape ideas Black Lives Matter as it travels across and through place. In addition to making contributions to the geographies of race and place through examining how Black Lives Matter is reshaped and translated as it meets different places where differently racialized struggles exist.

Crucially, my research shows that Black Lives Matter goes beyond being a movement fixed to the parochial context of the US, and the important sole issue of police killings of young Black men, and instead, represents a movement that been successfully adopted by a wide range of actors, such as Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities in London and Aboriginal Torres Strait and Australian South Sea Islander communities in Sydney;⁴ and adapted to represent diverse struggles, such as; racial police violence, neoliberal urban racial violence and environmental racism.⁵ By exploring key themes in relation to Black Lives Matter, I reveal the intersectional and heterogenous nature of the movement and contribute insight into the different ways that the movement is understood and enacted across transnational urban place.

Throughout this thesis, I use the term 'Black Asian Minority Ethnic' to refer to participants in London and 'Aboriginal' to refer to participants in Sydney. I acknowledge debates on the changing nature of identities that have challenged the essentialism of diverse groups of people as 'BAME' (Murhi, 2022), as well as debates on the appropriateness of labels (e.g., Aboriginal, or Indigenous) when researching First Nation peoples (Creative Spirits, N.D.). However, drawing on the anti-racist and decolonial guidance of Creative Spirits (N.D.), I have rooted terms through the prevailing ways that participants identify themselves in the context of this work. As such, I mostly refer to participants as 'Black Asian Minority Ethnic' people and 'Aboriginal' people, except in circumstances where participants have either used or

⁴ Note: the primary focus of the Sydney context is with Aboriginal peoples, with passing reference to Torres Strait and Australian South Sea Islander peoples.

⁵ This list is not exhaustive but represent some of the key issues within the context of this thesis.

requested alternative terms. For example, I make some reference to ‘Torres Strait Islander’ people, ‘Australian South Sea Islander’ people and ‘Black’ people, in instances when participants specifically use these terms.

1.3 Sites of Research: London and Sydney

This thesis uses a multi-sited ethnography to explore Black Lives Matter activism in London and Sydney. These sites are global cities (Sassen, 2009, p. 6) where Black Lives Matter has gained significant traction beyond the context of North America and provide cases, where Black Lives Matter both as a movement and as broader idea has travelled to and has been reshaped by long-standing anti-racist and decolonial struggles. The data presented in this thesis is from ethnographic fieldwork in both London and Sydney, where I immersed myself into Black Lives Matter protest and event settings, engaged in informal conversations, took photographs, collected ephemera, and conducted interviews with Black Lives Matter activists. Chapter three provides more detail on the methodological approach.

1.31 London

London is a particularly important site for research, as it represents one of the most prominent places of Black Lives Matter activism outside of the US. In 2016, Black Lives Matter protests and events were held across London. Black Lives Matter activists brought London’s streets to a standstill, as hundreds of protesters held several protests across Westminster, Brixton, and Oxford Street (Micklewaite, 2016; Withnall, 2016). In the same year, nine Black Lives Matter activists blocked a key road (M4) to London’s Heathrow airport, holding banners stating, “This is a Crisis”, “Black Lives Matter”. The blockade echoes many of the tactics used by the Black Lives Matter movement in the US and was used to cause disruption to the major economic, political, and social hub of Heathrow airport (Jeffery, 2016). One month later, Black Lives Matter activists chained themselves to London City Airport’s runway in protest against the disproportionate environmental impact of air travel on people of colour both in London and globally (Weaver and Grierson, 2016). Thus,

causing the disruption and mass delay of flights both to and from London City airport, as up to 131 flights were grounded (Lusher, 2016).

The death of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May 2020 sparked several large Black Lives Matter protests across London in June 2020, where protesters stood in solidarity with George Floyd and symbolically ended the first protest at Grenfell Tower (Brown, 2020; Mohdin et al., 2020). However, prior to the protests sparked by the death of George Floyd in May 2020, Black Lives Matter had a lesser known but still significant presence in London, with regular events being organised since it first emerged in London in 2016 (e.g., BLM UK, 2019). In addition, long-standing anti-racist organisations (such as, Stand Up To Racism and Unite Against Fascism)⁶ permeated ideas of Black Lives Matter through their campaigns. As such, London remains a key urban site where Black Lives Matter has a strong presence and is therefore an important site to explore the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter beyond the parochial context of the US.

London has a population of over nine million people (World Population Review, 2021), and is comprised of 32 boroughs and the City of London. London is by far the most ethnically diverse area in the UK with the 2011 Census showing a population of 18.5% Asian, 13.3% Black, 5% Mixed, 44.9% White British, 14.9% White other, and 3.4% other (Office for National Statistics, 2018). The city is home to people of more than 270 different nationalities (Barrow, 2013), and has been popularly referred to as “a global melting pot of cultures” (Davis, 2007). While I do not intend to give a history of how London became a “melting pot”, it is important to briefly trace back through the history of race and migration in London.

Small numbers of Black people have lived in Britain since as early as the 12th Century, but it was not until the expansion of the British Empire in the 17th and 18th Century’s that these numbers increased dramatically, as African, and Afro-Caribbean slaves were forcibly taken to Britain, and London in particular (Sandhu, 2011). By the 1760’s, London had the largest population of Black people in the UK, accounting for 10,000-15,000 of the country’s 20,000 population of Black people (Blair, 2013, p. 6). It was not until 1807 that Parliament passed the *Abolition Act* led by Parliamentarian

⁶ Netnographic fieldwork notes.

William Wilberforce to formally abolish slavery in the Britain (Farrell, 2007, p. 142). By the late-19th Century a new generation of Black Londoners were born, and many would later establish careers as doctors, politicians, and community activists that changed the landscape of London's political and cultural life (Blair, 2013, p. 9).

'Black London' (Matera, 2015, p. 4) in the 20th Century represented the forging of solidarities between people with Caribbean and African heritage and embracing identifications of being Black. From this time, anti-colonial activism emerged in London with Black students, academics, activists, and workers coming together to create several anti-racist and anti-colonial organisations. Notably, the Second Pan-African Congress was held in London in 1921, which primarily focused on British colonization of the Caribbean, but also everyday racism that was experienced by African and Caribbean people in Britain, as seen through the 1919 'race riots' (Adi, 2018). The 1919 'race riots' being some of the largest of its kind in Britain, as racist attacks on Black communities took place across London, Manchester, Liverpool, Cardiff and several other UK cities (May and Cohen, 1974, p. 112).

Following the end of WW2, large numbers of people from the Commonwealth migrated to Britain, which faced a severe labour shortage in the rebuilding of the country (Wardle and Obermuller, 2019, p. 84). The arrival of Commonwealth workers into Britain was a watershed moment in immigration, as the demographics of London and the wider country transformed by creating a much more diverse population (Mead, 2009, p. 139). London has a rich history of anti-racist resistance, and as highlighted, the history of British colonialism is pertinent here. In 1968, the British Black Panthers (BBP), a movement inspired by the earlier Black Power movement in the US was born. With its main headquarters in Brixton, London, the BBP sought to fight racial discrimination in housing, employment, education, health, and legal services, as well as issues of police brutality, through organising grassroots Black community activism (Pien, 2018). The BBP movement folded in 1973 but was instrumental in the organisation of various anti-racist protests across London, including the landmark 1970 protest outside the American Embassy, over the poor treatment by the police of their Black Panther counterparts in the US (Angelo, 2009, p. 17). Transnational anti-racist activism in London is therefore not a new phenomenon but has existed for decades.

In recent years, London has remained a key place for anti-racist activism, with movements such as ‘London Black Revolutionaries’, ‘Unite Against Fascism’ and ‘Black Lives Matter’ all being prominent in the city⁷. In addition to a 137-day long protest by anti-racist activists (Goldsmiths Anti-Racist Action) occupying Deptford town hall on the campus of Goldsmiths, University of London, in relation to institutional racism and colonial regulations (McKenzie, 2019). Thus, London is not only a city with a rich history of anti-racist activism but remains a key place where anti-racist activism is both created and enacted.

1.32 *Sydney*

I present Sydney as an important site for research, as it represents a key urban place where Black Lives Matter has interacted with discourses and activism around Aboriginal rights and anti-colonialism. In 2016, the Black Lives Matter movement emerged in Australia, with large-scale protests and events taking place in Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney. In Sydney, protesters marched to Sydney Townhall in response to Aboriginal deaths in custody, police brutality and the wider racialization of the criminal justice system (Black Lives Matter Sydney, 2016). In 2017, Black Lives Matter co-founder Patrice Cullors and Canadian Chapter leader Rodney Diverlus visited Sydney to stand in solidarity with Black and Aboriginal communities, while drawing attention to contemporary struggles of racial violence experienced by Aboriginal people today:

During our trip, the thing that stands out to us most is that Indigenous⁸ Australians are facing some of the most horrendous living conditions in the world, sadly similar conditions to those of the US and Canada (Cullors and Diverlus, 2017).

⁷ Netnographic fieldwork notes.

⁸ Note: I will use the term “Indigenous” of “First Nation” to refer to First Nation communities in different parts of the world (e.g., in Canada and the US), but I refer to First Nation people in Australia as “Aboriginal”, as rooted in conversations with participants.

In August 2019, Aboriginal communities and allies held a large Black Lives Matter protest in Sydney, demanding justice for Aboriginal victims of police brutality and deaths in custody. A state-wide protest was organised, calling:

It's time to stand tall, draw a line in the sand and demand an end to the racist police practices that continue to result in Aboriginal people being murdered in prison, or their murder cases being swept under the rug (Justice for Buddy et al., 2019).

Sydney has a population of over five million people, including a small (1.5%) Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population of over seventy-thousand (World Population Review, 2022). While the Australian census does not provide similar ethnicity indicators to the UK census, there is a question on ancestry⁹ which provides some insight of how respondents in Sydney perceived their ancestry, with 18.4% English, 16.9% Australian, 8.4% Chinese, 6.4% Irish and 4.7% Scottish (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). As such, this provides an indicator of how Sydney has emerged as a hub for far East Asian populations (Wong, 2016), and I will briefly discuss the significance of this in relation to the Aboriginal rights take-up of Black Lives Matter in more detail in chapter six. I do not intend to write a history of Sydney, but it is important to briefly trace back to the arrival of European settlers in Australia. Aboriginal people are First Nation people on the land now known as Sydney and although exact figures are subject to debate amongst historians, Aboriginal people are believed to have lived on this land for more than 60,000 years before colonial settlers (Parliament of New South Wales, N.D). However, the establishment of Sydney as it is known today occurred in the period following the arrival of the British Empire on April 19th, 1770. The HMS Endeavour under the command of Captain James Cook settled on this land, and the colony of New South Wales was later established in 1788 as Captain Arthur Phillip arrived with a fleet of 11 vessels carrying over 1000 people, including 778 convicts (Phillip, 2015, p. 34).

⁹ Data is based on calculated percentages and does not include those who did not specify ancestry. Also, data is limited to the top five ancestral groups stated.

The arrival of the British Empire had devastating impacts on Aboriginal people in Australia, and this was immediately seen through a wave of European communicable diseases brought by colonial settlers, which was responsible for the depopulation of hundreds of thousands of Aboriginal people (Bultin, 1993, p. 99). Some scholars have called the spread of infectious disease such as smallpox by British colonial settlers as deliberate acts of “terrorism” and “genocide” (Jalata, 2013). In the Sydney region, such spreading of disease is believed to have killed around half of all Aboriginal people occupying the land that today is known as Sydney (Aboriginal Heritage Office, N.D).

As Britain began to expand its settlements along the East coast of Australia (in what today are Brisbane and Melbourne), this resulted in violent struggles for territory, where Aboriginal land was either seized by the Empire or violent battles stripped land from Aboriginal communities (Barta, 1987, p. 237-238). Thus, resulting in the massacre of thousands of Aboriginal people. The devastating impact of the arrival of the British Empire on Aboriginal people in Sydney is illustrated in the diary of English-Australian journalist Edward Wilson writing during this period:

In less than twenty years we have nearly swept them off the face of the earth. We have shot them down like dogs. In the guise of friendship, we have issued corrosive sublimate in their damper and consigned whole tribes to the agonies of an excruciating death. We have made them drunkards and infected them with diseases which have rotted the bones of their adults, and made such few children as are born amongst them a sorrow and a torture from the very instant of their birth. We have made them outcasts on their own land and are rapidly consigning them to entire annihilation (1856, p. 209).

Wilson gives insight into the racial violence faced by Aboriginal communities after British colonists arrived. As is highlighted throughout this thesis, racial violence and the dispossession of Aboriginal land are central to Black Lives Matter activism in Sydney and reveal connection between historical colonialism and its contemporary

manifestations. As such, decolonization is central in understanding Black Lives Matter in Sydney. It was not until 1901, when the British government passed legislation to allow the six Australian colonies to govern themselves that Australia became an independent nation (Australian Government, N.D). After Australia aligned itself with Britain during WW1 and WW2, the country experienced three periods of economic booms: the post-war boom (1962-1974), the boom of the 1980's, and the contemporary boom from the 1990's into the 21st Century (O'Neil and McGuirk, 2006, p. 284).

The economic prosperity of Australia from the 1990s relied heavily on a move toward a finance-based economy, and Sydney was particularly important in this success (O'Neil and McGuirk, 2006, p. 283). Sydney has since emerged as a 'global city', and a "destination of choice for international corporations, business leaders, tourists and students" (City of Sydney, N.D). As well as its ability attract big business and academic talent, Sydney also boasts a "cultural economy", where creative cultural industries such as music, film, media, and the arts account for more than 30% of employment in the city. Sydney is a cosmopolitan city and has the cultural facilities and lifestyle attractions to facilitate its creative population (Gibson, 2006, p. 188-191). Thus, Sydney in the 21st Century is presented as a vastly different place to when colonists first arrived; however, the history and contemporary manifestation of colonialism runs deep when writing about racial violence toward Aboriginal people in this context.

Following the death of George Floyd in 2020, Sydney saw several large-scale Black Lives Matter protests both in solidarity with George Floyd, but also in drawing attention to the racial violence experienced by Aboriginal people in Australia (Henriques-Gomez and Visontay, 2020). While Black Lives Matter has since gained global traction, London and Sydney provide some of the most prominent places of Black Lives Matter activism outside of North America. In exploring the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter, London and Sydney provide two sites that are not only connected through the presence of Black Lives Matter, but as places with long-standing struggles against racial violence and colonialism. However, these sites mark diverse places and examining Black Lives Matter activism in each allows for deeper understanding in the different ways that Black Lives Matter has been taken

up by Black Asian Minority Ethnic people in London and Aboriginal communities in Sydney. Racial violence is presented differently through these sites, and this provides insight into how Black Lives Matter is adopted and adapted to represent diverse struggles and communities in different contexts transnationally.

Through multi-sited ethnographic work,¹⁰ I spent just under three months in Sydney and travelled to and from London to explore Black Lives Matter activism. The data produced in this thesis is from fieldwork across these urban contexts conducted between August 2019-June 2020. During this time, I worked with many anti-racist and Aboriginal rights activists, organisations, as well as a local NGO in Sydney in collecting the data presented in this thesis. Chapter three outlines what my multi-sited ethnographic approach looked like in more detail, including the use of ethnography, participant observation, semi-structured interviews, photographs, and the collection of ephemera as part of the research methodology.

1.4 Research questions

In exploring the transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter movement within the urban contexts of London and Sydney, my thesis is motivated by four key research questions:

- 1) Why does Black Lives Matter which originated in small town Ferguson, Missouri, resonate with activists transnationally?
- 2) What difference does place make to how Black Lives Matter is understood and enacted in different urban contexts?
- 3) What is the relationship between neoliberalism and transnational Black Lives Matter activism?
- 4) What does transnational Black Lives Matter activism foreclose and enable?

¹⁰ Including netnography (see chapter three).

1.5 Thesis structure and core arguments

I draw attention to the preceding chapters of this thesis, providing insight into key themes and arguments that will be presented and explored. At this stage, it is important to note that I do not intend, nor do I have the scope in this thesis to explain the transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter movement in its entirety. The cases of London and Sydney are used as exemplars in providing insight into the diverse adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter across transnational place, but the arguments presented are specific to these places. However, these cases reveal how place-based struggles shape ideas of Black Lives Matter, but also, how Black Lives Matter reframes the narrative of long-standing struggles across place.

Chapter 2 brings my main argument into focus; where I argue, the transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter movement can be understood through the ways that it is adopted and adapted across different transnational place. In this chapter, I review key scholarship on Black Lives Matter and literature related to key themes, situate this thesis in relation to these works, as well as provide conceptual clarifications for key terms and concepts used throughout this thesis. With regards to key literature, I put forward some issues that are central in examining the adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter: alliances and solidarities, police violence, neoliberal urbanism, and environmental racism. A current limitation in scholarship throughout is seen through the limited work on transnational Black Lives Matter activism, and this thesis aims to provide contributions by using London and Sydney as cases to attend to how ideas of Black Lives Matter travel transnationally. Moreover, a central aim of this review is to place race at the centre of intersectional debates; and to push my work beyond a singular lens of analysis and explore the different ways that racialization intersects with other forms of violence in producing places of struggle.

Chapter 3 details the methodological approach used for this thesis, providing insight into what my multi-sited ethnography looked like in practice, as well as reflecting on its effectiveness during the research process. I begin this chapter by reflecting on my own positionality as a White and non-Aboriginal researcher working with mostly Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal people, and the power differentials that this creates. I find it key to highlight this, as a critical self-

awareness of positionality and power shapes the methodological approach for this thesis. I then introduce a multi-sited ethnography as an approach and provide a detailed account of the methods that I used in the field,¹¹ as well as the spaces where ethnographic fieldwork was conducted. In this chapter I also discuss how the data was analysed and important ethical and moral considerations all prior to, during and after the research process.

Chapter 4 examines the building of transnational alliances and the translation of solidarities in shaping transnational Black Lives Matter activism. Using theories based in cultural translation (Benjamin, 1923; Bhappa et al., 2009; Jhumpa, 2000; Maitland, 2017), transculturation (MacDonald, 2016; Ortiz, 1940; Schiwy, 2007) and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Dhamoon, 2011; Davis, 2016; Roberts and Jesudason, 2013), I examine the intersectional and decentralized nature of the Black Lives Matter movement through its transnational adoption and adaption in London and Sydney. This provides insight into the ways that alliances are built amongst different place-based Black Lives Matter struggles, and how solidarities are negotiated between differently racialized people in enabling and shaping Black Lives Matter activism in London and Sydney. As such, this shows how Black Lives Matter activists both stand in solidarity with the US, but also seek to draw attention to violence in their own localities, thus revealing how the meaning of Black Lives Matter is translated across place. Moreover, this gives some insight into the different ways that diverse people and place-based struggles shape Black Lives Matter activism, but also how Black Lives Matter reshapes the narrative of place-based struggles. This chapter provides the theoretical underpinning for the diverse adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter.

Chapter 5 explores issues of suspicion and surveillance, 'stop and search' and physical police brutality, including Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal deaths in custody, in providing insight into how policing has shaped transnational Black Lives Matter activism in London and Sydney. I frame expressions of racial police violence as existing on a continuum and use this to add to scholarship exposing the co-constituted relationship between 'slow' and 'less visible' and 'fast'

¹¹ Including: netnography, participant observation, informal conversations, semi-structured interviews, photographs, and the collection of ephemera.

and 'highly visible' violence (Cahill and Pain, 2019; Christian and Dowler, 2019; Colebrook, 2020; Pain and Cahill, 2022). As such, I reveal how Black Lives Matter activism illuminates connection between different forms of police violence, as well as attending to forms of violence that are not easily counted within the 'slow' and 'fast' binary, such as 'stop and search', which marks the point when racialized intelligence becomes actionable. I examine the impact of structural racism in policing and the different ways that this shapes racialized perceptions of criminality and creates spaces of racial exclusion for participants in London and Sydney. However, this chapter reveals how Black Lives Matter in London and Sydney is not limited to solidarity with the issue of police violence in the US, but also shows how participants use Black Lives Matter to draw attention to police violence in their own contexts and de-centre the US narrative. As such, I discuss some of the ways that participants demonstrate Black Lives Matter resistance and agency against police violence, using counter-surveillance strategies and calls to defund the police. This chapter provides crucial insight for why transnational Black Lives Matter activism is seen as both possible and necessary in London and Sydney.

Chapter 6 investigates the issue of racialized neoliberal urbanism through the cases of Grenfell Tower in London and The Block in Sydney. I argue that Black Lives Matter exposes the way neoliberal urbanism and racial violence are mutually constituted and both London and Sydney illustrate distinct yet connected aspects of this connection. This reveals different ways that Black Lives Matter reshapes the narrative of an event (e.g., Grenfell Tower, The Block), but also how these contexts shape Black Lives Matter activism; thus, providing further insight into how Black Lives Matter is adopted and adapted across transnational place. As such, Grenfell demonstrates the centrality of multi-ethnic racial violence in the Black Lives Matter London movement, while The Block exposes key connections between Aboriginal land dispossession and Black Lives Matter activism in Sydney. This provides some insight into how Black Lives Matter takes on new meaning as it travels across transnational place. This chapter makes wider contributions to neoliberal urbanism, gentrification, and territorial stigma (Wacquant, 2007); first, through exploring the place-based impact of neoliberalism in shaping urban contexts and in (re)producing racial violence, including the role of territorial stigma in justifying redevelopment

and concealing structural racism. And second, by considering anti-racist resistance through Black Lives Matter activism, this chapter contributes to work examining the reframing of stigmatization attached to race and place (Cairns, 2018, Cretan and Powell, 2019; Nayak, 2019). Grenfell Tower and The Block reveal the significance of neoliberal urbanism both in shaping places of racial violence but also illuminates the ways Black Lives Matter reframes stigma and (re)asserts rights to place.

Chapter 7 explores the issue of environmental racism seen through the prism of Black Lives Matter. Using an intersectional approach, I argue that the struggle for environmental justice is connected to the struggle for Black Lives Matter. The cases of London and Sydney demonstrate the diverse ways that environmental issues are taken up by Black Lives Matter and reveal how ideas of Black Lives Matter are reshaped by place-based environmental racisms, but also how Black Lives Matter reframes the narrative of such place-based environmental struggles. As such, environmental racism is presented as a key issue for Black Lives Matter in Sydney, where the cases of the Adani coal mine, the pollution of the Murray-Darling River and the 2019/20 Australian bushfires are central in shaping the environmental narrative of Black Lives Matter: through Aboriginal land dispossession and the commodification of natural resources, as contemporary manifestations of colonialism. While in London, environmental racism is presented as developing as a transnational debate for Black Lives Matter, and the issues of racially discriminate air pollution in London and disproportionate effects of climate change have emerged as key issues. In this chapter I make contributions to environmental racism scholarship: first, through suggesting Black Lives Matter enables a more intersectional approach to environmental justice, which draws attention to how environmental injustice disproportionately affects Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal people. Second, by understanding environmental racism as another layer of structural racism that Black Lives Matter are concerned with (Forbes et al., 2021; Pellow, 2016); I give insight into some of the ways that transnational Black Lives Matter activism decentres US narratives of Black Lives Matter and creates both place-based movements that attend to environmental racisms explicit to place, but also shapes transnational solidarity. Third, contributions are made by drawing out the relationship between neoliberalism and environmental racism in more detail and

illuminating the centrality of neoliberalism in producing diverse place-based environmental racisms that Black Lives Matter is concerned with.

Chapter 8 provides a summary of my research findings in relation to the research questions, as well as new knowledge discovered through this work. I reflect on the success and shortcomings of this research and provide suggestions for important future avenues of research that build on the work presented.

Chapter 2.0 The adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces key concepts, theory and literature used throughout this thesis. While there is limited literature on the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter, I discuss work and themes that are most relevant to issues raised in this research. In doing so, I situate my research and research questions within the existing literature, as well as provide rationale for why this work is both important and relevant to existing Black Lives Matter and wider anti-racist and decolonial scholarship. In reviewing the literature, I refer to my main argument throughout; the transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter movement can be understood through how Black Lives Matter has been creatively adopted and adapted across diverse place.

I start this chapter by introducing some of the guiding concepts and terms used in this thesis, such as, transnationalism and travelling ideas, intersectionality, social movements, and slow violence. I make conceptual clarifications for how I understand such concepts and provide insight into academic debates in each. Second, I explore key literature surrounding Black Lives Matter and the issue of police violence. I refer to work on physical forms of brutality, such as incarceration and physical violence, as well as the role of 'less visible'¹² violence, such as surveillance technologies in creating intelligence that then becomes actionable. Moreover, I also consider the potential for counter surveillance and what this enables and forecloses. Third, I turn to the issue of neoliberal urbanism, where I provide conceptual clarification for how neoliberal urbanism is understood within the context of this thesis and provide insight into its relationship with racial violence. Specifically, I review work on gentrification and urban redevelopment, placing race at the centre of analysis, as well as the role of urban territorial stigma (Wacquant, 2007, 2008, 2010) in creating the context for redevelopment to occur and the impact of place in shaping racial violence. Finally, I turn to scholarship on environmental racism, exploring debates on the relationship between environmental and racial

¹² 'Less visible' – meaning nonphysical. Note: It is not my suggestion that we should hierarchise forms of violence, as I agree that all forms of violence are visible to the communities who experience it (Cahill and Pain, 2019, p. 1056; Davies, 2019, p. 1).

justice, as well as the issue of Aboriginal land dispossession, in understanding the diverse ways that Black Lives Matter has been adopted and adapted transnationally.

The aim of this review is not only to provide a summary of literature and debates relevant to this research, but also to demonstrate where this thesis contributes to existing scholarship. Much work on Black Lives Matter is limited to the context of the US, and gaps are evident in the transnational take-up of the movement. As such, a transnational lens reconfigures understandings of Black Lives Matter, through the diverse ways that the movement is taken up and enacted across transnational place. This thesis makes contributions to the study of intersectionality, scholarship on transnational social movements, the issues of racialized policing, neoliberal urbanism, environmental racism and the geographies of race and place.

2.2 Key concepts and theory

2.21 *Transnationalism and travelling ideas*

The concept of transnationalism emerged as an important framework in going beyond the analytical scope of the nation-state, and in recognising the spatial interconnections of people, culture, objects, and economics (De Jong and Dannecker, 2018, p. 494). This was particularly useful in early work on migration, as transnationalism provided a framework that did not limit analysis to a person's host country, but also sought to understand the social, cultural, political, and economic interconnections with their homeland (Basch et al., 1994; Also: Robins and Aksoy, 2015; Waldinger, 2017). Transnationalism thus offered a way to analyse the "multiple ties and interactions linking people, organisations or institutions across the borders of nation-states" (Vertovec, 1999, p. 447).

Since its emergence as a valuable concept in analysing experiences and networks in migration studies, the concept of transnationalism has attracted diverse critiques. Some argued that the concept lacked a clear and specific definition, and sought to cover an excessive range of issues, which led to both its overgeneralisation and doubt about what 'new' analytical insights it produced (Lee, 2011, p. 295; Portes, 2001, p. 182). Others asserted that transnationalism neglected the impact of the nation state in terms of shaping power relations (Dahinden, 2017, p. 1479; Köngeter, 2010, p.

179; Salazar and Smart, 2011, p. ii), while others, more explicitly, considered if transnationalism had fallen into the trap of being a “catch all concept”, in attempting to take on too many meanings (Clavin, 2005, p. 434; Fitzgerald, 2004, p. 243; Pries, 2008, p. 3).

In response to critics, Levitt, and Glick-Schiller’s (2004, p. 1003) work on migration argues that a broad understanding of transnationalism is crucial in analysing migrants because their experiences are “often embedded in, multi-layered, multi-sited transnational social fields” (2004, p. 1003). This suggests that a fixed definition of transnationalism, runs the risk of neglecting the intersecting impact of place and time in analysing social phenomena. Others have responded to criticism by, signalling that transnationalism has not made the nation-state “obsolete” but rather, redefined the role of the nation-state as a framework in understanding social phenomena (Osterhammel 2001 in Pence and Zimmerman, 2012, p. 496; Vertovec, 2004, p. 978).

As De Jong and Dannecker (2018, p. 497) point out, following the emergence of transnationalism in migration studies and subsequent critiques that sought to give the concept a narrower direction, we are now in a third phase of work on transnationalism, which has sought to bring the concept in dialogue with other fields of research, such as, diaspora and border studies. Transnationalism has developed through examining a range of different intersecting issues, such as, race (Grosfoguel et al., 2015; Nowicka, 2018; Patil and Purkayastha, 2015), gender (Patil and Purkayastha, 2015; Yeoh and Ramdas, 2014) and sexuality (Shephard, 2016). For example, Patil and Purkayastha (2015, p. 599) adopt an intersectional-postcolonial approach to transnationalism in exploring the geographies of race in media representations (namely *The Times of India* and *The New York Times*) of women’s experiences of sexual violence. Through investigating cases of the sexual violence of an Indian woman in Delhi, India, and a White woman in Steubenville, US, they illustrate the role of place in how race and (in)visibility are embodied in the media.

Patil and Purkayastha (2015, p. 609-610) suggest, *The New York Times* “scaled up” the Delhi case through a narrative of (violent) ‘tradition versus modernity’, depicting a wider Indian culture of ‘incomplete modernity’, while it “scaled down”

the Steubenville case, to a localized individual sporting culture of a small town, that does not represent the wider national culture of the US. This contrasts with *The Times of India*, framing the Delhi case through individual and collective agency in challenging sexual violence around the country, while the Steubenville case, was portrayed as “equally disturbing” (as sexual violence cases in India); and therefore, sought to erase hierarchies linked to the culture of sexual violence. Patil and Purkayastha (2015) thus demonstrate the value of transnationalism in examining the intersection of place with race, gender, and colonialism.

Nowicka (2018) uses a transnational frame in analysing the influence of social networks across national boundaries in producing, (re)shaping and transforming racism, through the experiences of Polish immigrants living in the UK. Her work effectively employs transnationalism to reveal the complex and ongoing negotiations of past (in Poland) and present (in the UK) experiences and networks, that span across two national boundaries, in shaping social constructions of racism (Nowicka, 2018, p. 825). This exposes how ideas of racism travel across borders, and are recontextualised through time and space; thus, arguing for an interactive (and transnational) approach in understanding how racism is spread in the European context (Nowicka, 2018, p. 836). Both Patil and Purkayastha (2015) and Nowicka’s (2018) work, illustrate the importance of place in understanding different manifestations of violence (such as, sexual, and racial). Moreover, these papers also demonstrate useful connections between transnationalism and intersectionality.

The transnational approach used in this thesis is influenced by De Jong and Dannecker’s (2018) suggestion that scholars should seek to establish dialogue between transnationalism and other key concepts (also; Nowicka, 2018; Purkayastha, 2015). In this sense, I do not seek to propose a new or alternative definition of transnationalism, but rather, use transnationalism in connection with other key concepts, such as, travelling ideas, intersectionality, social movements and slow violence, in analysing different manifestations of Black Lives Matter across place. Applying transnationalism in this way allows for a deeper understanding into how and why ideas of Black Lives Matter travel; the difference that place makes in how Black Lives Matter is understood and enacted; and the interconnectedness between diverse transnational place where racial violence is manifested in different ways.

As Tedeshi et al., suggest, “transnationalism is transformative and powerful enough to trigger changes in contemporary societies” (2020, p. 1). I agree with this claim and while this thesis does analyse the impacts of racial violence across place, it is also crucial to elevate Black Lives Matter agency in shaping transformative change across transnational place. Previous work has documented the importance of transnational interactions amongst non-state actors in shaping socio-political transformations such as the Arab Spring (Moss, 2016) and the Occupy movement (Vicari, 2014). The use of transnationalism in this thesis gives insight into the different ways that participation is shaped across diverse place, as well as recognising goals and achievements not only on the national level, but also transnationally (Rabinowitz, 2001, p. 71). As such, this does not limit analysis of transnational Black Lives Matter activism to one place, but exposes the processes that make transnationalism possible, as well as its impacts across place. This provides further rationale for why transnationalism is used in this thesis, as opposed to ‘international’ or ‘global’.

Travelling ideas

This thesis understands Black Lives Matter both as a movement and as a broader set of ideas that travel. Edward Said’s (1983) *Traveling Theory* provides an important contribution through suggesting the four common stages that any theory or idea undertakes in travelling. First there must be a set of conditions or “initial circumstances” that ignite an idea, allowing it to come to birth and have an origin. Second this idea moves through different contexts, times, and places, to “come into a new prominence”. Third the idea will gain traction in which some will come to accept it – but also importantly, others will oppose the idea, in which resistances are made. Fourth, the idea becomes “transformed by its new uses”, which evolves over different places and times (Said, 1983, p. 157-159).

With regards to Black Lives Matter, Said’s (1983) theorisation is useful in analysing how ideas of Black Lives Matter travel transnationally. First, the point of origin was through Twitter in 2013, when the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter emerged following the acquittal of George Zimmerman of the shooting of Trayvon Martin in

2012 (Chase, 2018, p. 1092). The jury's decision to acquit George Zimmerman created a set of conditions, which ignited Black Lives Matter as seen through the "Justice for Trayvon" campaign (Hon, 2015, p. 299). These conditions are seen through first the racialized police brutality which caused the death of Trayvon, and second through the belief of an unjust criminal justice system, which people believed failed to hold Zimmerman accountable for his actions (Stovall, 2014, p. 10).

Second, the idea moved from social media, and gained a "new prominence" (Said, 1983, p. 157) as activists took to the streets in Ferguson, following the fatal shooting of Michael Brown by police officer Darren Wilson in 2014. These events were also replicated shortly after in Staten Island, New York, after Eric Garner, another African American young man was killed by police (Chase, 2018, p. 1100). These events indicated that the death of Trayvon Martin at the hands of the police was not an anomaly, and this helped facilitate the travelling of Black Lives Matter from Ferguson, to New York and further. Third, Black Lives Matter has gained acceptances and support across many different contexts, however this has also been met with resistances. As #BlackLivesMatter has gained support, significant movements of resistance such as #AllLivesMatter (Carney, 2016, p. 180), #BlueLivesMatter (Opie and Roberts, 2017, p. 707) and #WhiteLivesMatter (Biesecker, 2017, p. 409) have emerged in response. Fourth, ideas of Black Lives Matter have experienced transformation across time and place. Work has documented the diverse and intersectional ways that Black Lives Matter has been taken up (Davis, 2016; Ransby, 2018; Taylor, 2016), including, through women's and LGBTQIA rights, environmental justice and anti-deportation and Indigenous rights (Babu, 2022; Cullors and Diverlus, 2017; Gayle, 2018; Pellow, 2016). As such, Said's (1983) ideas have real value in examining the different ways that Black Lives Matter is adopted and adapted across transnational place.

Gilroy's (1996) work in *The Black Atlantic* draws on examples from the US, Britain and Africa, and provides a useful framework to understand Black identity across different transnational contexts. For Gilroy (1996, p. 28), Blackness should not be bound geographically, nor does it have to be limited to skin colour; but should also be understood through the self-identification of the 'other' or being 'less-White'. Although Blackness manifests in different ways across place, Gilroy's perspective

suggests that the feeling of being the 'other' or 'less-White' manifests similarly and makes connections across diverse settings. Identity thus travels 'transatlantically' through a shared-ness of experience of forms of oppression. Gilroy writes:

Black survival depends upon forging a new means to build alliances above and beyond petty issues like language, religion, skin colour (1996, p. 28).

Gilroy's perspective highlights the importance of an intersectional approach in building alliances, with others who experience similar forms of oppression. In terms of Black Lives Matter, this work is relevant in understanding how a movement starting in small-town Ferguson, Missouri, was able to resonate with different communities around the world, including London and Sydney. As such, Gilroy's (1996) ideas offer value in understanding the different ways that Black Lives Matter is reshaped and redeveloped across place.

Travelling solidarity

Featherstone's (2012) work on solidarity has value in understanding the ways that international networks are formed across uneven geographies. This work shares similarities with some of Gilroy's (1996) ideas and uses concepts such as 'Blackness' and 'othering' to theorise the internationalism of solidarity, which has been a key feature of the Black Lives Matter movement (Miah, 2015). For Featherstone (2012, p. 23), solidarity is not based on merely being located within the same social divisions (e.g., class, race, or gender); instead, solidarity must be worked at hard, and emerges when working together on a common task. It is the process of "working together" towards a common goal or vision, that creates the possibilities for such networks across time and place. In this sense, solidarity is only possible when individuals and groups share a common vision and are willing to actively work towards achieving common goals.

This conceptualisation of solidarity is highly relevant in terms of Black Lives Matter, as it provides insight into the diverse activists that have been involved with the movement (Sewell, 2018). However, solidarity must be organised carefully, as such, not to “drown out” the voices of people of colour¹³ (Warren et al., 2021, p. 107). Such concerns are reflected in the movement’s decentralized organising principle, that looks to create a space that centres on voices that have previously been sidelined in anti-racist movements, such as women of colour, transgender people and LGBTQIA people (Nummi et al., 2019, p. 1046). Attention should therefore be paid specifically to different intersects of violence and how this can be used to make broader transnational connections, centred on the movement’s broader aims of structural change. As Taylor writes:

Solidarity is standing in unity with people even when you have not personally experienced their particular oppression – the day-to-day struggles in which many people are engaged today must be connected to a much larger vision of what a different world could look like (2016 p. 215-216).

Solidarities are therefore not only formed through the existence of similar experiences, but through desires to work towards common goals (Featherstone, 2012). This was seen, for example, in Palestine, when following the fatal shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, a group of Palestinian students from the Right to Education Campaign at Birzeit University travelled to the US in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. This was followed by three events at Birzeit University, when US Black Lives Matter activists (including Patrice Cullors) travelled to the West Bank to exchange stories of struggle and hope and stand in solidarity with Palestinian students (Bailey, 2015, p. 1021). This illustrates how the working together toward common goals creates solidarities across diverse places where racial violence is manifested differently.

¹³ The Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal voices in this thesis.

2.22 *Intersectionality*

Intersectionality is rooted in Black feminism (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Collins, 2000, 2015, 2017, 2019; Combahee River Collective, 1983; Davis, 1981; Hancock, 2016; hooks, 1982; Yuval-Davis, 2006) and the work of Black feminists have been instrumental in the development of the concept. Kimberlé Crenshaw is often credited with popularising the concept (1989, p. 139), where through exploring the oppression of Black women in relation to domestic violence, she theorised how oppression is not exposed through identifications of race or sex, but rather through the intersection of multiple systems of oppression, and/or categorical axes. In this sense, intersectionality recognises that Black women experience oppression not only through being Black or being women, but rather as Black women, through mutually constituted systems of oppression. Through analysing the experiences of Black women, Crenshaw's (1989) work suggests that solutions are not observed through including Black women in existing frameworks, but by transforming existing structures to account for intersections of oppression.

The Black Lives Matter movement is built on intersectional foundations and principles, and this makes the concept of intersectionality not only useful, but crucial, when analysing the creative adoption and adaption of transnational Black Lives Matter activism. As Sewell (2018, p. 1444) argues, "intersectional thought is not a mere thread of Black Lives Matter; it is the central thread of #BlackLivesMatter and its intellectual lineage". Others, such as, Barbara Ransby follow a similar perspective in arguing for an intersectional approach to Black Lives Matter:

A core of BLM/M4BL¹⁴ leaders have taken Gwen Carr's words at heart, forging a praxis that centres class, gender, sexuality, and empire alongside race to reflect a truly intersectional analysis (2018, p. 160).

¹⁴ Movement 4 Black Lives.

In applying an intersectional approach to Black Lives Matter, this thesis follows Hopkins (2019) considerations, in recognising the contributions of Black feminism in shaping the concept of intersectionality. As Hopkins (2019, p. 937) importantly points out, a critique of social geographers engaging with the concept of intersectionality is seen through scholars overlooking its Black, feminist, scholarly and activist roots; cautioning that a failure to attend to such roots, may inadvertently reinforce White, racist, and colonial ideas. Hopkins (2019) claims are timely and welcomed in relation to this thesis, not least, because Black Lives Matter was created by three Black women, two of whom identify as queer. But also, as an alternative response to racial justice movements with leadership predominantly “Black heterosexual, cisgender men – leaving women, queer, and transgender people [out]” (BLM, N.D.).

Crenshaw (1991, p. 1245) in her essay exploring the intersection of race and gender in relation to Black women’s experiences of domestic violence, rape, and remedial reform, theorises three differentiations of intersectionality: as structural, political, and representational. Structural intersectionality refers to how Black women experience violence “where systems of race, gender and class domination converge”. For example, Crenshaw (1991, p. 1247-1247) uses the example of immigrant women in the US who were victims of domestic violence and were forced to either report their violent spouses to the police and face deportation,¹⁵ or to stay in violent relationships and face abuse. Political intersectionality refers to how Black women are positioned in at least two subordinated groups and are often conflicted by the political agendas (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1252). And representational intersectionality refers to how images and debates of Black women are produced, arguing that experiences of racial and sexual violence are often understood individually and neglect the importance of intersectional analysis in recognising both race and sex are mutually reinforcing in marginalising Black women (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1283).

While Crenshaw (1989, p. 142) is often credited with popularising the term intersectionality, a closer reading of her work reveals recognition that ideas of

¹⁵ For not being ‘properly married’ under the US Immigration and Nationality Act.

intersectionality precede her work and are documented, for example, in the struggles of Black women¹⁶ fighting court cases against discrimination based on racialized and gendered violence in the US. Other work, such as Lawrence (2017, p. 169) goes back further, highlighting the emergence of intersectional activism by Black women in early women's movements in the US, fighting both as abolitionists and as suffragists. bell hooks (1982) addresses the historical oppression of Black women at the hands of White men, as well as Black men and White women; thus, drawing on intersectional thought in challenging single axes of oppression, including White feminist's failure to acknowledge additional intersecting oppressions of race. While Clark (2016, p. 49) reminds us of the early contributions of Indigenous activists in the late 19th/early 20th Century in shaping intersectional ideas, such as Zitkala-Sa (1901, 1924) and Winnemucca (1883) in understanding violence as aged, gendered and racialized, in relation to struggles for land. This work highlights that intersectional thought is not new and has its roots firmly embedded in Black feminism and activism, as well as in early work from Indigenous scholars.

Angela Davis' (1981) book, *Women Race and Class* applies a Black feminist and Marxist approach in examining the experiences of Black women in the women's liberation movement in the US, providing a re-evaluation of the struggles that Black women faced throughout slavery. Davis (1981, p. 8-9) attends to "the multidimensional role of Black women within the family and within the slave community as a whole", highlighting how Black women, contrary to representation,¹⁷ were often subjected to the same forms of physical labour as male slaves, while enduring intersecting domination in the forms of sexual abuse and reproductive control. Thus, illustrating the co-constituted nature of violence based on gender, race, and class. Davis' (1981) book provides pivotal intersectional contributions in understanding power; both in relation to the multiple systems where power functions and the interconnected and mutually reinforcing relationships between different systems of violence (e.g., gender, race, and class).

¹⁶ See case *DeGraffenreid v General Motors* 1977; *Moore v Hughes* 1983 (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 142-143).

¹⁷ Referring to a general false portrayal of Black slave women as house servants, undertaking work in the home. Davis (1981, p. 8) argues that this was not the case, and Black slave women were undertaking the same physical forms of labour as Black male slaves.

However, as Yuval-Davis (2006, p. 202) points out, intersectionality has since been expanded beyond gender and race to include multiple other social categorisations and axes, such as, class, ethnicity, nation, and ability. Therefore, indicating the potential for intersectionality to reconceptualise marginalisation through building coalitions between different forms of interlocking struggles (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1299). This is important in relation to Black Lives Matter because although the movement centres on race, it does so, in relation to multiple other forms of oppression, such as, gender, sexuality and ability (Greer, 2018, p. 662; Harriet Tubman Collective, 2017). In this sense, intersectionality provides a useful analytic in examining “the varying ways in which overlapping social identity markers combine to shape different forms of social marginalization or privilege” (Terriquez et al., 2018, p. 262).

Building on this and with regards to Black Lives Matter, Angela Davis conceptualises the “intersectionality of struggles” in creating and maintaining international movements:

You have to develop organising strategies so that people can identify with the particular issue as their issue [...] connections need to be made in the context of the struggles themselves [...] you need to talk about the structural connections. What is the connection between the way the US police forces train and are armed and Israeli police and military? (2016, p. 20).

Intersectionality in this sense, is not only useful in building coalitions through struggles within the nation-state, but also enables connections on the transnational scale. As such, intersectionality is a powerful tool for social movements in building alliances amongst differently oppressed people; and in creating a more effective organisation for social change (Roberts and Jesudason 2013, p. 313). This is relevant in terms of Black Lives Matter, as it offers a frame to examine the different ways that the movement has been taken-up across diverse transnational place. A notable gap in early scholarship on intersectionality is seen through its lack of engagement beyond

the Euro-American context, thus not accounting for how social categorisations and subsequent violence's are represented transnationally. Bandana Purkayastha (2012, p. 58) uses intersectionality in her work but cautions the fixing of (Western and colonial) racial hierarchies when such systems of oppression hold alternative meaning in countries beyond the West, which poses a key consideration in transnational intersectionality.

Drawing on the example of Black and Indian Ugandan immigrants in the US, Purkayastha (2012, p. 59) highlights how despite sharing forms of gendered and racialized violence through migration policies, Black Ugandan immigrants experience similar forms of racisms to African Americans, while Indian Ugandan immigrants experience racisms similar to Muslim communities in the US. Moreover, such axes of oppression are relative to the context where they are occurring. For example, upon returning to Uganda, a Black Ugandan person would experience difference forms of privilege and marginalisation to an Indian Ugandan person; whereas in the context of India, an Indian Ugandan person would experience other forms of privilege and marginalisation to a Black Ugandan person, which is further complicated by the role of religion and caste (Purkayastha, 2012, p. 59). Thus, illustrating how transnationalism enables the possibility to be part of majority and minority groups simultaneously (Purkayastha, 2010, p. 39).

However, this suggests awareness and does not say that transnationalism and intersectionality are incompatible. Although intersectionality emerged in Black feminist thought in the US, scholars:

Hoped that ideas would travel beyond U.S. borders, not as yet another American export to the rest of the world, but rather as part of the beginnings of a dialogue with similarly subordinated groups in a global context as well as all those who wish to build vibrant, multi-ethnic societies (Collins, 2009 in Choo, 2012, p. 40).

In engaging in transnational work across South Korea and the US, Choo (2012, p. 44) advocates for the travelling of Black intersectional feminist ideas beyond the national boundaries of the US and other Western nation-states, to make connections between experiences and struggles in different countries, thus enabling possibilities for coalition and solidarity building. For Choo (2012, p. 44), the facilitation of intersectional thought both beyond and between Western and non-Western national boundaries is crucial in understanding struggles and justice in the broader context of global hierarchies.

Such debates mark key considerations in the application of an intersectional approach in this thesis, not least in attending to the difference that place makes in how Black Lives Matter is understood, but also in analysing the different ways that Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal individuals experience racialized, and other intersecting forms of violence. In practice, this means that the intersectional approach employed by this thesis does not work from a fixed binary of how race and/or racial violence is understood in Britain or Australia, but rather remains fluid and interactive in examining Black Lives Matter and violence in the context that it occurs.

For example, chapter seven examines environmental racism in the Aboriginal context of Black Lives Matter and understands environmental violence beyond the physical in accounting for the spiritual and bodily relationship between Aboriginal people and the natural environment (Lewis and Scambary, 2016, p. 223). Therefore, challenging colonial ideas on the relationship between humans and the environment (Simpson, 2020, p. 57). In this sense, intersectionality is used to attend to differences that emerge in London and Sydney, but also in examining how transnational alliances and solidarities are negotiated through common forms of struggle. While race is understood differently across place, an intersectional approach to transnationalism enables understanding of how Black Lives Matter shapes place-based struggles, but also how such place-based struggles reshape wider ideas of Black Lives Matter.

As such, it is also important to acknowledge distinctions between different forms of violence. Drawing on the historic struggles of African Americans and

Indigenous people during Reconstruction and Civil Rights in the US, Mamdani argues, “anti-racism is not the same as decolonization [...] African Americans and Indians occupy different social and political locations of marginalisation, and these translate into different perspectives on emancipation and strategies for pursuing it” (2020, p. 95). In making this claim, Mamdani (2020, p. 94) cites that Native American people were excluded from voting rights both in the 15th Amendment¹⁸ and 19th Amendment,¹⁹ in addition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which excluded Native American people, who were not given legal protections until the 1968 Indian Civil Rights Act.²⁰

Mamdani (2020, p. 95) further articulates his argument through a metaphor of blood, suggesting that historically, the smallest drop of African blood (known as the one-drop rule) was enough for a person to be considered “contaminated” and to establishing belonging to a racialized group, while Native American people were subjected to far stricter measures of racial membership. He suggests this was because Black people were sources of labour, which made increases in the number of African American people desirable, while Native American people were sources of land, and thus had claims to land, which contradicted claims of settler sovereignty, and made higher numbers of Native American people less desirable.

Such debates surrounding anti-racism and decolonization are key to this thesis and I agree with Mamdani’s (2020) claim that we should be careful not to predicate that de-racialization is the same as decolonization and we should be aware of distinctions. However, it is also crucial to point out that the Black Lives Matter movement marks many differences to the Civil Rights movements, not least through its intersectional organizing structure, but also how the movement has sought to make connections with decolonization; for example, through toppling colonial statues and efforts to decolonize educational curriculums (Abraham, 2021; Phoenix et al., 2020). This does not suggest a critique of Mamdani’s (2020, p. 95) claim, but signifies the ways that Black Lives Matter is reshaped by anti-racist and decolonial ideas across place. These debates further support the use of an intersectional

¹⁸ 15th Amendment: giving African Americans the right to vote (1870).

¹⁹ 19th Amendment: giving women the right to vote (1920).

²⁰ Note: Mamdani (2020) does not suggest that such legal protections were effective, as many African American men and women did not have access to such rights in practice.

approach that includes Indigeneity in relation to racial and other intersecting forms of violence in analysing the transnational take-up of the Black Lives Matter movement.

While the intersectional approach of this thesis is shaped by Black feminist ideas from the US, I apply these ideas transnationally beyond the context of the US. In doing so, this not only marks an attempt to engage with decolonial ideas and challenge US hegemonic ideas on race and Black Lives Matter, but also to engage in the specificities of Black Lives Matter in understanding the different ways that transnational the movement is shaped by place but reframes the narrative of long-standing place-based struggles.

2.23 *Social movements and online activism*

Social movements are defined as networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities (Diani, 1992, p. 1).

Applying a loose definition of social movements is useful in the context of this thesis, as I conceptualise Black Lives Matter as both a movement and as a set of travelling ideas. Moreover, understanding Black Lives Matter in this way enables us to examine the different ways (e.g., physical, and online) that the movement has been taken up across diverse place. Traditional social movement theories such as political process theory and structural strain theory provide important philosophical underpinnings for understanding how successful social movements emerge. In political process theory, social movements are represented as political movements and are concerned with the power of the state. This theory suggests that movements stand a better chance of success if the state yields less power and/or is less likely to aggressively quash a movement; on the other hand, if the state is repressive in its nature, then a movement is more likely to fail (Sen and Avci, 2016, p. 127).

Structural strain theory offers an alternative explanation and is closely related to deprivation theory. For Smelser (1962), six processes need to happen for a social movement to grow: 1) a society should have structural conduciveness, where the spread of information can be facilitated; 2) people have to both experience and recognise that a structural problem exists; 3) there has to be development of an ideology that seeks address the structural problem; 4) an unexpected event or events has to appear, that will prompt people to consider collective action; 5) the state must be open to change following an event people are mobilized and make a “call to arms” for action; 6) a belief that social control is lost, and direct action is initiated to demand change and implement the movements vision for how things should be (Smelser, 1962; Posastiuc, 2013, p. 66; Saffer, 2018, p. 6).

Structural strain theory is not limited to one type or form of strain but accounts for the interconnection of multiple strains, as well as diverse interpretations for what a vision of a movement should look like (Saffer, 2018, p. 6). Both political process and structural strain theories have value in understanding the evolution of social movements, including Black Lives Matter. While I see the academic relevance of traditional social movement theory in examining Black Lives Matter, this thesis suggests analytical rewards from not being fixed to any one theory, but rather working with multiple frames and concepts in attending to the diverse intersectionality of Black Lives Matter. The literature refers to this as ‘new’ social movements theory and these theories are defined through challenging understandings of social movements as solely stemming from economic disparities; but to include ‘new’ social motivators such as ideology, politics, culture, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 9, Sen and Avci, 2016, p. 128). The intersectional nature of Black Lives Matter in representing diverse struggles across place, makes new social movement theory particularly useful in understanding how and why the movement has gained traction across different place (Collins, 2017, p. 1460).

While social movements are traditionally represented through protests and events in physical spaces, there has in recent years been a move toward activism in the digital sphere (Gurak and Logie, 2013, p. 25). This is particularly important in terms of Black Lives Matter, as the movement first began as a social media hashtag,

and online activism has been a key factor in the internationalisation of the movement (Freelon et al., 2016, p. 7).

Some scholars have called online activism 'slacktivism' (Harlow and Guo, 2014), emphasising a distinction in effort between the physical and online worlds of activism. However, as Bonilla and Rosa (2015, p. 7) point out, online activism has played a key role in the evolution of Black Lives Matter, and the movement should be understood through both 'real' and online worlds of activism. In terms of the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter, I find it key to follow Bonilla and Rosa's (2015) perspective and focus on both worlds of activism because social media has emerged as a key space for Black Lives Matter. Not least, because the online world of activism was particularly important in facilitating the continuation of Black Lives Matter throughout the covid-19 pandemic (Crooke, 2020).

Gilroy and Yancy (2015) build on this debate, suggesting physical activism should not get clouded with online activism. There is a rich literature on 'slackivism' (Cabrera, 2017; Glenn, 2015; McCafferty, 2011), contesting whether online activism is diluting 'real' in-person activism and if we should view hashtag activism as social movements at all (Harlow and Guo, 2014). However, as Cabrera et al., (2017, p. 413) suggest, the so called 'real' and 'online' worlds of activism are also connected, in that social media is part of the real world, as online engagement is performed in real time and the online is instrumental in the organisation of these real-world events. As such, it becomes difficult to say what is and is not a social movement, as both the online and physical worlds of activism are co-constituted.

This was particularly evident in Bonilla and Rosa's (2015, p. 7) paper, as they suggest "#Ferguson and its attendant live streams created a similar feeling of shared temporality - particularly during the protests and confrontations with police". This highlights how online activism not only enabled millions of people to view what was happening in Ferguson, but also created a sense of shared participation amongst "real time" and online campaigners. Ince et al., (2017, p. 1829) build on this, highlighting the importance of the 'hashtag network' in creating alliances. Through analysing more than 60 thousand tweets on Twitter in 2014, their research shows the most used hashtags in combination with #BlackLivesMatter where, "Ferguson",

“Police Violence”, “Tactics”, “Solidarity”, and “Other Places”. This not only demonstrates the capabilities of hashtag activism in terms of building alliances through Black Lives Matter but also signifies the importance of place, as activists used hashtags to draw attention to the location of events. While this thesis does not directly investigate the role of online activism, debates surrounding online activism versus ‘slacktivism’ are key in understanding Black Lives Matter because the movement was born as a hashtag, but also in understanding the ways that social media has connected with “real time” events to facilitate the reach of the movement (Cabrera et al., 2017; Bonilla and Rosa, 2015; Mundt et al., 2013). Moreover, the interconnectedness between ‘real’ and online worlds was particularly important during the covid-19 pandemic.

Given the intersectional approach of this thesis, it is not sensitive nor relevant to make judgement on what constitutes ‘real’ activism, as this does not account for barriers (e.g., race, gender, ability, age, health, and class) that may exclude a person from being able to engage with in-person activism. For example, fear of physical racial violence (Metcalf and Pickett, 2021) or having a disability (Rollo, 2017) pose potential barriers for engaging in large-scale in-person protest. Moreover, this is particularly relevant in relation to the pandemic, where the impacts of covid-19 disproportionately impacted people of colour (Johnson-Agbakwu et al., 2020; Karan and Katz, 2020; Razei et al., 2021).

2.24 *Slow violence*

The concept of slow violence is also useful in terms of understanding the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter, as it provides a conceptual frame to analyse the temporal and ‘less visible’²¹ manifestations of racial violence across place. Rob Nixon is often credited as one of the first to use slow violence, in talking about the climate emergency:

²¹ However, I agree with Davies (2019a) claim that violence is almost always visible to communities experiencing it.

By slow violence I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all (p. 2).

While Nixon's (2011) work provides some of the conceptual grounding behind slow violence, others have expanded the concept beyond the environment, to include different forms of violence. For example, Kern (2016, p. 442-423) frames processes of gentrification and redevelopment in Toronto as forms of slow violence, through displacing "undesirable" residents and in working to further marginalise and exclude some members of the community. While Pain (2019) builds on this work, conceptualising the chronic urban trauma of housing dispossession through the frame of slow violence.

Slow violence has been conceptualised as being less visible or "out of sight" (Nixon, 2011, p. 2), however, Davies (2019a, p. 1) questions, "out of sight to whom?" He makes the point that many marginalised communities feel slow violence in their everyday lives but are not seen as 'visible' because "these stories do not count" (Davies, 2019a, p. 3). As Bagelman (2019, p. 139) indicates in her work using creative practice with asylum seekers, slow violence often is not visible from "above" but is seen through the intimate experiences of asylum seekers awaiting decisions on refugee status. Such troubling of Nixon's framing of slow violence is also evident in Cahill and Pain's (2019, p. 1056) work, which follows a similar critique to Davies (2019a) and calls for "centre[ing] the concerns, knowledge and bodies of those who suffer violences "unseen," that have been forgotten, hidden, or otherwise erased". In this sense, slow violence that may be 'less visible' to those who do not experience the struggle but is hypervisible and real to communities who are living through it. I agree with these points, as violence is highly visible to those who experience it, and any work that seeks to be intersectional (as well as anti-racist and/or decolonizing), should centre violence from the perspective of those who experience it.

In their recent paper, Pain and Cahill (2022) explore the contributions of scholars taking Nixon's (2011) conceptualisation of slow violence further, in

revealing the centrality of people and place in how disposability and dispossession is both enacted and justified (Katz, 2021; Murrey, 2016; Puldio, 2017); recentring slow violence through critical anti-racist and feminist perspectives (Christian and Dowler, 2019); and in marking epistemological shifts that centre the concept on those who experience “hidden” and “multi-sited violence’s” and elevate obscured forms of resistance that are otherwise hidden (Cahill and Pain, 2019; Jones 2019). In the conclusion, Pain and Cahill (2022, p. 366) reflect on the relevance of slow violence with regards to two monuments: the ‘Marra’²² in North East of England, as a symbol of despair following the 1980s miners strikes and death of the mining industry, and the statue of Black Lives Matter activist, Jen Reid, which briefly²³ replaced the statue of slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol, as a (temporary) symbol of hope. Pain and Cahill (2022, p. 366) seem to indicate that while these two statues similarly represent forms of structural violence and collective resistance, the fact that the statue of Jen Reid was removed the day after it was erected, questions the impact of time and place, as well as the intersection of race and class, in understanding the politics of (in)visibility. This paper makes key contributions to slow violence scholarship and urges work to sensitively consider spatialities and temporalities in examining the different ways that slow violence is manifested. As such, this conceptualisation of slow violence provides a frame in exploring diverse forms of racial violence London and Sydney, as it attends to the violent impact of ‘lesser visible’ forms of violence across place.

In relation to the key issue of police brutality for Black Lives Matter, work in Criminology has made strong contributions to slow violence scholarship. Ward (2015, p. 300) conceptualises slow violence as “state organised race crime” where (racial) victimisation is concealed and worn down. While Kramer and Renster (2022) use the concept to explain the ways that racialized routine policing practices constitute “cultural trauma” and disproportionately inflict harm on multiple aspects (e.g., health, well-being, academic performance, community engagement) of the lives of people of colour. Building on this, McBride et al., (2022) employ a slow violence framework in analysing the interactions of migrant sex workers in Vancouver with

²² The ‘Marra’ was funded and erected by Horden Parish Council in 2015.

²³ The statue of Jen Reid was removed just one day later by Bristol City Council.

the police, following a 2014 change in legislation that made the sale of sex legal in some instances. They suggest that while legislation was represented to protect sex workers, in practice, this fuelled racist and targeted policing toward migrant sex workers, while others avoided seeking 'help' from the police, in fear of being "outed" because of their immigration status (McBride et al., 2022, p. 3).

Work on slow violence has quickly developed since Nixon's (2011) terming of the concept. The contributions of scholars (Davies, 2019a; Cahill and Pain, 2019; Kern, 2016; Pain, 2015, 2019; Pain and Cahill, 2022) have not only developed the wider application of slow violence but provide important considerations for others using slow violence as a frame. This thesis considers Cahill and Pain's (2022) suggestions, in adopting an intersectional approach that centres on Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal activists and who experience multiple intersecting forms of violence across place. Moreover, slow violence is used not only to analyse different manifestations of racial violence, but also in documenting, and in attempting, to elevate anti-racist and decolonial Black Lives Matter agency in response to violence. However, the idea that slow violence is highly visible to communities experiencing violence (Bagelman, 2019; Cahill and Pain, 2019; Davies, 2019a) is taken forward by this thesis in attending to the ways that 'less visible' violence is not only violent, but also crucial in understanding why Black Lives Matter emerges in place.

2.3 Black Lives Matter and police violence

Black Lives Matter emerged in response to the deaths of young Black men at the hands of the police in the US, and police brutality is a central issue in the most prominent Black Lives Matter scholarship (Camp and Heatherton, 2016; Davis, 2016; Ransby, 2018; Taylor, 2016). In understanding the adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter transnationally, it is important to go back to the issue of the policing. As Chernega (2016, p. 234) argues, multiple high-profile cases of police shootings (notably; Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, and Eric Garner) is what it took for people to recognise the wider racialization of the criminal justice system. After the police killing of Michael Brown in 2014, many White Americans were shocked by the 'sudden' increase in racialized police shootings, while many Black Americans were

shocked that it took so long for the media to draw people's attention to the on-going crisis (Chernega, 2016, p. 234).

2.31 Police violence

The issue of racialized police brutality is not new and can be traced back in the American context as far as slave patrols in the early 1700s, followed by Jim Crow laws post-American Civil War (Durr, 2015, p. 875). Racist policing long precedes the Black Lives Matter movement and such high-profile cases should be understood as catalytic, rather than causality (Taylor, 2016, p. 153). However, a body of work (Carney, 2016; Davis, 2016; Rickford, 2016; Taylor, 2016) argues that police brutality should not be understood as individual acts of racism, but through structures that make police brutality possible. On this line of thought, scholars have critiqued work that reduces police brutality to individual cases of racism or a “few bad apples” and instead seek to analyse police violence from a structural level, thus indicating the problem roots from a “rotten apple cart” (Joseph-Salisbury et al., 2021, p. 27).

As Davis (2016, p. 15) points out, the deaths of Martin and Brown and the lack of legal impetus to hold individual officers to account and prevent further Black deaths from occurring, illuminate why focus should not be on individual solutions, but rather the structural nature of police and state violence that directs violence toward Black people. Moreover, Davis (2016, p. 17-18) suggests that such failures of justice show that “racism as a framework is far more expansive than any legal framework”, and simply placing Black people into positions of leadership in police forces does not provide solutions, as Black people are still targeted by police violence (also; Taylor, 2016).

Others have similarly sought to deconstruct “a few bad apples” theory, in favour of investigating the structural roots of racism both within and beyond policing. Taylor (2016, p. 10) conceptualises police brutality as “the tip of the iceberg” and suggests that more attention should be paid to structures that seek to criminalise Black and poor people and challenge colourblind politics (2016, p. 72). She (2016, p. 133-134) argues that the work of the police is integral in the social control of an unequal society, where criminality is racialized and this leads to an increased police

presence in Black and poor areas, as well as placing Black communities as targets for police violence. As such, this challenges the idea that police violence is limited to highly visible acts of violence and seeks to examine the wider structural context of the state in allowing violence to occur. Honwana (2019, p. 12-13) follows a similar argument, suggesting that racial profiling, incarceration, and Black deaths in custody signify “state sanctioned violence”.

Camp and Heatherton (2016) examine the emergence of Black Lives Matter through the role of “broken windows”; a policing strategy that works under the assumption that minor criminal violations such as loitering, graffiti, speeding, blocking traffic, public intoxication and other misdemeanours breed more serious crimes (Camp and Heatherton, 2016, p. 257). Broken windows policing suggests that no crime is too petty to address, and all misdemeanours should be taken seriously, to deter a ‘lawless’ environment which would likely lead to more serious crimes being committed (Kohler-Hausmann, 2018, p. 26). However, Camp and Heatherton (2016) illuminate the racially discriminate ways that broken windows policing feeds into wider debates surrounding targeted surveillance, incarceration, and Black deaths in custody; offering insight into why Black bodies are disproportionately targeted and represented in the criminal justice system.

Relevant to this, is a literature conceptualising policing and surveillance as tools of neoliberalism (Cowen and Lewis, 2016; Herbert and Brown, 2006). Ferguson, the town where Black Lives Matter first emerged, provides a key case in illustrating how broken windows policing and surveillance were used to generate revenue. The US Department of Justice (2015, p. 2) *Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department* revealed written communication between the City Finance Director and Police Chief Jackson stating, “unless ticket writing ramps up significantly before the end of the year, it will be hard to significantly raise collections next year”. The report concludes that city officials and law enforcement abused their powers to maximise revenue.

As Sobol (2015, p. 298) suggests, fines collected in Ferguson, a city of just 21,000 people stood at \$1.38 million (around 12.5% of general revenues) for the 2010 fiscal year. For the 2013 fiscal year, this figure increased to \$2.56 million, and then to \$3.09 million for the 2015 fiscal year, which represents more than 23% of the

budgeted general revenue. As such, this implies that broken windows policing, and in particular ticketing, represented an opportunity for the state to maximise its revenue by working together with the police department. The case for Ferguson not only represents a neoliberal urban agenda through racialized and violent policing (Cowen and Lewis, 2016), but is institutionalised into the fabrics of the local government, as seen through the close-knit relationship between the state and police. While scholars have focused on the role of racialized policing, and in particular, broken windows policing in the US (Chernega, 2016; Glover, 2007; Hinkle and Weisburd, 2008), it is important to note that these strategies are not exclusive to North America and are seen globally.

Broken-windows policing has been successfully exported around the planet. From New York to Baltimore, Los Angeles, London, San Juan, San Salvador, and beyond [...] a neoliberal urban strategy practiced and adapted worldwide (Smith, 1998, in Camp and Heatherton 2016, p. 5).

The use of police surveillance and broken windows policing thus goes beyond the US and provides global insight into policing in cities around the world. For example, Joseph-Salisbury et al., (2021, p. 23) work highlights how “the UK is not innocent” in light of Black Lives Matter protests, citing the over-policing of Black communities, ‘stop and search’ and police brutality, as well as other consequences of institutionalised racism, such as, Grenfell Tower and the Windrush scandal. Joseph-Salisbury’s (2021) work presents ‘extreme’ cases of police brutality and violence as routinized, and thus demonstrates how physical acts of police brutality are connected to structural forms of racial violence.

2.32 *Surveillance and the panopticon*

While the issue of police brutality demonstrates the most representable forms of violence, the issue of surveillance and policing has emerged as a key issue for

Black Lives Matter. As Alang et al., (2017, p. 662) argue, for police brutality to be violent, it does not necessarily have to include physical force but can be manifested through “emotional and sexual violence, as well as verbal assault and psychological intimidation [...] that dehumanise and degrade even in the absence of conscious intent”. In this sense, violence goes beyond the physical, to include symbolic and emotional forms of violence that although are not physical, remain violent. This is a powerful way in conceptualising the issue of police violence in Black Lives Matter discourse, as this does not limit the impact to the physical, but also enables us to understand how racist policing shapes spaces of racial exclusion (Canella, 2018; Cankaya, 2020; Jefferson, 2017;), feelings of dehumanization (Bustamante et al., 2019; Grills et al., 2016; Monahan, 2017), as well as incarceration and deaths in custody (Davis, 2011; Gilmore, 2007; Joseph-Salisbury et al., 2020; also; Klippmark and Crawley, 2018). In chapter five, I build on this work, through conceptualising racialized police violence as existing on a continuum, ranging from racialized suspicion and surveillance, to ‘stop and search’ and acts of physical brutality.

The work of Foucault is also useful here, and particularly his interpretation of the panopticon. Foucault (1977, p. 201) uses Bentham’s panopticon (design of a prison) as an exemplar in analysing changes in social control. The panopticon shows divided cells where prisoners can see both outside the building and inside toward the watch tower. But the prisoners cannot see inside the watchtower as they are blinded by a light in order for the watchtower to make them visible and thus the prisoners do not know if they are being watched. The prisoner’s pain of not knowing if they are being watched makes surveillance a permanent feature (Caluya, 2010, p. 622). Foucault’s (1977) perspective on the panopticon has been used by scholars (e.g., Canella, 2018; Eldon, 2003; Khoury, 2009) in analysing surveillance and increasingly how this has been used to police Black bodies.

The contributions of Foucault (1977) are highly useful in examining both how surveillance is an act of violence, and the permanence of its effects on racialized communities of criminality (Cook and Whowell, 2011; Fischer, 2019; Summers and Howell, 2019). In this sense, racialization through surveillance not only serves as a powerful tool in attaching stigma on biological grounds to individual’s for “the purpose of domination and exploitation” (Inwood and Yarborough, 2010, p. 299), but

also constructs racialized spaces of inclusion and exclusion. Others have followed this line of thought, suggesting that surveillance is racialized through the marking of non-White bodies as suspicious and subjecting them to increased monitoring and stigma (Burman, 2010; Patel, 2012; Silva, 2010). Some bodies are thus “hyper-visible” when it comes to surveillance measures (Khoury, 2009). This work offers crucial insight into the racialized functioning of surveillance and begins to unpack some of its racialized consequences (e.g., ‘stop and search’, raiding of homes, as well as psychological). I build on this in chapter five as I suggest surveillance is used to create racialized ‘intelligence’ that can then become actionable, as seen through more physical forms of racialized policing and brutality.

An emerging body of work has sought to go beyond police surveillance and investigates the use of counter-surveillance techniques (e.g., camera phones), as a means of turning the gaze on state misconduct and constructing resistance (Koskela, 2011; Yelsin, 2010). However, Beutin (2017, p. 17) offers three counter points; first, counter -surveillance may legitimise the use of more state surveillance in the form of bodycams for example. Second, it may work to delegitimise calls for radical protest in favour of “civility” and working with the system in order to ensure the myth of liberalism and “racial equality”. And third, the nature of “evidence” is “underwritten by dominant epistemologies” that are not likely to produce unracialized outcomes or reduce police violence (Beutin, 2017).

These debates are important in analysing the use of counter-surveillance techniques in Black Lives Matter activism, as Beutin (2017) reminds us that the use of counter-surveillance as evidence, does not always produce justice in terms of individual cases, nor does it address the structural roots of racist policing. However, as Gilroy exemplifies in his (2012, p. 392) essay ‘*My Britain is Fuck All*’, filming is crucial in putting debates into the public sphere, with regards to the racist slurs of Emma West, on a tram in Coydon, London, in 2012. This raises the questions, if video footage documenting acts of police brutality did not go viral, would a Black Lives Matter movement exist today?²⁴ Do counter-surveillance techniques not deter violent

²⁴ In other words, what many Black, Aboriginal Ethnic Minority groups experience in everyday life, is only made ‘real’ when disseminated to White audiences (see Lentin, 2018, p. 407; Siegel, 2020, p. 1071; Stack, 2021).

acts of brutality, at least, in the present? In chapter five, I go deeper into these debates and analyse the use of counter surveillance as both a method of self-defence and in reclaiming spaces of racialization.

On the issue of violence and transnationalism, Walter Benjamin (1978, p. 287) discusses police violence as never being identical across time and place, but similarly “marks the point at which the state... can no longer guarantee through the legal system the empirical ends that it desires at any price to attain [...] all violence as a means is either law-making or law-preserving”. This work suggests that although violence is different across place, the state similarly uses violence as a means to keep the law intact and defend so-called “society”. In relation to Black Lives Matter, this strongly echoes Angela Davis’ (2016, p. 20) work and suggests that although the “struggle for freedom” is different across place, it is similarly manifested through the states reach to deploy violence in the name of the law.

Relevant to this, Achille Mbembe’s concept of necropolitics²⁵ is also relevant in defining “who matters and who does not, who is disposable and who is not” (2003, p. 27). Necropower thus places a value on life and death, calculating who is subject to “exclusion, violence and neglect” and who is not (Mbembe, 2003, p. 14). On the issue of racist policing, scholars have used necropolitics to conceptualise diverse forms of physical and non-physical racial violence,²⁶ such as, ‘stop and search’ (Flacks, 2020, p. 392), surveillance drones (Wall, 2016, p. 1126) and incarceration (Alves, 2014, p. 324). With regards to Black Lives Matter, Rouse (2021, p. 362) suggests the movement represents resistance against the necropolitics that makes “Black bodies expendable” at the hands of the police. Necropolitics, therefore provides a useful frame to analyse the racialization of criminality.

2.4 Black Lives Matter and neoliberal urbanism

While police violence is a key issue in the Black Lives Matter scholarship, there have been some attempts to broaden violence out to include more diverse forms, such as the impact of neoliberalism on urban communities of colour (Issar,

²⁵ Also known as “work of death” (Mbembe, 2003, p. 16).

²⁶ In addition to other intersecting forms of violence; for example, gender and sexuality.

2021; Maharawal, 2017; Ransby, 2018; Taylor, 2016). Scholarship on neoliberal urbanism and Black Lives Matter broadly draws on two main perspectives: first, the role of gentrification and urban redevelopment in displacing and excluding Black and poor communities from gentrified space. And second, the securitization of space in securing and maintaining neoliberal space using violent policing. Work on urban territorial stigma is therefore also important in conceptualising the racial stigmatization of space in both justifying redevelopments as 'necessary' and in 'defending' neoliberal space (Wacquant 2007, 2010).

2.41 *Neoliberal urbanism*

Peck, Theodore, and Brenner (2013, p. 1091) suggest neoliberal urbanism represents the neoliberal processes that have been structuring the landscape of urban re-development for decades, indicating cities play a central role in the (re)production of neoliberalism. Neoliberal urbanism is manifested through "policy experiments, institutional innovations and political projects" (Peck, Theodore, and Brenner 2009, p. 65) and such agendas rely heavily on public and private investment, and often encourage community members to invest in these private projects with the (often false) promise of jobs and other social and economic benefits for the local community (Boland, Bronte, and Muir, 2017). Since neoliberalism gives local authorities less capacity to redevelop urban space directly, local government becomes "more reliant on private sector capital" (Brenner, and Peck, 2002, p. 369 in Gonzales, and Vigar, 2008, p. 11). On this issue, Smith (1979, p. 544-546) suggests that the systematic disinvestment of neighbourhoods creates specific opportunities for developers to capitalise on the 'rent gap'²⁷ and "recycle" neighbourhoods through a process of displacement and gentrification.

This marks the shifting away from public sector investment,²⁸ and promoting the privatisation of space in the form of 'socially neutral' economic growth programs, and entrepreneurial governance (Mele 2013, p. 600; also; Harvey, 1989, p. 5). Neoliberal urbanism is thus represented as a solution to many existing social and

²⁷ "The rent gap is the disparity between the potential ground rent level and the actual ground rent capitalized under the present land use" (Smith, 1979, p. 545).

²⁸ Including social development programs (see, Mele, 2013, p. 600).

economic problems in cities, and predicates that economic and social problems can be fixed with a market-based solution (Peck and Tickell, 2002). However, as Peck points out, neoliberal urbanism never looks the same across place and has many different “mutations” (2012, p. 651, 2013). Yet, such forms of urban governance are bound together through the same neoliberal ideological principles of a small state, privatization, and local competition (Peck, Theodore, and Brenner, 2009, p. 50). To maintain the neoliberal order within cities, Smith (2002, p. 428) suggests that space is securitised, with the police taking a central role in securing neoliberal space.

Zukin’s (1982) work on gentrification, class and *Loft Living* reveals the centrality of space in observing the arrival of the creative class²⁹ (such as, working class artists) into the SoHo district³⁰ in New York during the 1970’s. Many artists moved into studio lofts, which despite having some degree of “noise and dirt” were relatively cheap and offered large floor space and natural light for artists to both live and work. However, the creation of “artist quarters” in SoHo exemplified the “urban resurgence” of industrialised space in the US and created new demand by wealthy and upper-class residents seeking a taste of an ‘avant-garde’ lifestyle, which constituted the purchasing of large amounts of property by real-estate developers and wealthy individuals. Zukin (1982, p. 2) argues, increased rent prices forced many artists out from the area and transformed the space into “bourgeois chic”.

On the issue of neoliberal gentrification and displacement, there is a body of work analysing the different ways that displacement is both justified and manifested across place. As Elliot-Cooper et al., (2020, p. 498) point out, while the (economic) revaluation of land is a central proponent to gentrification, it is the conceptualisation of displacement as “an intensely felt and experiential process of un-homing” that allows us to recognise both its physical and psychological impacts. This is seen in Crawford and Sainsbury’s (2017) work, investigating the impact of displacement through the urban renewal of a social housing estate in South-Western Sydney. Crawford and Sainsbury (2017) found that displacement had an uneven impact on elderly residents and particularly those with health conditions, as many were reluctant to visit new, unfamiliar, medical services and would often travel to their

²⁹ Creative class – meaning the creative working class.

³⁰ With reference to Greenwich Village.

doctors and pharmacists in their former neighbourhoods. Zhang's (2018) work applies a Bordieuan lens in analysing the redevelopment and displacement of long-term residents in Shanghai, who accepted resettlement deals before the 2010 World Expo. Zhang (2018, p. 208) indicates that despite residents accepting resettlement deals, they experienced "grief, loss and suffering" because of losing their homes, and this constitutes displacement as a form of 'symbolic violence' and 'home-unmaking'.

Relevant to this thesis, is work examining the case of Grenfell Tower in London which I discuss in chapter six through a neoliberal urban lens. Much of this work is centred on the role of class violence in creating the context for the fire, and conceptualises neoliberal urbanism through decades of deregulation, financialization, privatisation and cuts to the public sector and welfare (Bhandar, 2018; Hodkinson, 2018a, 2018b; MacLeod, 2018). However, more recently, work has reframed Grenfell through the intersection of race and class violence (Bhandar, 2021; Danewid 2020; Ibrahim, 2021; Shildrick, 2018; Tilley and Shilliam, 2018). For example, Danewid (2020, p. 304-305) argues that global cities were historically and continue to be made through the logic of empire and the case of Grenfell exemplifies how neoliberal urban governance structures and maintains racial inequalities, hierarchies, and violence. This work uses an intersectional frame in exposing race and class violence in the case of Grenfell, and I will build on this case in chapter six through its permeation of Black Lives Matter in London.

2.42 Racializing neoliberal urbanism through urban re-development

The relationship between neoliberal urbanism and racial violence is significant to this thesis, as I suggest that neoliberal urbanism, through austerity politics and urban gentrification provides some explanation into the diverse adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter transnationally in chapter six. Mele (2013, p. 612) argues, neoliberal urbanism uses racial colour-blind discourses to justify its use as a strategy for urban re-development. Neoliberal urbanism is presented as an 'inclusive' model for social and economic development, yet it fails to provide such benefits evenly across urban populations. In other words, neoliberal urbanism implements a colour-blind strategy, and works to redefine race as matters of individual concern,

while disregarding racism as a structural issue (Mele, 2013, p. 601). Drawing on the case of Chester, Pennsylvania, Mele (2013, p. 612) suggests that neoliberal urban strategies were used to spearhead urban re-development along Chester's waterside, to appeal to White and wealthy newcomers. However, the (false) promise of "spill-over" economic development into Chester's Black and poor areas, creating jobs and bringing further investment did not materialise; rather, Black, and poor people were further marginalised and excluded from that space (Mele, 2013, p. 612). This work questions, urban development for whom? Mele's (2013) contributions on neoliberal urbanism illustrate the intersecting role of race and class in creating neoliberal spaces of exclusion, as well as how colour-blind racial 'logic' works in concealing structural racial inequalities.

Other work has drawn out this relationship in the city of Ferguson, where the Black Lives Matter movement first began. Ferguson is a city in St Louis County and part of the Greater St Louis metro, and is a predominantly African American area, accounting for approximately 68.2% of the population (US Census Bureau, 2018). However, as Cowen and Lewis point out, "Ferguson has become a majority Black suburb because of gentrification and displacement in St Louis - though this shift is not reflected in the political leadership and the police force, which remain almost entirely White" (2016, p. 7). As city planners and private investors recognised the 'potential' (through the financialisation of urban land) in inner city St Louis, this created a demographic shift; where Black renters were forced out of their homes in the inner city, and into smaller neighbouring areas, such as Ferguson. While White communities moved from the suburbs into (newly gentrified and 'desirable') inner city St Louis. Ferguson is therefore not a predominantly African American suburb by chance but represents racialized displacement through neoliberal urban redevelopment and spatial management.

However, this does not end with the displacement of Black communities to the suburbs, as the process of gentrification is maintained through violent policing, increasing rates of incarceration and the continuous eviction of Black communities from their homes (Cowen and Lewis, 2016, p. 6). While police brutality is the issue that has been well documented within the Black Lives Matter literature, it is important to recognise to the neoliberal urban processes that underpin racial violence

in Ferguson. It is suggested that neoliberal urban policy made Ferguson “increasingly difficult to distinguish from of predatory finance companies”, thus exposing the neoliberal underpinning of racial and class violence (Cowen and Lewis, 2016, p. 10). This work is geographically significant, as it gives insight into the neoliberal urban conditions that not only shape Ferguson, but also the context of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Building on this, Maharawal (2017, p. 340) explores the Black Lives Matter movement in the San Francisco Bay area, suggesting protests were established in resistance toward “a racialized security regime designed to protect urban re-development, tech-led property speculation and gentrification”. San Francisco is a key case for gentrification, and the displacement of disadvantaged social groups at the hands of the neoliberal state is well documented within the literature (Mirabal, 2009). However, racial violence at the hands of the state does not stop at displacement, as space is securitised, and police forces are deployed to project spaces of urban redevelopment. As Maharawal (2017, p. 347) documents in her ethnography, protesters held signs stating, “Gentrification = Police Brutality” during Black Lives Matter protests in the San Francisco Bay area. Therefore, indicating that police brutality is connected to gentrification, in justifying the ‘defending’ of space from the ‘other’ (Cheshire et al., 2019; Modan, 2007).

The case of Alejandro Nieto illustrates this point in more detail (Maharawal, 2017; Solnit, 2016). Nieto, a 28-year-old Latino man from San Francisco was killed by the police in the neighbourhood of Bernal Hill, where he had lived his whole life. After a dispute with two ‘new’ White residents, the police were called to the scene. Nieto, a college graduate, former youth councillor and at the time, an off-duty security guard, was carrying his licensed taser, when the police opened fire and fatally shot him. In analysing this case, Maharawal (2017) and Solnit (2016) suggest that gentrification and the “whitening” of space is central to understanding why Nieto was killed, as he did not ‘fit’ into that space anymore. This case illuminates how the relationship between neoliberal urban redevelopment and the securitization of space have direction. Seen like this, the police are represented as ‘defenders’ of neoliberal space and this offers some explanation into why gentrification is important to Black Lives Matter activists in San Francisco.

Racial violence through neoliberal urbanism has not only been studied in the US, but also in other global cities. For example, Lees and Hubbard (2021) investigate the “decanting” of ‘BAME’³¹ social housing tenants in London, within the context of racialized territorial stigma and neoliberal strategies to redevelop social housing estates despite an unaffordable private housing market. Applying an intersectional frame to a racial capitalism approach, Lees and Hubbard (2021, p. 1) suggest that the displacement of social housing tenants, under the guise of urban renewal, poses disadvantages for ‘BAME’ communities because of intersecting forms structural of racism; as evidenced through, the racial stigmatization of communities and space in justifying state-led gentrification; and the longer histories of structural displacement in relation to race and immigration. In addition, Lees and Hubbard conceptualise the displacement of ‘BAME’ communities as a process of slow violence, in “gradually” eroding ethno-cultural interactions and community connections, through the ‘myth’ of creating “mixed communities”, where ‘BAME’ residents are in theory, ‘elevated’ by living closer to White and wealthy neighbourhoods (2021, p. 14). The work provides valuable insight in understanding the intersection of race and class through neoliberal urban redevelopment.

In her (2007) book, *Cities of Whiteness*, Shaw challenges notions of neoliberal urban redevelopment in the inner-city district of Redfern in Sydney and conceptualises redevelopment through ‘whiteness’ and ‘recolonization’. The Block was once home to an Aboriginal-led social housing community, however, since the 1990’s, it has undergone a large-scale urban renewal project, re-developing what were once stagnant industrial sites or ‘deteriorating’ (Aboriginal) homes into prime location real estate and sites for urban entrepreneurialism (Shaw, 2007, p. 1). Shaw’s work highlights the connections between gentrification and whiteness in first, dispossessing Aboriginal people of their (affordable) homes, and second, replacing homes with newly gentrified space, where Aboriginal people were priced out and excluded, thus signalling the contemporary manifestation of colonialism in Sydney.

The use of inclusive language such as “improve”, “make safer” or “make habitable” was used to “sell” the redevelopment of The Block to Aboriginal people

³¹ ‘BAME’ – term used in Lees and Hubbard (2021).

(Shaw, 2007, p. 2). This work raises the question, whom has the right to the city? (Lefebvre, 1968; Mitchell, 2003). Shaw's work highlights the role of whiteness, as a neoliberal spatial strategy in understanding the connection between urban redevelopment and dispossession of Aboriginal land. Moreover, The Block provides a crucial site for investigation, as it was visited by Black Lives Matter leaders in 2017, who used their platform to assert the need to "reinvest in Black and Indigenous communities" (Cullors and Diverlus, 2017). I will discuss this case in detail in chapter six.

Relevant to this is Wacquant's (2007, 2008, 2010) conceptualisation of urban territorial stigma, where "blemishes of place" are used to justify the need to "fix" neighbourhoods but seem to neglect the presence of existing structural inequalities (Kallin and Slater 2014, p. 1351). Others have taken this further, suggesting that processes of stigma and redevelopment are mutually constituted, in that they work to increase the value of land, while "devaluing" already marginalised communities (Paton et al., 2017; Ruggiero, 2007, p. 395). However, as others have suggested, we should remain cautious of Wacquant's (2007, p. 68) suggestion that residents "internalize" stigma and consider the potential for agency and resistance in the face of stigma (Cairns, 2018; Cretan and Powell, 2018; Nayak, 2019; Zebechi, 2012). I build on work on urban territorial stigma, as well as critiques in chapter six of this thesis.

On the issue of territorial stigma, some work has sought to make connections between the policing of space (through the criminalisation of "street drinkers" for example) and the emergence of neoliberal urban renewal projects across Australia (Pennay et al., 2014). Similar work has also emerged in the context of the so-called 'drug overdose crisis' in Vancouver, Canada, examining levels of street-policing in relation to gentrification; suggesting that Indigenous and people of colour are regularly targeted in spaces of neoliberal urban redevelopment (Collins et al., 2019). Therefore, highlighting that while many poor and marginalised groups are criminalised in public spaces, it is not surprising to find that Aboriginal people are disproportionately impacted. Others have followed this line of thought in illuminating the importance of spatial systems in understanding the marginalisation and dispossession of Aboriginal people through the lens of 'settler colonialism' (Porter, 2018, p. 241-242). This work is useful in understanding the relationship

between racial violence and neoliberal urbanism, as well as contemporary manifestations of colonialism in reinforcing exclusion.

2.5 Black Lives Matter and environmental racism

The issue of the environment is largely neglected in current Black Lives Matter scholarship (with limited exceptions; Anguelovski et al., 2021; Henderson and Well, 2021; Lennon, 2017; Pellow, 2016). However, there is some a substantive literature on environmental racism which is useful in understanding the diverse adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter transnationally. While I go into more detail on this literature at the beginning of chapter seven, here I provide a review of some of the key scholarship on environmental racism in relation to Black Lives Matter. The issue of the environment remains lesser-examined in Black Lives Matter discourse, and my thesis attends to this by considering the role of transnational place in permeating struggles of environmental racism through Black Lives Matter. While some Black Lives Matter scholarship has made connection with Indigenous struggles (Belfi, 2020; Ramos, 2016), this work is mainly limited to the context of North America, and I attend to this by examining the central issue of environmental racism in the Aboriginal take-up of Black Lives Matter in Sydney.

2.51 *Race and the environment*

Work on environmental racism is rooted in the ideas of civil rights activist, Benjamin Chavis, who coined the term in 1982, during campaigns against the dumping of toxic waste into Black communities in Warren Country, North Carolina (Holifield, 2001, p. 83). Chavis took this further, offering a broad conceptualisation of environmental racism as:

Racial discrimination in environmental policy-making and enforcement of regulations and laws, the deliberate targeting of communities of color for toxic waste facilities, the official sanctioning of the presence of life-threatening

poisons and pollutants for communities of color, and the history of excluding people of color from leadership of the environmental movement (1994, p. 12).

The work of Chavis forms the foundations of environmental racism scholarship, through first illuminating the disproportionate impact of environmental injustice on communities of colour, and second, highlighting the exclusion of the same communities from positions of leadership on environmental justice. However, scholarship has taken these ideas further, for example, through challenging whiteness in environmental justice. Finney (2014) explores the contemporary manifestation of the natural environment as 'White space', where Black communities have been excluded, despite having historical connections to the natural environment. As such, Finney (2014) challenges constructions of the natural environment as 'White space' and interrogates (racial) violence that has worked to exclude Black communities from the environment.

Other work has similarly sought to deconstruct whiteness from the natural environment and make deeper analytical connections between race, space, and nature (Curnrow and Helferty, 2018; Pulido, 2000). As Brahinsky, Sasser and Minkoff-Zern (2014, p. 1141) suggest, the environment provides a useful site to unpack the naturalization of race, and investigate the racialized routes that resources are allocated in creating environmental injustice (e.g., the dumping of toxic waste in Black communities). Moreover, this work emphasises the need to go beyond sole explanations of neoliberal capitalism in understanding violence and seeks to explore the intersecting role of racism in environmental (in)justice. A strength of this literature is seen through its ability to unpack environmental justice as a space of racial violence and in challenging the natural production of White space. In addition, this scholarship not only illustrates that environmental racism exists, but importantly begins to examine processes that create racialized spaces of exclusion and violence.

However, as Pulido (2015) points out, the role of neoliberalism problematises explanations of environmental racism being reduced to white privilege, and she instead urges scholars to consider the impact of structures and institutions in constructing acts of white supremacy; as seen through the naturalization of racialized

and gendered political systems that produce racial violence (Smith, 2012, in Bonds, 2019, p. 3). Pulido (2016, 2017) conceptualises environmental racism through “state-sanctioned violence” and “neoliberal capitalism” and in her (2016) work on water contamination in Flint, Michigan, Pulido investigates the causes and impacts of a water poisoning scandal which has been linked to a range of health problems for mostly Black communities, such as, lead in children’s blood causing learning problems, slowed growth, hearing problems, lower IQ, and hyperactivity, anaemia, and in rarer cases, seizures, coma and even death (see Environmental Protection Agency N.D). Pulido asserts the poisoning of water should be considered “deliberate” and suggests that we should not understand this case as a failure or accident of the state, but rather a direct consequence of the neoliberal capitalist functioning of the state (2016, p. 2). Moreover, not only was environmental racism produced in the context of neoliberal austerity, but Pulido argues that the mostly Black communities impacted, where racialized based on both their “Blackness and surplus value” (2016, p. 1).

This case further builds on Pulido’s conceptualisation of environmental racism as “state-sanctioned violence” and suggests that a combination of devaluing of non-White bodies and allowing neoliberal capital to function with impunity, means that we should not view the state as an ally or passive bystander on environmental justice, but rather a “co-conspirator” (2017, p. 529). Others have taken this approach further, such as Wright (2021), who explores environmental racism from “above” (state-sanctioned) and “below” (e.g., dumping toxic waste), suggesting that both represent “anti-Black violence” that is destructive to the environment and Black communities. For Wright (2021, p. 791), environmental racism is about the “mutual devaluation of Black bodies”, and the spaces that Black communities exist in.

The link between neoliberalism and environmental justice is a valuable one, as this offers crucial insight into the economic structures underpinning environmental racism. While some scholars have suggested that neoliberalism protects white privilege and moves beyond explicit forms of “state-sanctioned violence” evident in the past (Mascarenhas, 2016); this thesis builds on Pulido’s consideration, indicating that environmental racism should not be reduced to an unfortunate consequence of neoliberalism., but rather seeks to illuminate the active role of the state and

corporations as central in the production of environmental racism. Moreover, these connections should not be limited to the environment as links are also evident within different issues such as policing and gentrification.

2.52 *Climate change and Indigenous land*

The issue of climate change has also emerged within limited Black Lives Matter scholarship. Pellow (2016, p. 233) explores Black Lives Matter within a critical environmental justice studies framework, suggesting environmental racism is a form of state-driven systematic racism which Black Lives Matter is actively challenging. Using an intersectional frame of race, class and gender, Pellow (2016, p. 228) highlights how the impacts of climate change are not uniform across time or space, suggesting people of colour, poor people and women disproportionately bear the brunt of climate change; and in response to such protests against the “racist state”, the US military is deployed onto the streets of Ferguson, as it is to defend its interests against people of colour in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria. In making this an environmental justice issue, the US military are one of the largest contributors to pollution in the world, but also defend the state-sanctioned practices that produce environmental racism (Nazaryan, 2014, in Pellow, 2016, p. 228).

Pellow’s work provides an interesting perspective in terms of the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter; particularly, as activists have engaged with environmental justice globally. For example, in 2014, Black Lives Matter activists staged a “die in” protest outside the Climate Change Conference in Lima (Peru), protesting the disproportionate impact of climate change on Black people all around the world (Klein, 2014). In 2016, nine Black Lives Matter activists chained themselves to London City airport runway, in protest to the disproportionate impact of the airport’s air pollution on mostly Black communities living in nearby Newham (Weaver and Grierson, 2016). The protest was not only in response to the increasing respiratory health problems of nearby (largely Black) communities, but also to highlight the UK government’s role in climate change which disproportionately impacts the Global South (Jasiewicz, 2018), thus signalling Black Lives Matter’s concern with the environment.

Climate change has emerged as an issue for Black Lives Matter, and this marks an attempt to place the movement in environmental racism scholarship. However, there is limited work explicitly exploring environmental justice through Black Lives Matter discourse, and this marks a limitation in current scholarship; particularly as Black Lives Matter has gained traction in countries around the world. Other scholars have similarly sought to draw attention to the racialized impacts of climate change (Almeida, 2019; Baird, 2008; Joo, 2020; Tuana, 2019). For example, Baird (2008, p. 1) argues that while the world experiences an increase in natural disasters because of climate change, such impacts are disproportionately affecting Ethnic Minority and Indigenous people. Others have taken this further, suggesting climate justice should involve the elimination of colonial structures and (Western) borders, that continue to keep those disproportionately impacted by climate change out and fail to recognise ecological relationships between Indigenous communities and the environment (Chaver et al., 2021, p. 11).

On the issue of the environment and Indigenous land, there is a rich literature documenting the impact of environmental racism on Indigenous peoples and land (Bullard, 1993, 2002; Jacobs, 2010). The connection between Indigenous people and land is all, physical, spiritual, symbolic and resembles a symbiotic relationship, where people do not live off the land, but rather with it (D'Odorico et al., 2017, p. 2235; Pascoe, 2007, p. 92). The relationship to land is therefore understood different to Western binary, where land is used for extraction purposes, such as mining (Lewis and Scambray 2016, p. 223). However, as Bullard suggests, the destruction of Indigenous traditional lands is rooted "in economic exploitation, racial oppression, the devaluation of human life and the natural environment and corporate greed" (2002, p. 34).

Debates on modernity are therefore key in conceptualising the distinction between 'uncivilised' nature and non-White bodies, that are reduced to serving the 'modern' world; versus the 'civilised', Western-centric (capitalistic) ideas, knowledge systems and (White) bodies that dominate the 'uncivilised', to embody modernity (Ranauta, 2020, p. 356). For example, drawing on the case of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta, Williams (2018, p. 240) suggests the use of pesticides represent the "modernization" of the plantation, and is a form of agro-environmental racism,

through both exposure to toxins and use of modernity to rationalise land dispossession. Whiteness is thus a central proponent of (Western) modernity (Bonnett, 2002, p. 70) and considering such a relationship is key in understanding both racialized distinctions between the 'civilised' and 'uncivilised', as well as the foundations of contemporary manifestations of colonialism, as seen through environmental racisms.

The issue of resource extraction is well documented within Indigenous environmental racism scholarship (Bosworth and Chua, 2021; Mollett, 2006; Pasternak and Dafnos, 2018; Temper, 2019). Temper (2019, p. 94) argues, Indigenous people are disproportionately impacted by environmental injustice and any approach to environmental justice should be decolonial and address the issue of natural resource extraction in the settler-colonial context. While Jacobs (2010) argues for an intersectional approach, in examining the Canadian Indigenous context. Applying a "decolonizing antiracist" approach, Jacobs (2010, p. 1) suggests, the experiences of Indigenous peoples on their land should be analysed through the intersecting lenses of race and class in exploring the central struggle of decolonization in environmental racism. Others have sought to build on this and interrogate the relationship between race and contemporary representations of colonialism through neoliberal capitalism (Heyen, 2016; Pulido et al., 2016). Intersectional approaches, that include race, as well as other intersecting forms of violence in relation to environmental justice, offer value in recognising the uneven ways that people of colour and Indigenous people are impacted by environmental injustice.

Other work, such as Mollett (2006) conceptualises natural resource struggles as racialized struggles, suggesting that historical colonial stereotypes³² remain key in claims to land. Similarly, Van Sant et al., (2021, p. 634) build on this, indicating natural resource struggles in Latin America offer crucial insight in how Indigenous dispossession of land is connected to racist ideas of colonialism and contemporary neoliberalism. While Bagelman and Weibe (2017) examine the geographies of toxicity through the 'intimate' experiences and resistances of Indigenous women at the

³² Stereotypes shaped through (western) modernity.

Aamjiwnaang First Nation reserve, situated next to Canada's 'Chemical Valley'.³³ Crucially, Bagelman and Weibe (2017, p. 83) reveal the paradoxical ways that Indigenous women in Aamjiwnaang are simultaneously subjected to the 'toxicity' of colonialism, while at the same time, are embodied actors of resistance and environmental justice. Such ideas are key in the Australian Aboriginal context of this thesis, in conceptualising land dispossession through neoliberal colonialism and racial violence, as well acknowledging environmental injustice beyond the physical, to account for cultural and symbolic relationships with the environment.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed some of the key concepts, literature, and themes both situated within Black Lives Matter discourse, and related fields that this thesis seeks to contribute to, through analysing the diverse adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter transnationally. The key issues of alliances and solidarities, police violence, neoliberal urbanism and environmental justice illustrate some of the diverse ways that transnational Black Lives Matter activism emerges, as well as the difference that place makes in how Black Lives Matter is understood and enacted. As such, the key concepts of transnationalism and travelling theory, intersectionality, slow violence, and social movements are useful in conceptually grounding analysis into the ways that different place-based issues shape Black Lives Matter activism transnationally.

A central aim of this chapter has been to centre racialization in debates on each issue discussed. Black Lives Matter is presented as intersectional movement (Littlechild, 2021, p. 19), and it is important to analyse the intersection of racialization with other social markers, such as class, gender, and Indigeneity. In understanding the transnational diverse adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter, work on intersectionality offers value in pushing analysis beyond a singular lens and in unpacking the difference that place makes in redeveloping the meaning of Black

³³ Known as 'Chemical Valley' due to being situated next to Sarnia, Canada's largest petrochemical complex, with the worst air quality in the country (see, Bagelman and Wiebe, 2017). A recent study suggests that levels of cancer-causing chemicals in 'Chemical Valley' are more than 44 times higher than levels considered 'safe' (see, Cecco, 2021).

Lives Matter. Moreover, for the Australian part of this thesis, there is value in work from Aboriginal scholars and those who challenge Western binary and ideas of modernity through framing their work in respect to Aboriginal culture and knowledge (Donald, 2012; Pascoe, 2007, 2018; Sandoval et al., 2016).

While I have explored some of the key literature thematically, it should be noted that such issues should not be understood in isolation, but rather, in connection with other intersecting issues. For example, the conceptualisation of racist policing as a structural issue, over explanations reduced to individual acts of racism (Davis 2016; Taylor 2016) relates to the structural ways that neoliberal gentrification dispossesses people of colour from their homes (Brand et al., 2020; Mele, 2013), as well as conceptualisations of environmental racism as “state sanctioned violence” (Pulido, 2017). As such, the literature is in dialogue with each other, and I contribute to this by examining how Black Lives Matter relates to these issues in London and Sydney.

This review has exposed gaps in current scholarship, with much of the Black Lives Matter scholarship focused on the US context, and limited work has examined the movement outside of North America. This thesis attends to these gaps by being amongst the first work to examine the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter through its creative adoption and adaption in London and Sydney. As such, I aim to reveal the different ways that place-based struggles shape ideas of Black Lives Matter, as well as the ways that Black Lives Matter permeates the narratives of long-standing place-based struggles. London and Sydney provide key sites where Black Lives Matter activism has come to the fore and offer crucial insight into how Black Lives Matter is reshaped and redeveloped across transnational place.

Chapter 3.0 A multi-sited ethnographic and White reflexive approach to understanding Black Lives Matter activism

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I first reflect on my own racial position as a White and non-Aboriginal researcher in mostly Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal protest settings. Second, I introduce ethnography as my main method, providing insight into what a multi-sited ethnography looked like in the context of my research. Third, I give a rationale for my choices of sites, where I discuss my decision to use a multi-sited ethnography to conduct fieldwork in both London and Sydney. Fourth, I explain how I located and recruited research participants as well as consider shortcomings in this. Fifth, I turn to the research process, and draw on the use of semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, participant observation at key events, collection of ephemera while in the field, online netnography and photographs as part of my ethnography. Sixth, I discuss data analysis, including the coding and interpreting of the data generated through the ethnography. Seventh, I draw on some of the broader moral and ethical considerations of this work, before highlighting some important practical considerations. I conclude by discussing how well the methodology worked in practice and reflect further on my whiteness and privilege during the research process, in seeking to produce work that is anti-racist and is sensitive to colonial power structures.

This research draws on data collected over a ten-month period (August 2019 – June 2020), where I spent time, meeting, observing and interviewing activists in London, and just under three months meeting, observing, interviewing and working with activists in Sydney, as well as netnographic work throughout the ten-month period. The data presented here is drawn from 30 semi-structured interviews, netnographic work, many informal conversations with activists in both London and Sydney, as well as participant observation at anti-racist and anti-colonial events, ephemera collected while in the field, and the use of photographs.

3.2 Power differentials, positionality, and reflexivity as a White and non-Aboriginal researcher

Jessie, a young, Black woman, and Black Lives Matter London activist asked:

What are your motivations for your research? Like, as a White person; why are you doing stuff with BLM?

(Jessie).

Grayson, a young, Aboriginal man, and organiser of Black Lives Matter in Sydney questioned:

I think it's a fantasy that you can idealise your personality based on the ideas in your head. You are shaped by the world around you. Everything about it. What's your background? What's your upbringing?

(Grayson).

An acknowledgement of power differentials and positionality³⁴ are central in shaping the methodological approach of this thesis. Many times, as documented above, my position, as a White and non-Aboriginal man, was questioned by many Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal participants. The methodology is shaped through a critical self-awareness of whiteness as a racial position and attempts to promote participant agency, while being sensitive to colonial power structures. First, by engaging collaboratively with participants and the 'discoverable' (Hardwerker, 2001) nature of ethnography, in working alongside participants to shape the contents of this thesis and embrace "other ways of knowing" (Ahenakew, 2016, p. 323). Second, by not only focusing on struggles but including space for participant anti-

³⁴ Referring to identifiable markers such as race, class, gender, and other identifiable characteristics that create positions in relation to the researcher and participants (Alcoff, 1988).

racist and decolonial resistance. The methodology is also sensitive to colonial power structures by critically acknowledging my whiteness and other intersecting power differentials in relation to the research process and by allowing space for whiteness to be discussed. I also recognise the historical impact of colonialism in silencing Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal people and its contemporary manifestations (Agboka, 2013, p. 303).

There is a growing awareness of whiteness as a racial position, which began in the early 1990's through work in the journal *Race Traitor*, which was subtitled, "treason to whiteness is loyalty to humanity"³⁵ (Preston and Chadderton, 2012, p. 85). *Race Traitor* showcased scholarship that sought to abolish whiteness *from within*. As such, various accounts abolished whiteness; for example: White athletes refusing to play or be associated with racist sports teams (Clarke 1993, p. 25) or the reframing of the 1992 LA Rebellion as resistance against the 'acceptance' of Rodney King's death, and thus challenging liberal narratives that sought to reduce the meaning of the rebellion as just "tragic" (Chicago Surrealist Group, 1993, p. 5). The journal editor, Ignatiev, explained that "the point is not to interpret whiteness but to abolish it" (Ignatiev, 1997). Alongside *Race Traitor*, the Marxist contributions of David Roediger (1992; 1994; also; Du Bois, 1935) were pivotal in theorising whiteness as socially constructed and as a means of perpetuating power difference between Black and White workers.

Distinct from this 'abolitionist' paradigm, writers sought to interrogate whiteness, arguing that by making whiteness fully invisible, this would reinforce white supremacist ideas (Frankenberg, 1993; hooks, 1992; Morrison, 1992; Ware, 1992). In *Beyond the Pale*, Vron Ware (1992) examines the historical connections of anti-racism and feminism, through the accounts of two British women in India during the period of British colonial rule. Ware reveals the ways the campaigns of White British missionary women against gender violence were framed by a White supremacist and colonial logic. For example, in response to the Ilbert Bill (1883), a piece of legislation devolving some power back to Indian courts, the early feminist activist Annette Ackroyd, writing in *The Englishman*, argued:

³⁵ A slogan on every issue of the journal *Race Traitor*.

I am not afraid to assert that I speak the feeling of all Englishwomen in India when I say that we regard the proposal to subject us to the jurisdiction of native judges as an insult (Ware, 1992 p. 122).

This demonstrates how whiteness penetrates struggles against patriarchy and Empire. As Nayak (2007, p. 742) points out, this work illustrates how connections between whiteness and gender reveal the ways that these women both “worked within and against the imperial project”. This also highlights the intersectional nature of whiteness, in expanding social markers beyond skin colour to include gender. Others have claimed that critical analysis of whiteness as a racial position is crucial in understanding how it perpetuates violence on people of colour (Leonardo, 2013).

Shaw (2000, 2006, 2011) builds on connections between whiteness and class in conceptualising the neoliberal gentrification of inner-city Sydney as attempts to ‘whiten’ and ‘recolonize’ urban Aboriginal land. Crucially, this work reveals how whiteness works to mutually reinforce the further marginalisation of Aboriginal people, land dispossession and racialization of Aboriginal people. In the British context, Abbas (2018, p. 205) argues for a “politics of discomfort” in dislodging the “comfortable seat” of whiteness, indicating that the UK’s failure to embrace an intersectional approach to whiteness has hindered attempts to address structural racism. Thus, rendering whiteness as invisible, retracts from meaningful self-awareness of whiteness and privilege. As Bonnett reminds us, “we need to stop finding whiteness normal and unexceptional... mainstream, nonexotic, even boring” (1997, p. 199). As such, scholars should not abolish whiteness, but seek to interrogate it, in considering power and reflexivity in relation to white privilege. It is from these ideas that I situate my methodology.

While the above provides a snapshot of key debates, there is a growing awareness of whiteness as a racial position and this debate is ongoing. Going back to the questions posed by Jessie and Grayson at the start; these prompt a detailed discussion on positionality and power. In being aware of power differentials

(between the researcher and participants) and in acknowledging the role of whiteness in the research process, I attempt to be reflexive and critically self-aware, in allowing subjectivities to emerge (Vadeboncoeur et al., 2020, p. 30). By this, I mean, I reject notions that I, as a White researcher, am detached from the research process, and I acknowledge the power differentials of whiteness both in terms of conducting fieldwork and in interpreting data (Milner, 2007, p. 388). As such, whiteness is a tension in the research process that I allowed space for, and although uncomfortable at times, I actively encouraged participants to question and address my whiteness and privilege. For example, I asked: “how do you feel about me as a White man doing work with Black Lives Matter? Is there anything that you would like to know about me?”

As the late Stuart Hall said, “there’s no enunciation without positionality. You have to position yourself somewhere in order to say anything at all” (1990, p. 18). Positionality is central to any ethnography, as all ethnographers are positioned in a particular way that will allow them to know some things, and not know others (Chiseri-Strater, 1996, p. 147-148). While early work on positionality put researchers into insider or outsider boxes, I follow Merriam’s (2001 et al., p. 405) suggestion, that these two positions are not clear cut, and that identities must be understood as fluid and multiple. McAreavey (2017, p. 63) suggests, positionality should be understood as a process of constant negotiation, in which “multiple positionalities” are established, and relate to various other identifications such as age and education. In other words, positionality is not limited to one single categorisation of identity, but instead is understood through the negotiation of multiple positionalities. As Hopkins says:

Positionalities may include aspects of identity – race, class, gender, age, sexuality, disability – as well as personal experience of research such as research training, previous projects worked on and the philosophical persuasion of the researcher (2007, p. 391).

However, in negotiating personal relationships with participants, I found that while whiteness was a constant tension, some participants were invested in locating “common ground” beyond whiteness (Pickerill, 2009). For example, the questions posed by Grayson at the start indicate initial scepticism in terms of my whiteness, but also an interest or curiosity in obtaining information on non-visible social markers (Fassinger and Morrow, 2013). In this interview, I revealed my working-class background to Grayson as I told him about my upbringing in Hull, which was infamously given the (stigmatized) accolade of “Britain’s crappiest town”.³⁶ I told Grayson about my mum, a carer, the same as her mum, and my dad, a refuse collector, the same as his dad, and how hard they all worked to give me opportunities in life. This was no more evident than when I was encouraged by my mum to attend a college outside of the (inner-Hull) area where I lived, which would give me a ‘better’³⁷ opportunity to get a place at university. However, the transition was not straight forward, as I had to navigate a new world of uncomfortable encounters with people who had very different class backgrounds to me, and who spoke with confidence, ‘proper’ pronunciation and had family connections to people in high places. I always had the feeling that I was not meant to be there, which was reinforced by institutional structures that required me to engage in additional progress reviews³⁸ where I left with an impression that I was ‘lucky to be there’. I told Grayson about how I felt intimidated at college, and later at university, and while I used to try to conceal my working-class background in order to ‘fit in’, I have since learned to embrace it, and have become very proud of my working-class background and especially the efforts of my parents, to which he responded, “I like that”.

³⁶ Hull was given top spot in Kieran and Jordison’s (2003) book *Crap Towns: The 50 worst places to live in the UK* and has been a constant feature in negative news stories and stereotypes of Hull and its people, depicting it as a “dump” where its residents do everything they can to “escape” (Hodgkin, 2017). I experienced this myself, for example, when asked by a fellow (wealthy) student where I was from; to which I answered I was from Hull, and they responded, “oh that’s unfortunate”. Or in less obvious ways when people repeatedly ask, “are you from Hull Hull or just outside of Hull?” Indicating that while the surrounding areas are ‘acceptable’, the city of Hull is not.

³⁷ ‘Better’ in terms of possibility of being awarded a university place (which no-one in my family ever had the opportunity to do), as most colleges in inner-Hull were positioned more towards vocational education. Note: this college was still publicly funded but was situated on the outskirts of the city and attracted students from private and grammar schools in surrounding areas.

³⁸ Additional progress reviews which were not mandatory to others.

It was at this moment that I got a feeling that Grayson was surprised, and that we shared a sense of connectedness that we had not before, which was made possible through shared working-class identities. While Grayson and I experienced conflicting forms of privilege in terms of whiteness, his activism sought to connect Aboriginal rights with workers' rights, and as such, my class position resonated with Grayson on a level that my whiteness did not. This is a reminder that while "money whitens" (Bonnett, 2000, p. 55), class can also dilute whiteness, revealing how some people are *whiter* than others (Bonnett, 1998). Thus, the term 'White working class' presents "another cultural minority" in a "dysfunctional" society, implying a sense of otherness (Bottero 2009, p. 7). However, this is not to take away from the fact that White working-class people (myself included) still benefit from an "invisible package of unearned assets" (McIntosh, 1989, p. 10), or the fact that racial and class oppression have a co-constituted relationship (Danewid, 2020). But rather, intersectional identities create the possibilities to simultaneously hold both privileged and oppressed social positions, and we should be self-reflexive in understanding our different responsibilities in being "allies for social change" (Kichimoto, 2018, p. 548). In attempting to position myself as an allied researcher,³⁹ I follow McGuire's (2021, p. 3) argument that self-reflection "is the cornerstone for developing allied relationships" and in practice this means critically acknowledging my privilege and positionality, drawing on Black and Aboriginal thought and actively challenging racism in all its forms.

While I was considered an 'outsider' by many Aboriginal participants in terms of my British nationality and whiteness in Sydney, I found that my working-class background was significant in locating common ground with many Aboriginal participants. Nayak (2009, p. 29) suggests that "the doing of whiteness reminds us that nothing whitens more than money", which is manifested through an intertwined set of privileges that allow one to choose where to live, where to go to school, how to behave in front of an employer, or during encounters with the police. As such, this exposes connectedness between whiteness and privilege, and provides some explanation for why some Aboriginal participants saw my working-class

³⁹ Which I do not self-proclaim, but rather this judgement is for participants of this study and the wider community.

background as common ground. However, in London, where I shared common ground with many participants in terms of my British nationality and working-class background, I found my class-background had less of an impact in negotiating common ground. This implies difference in how race and class is understood across place, or at least, indicates difference in the strength of racial and class identity. However, due to the fieldwork in London largely taking place online because of covid-19 restrictions, this could also be the result of developing stronger relationships with participants in Sydney, as the fieldwork was mostly in person.

As Fedyuk and Zentai (2018, p. 180) point out, common ground on one single position is not enough to make a researcher an insider. While social markers such as race and class intersect (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 2000; Davis, 1981, 2016; Hancock, 2016), and thus can work to strengthen or weaken social markers, whiteness remains a central and constant tension throughout this ethnography. This was evident in Jessie's account, as she directly addressed the issue of whiteness and questioned my motives for doing research with Black people as a White (privileged) researcher. While I recognise that my values align with many of the core messages of Black Lives Matter, this does not retract from the power differentials created by whiteness. As I attempt to situate myself as an allied researcher (Kishimoto, 2018) or even a settler ally⁴⁰ (McGuire-Adams, 2021); Black Lives Matter means different things to different people, and positionality is neither static nor linear, and it is for each individual participant to decide whether they consider me to be an ally or not and this should not be assumed.

The issue of whiteness is therefore central in being aware of my positionality and privilege. While engaging in Black Lives Matter protest spaces, I experienced my own white privilege many times. For example, at an anti-racist protest in central London:

When it was time to leave, I had to break the police line to get out from the protest. I noticed that two young Black women were trying to get by, and the police would not let them through, and they were told to

⁴⁰ Referring to researchers working in Settler Colonial contexts.

walk around. They did not have any characteristics that suggested they were protesters (no placards or T-shirts), yet I couldn't help but think, because they were Black, did the officers assume that they were going to get involved with the protest? My earlier assumptions were later backed up, as I come face to face with the officers and asked, "can I just get by you there?" One of them replied, "Yep, no worries, mate". Why was I allowed through? Why weren't the two women? [...] I couldn't help but think [...] why am I not viewed as a threat, yet the two Black women were.

(Ethnographic notes: 19th August 2019).

While I see value in recognising the interconnections of social markers, the above extract illustrates the centrality of white privilege in shaping positionality and power (Latta et al., 2018, p. 46; McCokrel and Myers, 2003). This experience brings into focus the concerns that Jessie and Grayson expressed at the start, and questions if and how White and non-Aboriginal people can ever be positioned to accurately reflect Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal participant perspectives. However, reflexivity is a process and not something to be achieved or ticked off. As such, work that seeks to be anti-racist and is aware of power differentials should sensitively consider how whiteness impacts all stages of the research process.

As Freire (2000, p. 50) reminds us, objectivism and subjectivism have a "dialectic relationship" and we must consider how our positionality shapes our position in the field, as well as the data produced. On this issue, Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva (2008, p. 17-18) critique the objective neutrality of positivist research, arguing that "white logic" produces the methods through which social facts are established; while "white methods" shapes methods used to collect and analyse data in support of racialized classifications. Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva's (2008) contributions are important, in that they point to the issue of tradition of White interpretation of (non-White) 'others' (also; Bonnett, 1998, p. 1031). On this issue, it's important to reflect on the fact that I am a PhD student based at a UK university, with UK funding and must follow to some degree, Western academic convention in method, analysis, and

writing (Arif et al., 2022; Jivraj, 2020). Moreover, ethnography as a method is deeply rooted in colonial traditions that emerged from Anthropology (Adjepong, 2019), and these are tensions that emerged in the research process. While Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva's (2008) ideas are key in reflecting on power differentials, they also imply reductive and essentialist notions of whiteness, which neglects intersectional identities.

As a White and non-Aboriginal researcher, I had to consider my positionality in terms of interpreting data and identifying content for this thesis. As Bourke (2014) points out, there is potential for White researchers to be positioned as "oppressors", if they do not reflect non-White participant perspectives. In attending to this, I embraced the 'discoverable' (Hardwerker, 2001) nature of ethnography and had open and collaborative conversations with participants to discuss key issues and largely decide the key issues explored in this thesis. For example, I asked participants "what must be in this thesis?" This included not only focusing on struggles, but also participant agency and resistance. Moreover, I sought to engage with decolonial research practice by bringing an awareness of my White positionality into the methodology, recruiting mostly Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal participants,⁴¹ citing Black and Aboriginal scholarship (Matias and Boucher, 2021, p. 3) and by recognising contemporary manifestations of colonialism in shaping racial violence. As Caroline, an Aboriginal woman and campaigner told me, "If you are writing about Aboriginal people, then you've got to talk to Aboriginal people". However, the fact remains that the research process is underpinned by some Western academic convention, and the words presented in this thesis are my own. As Evie, an Aboriginal woman, said in an interview:

You have to be prepared to listen. We (Aboriginal people) have had enough of having other's (non-Aboriginal people) speaking for us. Our voice, our teachings, need to be heard. We can speak for ourselves.

⁴¹ There were three exceptions of participants who did not identify as Black Asian Minority Ethnic or Aboriginal – but they were carefully selected based on recommendation from senior figures in Black and Aboriginal community organisations, citing them as "strong allies" and people that I should talk to.

(Evie).

In being sensitive to colonial power structures, I encouraged whiteness to be actively discussed in the interview process. As such, I gained further insight into how participants understood whiteness:

If you're good enough to come from another country and as a White man, bonus, bonus, bonus points because not enough do it. In other circles I get a lot of Asian sisters come and talk to me because they see Black women strength and they want it. But when it comes to men reaching out, at first, I am very particular; who are you? What do you want? Are you going to use me as a platform to get to somewhere bigger for yourself? When you reached out, I talked to Grayson [pseudonym], and we thought yeah; let's give this guy the benefit of the doubt. So, when you reached out to us and gave us the respect and said, 'hey I've heard about who you are, and I really want to learn'. Those people you get the respect and attention straight away. Whereas if people read an article, they screenshot it and then go home and say, 'Black people in Australia...', [...] they don't [get access].

(Evie).

Evie's account reveals complex and intersectional social markers in her decision to talk with me. While I have mainly discussed whiteness, it is important to acknowledge the different intersections at play here. Aboriginal women have been especially marginalised through colonialism (Sullivan, 2018, p. 397), and Evie's account reveals interlocking power differentials in relation to race and gender. In negotiating my position, it was crucial to consider how my whiteness intersected with other social markers (such as my gender) in mutually reinforcing power (Parson, 2019; Roegman, 2018). As well, Evie's account reiterated her earlier claim on listening to and reflecting voices who have long been silenced, to challenge Western

and colonial conceptualisations of the world (Donald, 2012 p. 548; Moffat, 2016). As such, my approach was to listen to participants, learn from their stories and work collaboratively with them in attempting to accurately reflect their own complex realities.

However, in listening to participants, this also meant listening to when they chose to walk away or refused to part in my research. Audra Simpson (2014, p. 11) in *Mohawk Interruptus* conceptualises refusal as a “political alternative to [colonial] recognition”, as demonstrated by the Mohawks of Kahnawá:ke, who refuse to be encapsulated by the ‘logics’ of the settler colonial state. In chapter four, Simpson (2014, p. 113) expands on her discussion of refusal to include “ethnographic non rendering” or rather, ‘*what they do not tell us*’, as “these refusals speak volumes because they tell us when to stop”. Throughout my research, participants were able to, and did in some instances, walk away. For example, at a Black Lives Matter in event in Sydney⁴², I was introduced to a group of several activists. When I told the group about my research and that I was looking to speak with people involved with Black Lives Matter, I was promptly ushered over to meet Angie, a Black woman, who had been involved with Black Lives Matter in both the UK and in Australia as she was “a good person to talk to”. Angie seemed to enjoy the discussion of my research, however when I started to talk about recruitment, her body language and facial expression indicated that she was not comfortable taking part, and on this occasion, Angie chose to walk away. In other instances, I had interesting online conversations with activists via Facebook messenger swiftly end, after I invited them to take part in interviews, when they chose not to reply, and thus walked away. While I cannot give explanation for why some people chose to walk away, I was always aware of the power differentials that my positionality created and that some people may have suspicious of me or just did not want to take part. However, in all instances, I found it crucial to listen to and respect the right to refusal, with no questions asked. As such, the act of walking away is a powerful statement within itself.

While early ‘abolitionist’ contributions on whiteness, such as *Race Traitor*, were key in starting the debate, my discussion of positionality and power

⁴² In Newtown, Sydney 23rd January 2020

differentials signal the importance of not abolishing whiteness, but critically reflecting on its impact on the field. As Crenshaw pointed out, scholars “must do the critical and self-reflexive ideological work necessary to make whiteness visible and overturn its silences for the purpose of resisting racism” (1997, p. 253). As such, whiteness is a tension that I allowed into the research process, as to ignore it may reinforce colonial and racist ideas, and neglect reflection on Jessie and Grayson’s questions at the start of this section. Thus, I acknowledge how my whiteness is attached to the research process and creates power differentials in relation to fieldwork, interpretation, and writing (Milner, 2007, p. 388). However, in attempting to produce work that is anti-racist, and that accurately reflects participant perspectives, it is crucial to recognise tensions that emerge in the research process and acknowledge my own whiteness and privilege.

3.3 A (multi-sited) ethnography

Ethnography is a notoriously difficult method to define, as it comes in many different forms and is used across several disciplines. Yet, it can largely be agreed that ethnography entails the immersion of a researcher into a particular social setting and human group, to gain an understanding of the world through the ‘living out’ experiences of participants (Madden, 2017, p. 16). The primary focus of ethnographic research is usually participant observation and is often used in combination with other ethnographic methods such as documenting informal conversations, focus groups, interviews, the collection of ephemera and the use of photographs (Gobo, 2008, p. 5). As Hammersley puts it:

The task [of ethnographers] is to document the culture, the perspectives, and practices, of the people in these settings. The aim is to ‘get inside’ the way each group of people sees the world (1992, p. 4).

The ethnographer spends an extended period within these ‘natural’ settings to gain acceptance and build up trust with participants and to allow for the

understanding of the group from the perspective of participants (Lareau and Shultz, 1996, p. 3). At the centre of the ethnographic research process is the role of the researcher; not only in the field, but also in the 'writing up' of ethnographic diaries and fieldwork notes. By this I mean, ethnography relies on the researcher's ability to interpret the meaning of what was done and said while in the field (Brewer, 2000, p. 122). However, as discussed earlier, ethnographers must be aware of their position and power to the field, and interpretations should be considered in "reflexive and self-conscious way" (Coffey, 1999, p. 56).

In terms of my ethnographic approach, the data produced in this thesis was generated through a multi-sited ethnography in the urban contexts of London and Sydney. This included participant observation, interviews, online netnography, photographs, and the collection of ephemera. A multi-sited ethnography uses the same fundamental principles of ethnography that have been outlined above, however what is researched is no longer contained in one site. Instead, a multi-sited ethnography stems from the need to "follow people, connections and associations, and relationship across space" (Falzon, 2009, p. 1-2). George Marcus is one of the leading scholars on multi-sited ethnography as a research method:

Moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space. This mode defines for itself an object of study that cannot be accounted for ethnographically by remaining focused on a single site of intensive investigation. It [...] acknowledges macro-theoretical concepts and narratives of the world system but does not rely on them for the contextual architecture framing a set of subjects (1995, p. 96).

In exploring the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter, a multi-sited ethnography enables multiple sites of observation, which provides value in examining the different ways that transnational Black Lives Matter activism is shaped across place. Although focusing on multiple sites allows for less time and depth of interpretation, a "multi-sited ethnography gives the researcher a deeper

understanding of what strategy is” (Hovland, 2011, p. 104) across the diverse places of London and Sydney.

3.31 A turn of events - researching during a pandemic and netnography

The covid-19 pandemic and social restrictions meant that I had to abandon fieldwork early in Sydney, and this caused significant disruption to in-person fieldwork plans in London.⁴³ As it became clear that I would not be able to attend any large-scale protests, events, or interview participants in person, this presented a methodological dilemma for my ethnography. I promptly made the decision to use netnography to continue my fieldwork. Netnography is an online method of conducting ethnographic work, “combining archival and online communications work, participation and observation, with new forms of digital and network data collection, analysis and research representation” (Kozinets, 2015, p. 2). As many Black Lives Matter activists use social media to organise, I did notice a transition into more online activism by many of my contacts in the field. I immersed myself into these online settings via Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, analysing posts, contributing to discussions, and conducting online interviews.

Although there was not an abundance of previous work conducted using netnography prior to the pandemic, Wu and Pearce (2014) used this method to understand the different reasons for Chinese recreational vehicle use in Australia. This paper mostly focused on archival work through messages on blogs, in addition to online messages and emailing users. This research provided a good example of how netnography can be used to conduct research where geographic limitations apply. Moreover, netnography allows us to observe behaviours and perspectives of participants in a ‘naturally’ occurring setting (Kozinets et al., 2015, p. 262).

I was inspired by the netnographic approach of Wu and Pearce (2014) and although my work focused on social media, as opposed to archives; this approach enabled me to continue my fieldwork with contacts I had in the field. Many

⁴³ Although cut short, my fieldwork in Sydney was extensive and did produce rich and detailed ethnographic data and I did manage to do in-person fieldwork in London prior to the pandemic; however, plans to conduct the second leg of fieldwork in London were disrupted.

comments would follow below social media posts, and this gave me the opportunity to examine the ways that Black Lives Matter was used in relation to diverse issues across place. I also used Skype and Facebook video/audio to talk with participants and conduct further interviews. While I acknowledge the ethnographic experience is different to being in the field, it is worth noting that not only did researchers have to adjust to life through covid-19, but rather everyone did, including participants of this study. Many participants expressed that fighting struggles during such difficult times was more important than ever and urged me to continue my work online.⁴⁴ This indicated that struggles did not simply go away but were exacerbated through the pandemic. Therefore, demonstrating the importance of taking a flexible approach to research and adapting methods to ensure work accurately reflects struggles in the context of when and where they are happening.

3.4 Ethnographic spaces

It is important to outline the spaces where my ethnographic research took place in London and Sydney. As ethnography is interested in researcher immersion into a particular social setting (Brewer, 2000, p. 11), it was crucial to conduct the key part of my research in Black Lives Matter protest and event spaces, as well as other anti-racist and decolonial protest settings where Black Lives Matter activists were present. In addition, I also visited sites of interest (e.g., The Block in Sydney and Grenfell Tower in London) that participants talked about during interviews, to get a better *feel* of place in understanding Black Lives Matter activism. It is in these spaces that I conducted participant observation, engaged in informal conversations and activities (such as holding protest signs and chanting), as well as taking photographs and collecting ephemera.

It was important to write observational fieldwork diaries and critical reflections *in the moment* and within these spaces. For example, I would often, after leaving a protest or event, remove myself from these settings, and sit on a bench or go to a coffee shop, just 50 yards or so away, to write observational fieldwork diaries and reflections. This allowed me to better visualise what just happened, as well as

⁴⁴ Conversations with Sandra, Caroline, Amanda and Rachel, for example.

reflecting on “how well things went”. I learnt this lesson from my first fieldwork experience, where I wrote my observational fieldwork diary a couple of hours later in a different setting and struggled to remember all of the key details and provide meaningful reflections.

While conducting research in activist settings is crucial in understanding Black Lives Matter in each context, these spaces are not always suitable to conduct formal interviews. There are various practicalities surrounding sound quality and whether to record these interviews, as well as interrupting to the ‘natural’ setting where research is being conducted (Fetterman, 1989, p. 49). Therefore, it was key to follow-up with formal interviews in various other spaces such as coffee shops, parks, libraries, and online spaces such as Skype and Facebook. This allowed for deeper conversation on interpreting participant perspectives, as well as allowing interviews to be recorded with better quality. Moreover, as I had no previous experience in the Sydney context, I sought to immerse myself into this setting by volunteering with Justice Association⁴⁵, a local NGO working with incarcerated people. Although I did not use this space for ethnographic work, it was useful in gaining knowledge on local justice systems and in immersing myself deeper into the Sydney context.

In terms of spaces for ethnographic research, I broadly break these into four main categories: protests, events, public spaces and online. I briefly outline the details of these categories below:

Protest spaces in both London and Sydney, which were either directly organised by Black Lives Matter activists or other anti-racist and decolonial protests which had a Black Lives Matter activist presence.

Event spaces in both London Sydney, where Black Lives Matter and other anti-racist activists held exhibitions, events and group discussions around key Black Lives Matter issues.

⁴⁵ Pseudonym.

Public spaces in both London and Sydney such as a parks, libraries and coffee shops were used to conduct semi-structured interviews with Black Lives Matter activists.

Online spaces such as Facebook and Twitter were used to conduct netnographic work, whereby I observed message threads, posts and engaged in online discussions. Skype and Facebook video were also used to conduct 'follow up' semi-structured interviews with Black Lives Matter activists in both London and Sydney.

3.5 Locating and recruiting participants

In locating participants for my research, I had to question, "what is their relationship to Black Lives Matter?" As Black Lives Matter works under the broader "Movement for Black Lives" (The Movement for Black Lives, N.D), it is common that Black Lives Matter activists were part of other anti-racist and decolonial organisations. For this reason, I found it suitable to broaden my search to Black Lives Matter activists both within direct Black Lives Matter networks, and through other anti-racist and decolonial organisations working on connected issues. As such, I understand Black Lives Matter as not distinct from other racialized struggles, but as connected. In locating activists, I created social media accounts on all Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Postill and Pink, 2012) to locate Black Lives Matter and related protests and events taking place in London and Sydney.

In locating protests and events, Facebook was a particularly useful platform, in that it showed where and when such events were taking place, and the different groups and individuals who were attending. As Gökçe et al., (2014) point out, social media enables identification of the location of political leaders and organisers. In locating such events, this allowed me to attend events and protests where Black Lives Matter activists were present and immerse myself into these protest settings. This was also important in locating other anti-racist groups who reframed activism through Black Lives Matter in London and Sydney. Social media platforms and in particular Facebook, also helped to identify organisers of Black Lives Matter events.

In recruiting participants, the role of social media was central, in that it allowed me to communicate with Black Lives Matter activists in the online world, as well as find information on when and where events were taking place in the physical world. While the online world was crucial in contacting potential participants and groups, it is in the physical world that I was able to engage in “deep hanging out” (Geertz, 1998, p. 69) with Black Lives Matter activists and networks were made that helped generate a snowballing effect (Bryman, 2012, p. 202). It is through this method that I managed to recruit most participants for semi-structured interviews, and who feature in my observational fieldwork diaries.

As I built relationships with participants at protests and events in the physical world, I often talked about my research (making my presence as a researcher clear) and asked if they would be interested in taking part in interviews. If interested, I gave potential participants a business card stating my email address and asked them to email/call to arrange an interview (Macleod, 2013, p. 323). I also asked participants to connect me with friends or colleagues who are also working with Black Lives Matter and may also be interested in taking part in my research (Valentine, 2005, p. 117). Snowballing was a highly effective method in recruiting participants for my research.

This method was also used in the online world through social media, as I reached out to Black Lives Matter groups and other related organisations who were at such events and asked if they could pass my project proposal onto their members online. In terms of recruitment, this was very effective as it gave me the opportunity to also build networks with activists whom I did not initially get chance to talk with in the field. Thus, expanding my scope to a wider range of Black Lives Matter activists. In terms of the individuals and groups I sought to speak to in collecting data, I broadly break these into four main categories:

Black Lives Matter *social media groups* were first used to identify key events and protests taking place in London and Sydney. I primarily used Facebook to locate when and where these events were taking place and identify the key individuals organising such events. Second, I used these online groups to expand the scope of the

sample size, by asking them to connect me with other activists who may be interested in taking part in my research.

Other anti-racist social media groups were also used to identify key protests and events taking place in London and Sydney. I also used Facebook primarily to locate events and protests and identify if a Black Lives Matter presence would be established at these events. Second, I reached out to these groups after events and protests, to ask them to connect me with activists who have also been involved with Black Lives Matter in either London or Sydney.

Black Lives Matter *group activists* were located while in the field during protests and event settings. I immersed myself into these settings, participating in collective protest and discussion within these groups, while also taking time to observe what participants were doing and saying within a group. Black Lives Matter group activists form most of the data generated through observational fieldwork diaries in this thesis.

Black Lives Matter *independent activists* where I made connections with these activists through immersing myself into Black Lives Matter protest and event settings and getting involved with the work and discussions taking place. After building connections with these individuals, I asked if they wanted to take part in a semi-structured interview for my research. If interested, I left participants with a business card to arrange a suitable date, time, and place.

3.51 *Considering online police surveillance*

In using social media to locate and recruit some of my research participants, there are some important drawbacks worth considering. The methods that I used to recruit research participants are not entirely different to the methods deployed by the police in surveilling activists online. In 2018, news of Memphis Police Department using the alias 'Bob Smith' to surveil Black Lives Matter activists was uncovered (Joseph, 2018). The fake account was used to illegally spy on Black Lives Matter activists for years and worked by building trust with Black Lives Matter activists through falsely citing shared political views, common objectives and referring to

other key actors of the movements. Such methods of policing have been key in shaping widespread distrust amongst activists online (Schlembach, 2018).

In using online methods, I was often viewed with caution initially. For example, Rachel, an Aboriginal woman, and Black Lives Matter activist questioned: “who else have you spoken to? How did you find me?” While Michael, a Black man and Black Lives Matter activist asked several times, “before we start, this is all confidential, right?” This reveals how participants sought to ‘test’ that I was who I said I was, by finding evidence of who else in the community I had spoken with, as well as my motives and what I sought to do with the data. While I was not questioned about being an undercover police officer directly, this sense of anxiety toward online police surveillance was expressed by several participants. For example, in a conversation with Black Lives Matter event organiser in London, Angela said, “I don’t know why not so many came to my event, I wonder if the police or state have blocked it online and that’s why not many people have come”. The fear of police surveillance is thus a real concern for Black Lives Matter activists using social media. The case of Bob Smith illuminates how the police can use social media to penetrate organisations like Black Lives Matter and spy on activists. As such, it was always likely that some activists would not reply or engage with me because of their reasonable suspicions. In attempting to mitigate this, when contacting participants through social media, I gave as much information as possible and attached the URL of my university and ESRC profiles, which showed a photograph and a project description. Despite this, the methods used were like those used by the police to surveil activists and this reflects an important shortcoming of the methodology.

3.6 Participant observation and informal conversations at events and protests

Participant observation is a key aspect of ethnography and is used to refer to “a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means in learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and culture” (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011, p. 5). A key advantage of participant observation is that rich, detailed data can be collected based on the observations of participants in their ‘natural’ setting (Burgess, 1984, p. 79). In

terms of my ethnographic approach, this allowed me to generate data through observing Black Lives Matter activists in protests and event settings. However, I am not suggesting that these were 'natural' settings, as I acknowledge my impact as a researcher on these settings, including my impact on interpretation and the writing of ethnographic notes (Savage, 2006, p. 386).

In the field I took both active and passive roles when undertaking participant observation. By active participation, I mean, I actively engaged in activities and events that were being observed and established a social role in such settings (Johnson, Avenarius, and Weatherford, 2006, p. 114). And by passive, I mean, that I sometimes engaged with activities as little as possible, as not to disrupt researched settings and allow for concentrated participant observation (Schwartz and Schwartz, 1955, p. 348). I found a combination of active and passive roles were effective in forging relationships with participants, established through trust, as well as allowing the observation of activist settings from a distance.

During protests I immersed myself into these settings by actively participating in protests, holding placards, taking part in chanting, and wearing Black Lives Matter memorabilia. During events, I actively engaged in discussion with participants, contributing to both group and individual conversations, and got to know activists on an individual level. I engaged in informal conversations with participants, where we discussed our personal lives, Black Lives Matter issues and other topics such as politics, sport, food and pop culture. By actively taking part in protest and events, this helped me negotiate trust with participants and establish deeper relationships.

While taking an active role has its advantages in my ethnographic approach, I also found it equally as important to observe from a (close) distance and take on a more passive role. Thus, attempting to disturb the activist setting as little as possible (Mackellar, 2013, p. 57-58). In doing so, I sometimes removed myself from protest settings as to limit my impact, and document (discretely on my mobile phone) what was happening, as well as reading signs and banners. However, many participants knew of my presence as a researcher, and even when taking on a passive, and

observational role, I contend that causing zero disruption was not possible (Jackson, 1990).

In terms of writing observational fieldwork diaries, I decided not to take written notes while in the field. My reasoning for this was first because I did not want to miss anything interesting. And second, to limit my impact on protest and event settings being observed, by refraining from actively taking written notes at such events. While I acknowledge that it is unrealistic to say I had no impact, I attempted to remain as 'natural' as possible in the field and limit any influence which could impact what participants say and do within these contexts (Fielding, 1993, p. 152).

Instead, I chose to discreetly take minimal notes on my mobile phone when taking on more of a passive role, thus limiting my impact on protest and event settings. I also recorded oral notes on my mobile phone, where I briefly mentioned interesting things that happened or was said while at protests and events. I found it important to document placards, as well as what was chanted and informal conversations that I either engaged in or overheard at these events. As discussed earlier, the writing up of observational fieldwork diaries took place immediately after events and protests, and still within close geographic proximity of where these events took place, in order to help me better visualise the research setting and make more detailed and accurate notes of what just happened. Moreover, this this also gave me the opportunity to write critical reflections of what had just happened in the field, as well as reflect on how well things went from a methodological perspective.

3.7 Semi-structured interviews

While participant observation and informal conversations with Black Lives Matter activists at protests and events were central to my ethnographic approach, I also conducted 30 semi-structured interviews with Black Lives Matter activists in London and Sydney. Semi-structured interviews are used in the ethnographic process to allow the researcher to go deeper and explore specific areas of interest that may have been discovered while in the field (Handwerker, 2001, p. 125). While participant observation and informal conversations are useful in generating "thick

description" (Geertz, 1973) amongst various actors, interviews allow an opportunity for the researcher to go deeper on an individual level.

Using interviews as part of an ethnography provides a method of further validating (or even triangulating) research undertaken in the field (Hammersley, 2009, p. 9). In this sense, the researcher can clarify observations made of participants, while gaining a deeper insight into the perspectives of those being researched. Since participant observation relies solely on the interpretation of the researcher, I found semi-structured interviews to be crucial in triangulating my own interpretations of the field with participant perspectives. This was particularly important in not only interrogating my own White positionality but in enabling Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal participants to be involved in multiple stages of the research process. As such, there were several instances where I made interpretations that did not accurately represent participant perspective, and I used semi-structured interviews to address such issues and allow participants to make clarifications and reshape my own interpretations.

Another key advantage of using interviews as part of the ethnographic process is that they allow a better understanding of "what people say and what they actually do" (Gibbs 1997, p. 2). This was crucial for my research, as I was able to make connections and distinctions between what activists do at events and protests as a collective, and what they say during interviews as individuals. In this sense, the use of semi-structured interviews complimented methods of participant observation, as it provided validation and deeper insight into participant perspectives. In terms of my semi-structured interviewing techniques, I arrived at interviews with a broad range of topics, but always remained interested in 'discovering' new things (Shweder, 1997, p. 154). I did not limit interviews to set topics, but instead remained open to other areas of conversation. This was important in recognising colonial power relations embedded and in allowing participants to shape the direction of the research. At the beginning of interviews, I focused on more biographical information, which was a good ice breaker, in that these questions were easy to answer and less threatening (Ahlin, 2019, p. 9). I also drew on events and protests that myself and participants attended, thus establishing common ground in efforts to build trust.

Although I worked collaboratively with participants to ensure that interviews discussed issues that they viewed as crucial, I still had to be cognisant of the fact that my focus was on Black Lives Matter. At times, I had to steer focus back onto Black Lives Matter, asking participants to elaborate on their own experiences and past involvements. In most cases, participants were receptive to these lines of enquiry, and in interviews where participants were not as open to such discussions, I would use photographs either taken in the field or from the internet to prompt discussion in particular areas (Bagnoli, 2009, p. 547). These photographs were carefully selected to represent areas of interest, and prompt conversations onto Black Lives Matter. However, I was always aware of neo-colonial critiques of “academic extractivism” (Cruz and Luke, 2020), and I never interrupted participants, or neglected any aspect of interview conversations. In interviews where participants talked more about their own past experiences, I asked if they would like to show me their own photographs from Black Lives Matter events and/or other relevant photos and describe their interpretations of what these images mean. The use of photographs within the interview process were useful in both generating interesting conversations on topics of interest and in gaining a deeper understanding of why activists got involved with Black Lives Matter (Glegg, 2019 on visual tools).

Overall, the use of semi-structured interviews as part of my ethnographic approach were valuable to the data presented. These interviews not only gave me the opportunity to pursue topics of interest but sought to enable participant agency through encouraging them to steer focus onto issues that were most important to them and in promoting participant involvement in multiple stages of the research process. While I recognise that semi-structured interviews did not take place in activist settings, they were crucial in validating the interpretations made in observational fieldwork diaries, as well as gaining deeper insight into the lives of participants. This was crucial in challenging my own position and in attempting to produce work that is anti-racist and sensitive to colonial power structures in the research process.

3.8 Using photographs and ephemera in the ethnographic process

As part of my ethnography, I took photographs at protests, events, and places of significance to the research (a method of photo-documentation) and used these to generate discussions in semi-structured interviews. Moreover, I used participant generated photographs (previously taken photographs by participants) to generate discussions during interviews, as a method of photo elicitation. Photographs have long been used by social scientists as part of the ethnographic process (Twine, 2006, p. 490), and given the use of imagery through social media plays a key role in shaping social movements (Mattoni and Teune, 2014, p. 876), I found it appropriate to use photographs as part of my ethnography.

Photo-documentation conceptualises photographs as “a precise record of material reality” (Rose, 2016, p. 310), and is used to capture the moments as they happened. Photographs were taken at events and protests, where I aimed to capture moments as they happened, as well as interesting messages, placards, clothing, and signs used in these events. Photographs were not only used for thematic analysis but also to generate discussions during the semi-structured interviews (Harper, 1989, p. 38). These photographs were carefully chosen to reflect key topics of interest and were used to give the interviews direction (Collier, 1957, p. 858) and thus generate discussion on key themes (e.g., depicting Black Lives Matter protests and placards from other parts of the world). While my own photographs proved to be effective in generating discussions, I also used alternative images of Black Lives Matter protests taken from the internet to generate these discussions. Although photographs were powerful in capturing moments as they happened, there are also practical issues of consent, misuse, and trust (Pauwels, 2008). In attempting to mitigate such issues, I did not take photographs of people’s faces and asked for permission in cases where photographs revealed people’s identities. However, I acknowledge that this was not always possible in large protest settings.

As well as using photographs that I had selected prior to semi-structured interviews, I also asked participants if they would like to share their own photographs or videos from events and/or protests. This method is my own take on photo-elicitation; a method where participants are asked to generate photographs specifically for a research project, which is later discussed in an in-depth interview

with the researcher (Rose, 2016, p. 308). Although not a typical photo-elicitation, this method allowed me to gain further insight into participants lived experiences, as they explained what was happening in photographs, and why these images were important. By using previously taken photographs, this also helped participants remember things that they may have otherwise forgotten (Banks, 2001, p. 90), which generated memories and allowed participants to tell stories from this.

As part of my ethnographic approach, I also collected ephemera at various Black Lives Matter protests, events and online. Ethnography is not just about recording what people say and do, but is also about items, objects and the things that people write and create (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999, p. 14). While in the field I collected various pieces of ephemera such as, posters, placards, newspapers, tickets signs, leaflets, and Black Lives Matter themed jewellery. I also collected ephemera online in the form of posters and leaflets. Although the collection of ephemera was not a principal method of data collection in my ethnography, it was useful in generating “thick description” (Geertz, 1973). As Adams writes:

Even though something like a receipt may not seem exciting, it did get saved by somebody. There are the oddball things that people keep for some reason. They’re ephemeral, but they connect us with our past and culture (2012, p. 15).

3.9 Analysing the data: coding and interpreting

After spending ten months collecting data in the field, I then had the task of analysing what I had found. In the initial stages, I compiled all my notes, interview transcripts, ethnographic diaries and coded data thematically using NVivo (Hilal and Alabri, 2013, p. 181). Although I see the value of NVivo in analysing and coding large amounts of data (Richards, 2015), I had spent a long-time developing relationships with participants and felt that I got to know some of them, the data, the issues they felt strongly about, and I found it important to handle the data with deeper thought and care. I reverted to more traditional methods of analysis, where I coded data thematically using pens, highlighters, mind-maps and placed these into categories with selected photographs taken in the field. In addition, this encouraged me to read

through the data many more times and embrace “other ways of knowing”⁴⁶ as well as critically reflecting on my positionality in terms of colonial power structures and production of knowledge (Thambinathan and Kinsella, 2021). This was particularly useful for data collected with Aboriginal participants, as words said, often had meaning beyond my Western understanding.

In analysing the data by hand, I took extra care with every word that I highlighted, every theme that I put together, and this enabled me to not only make connections within the data itself, but also amongst the people that said and did these things. From this, I was able to identify where individual participants agreed with each-other more philosophically or in terms of objectives but had alternative perspectives on the means to achieve such objectives. For example, Aboriginal participants Grayson and Caroline both shared similar views on decolonization. Yet, the desired methods to achieve decolonization were different, with Grayson arguing for more direct action against official channels with government, whereas Caroline expressed the need to use official channels to gain Aboriginal representation. Through getting to know the people as opposed to just the data, I was able to make note of important of the differences in the data that could be overlooked through computerised coding.

Ethnography is notorious for producing large amounts of *raw* data (LeCompte and Schensul, 199, p. 2) and this was the case for me, as I ended up with far more data than I could ever use to write this thesis. I had to be selective in deciding exactly what I would and would not use, and I actively involved participants in this process. I found it suitable to break the data up into the most common themes that I came across during fieldwork and then use cases (e.g., the Adani mine in Australia or Grenfell Tower in London) to form the basis of sub-chapters. This method enabled me to condense large amounts of data that I had collected into key themes and sub-themes. In interpreting the data, I found it pertinent to use the relationships that I had built up with participants to gather their own thoughts on how I was interpreting the data. It is for this reason that I went back to many participants and conducted second and third interviews as well further informal conversations. This

⁴⁶ This was particularly important for the data generated in Sydney, in considering Aboriginal epistemologies in relation to decolonialisation and land struggles.

was not only because of my awareness of my positionality as a White and non-Aboriginal researcher but was also an attempt to elevate participant agency by working collaboratively with them to reflect issues from their own perspectives. As I quoted Caroline in section 3.2, it was therefore crucial that I engaged with Aboriginal people in the Australian context.

Participants were an integral part of the process, as they helped me better understand the data from their own perspectives. This was particularly important when in Sydney, as many Aboriginal participants provided cultural lessons, where I learnt what “country” means, who the “mob” are and the importance of “Aunties” and “Uncles”. These are things that have meaning beyond their literalised state, and it is through going back and talking to participants again, that I learned some of the meaning behind such terms. While I am aware that I, as a White and non-Aboriginal researcher am part of the research process, drawing on Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal perspectives to interpret the data was key in better understanding and accurately reflecting participant stories.

3.10 Ethical and moral considerations

Before going onto the practical considerations of my methodology, it is important to pay attention to the time in which this thesis is written, during an era of mass racialized violence. Ferguson may seem long ago and far from the sites (of London and Sydney) that are being studied here, but the fact remains, we are living during a period where mass racialized violence is happening not just in the US but everywhere. In conducting this research, every participant either experienced themselves or knew someone who has been subjected to racial violence. The participants of this study are real people, with real experiences, telling real stories. I have a moral responsibility to recount my participants stories accurately and in their own words, as well as asking the sensitive questions that need to be asked. Writing during this time requires a great deal of trust between participant and researcher and protecting my participant’s identities while recounting their stories was a priority. Much of the information that I have been trusted with is sensitive and I have a responsibility to ensure this information is not only presented how it was intended,

but also kept secure. Moreover, I have a moral responsibility to my participants to not only discuss violence that makes Black Lives Matter necessary, but to also document the ways that participants demonstrate agency and resistance to violence.

My moral responsibilities do not end with my research participants or the living, but also for all those who lost their lives to racial violence and made transnational Black Lives Matter activism necessary. Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner who were all killed at the hands of law enforcement are regrettably only a few names on this continuously growing list in the US (Andrews, 2019). This is not to mention the hundreds of Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal people killed in prisons and police custody in the UK and Australia in recent years (Allam, Wahlquist, Evershed, 2019; Bullman, 2018). As such, it is my ethical duty both as a researcher and as someone who has been trusted with participant stories, to reflect the conditions that make a transnational Black Lives Matter activism necessary in these places. Writing during times of mass violence against Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal people, I reject positivist explanations and attempt to produce research with an awareness of my position as a White man, but also as both a supporter of Black Lives Matter and as an “allied researcher”⁴⁷ (Kishimoto, 2018).

3.101 The issue of consent in ethnography

Participants were made aware that they could withdraw from the research at any time, and their data would be destroyed and not used in my research. All participants taking part in semi-structured interviews were given information sheets and consent forms (Gobo, 2008, p. 140) which were signed and returned to me. The nature of the project as well what their information would be used for was explained prior to interviews, and participants were debriefed at the end of every interview. While gaining formal consent for the interviews was essential, ethnography has a notoriously strained relationship with ethics, as formal consent is not always possible while in the field (Strathern, 2000, in Mapedzahama and Dune 2017, p. 6). Participant observation and informal conversations at Black Lives Matter events and protests

⁴⁷ Note: It is for participants to decide if I am an ally. This is never assumed.

were used as part of my ethnographic approach, however gaining formal consent from everyone within these large-scale settings was not possible.

While this is a common problem for ethnographers (Wackenhut, 2018, p. 243), I found it pertinent to make my presence as an overt researcher clear to all gatekeepers and anyone else whom asked, and I made this clear on all my social media pages as I attached my PhD project details to each profile. As Plankey-Videla (2012, p. 2-3) points out in her study of over 1000 strike activists in Mexico, total honesty is an “unrealistic” goal in these large-scale situations and the process of gaining informed consent cannot be static but should instead be an on-going process. In other words, to gain written formal consent from everyone at such large-scale events is not possible, but instead the researcher must adapt and be creative in finding new ways to gain consent.

In following the ethical considerations of Plankey-Videla (2012), I made my presence as a researcher clear to all gatekeepers, and with as many participants as possible. I found that often gatekeepers would introduce me to participants, and say something like:

This is Dan. He is from the UK and doing his PhD research on Black Lives Matter [...] you should speak with him.

(Ethnographic notes: January 26th 2020).

Being introduced in this way helped me be transparent as a researcher. In most cases, participants were receptive to my work, and openly offered their help in my project. They often gave verbal consent to use informal conversations as part of my research and in some cases, offered contact details to follow up with further interviews.

3.102 Upholding principles of confidentiality and anonymity

Given the sensitive nature of my research, another key ethical concern (as with all ethnographic work) was upholding principles of confidentiality and anonymity. Ethnographers are privileged to have such in-depth access to participant's lives, however this also presents an ethical dilemma, as ethnographers must provide a detailed and precise account of a particular social world while ensuring the protection of participant's identities (Kaiser, 2009, p. 1639). This was especially important for my research, as I was focusing on the specific contexts of London and Sydney, which may have made participants identifiable. In mitigating these issues, I anonymised all data collected, analysed, and written to ensure that no information could be linked to participant's identities. In doing so, I locked the written consent forms (stating participant's legal names) in a filing cabinet to ensure that this information was not lost or misplaced. I used pseudonyms for participant's names (Gobo, 2008, p. 138), and for smaller organisations and events which could be used to identify participants. In terms of locations, I never reveal the exact locations of private homes or small-scale events, where I feel this information could be used to identify participants.

While I understand that the anonymisation of data can lead to the "de-contextualisation" or "de-coupling" (Nespor, 2000, p. 549) from what happened in the field, I instead chose to provide vague descriptions of these events and sites, which does not take away from the realities of what happened. Thus, attempting not to de-contextualise the situations, encounters or experiences. Although I upheld the anonymisation of identities for individual participants whom I either interviewed or had informal conversations with, this was not possible when more people were present, as participants took part face-to-face interactions as a group. However, I addressed the importance of Chatham House rules both on information sheets and verbally at the beginning of interviews when more than one person was present (Tolich, 2009, p. 99). I asked all participants to agree to these rules, and in every case, participants understood and agreed.

3.103 *Mitigating illegal activity and sensitive disclosures*

During the planning stages of my fieldwork, I had to consider the possibility of coming across illegal activity while in the field. This is a particular problem for ethnographers, as researchers may be invited to part in illegal activity at protests, or uncover illegal disclosures when interviewing participants (Bryman, 2016, p. 440). While Black Lives Matter is largely a peaceful movement, this does not mean that all actions are strictly 'legal'. By this I mean, actions can be peaceful but still illegal. For example, the 2016 blockade of London City airport runway, led to the arrest of nine Black Lives Matter protesters (Weaver and Grierson, 2016). The issue here was to balance my trust with participants with the ethical and moral obligations of social research.

When in the field, I did come across some (minor) illegal activity, however I never engaged in this activity and at all times complied with the demands of law enforcement (Elliott and Fleetwood, 2017, p. 1). While I only exercised my right to peaceful protest in both London and Sydney, another wider ethical problem emerges in ethnographic work at protest events, as the researcher cannot un-see illegal acts while in the field or un-hear illegal disclosures during interviews. As Holder (1989, p. 5) points out, there is a history of social science research data being subpoenaed, and this poses a potential ethical dilemma for ethnographers, and for those who may uncover illegal material.

In the rare occurrences where I saw illegal activity at protests, such as violence and vandalism,⁴⁸ I immediately removed myself from these settings, and moved to alternative factions of the protests. Not only was this important for my personal safety (Williams et al., 1992, p. 343), but also mitigated the risk of seeing or hearing of illegal activity. Moreover, I did not photograph any illegal activity. In terms of the interviews, I also mitigated the risk of hearing about past or planned illegal activity by briefly mentioning to both participants and gatekeepers my moral obligation to comply with law enforcement if subpoenaed (Bryman, 2016, p. 440). I assured participants that such events were extremely unlikely and reiterated that these precautions were for the purpose of protecting participants. The protection of

⁴⁸ Note: I am not necessarily referring to illegal activity on the part of Black Lives Matter activists, as in some cases, I witnessed illegal activity from opposition protesters.

participant's information was of the utmost importance to my research, and this method proved to be effective in mitigating such risks.

In discussing ethical considerations, it is also important to briefly mention that my fieldwork was in part conducted in potentially unpredictable protest settings. While most Black Lives Matter activists exercised their right to peaceful protest, there was always a risk that protests could turn violent or non-peaceful when researching any social movement (Jipson and Litton, 2000, p. 155). Although I never felt in any real danger while in the field, and protests were mostly peaceful, I worked closely with my supervisory team to draft fieldwork plans that abided by Newcastle University's ethical regulations and made my personal safety a priority. This was particularly important given that part of the research was conducted overseas in Sydney.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methods used in this thesis and provided rationale into why I chose a multi-sited ethnography to explore the transnational Black Lives Matter activism. As such, the methodological approach is shaped by an awareness of my position as a White and non-Aboriginal man and the power differentials that this creates in relation to fieldwork, interpretation, and writing. As such, I have challenged my own racial position and privilege by allowing space for whiteness to emerge within the research process, and I have sought to promote participant agency through working collaboratively with them in attempting to accurately reflect the most pressing issues from the perspectives of Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal participants. In seeking to produce work that is anti-racist and is sensitive to colonial power structures, I not only recognise my own white privilege and power differentials, but also the contemporary manifestations of colonialism in producing racial violence across place.

I have explained the methodological underpinnings of my research and have provided insight into what my multi-sited ethnography looked like both in theory and in practice. I maintain that while ethnography proves to be a very challenging method for social research, it remains invaluable in generating a truly deep and rich

observation of 'lived experiences' from participant perspectives. In reflecting on my experiences in the field, my approach was not always conventional or systematic, but rather fluid, flexible, and always opportunistic. By this I mean, it is in the very nature of Black Lives Matter to spark into action as a response to current events. Rather than carefully planning my attendance at key events and protests, I instead had to remain flexible and available to travel at a moment's notice. Thus, the processes of recruiting, fieldwork, analysing, and writing were not singular, but instead were part of an interconnected and on-going process over the course of my PhD. Overall, a multi-sited ethnography enabled me to effectively immerse myself into Black Lives Matter activist settings in London and Sydney and gain deep insight into the lives of Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal participants.

After reading many (and I mean many) "how to" or "a guide to" books on ethnography (Davies, 2012; Madden, 2017), and months of planning, no written manual prepared me for the realities of ethnographic fieldwork. Ethnography in theory is very different to ethnography in practice, and the unexpected twists and turns (Crang and Cook, 2007, p. 1) were at times relentless, sometimes in a positive way and other times in a not so positive way. After writing on a similar topic several years ago for my master's dissertation, the data generated through my multi-sited ethnographic approach is far richer, and more detailed than I envisaged.

Ethnography has enabled me to discover things that I did not expect to come across and make interpretations based on the personal relationships that I negotiated in the field. The details of which are documented in this thesis.

Chapter 4.0 The travelling of Black Lives Matter: building transnational alliances and translating solidarities

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I draw on empirical data collected from my ethnographic fieldwork in London and Sydney with Black Lives Matter activists over the course of ten-months between August 2019 - June 2020. This chapter begins to unpack how and why the Black Lives Matter movement has gained traction in these contexts. My main argument throughout this thesis suggests the transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter movement is understood through the diverse adoption and adaptation of Black Lives Matter across place. The cases of London and Sydney illustrate the different ways that Black Lives Matter is reshaped across place and adopted and adapted to fit diverse actors and differently racialized struggles. As such, this reveals how the intersectional foundations of Black Lives Matter have enabled the building of transnational alliances from London to Sydney and the translation of solidarities between diverse Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal communities.

In the first part of this chapter, I discuss work on cultural translation and transculturation, as useful concepts in understanding the transnational adoption and adaptation of Black Lives Matter. While this thesis is concerned with transnationalism, the concepts of cultural translation and transculturation are employed as frames within the broader concept of transnationalism in revealing how ideas of Black Lives Matter travel transnationally. Other work has similarly drawn on the value of such concepts in relation to transnational migration (Andrzejewska and Rye, 2012; Banerjee and German, 2010; Sbiri, 2020; Sirkeci, 2012) transnational identities (Cerwonka, 2008; Zhang and Guo, 2015) and transnational movements (Cervantes, 2015; MacDonald, 2006; Njoroge, 2008). However, the use of cultural translation and transculturation in understanding transnational Black Lives Matter activism marks an original contribution.

Second, I turn to my fieldwork in London and Sydney and explore how ideas of Black Lives Matter are understood and enacted within these places. Drawing on cultural translation and transculturation theory, I show that a decentralized organising principle to Black Lives Matter has enabled the movement to gain traction

across transnational place. As such, the cases of London and Sydney reveal the heterogenous and non-deterministic nature of Black Lives Matter and the different ways that this has enabled Black Lives Matter to be shaped by place-based struggles and actors; while at the same time reduces racialized difference and enables alliance building transnationally.

Third, I build on this by discussing how solidarities are translated, as a means of creatively adapting Black Lives Matter to fit place-based struggles in London and Sydney. Influenced by Featherstone's (2012) conceptualisation of solidarity, I expose the different ways that ideas of Black Lives Matter are employed in negotiating difference and translating solidarities, in creating more unified approaches to differently racialized struggles. Specifically, I discuss different inflections of the movement (e.g., Muslim Lives Matter; Refugee Lives Matter; Aboriginal Lives Matter) and how Black Lives Matter has been used to create solidarities both between and within diverse racialized contexts. Last, I provide some concluding remarks, reflecting on the value of cultural translation and transculturation theory in understanding the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter, as well as key differences that emerge in London and Sydney.

4.2 Cultural translation and transculturation

Cultural translation

The concept of cultural translation first emerged during the 1920's, in Walter Benjamin's (1923) *The Task of the Translator*, which critiqued existing forms of translation theory with their focus on the direct translation of text. As such, translation should not be limited to the fixed binary of the original text, but rather "touches" the original text, and then follows its own direction (Buden et al., 2009, p. 200; Ingram, 1997). Although Benjamin did not use the term cultural translation, his critique of translation theory paved the way for other scholars (such as Bhabha, 1994; Jhumpa, 2000; Maitland, 2017) to build on these critiques and alter the direction of traditional translation theory into cultural translation.

For Bhabha (1994, p. 3) cultural translation plays a central role in the survival and empowerment of minority groups who live in the colonial contexts that have

violently oppressed them. Through creating a hybrid 'third space'⁴⁹ where difference is not "fixed in the tablet of [Western] tradition", Bhabha suggests that cultural translation should be used as a process that challenges fixed binaries and enables minority groups to create and negotiate 'new' values that resonate with people within a particular time and space; thus, giving minority groups agency (Bhabha, 2018). By binaries, Bhabha builds on Benjamin's (1923) critique of translation to challenge essentialist notions of an idea, suggesting that ideas should not be fixed to the original or translated text, but rather be allowed to evolve. Bhabha's contributions to cultural translation have transformed how we think about translation; and are particularly insightful in relation to the diverse transnational take up of Black Lives Matter.

These ideas have been taken further by Maitland (2017), whose conceptualisation I find to be equally compelling in accounting for fluidity of ideas and the difference that place makes in how translation is understood. As such, this is key in understanding the adoption and adaptation of Black Lives Matter. She suggests:

A translated text does not seek to represent the intentions of the author of the original foreign text but the totality it projects before the translator and the translator's construction of such a world (2017, p. 8).

Cultural translation here does not refer to 'direct' translation of text but has deeper meaning that is understood through the translator's vision of the social world and possibilities. In this sense, by not fixing translation to the binary of the original text, cultural translation has "transformative" and "emancipatory" potential (as Maitland refers to) in allowing ideas to be translated to meet the struggles of a place. In other words, cultural translation does not uncover meaning through what the writing says in the text or by word-for-word translation, but instead, meaning is

⁴⁹ Third space refers to a space "where all binary divisions and antagonisms [...] cease to hold. Instead of the old dialectal concept of negation, Bhabha offers the ideas of negotiation or cultural translation, which he believes to be in itself political subversive" (see Buden et al., 2009, p. 201).

produced and negotiated through a reader's vision and understanding of how it can be applied to time and place (Maitland, 2017, p. 159). As she says:

Translation reveals more about the translator's own subjectivity than the reality of the translations object itself (Maitland, 2017, p. 159).

But as Kapsaskis (2019, p. 375) points out, an important consideration in such constructivist ideas is through the possibility for cultural translation to be used for the "wrong" (e.g., racist) goals; and we must trust that "right" interpretations will prevail over "wrong" ones. In other words, we should be cognisant of how multiple interpretations creates the potential for some to become invalid. This is an important point to make, as we should consider how a cultural translation approach may also be used to benefit groups working against Black Lives Matter. For example, this has been evident through campaigns questioning that if Black Lives Matter, then surely, All Lives Matter or Blue (police) Lives Matter (Carney, 2016; Solomon and Martin, 2019).

While scholars have contested how best to use cultural translation (e.g., Baker, 2013; Buden et al., 2009), in this chapter, I suggest that cultural translation has value in understanding the creative adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter across transnational place. The cases of London and Sydney illustrate how the struggle for Black Lives Matter is translated to attend to the anti-racist and decolonial struggles of place. This provides some explanation into the difference that place makes in how Black Lives Matter is understood and enacted, as well as the "transformative" and "emancipatory" (Maitland, 2017, p. 8) possibilities that transnational Black Lives Matter activism holds.

Transculturation

Building on cultural translation, work on transculturation is also useful here, in gaining insight into how and why Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal (as well Torres Strait and Australian South Sea Islander) communities have identified

with the Black Lives Matter movement. Fernando Ortiz is often credited with coining the concept of transculturation in his work on the Caribbean and Latin America.

Ortiz defines transculturation as:

The product of a meeting between an existing culture or subculture and a migrant culture, recently arrived, which transforms the two and creates in the process a neo-culture, which is also subject to transculturation (Ortiz, 1940 in Onghena, 2008, p. 182).

Transculturation does not refer to erasing one culture, in place of another, but rather suggests that interactions reshape both cultures simultaneously. However, as Mignolo and Schiwy (2007, p. 93) point out, when using transculturation theory to study how the dominant (e.g., colonist) and dominated (e.g., colonised) are “modified” through an interaction, it is important to acknowledge that this interaction is not equal or reciprocal. For example, when the colonized enter the “First World”, it is often as “slaves, refugee’s or illegal aliens, rather than as tourists or scholarly researchers” (Mignolo and Schiwy, 2007, p. 93). Thus, the possibilities of transculturation are heterogenous and non-deterministic. Through colonialism, European ideology, language, and values were taken from Europe and transnationally imported into Indigenous contexts across the world, making a “neo-culture” (Mignolo and Schiwy, 2007, p. 8; Rogers, 2006, p. 499). These examples demonstrate the power dynamics at play when colonized and colonial cultures meet.

However, other work has drawn on transculturation in studying political transformation and creating solidarities (MacDonald, 2006; Mohamed, 2011; also; Njoroge, 2008; Walter, 2016). Mohamed (2011) uses transculturation theory to explore the hybridity of Arab collective identities following the Arab Spring in 2011. He suggests that transculturality enabled Arab people from different transnational contexts to shift focus away from cultural differences and build a “collectivist, transcultural and inclusivist culture that transcends the parochialist and monocultural perspective” (2011, p. 14). As such, transculturation allows for the fluidity of culture, and ideas; and enables solidarities to be negotiated based on

transcultural identities. In the terms of Black Lives Matter, transculturation is useful in understanding how ideas travel transnationally, which began by protesting police killings of young Black men in the US and is now being employed into Aboriginal rights struggles in Australia, as well as issues of multi-ethnic racial violence in the UK.

While this thesis is framed through transnationalism, I highlight the ways that transculturation operates within transnationalism, and this provides insight into how Black Lives Matter has evolved into a transnational movement. Banerjee and German (2010, p. 31) suggest transculturation is useful in analysing processes and outcomes of transnational migration, as it does not refer to erosion of one culture at the expense of another, but rather seeks to understand the merging of cultures in creating a new culture. MacDonald (2006, p. 190-191) in his work on identity and social movements in Northern Pakistan indicates that transnational interactions amongst people that shape movements are simultaneously processes of transculturation. As such, he suggests that while many local cultural movements are grounded in essentialist notions of people and place, transnational interactions of people and information facilitate the mutual reshaping (or transculturation) of identities.

Through employing frames of cultural translation and transculturation to Black Lives Matter, this reveals how 'new' meanings (e.g., Aboriginal Lives Matter; Muslim Lives Matter; Refugee Lives Matter) emerge, while at the same time, recognising the African American roots of Black Lives Matter. This goes beyond the simple replication of Black Lives Matter into new places, but rather explains how transnationalism reshapes the movement across place. Cultural translation and transculturation should not be understood as separate analytical frames, but rather interconnect in providing deeper insight into transnationalism. This supports the intersectional approach of this thesis, as focus can be shifted between London and Sydney, making connections/differences between place, as well as analysing violence and agency in the contexts of where it happens. As such, cultural translation and transculturation have real value in analysing the transnational adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter.

4.3 Making Black Lives Matter in London and Sydney

It is critical that the #BlackLivesMatter movement builds solidarity amongst movements across the globe. The phenomenon of anti-black racism is not just present within the U.S. borders, but rather, anti-black racism and state violence is a global crisis (Black Lives Matter, 2015).

This 2015 quote from Black Lives Matter co-founder Patrisse Cullors motivated me to start thinking about Black Lives Matter beyond the borders of the US and about the potential for a transnational movement. I have heard Patrisse, along with many other Black Lives Matter activists and commentators since (Arbouin, 2020; Caruso, 2020), talk of the global importance of the movement.

As I immersed myself into Black Lives Matter settings, I found that the Black Lives Matter movement had attended to Patrisse's call. The Black Lives Matter movement was not operating as a singular movement, but rather, was employed into existing anti-racist and decolonial organisations, that embraced intersectional thinking. Crucially, this fieldwork precedes the death of George Floyd in May 2020 in the US, which led to a substantive wave of Black Lives Matter protests around the world (Brown, 2020). However, the timing of this fieldwork offers crucial insight into how a more visible transnational Black Lives Matter movement was possible and reveals the different ways that Black Lives Matter is reshaped and redeveloped across different transnational places. In understanding the transnational adoption and adaptation of Black Lives Matter, I suggest that the intersectional foundations and decentralized organizing principle of Black Lives Matter has helped create a transnational movement, with advantages seen through its ability to feed on long-standing racialized struggles and the diverse ways that racial violence manifests across places.

4.31 *Black Asian Minority Ethnic Lives Matter in London*

The Black Lives Matter movement first emerged in London following the police killings of young African American men, Philando Castile and Alton Sterling in the US in 2016 (Connett, 2016). The 2016 campaigns were initially set up in

solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement in the US, but also highlighted racism in the UK, including Black deaths in police custody and the highly controversial usage of 'stop and search'.⁵⁰ An important finding from my research revealed that the Black Lives Matter movement in London operates within existing anti-racist movements and is not fixed to one cause, issue, or group. Rather, ideas of Black Lives Matter have permeated several organisations as a broader idea to organise through.

While certainly a continuation of some of the work of Black Power, a transnational movement⁵¹ that emerged in the US during the 1960's fighting for Black self-determination and reliance (Frankin, 2007; Jeffries, 2020); the Black Lives Matter movement's decentralized organising principle marks a key difference to what came before. As such, the decentralized structure complements the movement's intersectional framing, and this has enhanced the transnational possibilities of the Black Lives Matter. Organising through Black Lives Matter is a useful way for anti-racist activists to draw national and global attention to their local issues and organisations, and this is part of the fabric of the movement. In an interview with, *In These Times Magazine*, co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement Alicia Garza emphasised:

Folks use BLM because it gives them a platform. At the Black Lives Matter Network, we aren't concerned with policing who is and who isn't part of the movement. If someone says they are part of the BLM movement, that's true – if they're working to make sure that Black lives do matter. But we don't control the movement (Fletcher, 2015).

What Garza says, goes to the core of what this thesis is about; and reveals the structural importance of Black Lives Matter as an intersectional and decentralized movement. As such, this links to the guiding concepts of intersectionality and

⁵⁰ Conversations with several participants. See chapter five.

⁵¹ Black Power gained traction in many different places outside the US (e.g., Australia; Canada; Caribbean; UK).

decolonization in this thesis: Black Lives Matter enables voices that have previously been marginalised (e.g., Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal women) to be heard. In understanding how Black Lives Matter has been adopted and adapted across transnational place, it is important to refer to what Garza says throughout this thesis; that Black Lives Matter is a movement but also a set of ideas that are malleable to different time and place.

In London, I found many anti-racist organisations were organising through Black Lives Matter as a means of building alliances amongst diverse people who experience racial violence. I met with experienced anti-racist campaigner and organiser Sandra, whom was one of the organisers of the Black Lives Matter London movement when it emerged in 2016 following the deaths of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling. Sandra was involved in multiple anti-racist organisations in London, including Stand Up to Racism and Justice for Grenfell. I asked her if the Black Lives Matter movement was successful in London:

Sandra: The [Black Lives Matter] movement is much quieter nowadays.

Dan: Why is that?

Sandra: It's difficult to organise when you've got so many different opinions on what direction to go in. But Black Lives Matter as a message and a slogan is still used by many campaigns here. It's very powerful.

(Sandra).

I learned from Sandra, that while Black Lives Matter as a singular and centralized movement was not active at that time (in 2019), ideas of Black Lives Matter were effectively employed by various anti-racist campaigns in London. She told me how campaigners regularly wore Black Lives Matter t-shirts, held placards, put up posters and chanted 'Black Lives Matter' at campaigns.⁵² I witnessed this

⁵² Several conversations with Sandra.

multiple times during my fieldwork at events and protests. For example, in central London, I attended an anti-racist forum and rally⁵³ in central London, where I took ethnographic notes of the usage of Black Lives Matter:

Campaigners are shouting “Black Lives Matter”, “Jewish Lives Matter”, “Muslim Lives Matter” [...] As I look around, I can see fear in the eyes of many anti-racist protesters, some hesitate and take a step back, while others spring into action, screaming “don’t let him break the line”, “Black Lives Matter”, “Black Lives Matter”.

(Ethnographic notes: 3rd August 2019).

Figure 1 shows a poster of what Sandra is talking about when she says that Black Lives Matter is powerfully employed into campaigns. The poster demonstrates an attempt by an anti-racist organisation to use the decentralized organizing principle of Black Lives Matter to make transnational connections with the US, but also to draw attention to issues of racism in the UK. As such, the adoption of ideas of Black Lives Matter into existing campaigns provides a useful tool for building alliances amongst diverse communities who experience racial violence. This reflects the transnational possibilities of Black Lives Matter through its intersectional thinking and decentralized organising structure.

⁵³ 3rd August 2019 in central London, organised by Stand Up to Racism.

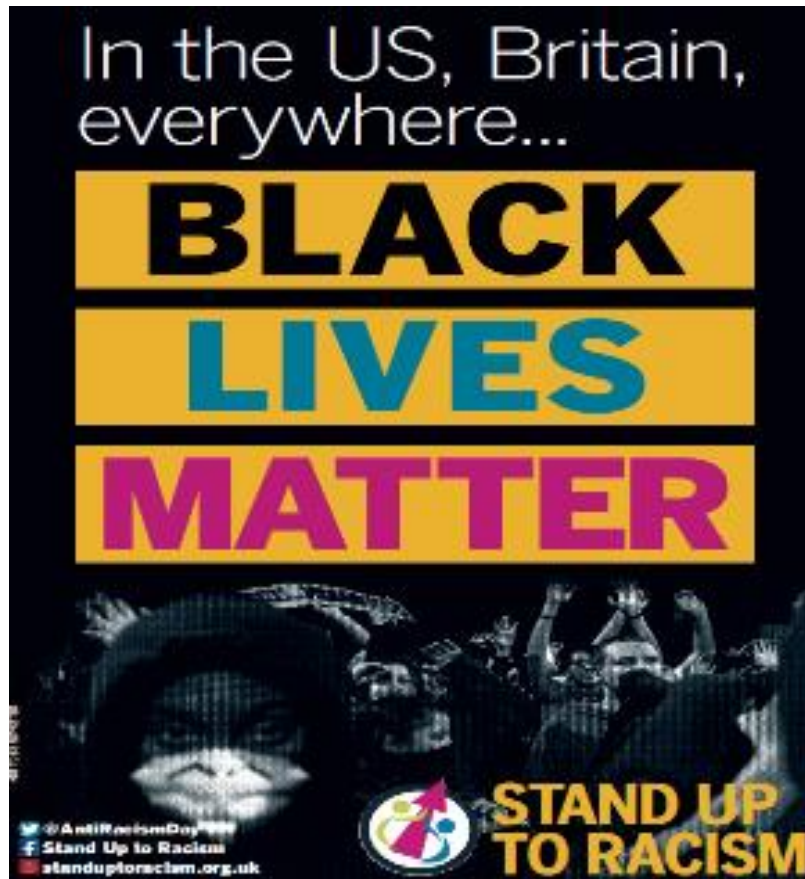


Figure 1 Stand Up To Racism Black Lives Matter Poster.

Source: Participant.

Drawing on Maitland's (2017, p. 159) conceptualisation of cultural translation, it becomes clear that while Black Lives Matter in London marks an attempt to build transnational alliances with the US movement, this is not a direct translation of ideas, but rather subjectivities emerge in negotiating a movement that works for London. Black Lives Matter is not presented as a centralized movement with a singular direction, but instead ideas of Black Lives Matter are effectively employed into anti-racist organisations. For example, the focus of Black Lives Matter in London is not limited to Black communities, but also seeks to create alliances with Muslim and Jewish communities in attending to the different ways that racial violence is manifested. As such, the words "Black", "Muslim" and "Jewish" are used interchangeably within Black Lives Matter activism in London, and negotiates alliances based on a shared experiences of racism and common goals to fight racial violence (see Featherstone, 2012, p. 23). As Ransby points out, such forms of political quilting create 'maroon spaces' for activists to "fortify themselves to face the brutal terrain of everyday struggle and forge new levels of consensus" (2018, p. 148).

Yet, this is not to say that Jewish and Muslim communities do not have representation in the US Black Lives Matter movement, as work has documented connections between Black Lives Matter and Islamophobia (Latif, 2018) and anti-Semitism (Shanes, 2020) in the US. Rather, this marks one of the ways that ideas of Black Lives Matter are translated to fit place-based struggles in London. As such, 'new' values of Black Lives Matter are created and negotiated in relation to place (Bhabha, 2018). The decentralized organising principle, as well as the intersectional thinking of Black Lives Matter are thus central in understanding its translation to place.

However, Sandra seems to indicate some practical disadvantages to the decentralized organising principle of Black Lives Matter, in that diverse opinions made it difficult to agree on a direction for the movement. This marks a key disadvantage in the cultural translation perspective of Black Lives Matter. While Kapsaskis (2019, p. 375) pointed out that cultural translation can be used to achieve "wrong" (e.g., racist) goals, Sandra's account suggests that translation does not have to be in direct conflict with previous ideas to cause problems. In terms of Black Lives Matter in London, this account indicates that by allowing a space for diverse opinions to shape the movement, it became difficult for activists to collectively agree on a direction or strategy to achieve goals. This provides some explanation into why ideas of Black Lives Matter are employed into anti-racist organisations in London.

Building on this, Mundt et al., (2018) highlight the ways that the Black Lives Matter movement is useful in creating connections amongst a diverse range of marginalised communities in the US through social media; suggesting the use of Black Lives Matter as a platform on social media is effective in 'scaling up'. The contributions of Ransby (2018) and Mundt et al., (2018) similarly focus on the US context and this can be taken further by recognising how ideas of Black Lives Matter have emerged in campaigns in London. Figure 1 was widely shared on social media and marks an attempt to not only draw on ideas of Black Lives Matter to gain wider support and build alliances transnationally; but also, to highlight the transnational connections of racial violence beyond the context of the UK and US. As such, this demonstrates how ideas of Black Lives Matter are used to 'scale up' the movement transnationally.

Adding to this, other accounts sought to directly challenge US exceptionalism on race, expressing that the Black Lives Matter movement offered opportunities to build meaningful alliances transnationally; creating a space for diverse activists to learn from each other. I interviewed Jerry, a Black, Muslim, man and activist who spoke of the importance of a transnational Black Lives Matter movement in representing racial violence in the UK:

They [American BLM activists] are not fully aware of their network capabilities in the UK, Australia and even in France. They think that everything is in America.

[...]

Yes, BLM did start in America. But we need to talk about the institutionalised racism in the UK. Don't get me wrong, what is happening in America is important, but we can't be waiting for America. We must raise issues of racism here. There was a BLM person who came to the UK and he was in shock to see how many people in the UK was following BLM. He was in shock with how up to date everyone was. They were more up to date than BLM activists in America he said. And he said, "I feel bad because I don't even know what is happening here in the UK". It made him look into what is happening here in the UK.

(Jerry).

Jerry's perspective shares similarities with the message on Figure 1. Although the Black Lives Matter movement began in the US and is most prominently known in that context, this testimony marks a sense of urgency from activists to reshape Black Lives Matter as a means of not only building alliances with their American counterparts, but also to draw attention to racial violence in London, and the wider UK. As such, Jerry seems to indicate that transnational Black Lives Matter activism offers opportunities for symbiotic alliances, where activists in different places learn

from each other. A transculturation perspective (Ortiz in Onghena, 2008, p. 182) is useful here, as such transnational encounters are not limited in transforming one (London) inflection of Black Lives Matter, but rather seek to transform all inflections that have encounters. While Mohamed (2011) uses transculturality to explore the “hybridity of Arab identities” in enabling collective action during the Arab Spring, Jerry employs Black Lives Matter to recraft wider transnational power dynamics on race and negotiate meaningful alliances that recognise different manifestations of racial violence across place.

Jerry and Sandra’s accounts, along with ethnographic data, are not limited in focusing on struggles, but also point toward some of the possibilities of transnational Black Lives Matter activism, as seen through creating alliances, negotiating difference, and challenging US exceptionalism on race. As such, the decentralized organising principle of Black Lives Matter has enabled the movement to gain traction in place beyond the US, such as London. In this sense, Black Lives Matter is represented as fluid, heterogenous and non-deterministic and this is reflected in the ‘new’ meanings of Black Lives Matter in London (Bhabha, 2018).

Domaradzka’s (2018, p. 613-614) work on *right to the city* movements builds on the conceptualisation of social movements as “distinct networks” (Diani, 2015), in suggesting that coalitions and alliances are made possible through shared objectives and common problems. On a transnational level, organising is then centred around the local manifestations of global problems (Mayer, 2007, p. 108 in Domaradzka, 2018, p. 614). In terms of Black Lives Matter, this perspective is useful in understanding the connection between such local manifestations (e.g., in London) of global problems (e.g., wider racial violence) and why anti-racist campaigners are organising under the platform for Black Lives Matter. As such, activist perspectives acknowledge that place makes a difference in how violence plays out; but seek to use ideas of Black Lives Matter to conceptualise local experiences of racial violence as global issues, in putting forward the case for why transnational Black Lives Matter activism is necessary in London.

Alternative accounts from London sought to build on the idea of using the decentralized platform for Black Lives Matter as an organising principle to negotiate

alliances. I interviewed William, a South-London based Black Lives Matter activist, who has been involved in anti-racist activism across North America, Europe, and Africa. His perspective indicated that Black Lives Matter should be employed into social justice organisations to build a broader movement and fight multiple forms of racism and oppression. I asked William why:

When we're talking about Black Lives Matter, we are campaigning for equal rights, recognition, justice. It's not only about the death of young Black men [...] I believe we have to work together with other organisations [...] what is happening to the Black community is also happening to other communities.

(William).

William's testimony not only implies the utility of ideas of Black Lives Matter in negotiating alliances, but also in recognising the "intersectionality of struggles" (Davis, 2016, p. 20). While the police killings of young Black men have gained the most attention in the Black Lives Matter scholarship (e.g., Camp and Heatherton, 2016; Lowery, 2017; Phelps et al., 2021), William addresses this issue directly, and seems to indicate that Black Lives Matter in London has deliberately sought to expand its focus on racial violence to include, but also go beyond, issues of policing. Although a substantive body of Black Lives Matter scholarship has now addressed racial violence beyond the police (e.g., Anderson-Carpenter, 2021; Issar, 2021; Bell et al., 2021), William's perspective seems to challenge narratives that associate Black Lives Matter with US police killings. As such, Black Lives Matter in London has embraced intersectionality, both in terms of recognising diverse struggles and in creating alliances with multi-ethnic communities. The working together of such diverse communities within broader ideas of Black Lives Matter demonstrates a strength of transnational Black Lives Matter activism.

4.32 *Aboriginal Lives Matter in Sydney*

In Sydney, as well as the wider Australian context, Black Lives Matter is centrally focused on racial violence toward Aboriginal communities⁵⁴ and picks up specifically on historical struggles of colonialism and land dispossession. My fieldwork in Sydney focused on interviews and *hanging out* (Geertz, 1998, p. 69) primarily with Aboriginal campaigners involved in ‘The Justice For’ campaigns, Indigenous Justice Alliance, and Sydney Alliance.⁵⁵ I found these organisations and people played a key role in shaping Black Lives Matter in Sydney and in illuminating the different ways that racial violence is experienced by Aboriginal communities.

‘The Justice For’ campaigns were responsible for organising the first mass Black Lives Matter Sydney protest in August 2019. Justice for Buddy, Justice for Colleen, Justice for Junior, Justice for Jaylen, and Green MP David Shoebridge were the organisers of this event. ‘The Justice For’ campaigns represent multiple Aboriginal families who have lost family members across New South Wales and whose deaths were never solved.⁵⁶ Indigenous Justice Alliance has been an established organisation in Sydney for decades and is at the forefront of campaigns surrounding Aboriginal deaths in police custody, as well wider issues surrounding Aboriginal rights. Sydney Alliance is a Socialist movement who primarily campaign for socialist systematic change but also for racial justice in Australia, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait land rights.⁵⁷ I spent extensive time with Grayson, an Aboriginal man, and organiser for Sydney Alliance, who was an organiser for Black Lives Matter campaigns in Sydney. Importantly, Black Lives Matter in Sydney is not limited to these organisations, but campaigners within the ‘Justice For’ movements, Indigenous Justice Alliance, and Sydney Alliance are key in shaping Black Lives Matter in Sydney.

⁵⁴ But also, with Torres Strait Islander and Australian South Sea Islander communities.

⁵⁵ Indigenous Justice Alliance and Sydney Alliance are pseudonyms.

⁵⁶ Interview with Maria 30th January 2020 in Glebe.

⁵⁷ Conversation with Glen 23rd January 2020 in Newtown at a Black Lives Matter forum.

4.33 *An Account of Invasion Day in Sydney, 2020*

In understanding how Black Lives Matter has come to the fore in Sydney and the different alliances that are part of the movement, I provide details of my ethnographic experiences at Invasion Day 2020 in Sydney. January 26th marks the national holiday, 'Australia Day' where Australians celebrate the birth of the country on the anniversary of the arrival of British settlers, often with events, festivals, barbeques and concerts; however, at the same time, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders take to the streets in mass protests to demand that the date to be changed because it symbolises the historic marginalization and violence toward Aboriginal people (Bond, 2015; Korff, 2021; Selvanathan et al., 2022). The reason I provide this detailed first-hand account of Invasion Day 2020 is because the events that took place are central to understanding race in Australia, and this reshapes and redevelops Black Lives Matter in the Aboriginal context.

Today marks January 26th, 2020. An important day in Australian history. A day where people throughout Australia celebrate the birth of their country. A day to celebrate the anniversary of the arrival of the first British Colonial ships to dock at Port Jackson in 1788. A day which is known as Australia Day. However, not all Australians feel this sense of national pride. Not all Australians want to celebrate this day. Not all Australians see themselves as being Australian. Today marks January 26th and my Google calendar tells me that today is Australia Day, but to many Sydneysiders and people throughout this continent, January 26th marks Invasion Day. A celebration? No. More like a commemoration to mark the day when British Colonialists invaded Aboriginal sovereign land and the continued oppression of Aboriginal communities throughout this continent. Invasion Day thus marks the stealing of Aboriginal land and rights.

(Ethnographic notes: Invasion Day, 26th January 2020).



Figure 2 Invasion Day 2020.

Source: Participant.

Hyde Park was packed with thousands of campaigners fighting a diverse range of causes. For example, environmental justice campaigns (see Figure 3), campaigns against Black deaths in police custody and Aboriginal solidarity campaigns with Palestine (see Figure 4). After seconds of stepping foot in Hyde Park, I noticed Black Lives Matter placards, people wearing Black Lives Matter t-shirts and holding signs. Some accounts from Invasion Day sought to make transnational alliances between the struggle for Black Lives Matter and the struggle for Aboriginal rights. I met Cath, an Aboriginal woman from Melbourne who had been temporarily working in Sydney as a children's entertainer. Cath was wearing a Black Lives Matter t-shirt, which caught my attention.

Cath: I wear it because if I change one mind, then that is good for our struggle.

Dan: Who's mind do you want to change?

Cath: Everyone's. Black Lives Matter showed regular people in the world that racism and oppression exist. And by wearing it [the t-shirt], I hope that one person sees this and thinks about why they are celebrating Australia Day [...] Aboriginal people are Black too. It's all about changing minds.

(Ethnographic notes: Cath at Invasion Day 26th January 2020).

As we marched on further, I saw more campaigners holding Black Lives Matter placards, wearing t-shirts (Figure 5 and Figure 6), and being used in protest chants. I met Helen and Matt, a young woman and man both studying at the University of Sydney who were holding a homemade Black Lives Matter placard. I asked them why they made a Black Lives Matter sign for Invasion Day:

If Black Lives Matter, then we must start with Aboriginal lives here in Australia [...] what happens with Aboriginal people is caused by the same shit in America with cops [...] Black deaths are everywhere.

(Ethnographic notes: Helen at Invasion Day 26th January 2020).



Figure 3 'Water For Rivers, Not Profit' flyer.

Source: Participant.



Figure 4 Aboriginal and Palestine flags. Invasion Day.

Source: Participant.



Figure 5 Black Lives Matter activists at Invasion Day 2020. Source: Participant.



Figure 6 Black Lives Matter placard at Invasion Day 2020. Source: Participant.

Cath attended Invasion Day alone and was not affiliated with any one group or campaign. What she says, and in choosing to wear a Black Lives Matter t-shirt, indicates that the struggle for Aboriginal rights is part of the struggle for Black Lives Matter. The take up of Black Lives Matter by Aboriginal people reiterates the centrality of the “intersectionality of struggles” (Davis, 2016, p. 20) in enabling Black Lives Matter to be reshaped across place. Cath’s account suggests that Black Lives Matter in the Sydney context has been translated to specifically meet the local culture and issues of Aboriginal people. Her account also seems to indicate that while Black Lives Matter illuminated racism globally, the employment of ideas of Black Lives Matter into Aboriginal rights campaigns marks an attempt to raise awareness of the place-based racial violence experienced by Aboriginal people. While I do not intend to go into deep discussion of Blackness in Australia; importantly, Cath referred to herself as a “fair skinned Aboriginal woman”, who identifies as Black,⁵⁸ and this emphasises the importance of analysing race as a social construct in Aboriginal contexts (Foley, 2003 p. 44). Moreover, this illustrates one of the ways that the meaning of Black Lives Matter is adapted across transnational place.

Helen’s perspective also sought to make transnational connections between the struggle for Black Lives Matter and the struggle for Aboriginal rights. However, she seems to indicate more directly that Aboriginal deaths in custody occur in similar ways to Black deaths in custody in the US. As such, this suggests an attempt to build on the widely recognised issue of African American deaths at the hands of the police, to raise awareness of Aboriginal deaths in custody. This strongly echoes Angela Davis’ (2016, p. 20) ideas on the importance of making structural connections in building international movements. While Davis (2016, p. 20) says this in relation to the structural connections between the militarisation of the US police force and the Israeli military, in similarly shaping racial violence toward African Americans and Palestinians; Helen’s perspective shows how similar structural connections can be made in Australia. On the issue of Black Lives Matter in Australia, Mundine claims the “Black Lives Matter movement elevated our voice [...] it put us on the map” (2021, p. 18). This argument is supported in Cath and Helen’s accounts and indicates

⁵⁸ Ethnographic notes 26th January 2020.

that Black Lives Matter in the Sydney is reshaped through the struggle for Aboriginal rights.

Other accounts sought to build on the translation of Black Lives Matter in the Sydney context, by making specific reference to Aboriginal land rights and cases of Aboriginal deaths in custody in relation to Black Lives Matter. This demonstrates how Black Lives Matter in Sydney has used the decentralized organising principle of Black Lives Matter to 'elevate' the case for Aboriginal rights, as well as make transnational connections with experiences in the US. During the Invasion Day rally, I accepted Grayson's⁵⁹ invitation to join Sydney Alliance's faction of the protest. As we marched onto Yabun,⁶⁰ I found the language being used by Grayson and others in Sydney Alliance, to be insightful in analysing how Black Lives Matter was used in connection to Aboriginal rights. Grayson and others shouted into their megaphones:

Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.

[...]

When I say accident, you say murder... Accident, murder, Accident, murder.

[...]

Who's Lives Matter, Black Lives Matter, Who's Lives Matter, Black Lives Matter.

(Ethnographic notes: Invasion Day, 26th January 2020).

It is within these protest settings that the employment of Black Lives Matter into Aboriginal rights activism is most evident. Interestingly, the words Aboriginal and Black are almost used interchangeably in creating connections between these struggles. As such, this seems to suggest that it both reduces difference between Black and Aboriginal struggles and draws solidarity across racialized difference and

⁵⁹ Note: Grayson is Aboriginal man from Gumbaynggirr land and is one of the leading figures in Black Lives Matter campaigns in Sydney.

⁶⁰ Yabun is where the protest ends.

different contexts. The second quote is with reference to the death of David Dungay Jr, a young Aboriginal, Dungatti man who was killed in his Sydney Long Bay Hospital jail cell, just weeks before he was due for release (Justice Action, N.D). I will discuss this case in chapter five; however, it is worth noting that David died under similar circumstances to other Black men⁶¹ who are closely linked to Black Lives Matter.

As Stansfield (2021) highlights in her article with Aboriginal Black Lives Matter campaigners in Australia; the Black Lives Matter movement has shone a light on the issue of Aboriginal deaths in custody but also enabled closer transnational connections to be made with African American campaigners, in similar ways to the civil rights movement in the 1960's and 1970's. However, differences are seen through the intersectional and decentralized organising principle of Black Lives Matter, that rejects the Black male lead hierarchical leadership of the civil rights movement (Reynolds, 2015). There remains frustration from some Aboriginal people that it has taken a global Black Lives Matter movement to draw attention to these issues, asserting that the real question is "what is the rightful place of First Nations?" (Stansfield, 2021). While Grayson's account demonstrates an attempt to build transnational alliances with global struggles for Black Lives Matter, the issue of Aboriginal land remains central to this narrative, and thus resists the essentialism of Black Lives Matter. This shows how ideas of Black Lives Matter are used to build alliances, but at the same time, recognises the distinct and place-based struggles of Aboriginal people.

A transculturation perspective is useful here in revealing not only how Black Lives Matter shapes Invasion Day, but also how Invasion Day shapes broader ideas of Black Lives Matter. MacDonald (2006, p. 192) in his work on cultural identity movements in the Northern Pakistan region of Baltistan, uncovers the ways that transnational exchanges of people and information reshaped what are often represented as essentialist, place-based, local cultural movements; as well wider identities of "Tibetan-ness". His work suggests that such transnational reshaping of identities is simultaneously a process of transculturation and creates "new" agendas

⁶¹ Notably Eric Garner, Mike Brown, and later George Floyd all in the US.

based on transnational communication and flows (2006, p. 213). In relation to Black Lives Matter, this perspective is useful in that the employment of ideas of Black Lives Matter at Invasion Day represents an attempt to transform and reshape the meaning of struggles for Black Lives Matter and Aboriginal rights. This does not retract from the fact that Aboriginal and other place-based racialized struggles are different but attempts to negotiate difference and build alliances transnationally. Invasion Day provides important insight into how Black Lives Matter has been adopted and shaped within Sydney, as well as the important alliances that are made possible through Black Lives Matter activism.

4.34 *Australian South Islanders for Black Lives Matter*

While Black Lives Matter in Sydney is most widely taken up with the struggle for Aboriginal rights, the decentralized organising principle of Black Lives Matter has also enabled Australian South Sea Islanders to draw attention to their struggles. Australian South Sea Islanders were brought⁶² to Australia from the Pacific Island's during the mid-to-late 19th century to work primarily on sugar and cotton plantations; historians have long documented that such labour was racialized to the extent that it was closely related to slavery in the Caribbean (Christopher, 2021, p. 233-234; Dick, 2015, p. 111). I interviewed Amanda; an Australian South Sea Island women who leads a Sydney based organisation representing the rights of Australian South Sea Islanders.

That's one thing that I did say, we have always had a Black Lives Matter initiative [...] Black Lives Matter might be the catch of the day and we are going to ride that wave.

Dan: What did you do?

⁶² Some voluntarily but many forcibly through blackbirding – where bribes and kidnappings left Pacific Islanders little choice but to go and work in Australia (Dick, 2015, p. 111).

Amanda: I took that slogan straight away, put it on t-shirts and took it to our people to ride it. I put it in the background, and we had a layered effect of Black Lives Matter in the background.

Dan: Why did you do that?

Amanda: To ride the wave. It gives more appeal and brings more people together in our struggle.

(Amanda).

Amanda's explanation for why she chose to "ride" the Black Lives Matter wave is significant because it marks an attempt to reshape how racism is understood in the Australian context. By using ideas of Black Lives Matter to build alliances and specifically elevate the struggles of Australian South Sea Islanders, this demonstrates parallels with how Black Lives Matter was employed to "elevate" Aboriginal voices (Mundine, 2021, p. 18) on a transnational scale. This is crucial, not only on a transnational level, but also within the Australian national context, as Quanchi (1998, p. 31-32) points out, despite not being native, Australian South Sea Islanders have long experienced comparable experiences of racial violence to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; yet the rights of Australian South Sea Islanders have often been ignored by the state. Seen like this, Black Lives Matter has not only enabled Australian South Sea Islanders to build on existing alliances with Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities, but also in drawing attention to their own distinct struggles through adopting and adapting ideas of Black Lives Matter. This marks the intersectional nature of Black Lives Matter and how a decentralized organising principle has enabled the movement to both shape place and be shaped by it.

However, as Chernega (2016, p. 238) points out, by drawing on resource mobilisation theory; many social movements have a greater chance of being successful if they are centralized and well organised. As such, a criticism of Black Lives Matter's decentralized organising principle is that it makes it difficult to distinguish what the movement does and does not stand for. These debates are important, as Black Lives Matter's decentralized organising principle raises questions

of accountability (Makalani, 2015 p. 529). This is a fair criticism, and we should not neglect the risk of individuals or groups using Black Lives Matter for their own self-interest, or to discredit the movement. However, the advantages of a decentralized organising principle are evident through how Aboriginal and Australian South Sea Island people have reshaped the narrative of Black Lives Matter in Sydney and used this to build transnational alliances. Moreover, participant accounts have posed challenges to US centric ideas of Black Lives Matter and the essentialism of the movement. This is not to say Australian South Islanders would not be part of Black Lives Matter, if it was a centralized movement, but rather a decentralized organising principle enabled Amanda to act fast and “ride the Black Lives Matter wave” to draw attention to the racial violence experienced by Australian South Sea Island people. This offers a further example of how transculturality has enabled the adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter across diverse actors and place. As such, this reveals how the heterogenous and non-deterministic nature of Black Lives Matter has enabled it to penetrate diverse anti-racist and decolonial struggles across place.

4.4 Translating solidarities

Building on the previous section, I draw on ideas influenced by cultural translation and transculturation theory in examining how solidarities are translated, as a means of creatively adapting Black Lives Matter to place-based struggles. As such, I reveal the different ways that Black Lives Matter is effective in negotiating difference and translating solidarities in creating unified approaches to racial violence. This demonstrates how place-based struggles are not only reframed by Black Lives Matter, but also how Black Lives Matter is reshaped by place. Moreover, this demonstrates the centrality of intersectionality in investigating the diverse adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter across transnational place.

4.41 *Creating and negotiating solidarities in London*

In *Solidarity, Hidden Histories and Geographies of Internationalism*, David Featherstone (2012, p. 23) suggests, the forging of solidarities is not as easy as merely falling in the same social categorisations, such as, race, class, or nationality, but

rather, should be understood through hard work (c.f. slacktivism) and a shared commitment to work together toward a common goal, or at least, against a common evil. As such, Featherstone's conceptualisation of solidarity challenges "reductive binaries of similarities and dissimilarities" (2012, p. 23), and recognises that solidarities are negotiated through ideas and political action. Featherstone provides a useful analytic in understanding the heterogenous and non-deterministic ideas of Black Lives Matter, and how this enables solidarities between different actors to be negotiated. In London, I found Black Lives Matter to be effective in negotiating difference; and in enabling alternative views and racialized backgrounds to engage in collective Black Lives Matter activism. I interviewed Jerry, a Black, Muslim, man, from London, who leads a community organisation representing Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities in London and Manchester:

Dan: What was it about Black Lives Matter that made you get involved?

Jerry: Black Lives Matter brought together people from diverse backgrounds of the Black community, which is something that I have never seen before.

[...]

Within the Muslim community it is very difficult to get a Sunni, Shia, and Sufi together. When I was with Black Lives Matter, all three was there. I can't even get all three in a room, yet they were all there sat at Black Lives Matter events.

[...]

They [Black Lives Matter] were able to captivate a sense of unity within the Black community that I have never seen before in the UK. But with Black Lives Matter, you see Muslims, with Christians, with LGBT people, with socialists. And you are thinking wow. This is the kind of unity that I have never seen before.

(Jerry).

Jerry told me that after engaging with Black Lives Matter, he employed ideas of Black Lives Matter into his own community organisation in successfully bringing together diverse Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities in solidarity. As such, ideas of Black Lives Matter in London are not only used to negotiate solidarities amongst activists, but have possibilities beyond the realms of activism, as seen in Jerry's organisation. This reveals the ways Black Lives Matter in London has been able to navigate difference and build on similarities, thus challenging notions that solidarities are defined through "given" attributes (Featherstone, 2012, p. 23).

Work on transculturation takes analysis further, in that Black Lives Matter has experienced multiple processes of transculturation over time and transnational place. Drawing on Ortiz's (in Onghena, 2008, p. 182) conceptualisation of transculturation, we see how what started as a movement protesting the deaths of young Black men in the US has been transformed by place to encompass multi-ethnic struggles against Islamophobia in London. But also, how despite religious differences amongst Sunni, Shia, and Sufi Muslims (Knott and Francis, 2016), Jerry's testimony indicates that Black Lives Matter enabled the negotiation of solidarities, not only based on shared experiences, but also shared visions of agency through Black Lives Matter. As De Genova (2018, p. 1772) points out, the 2015 terror attacks in Paris provided a catalyst for the wider spectre of anti-Muslim and Islamophobic racism across Europe, including London: as seen through the aggressive securitization of external borders and the heightened surveillance, policing and deportation of Muslim communities. As such, these issues are relevant to Jerry's account, and demonstrate the ways that transnationalism is also a process of transculturation.

Finn and Momani (2021) draw on a transculturation analytic in investigating how Canadian-Arab youth embrace multiple cultures and identities through transnational connections with people, spaces, and objects in their home countries. They suggest that Canadian-Arab youth "hybridise" themselves through "balancing attachment, longing and living in Arabic culture, demarcating the inside and outside of cultural boundaries" (2011, p. 121). Jerry's perspective draws some parallels to these ideas, as Black Lives Matter is presented as elastic, and does not essentialise

struggles or identities, but rather negotiates solidarities based on understandings of differently manifested struggles and visions of anti-racism. As such, this reveals the centrality of “place-based activity” in translating transnational Black Lives Matter solidarities (Featherstone, 2012, p. 30).

The adaption of Black Lives Matter into struggles of Islamophobia is demonstrated in Figure 7, which shows the inflection of #MuslimLivesMatter in campaigns in London. The poster is from Stand Up To Racism and is used to not only build solidarities with the US Black Lives Matter movement, but also to represent the distinct struggles of the Muslim communities as an issue for Black Lives Matter.



Figure 7 #MuslimLivesMatter poster.

Source: Stand Up To Racism.

I asked, Bob, a Stand Up to Racism organiser about the diverse usage of Black Lives Matter in their campaigns:

We do campaigns with the Black Lives Matter slogan often. It's a powerful slogan and many of our people were involved with the Black

Lives Matter London movement when that started off. It offers solidarity and brings together issues of racism within the BAME community.

[...]

We have also used Muslim Lives Matter as part of our campaigns.

(Ethnographic notes: Bob at Friends House, London, 19th August 2019).

Bob's perspective shows some of the different inflections of Black Lives Matter, that are used to captivate anti-racism that is specific to place. While in the US, Black Lives Matter has mostly been shaped through the struggles of Black, Brown and Latinex communities; in Australia through the struggles of Aboriginal people; and in London, this has been reshaped by Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities (Corral, 2020, p. 450; Longman, 2020, p. 66). As such, transnational ideas of Black Lives Matter have experienced multiple forms of transculturation across place, and this is demonstrated through the diverse place-based infections that are reshaping the movement to reflect people and place-based struggles.

However, the take up of Black Lives Matter by Muslim communities is by no means exclusive to London, as similar resonances are documented in India (Ellis-Peterson, 2020; Shahin et al., 2021) and Palestine (Sahhar, 2021). Nor is Black Lives Matter in London limited to such usage, as I uncovered various other inflections of Black Lives Matter that were used to negotiate solidarities. For example, ethnographic fieldwork, as well as netnographic work⁶³ revealed the use of 'Black Trans Lives Matter', 'Jewish Lives Matter', 'Roma Lives Matter' and 'Refugee Lives Matter' (Figure 8). However, what this does reveal, is the multi-ethnic reshaping of Black Lives Matter in London, and the agility of the movement to adapt and respond to world events. This demonstrates the intersectional nature of Black Lives Matter and the ways that participants in London sought to negotiate solidarities between diverse communities.

⁶³ Fieldwork notes: August 2019, September 2019, April 2020.



Figure 8 #RefugeeLivesMatter by Socialist Party.

Source: Mattson, 2015.

While Black Lives Matter can traverse difference, it can also be divisive and fail to register with differences. The Black Lives Matter movement, particularly in the US, has experienced tensions in how ideas are appropriated in attempting to represent such wide-ranging issues of racial violence. For example, hashtags such as #AsianLivesMatter or #LatinoLivesMatter have been criticised in favour of other tags such as #AsianPacificIslanders4BlackLivesMatter. Ramos (2016, p. 6-7) points out, that while Black and Latino communities share some similar experiences in terms of structural racism, some Black activists have questioned whether Asian and Latino communities can empathise with the experiences of Black communities in the same way (Ramos, 2016, p. 6-7). As such this reveals tensions in who is and who is not represented in Black Lives Matter, and particularly in relation to minority non-Black people.

Sandra, who was an organiser in the first Black Lives Matter protests in London in 2016 told me about some of the tensions that arose when figures from the US Black Lives Matter movement came to London to engage with Black Lives Matter activists in London. She described how Black Lives Matter figures from the US asked

all non-Black people to vacate their seats to make space for Black people to sit. Sandra said that was met with tensions from London Black Lives Matter activists, with people expressing:

No, no no. This ain't going to work for London!

(Ethnographic notes: phone call with Sandra, 20th October 2019)

Sandra's testimony builds on Ramos' (2016) considerations and demonstrates the possibilities for tension to emerge when Black Lives Matter activists across place do not agree. While Black Lives Matter is effective at negotiating difference at points, at other moments, it can be divisive and fail to register with regional differences when it moves outside of the US. Thus, transnational solidarities are not easy, and transculturation can be a messy process, as some activists feel that their struggles are more pressing and/or relevant than others. As Rogers (2006, p. 499) points out, we should not view exchanges of cultural elements through the "innocent" lens of mutual constitution and reconsider the domination-subordination power relations at play in making exchanges unequal. As such, transculturation must navigate tensions between "the need to challenge essentialism and notions such as ownership and degradation to criticize the exploitation of colonial cultures" (Rogers, 2006, p. 474).

In relation to Black Lives Matter in London, it is important to consider the challenges that such diverse inflections pose to the original meaning of the movement. This is an inevitable tension of transculturation and one that transnational Black Lives Matter activism will continue to face, as it gains traction across place. However, the intersectional foundations of Black Lives Matter mark differences to anti-racist movements of the past (e.g., civil rights movement and Black Power; see Clayton, 2018; Greene-Hayes and James, 2017), and have directly sought to challenge essentialist ideas and hierarchical (Black, heterosexual, male) leadership structures and provide a space for diverse voices who were previously marginalised in such movements. As such, the case of London reveals some of the ways that Black Lives Matter is reshaped and redeveloped to attend to multi-ethnic

place-based struggles; while at the same time, reframes the narrative of such struggles as issues for Black Lives Matter. This provides insight into the ways that Black Lives Matter negotiates difference and translates solidarities.

4.42 Negotiating solidarities in Sydney

In Sydney, Black Lives Matter played out in different ways to London and was most prominently adapted to Aboriginal rights settings. I found that ideas of Black Lives Matter were used in creating solidarities amongst diverse Aboriginal struggles in Australia. As such, ideas of Black Lives Matter were reshaped in the Sydney context with direct reference to Aboriginal rights and were used to create a movement that attends to both Aboriginal culture and place. I interviewed Maria, an Aboriginal woman, who co-organised the New South Wales State-Wide Black Lives Matter rally in Sydney on 21st August 2019. Maria, along with family members Grayson, Evie, and others, were tasked with bringing together multiple Aboriginal families from small rural towns North of Sydney, who had all similarly experienced deaths of family member's and not received justice.

Dan: Why did you decide to organise the New South Wales state-wide rally for Black Lives Matter?

Maria: I am originally from the coast, where my brother was found (over 30 years ago) on the tracks up in Kempsey. Now, we have rallies in that town, but they don't go nowhere; it doesn't go any further; so, I thought, all of these families having rallies in their own little communities and they don't go nowhere. We need to do something in front of the government. We have to do something at state level.

[...]

There were heaps of people getting involved. We had people joining in. Black Lives Matter is a powerful thing. The atmosphere was powerful.

(Maria).

Maria utilised ideas of Black Lives Matter to build solidarities between the families of Lewis 'Buddy' Kelly from Kempsey, Colleen Walker from Bowraville, Jaylen 'Bundy' Armstrong Close from Toowoomba, and the family of David Dungay Jnr in Sydney. These are just a few cases, but as Figure 9 illustrates, there are more Aboriginal families who have lost relatives; either in police custody or whose deaths were never fully investigated. As such, Black Lives Matter was used to negotiate solidarities between communities who experience similar forms of racialization. Jeanelle Hope (2019 p. 223) in her work on Black-Asian Black Lives Matter solidarity in Sacramento suggests, that while Black and Asian people experience different forms of violence, solidarity is informed through shared experiences of "state-sanctioned violence", living in an urban environment and being racially stigmatized as "deviant".

While Black Lives Matter has been effective in negotiating solidarities amongst differently racialized people (e.g., Black, and Asian activists), Maria's account offers an alternative way of how Black Lives Matter is used to build solidarities between Aboriginal communities across place. Black Lives Matter is translated into issues of Aboriginal racial violence, and by bringing multiple families together in a unified protest in Sydney, this demonstrated that such issues were not singular or fixed to place. Maria seems to indicate that by building Aboriginal solidarities through Black Lives Matter, the protest revealed the systematic depths of Aboriginal injustice and spoke back to explanations that sought to reduce injustice to 'one-off' individual acts of racism (Joseph-Salisbury et al., 2021, p. 26) or that Black bodies are "expendable" and thus are not worth defending (Rouse 2021, p. 362). As such, Black Lives Matter was used to 'scale up' (Mundt et al., 2018) protests from a local/rural level to a regional and national level and reveal that each individual injustice across place is connected.

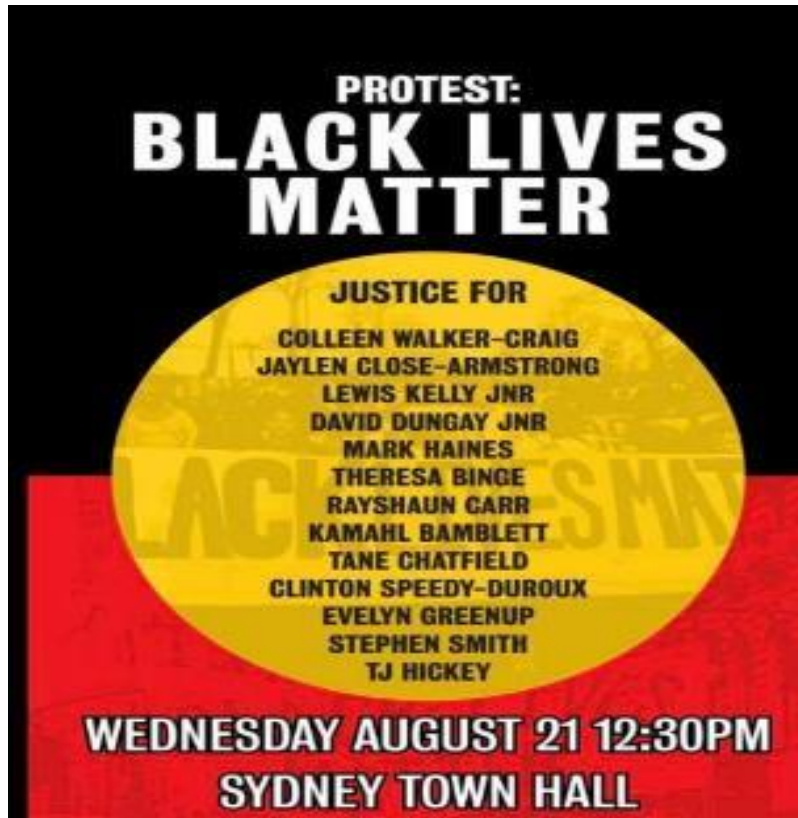


Figure 9 NSW State-Wide BLM Protest Poster.

Source: Participant.

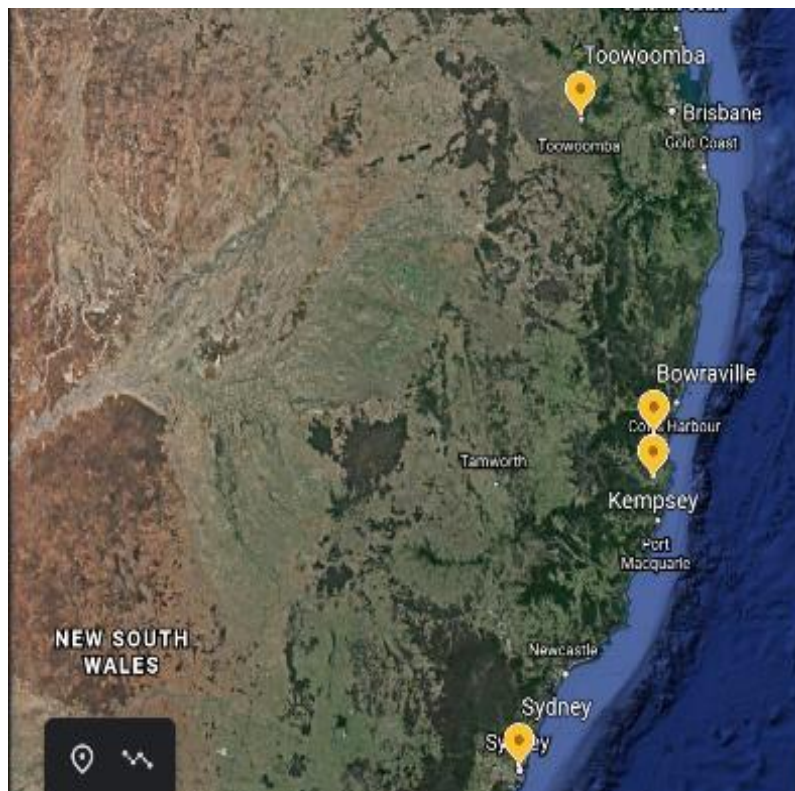


Figure 10 Location of where some families travelled from to Sydney for the BLM protest.

Source: Google Earth.

Maria's account also seems to indicate that ideas of Black Lives Matter were effectively used to create solidarities not only between Aboriginal families but also across urban and rural place. By place, I am referring to the small towns that Maria talks about (see Figure 10) and that did not gain sufficient attention to generate any form of political or legal action. This marks a key difference to Hope's (2019, p. 223) suggestion that Black Lives Matter solidarities in Sacramento were created through shared urban experiences.⁶⁴ As such, Black Lives Matter in Sydney was used to elevate the voices of Aboriginal families from rural communities through causing maximum disruption in Sydney CBD.⁶⁵ I asked:

Dan: Why in Sydney?

Maria: We need to be seen because in our hometowns, we don't get seen. We don't get heard. Folk have been waiting 30 plus years to get justice. But we don't get heard, we don't get seen. So, we have to find a way to be seen. Not just Australia, I want the world to see that this is what we face over here.

[...]

Maria: Since I had that march, the rally. We shared a lot of stories and how we do things individually as families. And we went away with knowledge. Especially the ones that have never been to Sydney before, they went away with their family with ideas of what to do next.

(Maria).

This suggests that Black Lives Matter was not only used to build solidarities amongst Aboriginal struggles, but also to garner support and attention, by having the rally in the more populous and politically visible location of Sydney. I learned that while rallies in smaller towns such as Kempsey or Bowraville gained little media

⁶⁴ However, this does not suggest that urban experiences are unimportant, as I discuss the issue of neoliberal urbanism in chapter six.

⁶⁵ Both Grayson and Evie concurred with the importance of such disruption.

attention and support from outside of the families involved, the protest in Sydney provided an opportunity to gain wider media attention and political pressure. As such, Sydney is presented as a strategic location in ensuring that rural Aboriginal injustices were heard. As Barker and Pickerill (2012, p. 1717) point out, there has long been a dissonance between urban and rural sites of protest, with rural Indigenous struggles often not represented, misrepresented, or misunderstood in urban protest settings. This claim was confirmed in Maria's explanation for why Sydney was chosen as the site of protest.

However, there are some powerful cases of when urban locations have been strategically used by rural communities in attempting to generate more effective collective action. For example, Missingham (2002, p. 1647) explores the case of the 'Village of the Poor' protest in 1997 in Thailand, that saw rural communities mobilise outside Government House in Bangkok in protest of the uneven economic development between urban and rural Thailand. Missingham (2002, p. 1648) highlights how protesters strategically targeted the symbolic and political heart of the city to elevate rural voices and demand political support. Similarities are also seen in the 1977 'Mothers of Plaza de Mayo' protests in Buenos Aires, where the mothers of missing children throughout Argentina organised at Plaza de Mayo, the "political venue of the nation", to demand justice (Cremaschi, 2021, p. 7). While Sobreiro's (2015, p. 1241) work with Indigenous communities in the rural Amazonian town of Barcelos in Brazil, suggests that rural-urban migration has the potential to create a "scale shift", where solidarities are made with rural Indigenous communities and create urban mobilisation that represents rural Indigenous struggles accurately.

Maria's testimony shares similarities with the 'Village of the Poor' protests in Thailand and how rural Indigenous communities in Barcelos build alliances and form accurate representation in urban Brazil. As such, the urban location of Sydney was a strategic choice that holds significance in how Black Lives Matter is understood in Sydney. This reveals the centrality of "place-based activity" in shaping solidarities (Featherstone, 2012, p. 30), as different rural locations (e.g., Kempsey, Bowraville, and Toowoomba) are brought together through ideas of Black Lives Matter in urban Sydney. As a result, ideas of Black Lives Matter in Sydney are reshaped by these rural locations and vice versa. Seen like this, solidarity is not only

evident on a transnational scale but also on a local scale, which connects rural Aboriginal communities with each other and with the urban context of Sydney. From a transculturation perspective, this indicates that while Black Lives Matter is most popularly represented as an urban movement (e.g., as in London), ideas of Black Lives Matter in Sydney are transformed not only through the adaption of Aboriginal rights, but also in representing rural Aboriginal struggles.

The Black Lives Matter New South Wales state-wide rally provides key insight in understanding how ideas of Black Lives Matter are creatively adapted into Aboriginal rights settings in Sydney. As such, this reveals that ways that Black Lives Matter is effective in negotiating solidarities amongst different Aboriginal struggles, as well as the possibilities of Black Lives Matter solidarity. Moreover, this demonstrates how Black Lives Matter in Sydney is not limited to the urban context of Aboriginal rights but is also reshaped through the struggles of rural Aboriginal communities. As such, this shows how the intersectional nature of Black Lives Matter enabled its diverse adoption and adaption across place.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented some of the organisations, campaigns, and individuals that I engaged with in the field and who are central to understanding how Black Lives Matter has been creatively adapted and adopted across transnational place. Drawing on theories based in cultural translation and transculturation, this chapter has revealed the value of such concepts in exploring how ideas of Black Lives Matter are reshaped across transnational place. The cases of London and Sydney demonstrate how ideas of Black Lives Matter are transformed across place to both represent Black communities in London and Aboriginal communities in Sydney, as well as different racialized struggles specific to place. This illuminates the intersectional foundations of Black Lives Matter and provides explanation into how the movement has been able to build transnational alliances from London to Sydney and translate solidarities within diverse Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal communities.

Black Lives Matter is presented as a decentralized organising principle and this is central in understanding different inflections of the movement (e.g., Muslim Lives Matter; Aboriginal Lives Matter; Refugee Lives Matter) across place, as well as the diverse Black Asian Minority Ethnic, and Aboriginal Torres Strait and Australian South Sea Islander communities that organise through Black Lives Matter. Black Lives Matter is thus heterogenous and non-deterministic and is shaped to the specific struggles of place, but also can build alliances transnationally. In London, some participant accounts demonstrated how activists sought to translate Black Lives Matter into place-based racisms in the UK and use the decentralized organising principle to create a London movement that negotiates solidarity between differently racialized groups, while also building transnational alliances. While in Sydney, participants sought to translate Black Lives Matter activism directly through the struggle for Aboriginal rights and decolonization, thus challenging American exceptionalism on race, but also reducing difference between Black and Aboriginal struggles in negotiating transnational alliances across place.

The cases of London and Sydney reveal the different ways that solidarities are translated as a means of creatively adapting Black Lives Matter to fit place-based struggles. In London, participant accounts showed the ways that Black Lives Matter was employed in negotiating differences (e.g., between Sunni, Sufi, and Shia Muslims) and building solidarities in more unified ways through Black Lives Matter. While the August 2019 Black Lives Matter protest in Sydney, demonstrated how Black Lives Matter was used to both negotiate solidarities across Aboriginal rural-urban place and create a unified approach for 'justice'. As such, this reveals distinct attempts by Black Asian Minority Ethnic activists in London and Aboriginal activists in Sydney to use Black Lives Matter to negotiate solidarities and build unity.

London and Sydney demonstrate the different ways that Black Lives Matter has been culturally translated to place. The movement has not been merely replicated across place but translated to meet the specific culture and racialized struggles of place; thus, enabling a more "transformative" and "emancipatory" movement (Maitland, 2017, p. 159). Moreover, a transculturation perspective reveals how multiple 'new' meanings (Ortiz, 1940 in Onghena, 2008, p. 182) of Black Lives Matter emerge across place through diverse inflections of the movement, such as, the take

up by multi-ethnic communities in London or Aboriginal communities in Sydney. In terms of the overall scope of this thesis, the data presented shows the diverse ways that Black Lives Matter plays out across different contexts and an intersectional approach has enabled the building of transnational alliances and translating of solidarities. This provides some insight into the diverse ways that Black Lives Matter is adopted and adapted across transnational place.

Chapter 5.0 Suspicion, surveillance, and police violence: a call to make Black Lives Matter in London and Sydney

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I turn to the issue of racialized police violence. Policing has been a primary focus for the Black Lives Matter movement in the US, following widespread killings of young Black men by the police (Leach and Allen, 2017, p. 543). Data between 2015-2022 shows that more than 1600 Black people were killed by the police in the US, which is more than twice the rate of White Americans (Washington Post, 2022). The killings of Trayvon Martin (2012), Mike Brown (2014) and Eric Garner (2014) in the US are what first created and enabled the Black Lives Matter movement. The mediatization of these events in the US are important in understanding why activists around the world both stand in solidarity with Black Lives Matter in US, but also reshape ideas of Black Lives Matter to attend to police violence in their own localities. As such, police violence provides key insight into the mobilisation and adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter across transnational place.

This chapter explores the issue of racialized police violence through the perspectives of Black Lives Matter activists in London and Sydney. I suggest, racial violence at the hands of the police is central in creating a transnational Black Lives Matter movement across place. In investigating police violence, I frame expressions of racial police violence as existing on a continuum. As such, this reveals how different forms of slow (Nixon, 2011; Pain 2019) and fast violence (Christian and Dowler, 2019; Colebrook, 2020) are co-constituted, in connecting racialized suspicion and surveillance with racialized 'stop and search' and incarceration and Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal deaths in police custody. Moreover, I add to scholarship that illuminates the co-constituted nature of violence (e.g., Cahill and Pain, 2019; Pain and Cahill, 2022; Pain; 2015) by discussing forms of police violence that fall in the middle of the continuum, such as racialized 'stop and search' and 'strip searching'. These represent forms of violence that are not easily counted within the slow and fast violence binary, and mark the point when intelligence becomes actionable, providing insight into how different forms of police violence are co-constituted.

It is important to mention that in framing expressions of racism on a continuum, I am not suggesting that forms of violence should be hierarchised,⁶⁶ but rather, use this to illustrate how slow and fast forms of police violence are connected (Colebrook, 2020). Moreover, in response to Nixon's (2011, p. 2) conceptualisation of slow violence as occurring "out of sight" or being less visible, I follow Davies' (2019a) rearticulation, indicating that slow violence is almost never invisible to communities who experience violence (also; Pain; 2019). On this issue, I understand racialized police violence as structural in its nature (Davis, 2016; Taylor, 2016) and the cases of London and Sydney reveal the different ways that policing creates interconnected spaces of exclusion, where mobility is both consciously (e.g., through suspicion and surveillance) and physically (e.g., through incarceration and brutality) restricted from wider society. The racialized impact of such policing practices provides crucial insight into how and why Black Lives Matter is seen as necessary within these transnational contexts.

This chapter is influenced by ideas of slow violence (Nixon, 2011; Pain, 2019; Kramer and Remster, 2021), fast violence (Christian and Dowler, 2019; Colebrook, 2020) and Foucault's (1977) ideas on surveillance, prisons and the panopticon and Black Lives Matter scholarship that conceptualises racial police violence as structural racism (Davis, 2016; Taylor 2016). In the first part of this chapter, I focus on everyday forms of racial police violence as seen through suspicion and surveillance, before moving onto forms of violence that fall into the middle of the continuum, such as, personal search practices (e.g., 'stop and search' and strip searching). I contribute to scholarship on the racialization of suspicion and criminality (Camp and Heatherton, 2016; Honwana, 2019; Taylor 2016) and draw on examples of surveillance and 'stop and search' in London and Sydney in exposing the different ways racial police violence is manifested across transnational place. I also draw on Foucault's (1977) ideas on the panopticon in demonstrating the internalizing and self-regulating impact of surveillance on Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal communities; and how this creates spaces of exclusion and restricts mobilities.

⁶⁶ Note: All intensities of racial violence are violent, and I am not suggesting that any one form is more or less violent than any other.

I then turn to the most representable and physical forms of racial police violence and brutality. Through drawing on several high-profile cases of Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal deaths in police custody and in prison, I illuminate the ways that such cases shape Black Lives Matter in London and Sydney. By suggesting expressions of racial violence exist on a continuum, I reveal how 'slow' and 'less visible' forms of violence feed into 'fast', 'highly-visible' and disproportionate ways that Black and Aboriginal communities die in custody and in prison. Thus, showing how all forms and extremities of racialized police violence are connected. In addition, I build on scholarship that challenges American exceptionalism on race (Carby, 2021; Strong, 2017), through exploring the ways that Black Lives Matter activists stand in solidarity with the US, but also seek to draw attention to racial police violence in their own localities.

5.2 Connecting 'slow' and 'fast' violence and all that falls in the middle

Rob Nixon's (2011) conceptualisation of slow violence as "a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight" is a useful frame in investigating the racialization of police suspicion and surveillance and how this relates to Black Lives Matter. As such, suspicion and surveillance are presented as covert policing strategies that often have an "invisible presence" (Loftus et al., 2016, p. 629). However, Nixon's (2011, p. 2) suggestion that slow violence occurs "out of sight" poses issues, as Davies (2019a, p. 3) points out, such violence is visible to communities that experience it, and is only rendered invisible because "these stories do not count" outside of marginalised communities. Scholarship has highlighted the ways that suspicion and surveillance is often racially targeted at non-White bodies that are labelled as 'devious' (Canella, 2018; Cunneen, 2020; Kerrison et al., 2018; Wallace, 2018).

In conceptualising suspicion and surveillance as forms of slow violence, it is crucial to centre analysis on the Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal bodies who experience "unseen violence" that otherwise would be hidden (Cahill and Pain, 2019, p. 1056). In this sense, suspicion and surveillance are not conceptualised as 'invisible', but rather 'hyper-visible' to the communities who are racially targeted by it. As Bagelman and Gitome (2021, p. 360) indicate in their work on reproductive

geographies, slow violence can be presented as a “routinized kind of violence that infiltrates everyday life”. As such, I am borrowing these ideas in suggesting that racialized suspicion and surveillance represent slow violence through their “routinized”, constant, and self-regulating manifestations of fear. Kramer and Renster (2022) reveal the ways that racialized routine policing practices constitute a wide range of everyday “cultural trauma’s” for non-White communities, as seen through impacts in health, academic performance, wellbeing, and access to physical space. Therefore, illustrating that racialized and routinized policing practices often impact multiple aspects of everyday life.

On the issue of violence inflicted through every day and self-regulating impacts of surveillance, Foucault’s (1977) ideas on surveillance and the panopticon are key. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault writes:

Bentham’s panopticon is the architectural figure of this composition. We know the principle on which it was based: at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower [...] The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make possible to see constantly and to recognise immediately. In short, it reverses the principle of the dungeon [...] to enclose, to deprive of light and to hide – it preserves the first and eliminates the other two. Full lighting and the eye of a supervisor capture better than darkness [...] Visibility is a trap (1977, p. 200).

Foucault’s interpretation of the panopticon conceptualises surveillance as permanent and self-regulating, as the prisoners’ chronic pain stems from not

knowing if they are being watched, and the fear of what may happen if they are (Caluya, 2010, p. 622). Foucault's ideas have analytical value in not only investigating the violence of surveillance, but also how surveillance is increasingly being used to police non-White bodies (Canella, 2018; Eldon, 2003; Khoury, 2009). Suspicion and surveillance are not evenly manifested but stigmatize on biological (racialized) grounds in targeting 'deviant' (non-White) individuals and thus shape spaces of racial exclusion (Patel, 2012; Inwood and Yarborough, 2010, p. 299). As such, some (non-White) bodies are labelled as "hyper-visible" (Khoury, 2009), while others are not.

Kukreja (2021) in his work with undocumented South Asian migrants in rural Greece employs a Foucauldian frame in analysing the self-regulating impacts of a panoptic society in navigating illegality and potential deportation. Participant accounts revealed strategies to negotiate visibility, with one participant expressing, "if we regulate our movements and make ourselves less visible, we can continue living and working here" (Kukreja, 2021, p. 3672). This work not only indicates the racialized logic behind surveillance in targeting non-White bodies, but also its self-regulating and chronic impact, as participants attempt to navigate spaces of (in)visibility in fear of punishment. As such, Foucault's ideas on the panopticon, as well as conceptualisations of racialized suspicion and surveillance as forms of slow violence, offer value in examining the different ways that policing is central to Black Lives Matter across place.

However, some excellent feminist scholarship has challenged the temporal binaries of violence which are inherent in conceptualisations of slow and fast violence (Cahill and Pain, 2019; Christian and Dowler, 2019; Christian, Dowler, and Cuomo, 2016; Pain, 2015; Pain and Cahill, 2022). For example, Pain (2015, p. 64) conceptualises domestic violence and modern international warfare as part of a "single complex", while Christian, Dowler, and Cuomo (2016, p. 64) suggest that 'hot' and 'banal' nationalism are part of an "intertwining complex". In their recent work, Christian and Dowler indicate the co-constitution of speeds of violence:

Slow and routinized harms...accumulate in deadly ways [...] Slow forms of violence imbricate with the fast, and the fast inescapably shapes the slow (2019, p. 1072).

Drawing on the discourses of everyday xenophobia and rape culture, they reveal how routinized forms of violence fuel hate crimes and rape (Christian and Dowler, 2019, p. 1072). As such, this scholarship suggests that slow and fast forms of violence should not be understood as separate, but rather are co-constituted in reinforcing different speeds and intensities of violence. Building on this, Colebrook's (2020, p. 497) work on Black Lives Matter and the covid-19 pandemic suggests that the fast and deadly ways that covid-19 disproportionately killed non-White Americans is connected to the long and 'slow' burning histories of racism in healthcare, insurance, working conditions, healthy diets, safe drinking water and exercise. I draw on these ideas in conceptualising expressions of racism through police violence as existing on a continuum. As such, fast and slow forms of violence are co-constituted, and this can be used to understand the ways that racialized suspicion and surveillance is connected to racialized deaths in custody and in prison.

While recent developments in the literature have been effective in challenging binaries of speed and revealing the ways that slow and fast violence are co-constituted, I add to these debates by discussing forms of police violence that fall in the middle of these binaries, and thus, are not easily counted (see Davies, 2019a, p. 3). By examining 'stop and search' and 'strip searching' as forms of violence that fall in the middle, this marks the point when racialized intelligence becomes actionable and reveals the co-constituted nature of police violence. As such, I am not hierarchising different violence's, but suggest that different forms of violence are connected. However, it is important to point out that highly representable forms of violence, such as racialized deaths in custody are often manifested every day and are routinized for the Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal communities who experience it (Anthony and Blagg, 2021, p. 77; Gains, 2021, p. 325), and these should be understood in connection with other forms of violence.

5.3 Suspicion and surveillance

5.31 *“You will get followed”*

In this section, I draw on participant perspectives of everyday forms of racial police violence, such as suspicion and surveillance in exposing the ways that suspicion and criminality is racialized. As such, this provides insight into why policing has emerged as an issue for Black Lives Matter in London and Sydney, as well as showing some of the counter-surveillance tactics used by activists when encountering the police. By framing expressions of racial police violence as existing on a continuum, I begin to unpack how racialized suspicion and surveillance is connected to and shapes other forms of police violence along the continuum. In early 2020, I met Maria, an Aboriginal woman living in the Sydney suburb of Glebe and an organiser of Aboriginal rights and Black Lives Matter campaigns in Sydney. After talking with Maria for a short while, it became apparent that the police were central in shaping her activism; after her brother, Lewis “Buddy” Kelly was found dead on the railway tracks in Kempsey, New South Wales, in 1983. Maria and her family have always contested the police report that Buddy committed suicide and that his death was not because of foul play (Ellis, 2020). I asked Maria about the role of the police in her neighbourhood and why this is an issue for Black Lives Matter:

If I go into a shopping centre, I get followed around. They [the police] watch you. Not just in the past, but it still happens today [...] They follow Aboriginals around thinking they are going to steal. When you are putting your shopping through and scanning, they stand behind you and make sure that you’re paying for everything [...] If you’re young and want to go to a shopping centre, you will get followed. They just watch you.

Dan: Why?

Maria: Because they think we are going to steal. Or just to intimidate young Aboriginals. The police will just pull them up for no reason. They do it heaps. They look at cameras, CCTV and use radios to let each other know, to keep an eye on young Aboriginals coming in [to

the shopping centre]. [...] Things like that happen all of the time. The colour of our skin is the reason why this happens and the reason why we don't have justice for any of these issues.

(Maria).

As Maria highlights, surveillance and monitoring by the police is a routine experience for Aboriginal people in her community. This ranges from less visible forms of surveillance such as CCTV and radio communication, to a visible police and security presence. The everyday experience of going to the shopping centre or walking the street is represented as a punitive reminder of the suspicion and surveillance taking place on Aboriginal people. In this account, the shopping centre is articulated as a space of racial exclusion for Aboriginal people; where there is a fear of being watched, what may happen if they are, and in not being granted entry based on their Aboriginality. As such, there is a perception of risk that Aboriginal persons are more likely to commit illegal activity and thus are suspected to a higher degree than a White person.

Cunneen (2020, p. 533) suggests the use of risk-based assessments by the police have categorised Black, Indigenous, and other minority people that do not follow White cultural norms as "high-risk". Risk assessments are presented as scientifically impartial and are quietly embedded into the structures of policing policy and practices, and thus attempt to justify racialized suspicion based on monitoring systems being 'colourblind'.⁶⁷ Relevant to this is Louise Ammore's (2021, p. 3) borderwork, revealing the ways that deep learning algorithms are central in both rearticulating what borders mean, and in remaking "the world in their own image". As such, algorithms similarly create racialized categories and by extension outcomes, which are justified through their presentation as scientific 'logic' (Ammore, 2021, p. 7).

While it is acknowledged that "some cops are more discriminatory than others" (Weber, 2020, p. 81), Maria's emphasis on the regularity of targeted

⁶⁷ Colourblind - the idea that we live in a post-racial society where the relevance of race has diminished (Cox, 2021).

surveillance indicates a deeper structural problem in how criminality is understood in Sydney. This reveals a process, that has 'slowly' over time become a "routinized form of violence" (see Bagelman and Gitome, 2021, p. 360) in shaping spaces (e.g., shopping centres) of exclusion for Aboriginal people. While surveillance is presented through less-visible technologies, this account reveals the "hypervisibility" (Khoury, 2019) of Aboriginal bodies in relation to racialized suspicion.

In London, I came across accounts of Black Lives Matter activists feeling that they were racially targeted by surveillance. For example, at a Black Lives Matter event in Bethnal Green, London, I met David, a young, Black man and Black Lives Matter activist, who told the group why he feels the need to act 'White' and change the way his behaviour in public places:

People here [in London] just think I'm a crazy Black man. So sometimes you've got to act White [starts laughing]. I mean, I've experienced racist police and even if you aren't doing anything [wrong], you can't give them a reason to question you or stop you [...] You never know who's watching or when they're watching.

(Ethnographic notes: David, 3rd August 2019)

David told the group about some of his experiences with the police, and how he was routinely stopped and searched, questioned where he was going when walking the street, and how this prompted him to change his behaviours in public spaces. David is an outgoing person and I immediately noticed this when I entered the room, as he warmly introduced himself and told me his story. But it also becomes apparent from what he says, that he feels the need to suppress and adapt his identity to act 'White' in case he is being watched by the police; despite not doing anything illegal. Although Maria's testimony is in the context of Aboriginal rights, there are some connections in the ways that surveillance has emerged as a central issue for Black Lives Matter in London and Sydney. For David, the impact of surveillance is represented as more than simply being watched; it prompts participants to change

behaviours in case they are being watched so that they do not arouse suspicion. Similar arguments are presented in Kahn et al., (2016, p. 403) work on policing and whiteness, where they argue “the whiter one appears, the more the suspect will be protected from police force”. This logic is reflected in David’s account, as he indicates that acting ‘White’ reduces racialized police suspicion and thus acting ‘White’ is viewed as warranted in negotiating potential police encounters.

Foucault’s (1977) ideas on the panopticon are useful in analysing Maria and David’s testimonies. His suggestion that “visibility is a trap” (1977, p. 200) is relevant in understanding how suspicion and surveillance operate, with some (Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal bodies) “hyper-visible” (Khoury, 2019) to the glare of the watchtower, but with a chronic fear of not knowing when or who is watching. While the panopticon metaphor has been used to attribute to advancements in surveillance technology, particularly urban CCTV, and the use of ‘big data’ in enabling biopower (Hepworth, 2019, p. 328; Lippert, 2009, p. 506), Foucault’s interpretation of the panopticon provides useful explanation into why surveillance has emerged as a central issue for Black Lives Matter. The panopticon is not just about enforcing the law or punishment as Foucault (1977) would have it; but to instil a constant state of fear into prisoner’s consciousness that they are being watched. This works upon the predication that prisoners are less likely to attempt escape, through the fear of punishment, if they think that the supervisor is watching. But, as Miller and Miller (1987, p. 3) point out, “the panopticon is not just a prison”; but a tool for surveillance which expands beyond the prison and into multiple aspects of everyday life.

David and Maria’s accounts reveal the internalized fear of being watched and punished, and how this fear controls spaces used and how to act within these spaces. While surveillance is often justified through a logic that one has “nothing to hide” (Stuart and Levine, 2017, p. 694), these perspectives expose the routinized workings of surveillance in unevenly targeting Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal bodies. The fear of being watched is represented as a chronic and self-regulating form of slow violence, which is made violent through ‘slow’ and constant manifestations of fear. This builds on Kukreja’s (2021, p. 3672) use of slow violence in investigating the “self-regulating” ways that South Asian migrants sought to

navigate in/visibility, by revealing the racialized underpinnings of surveillance and how Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal bodies must also navigate the gaze. Moreover, Pain's (2019, p. 386) suggestion that 'chronic urban trauma' "speaks to the subvisible temporalities and spatialities of slow violence" is also relevant, in signifying that violence through racialized suspicion and surveillance is both chronic and "hardwired" to place; with public spaces and shopping centres presented as sites of navigation in David and Maria's testimonies.

The participant accounts expose the different ways that racialized surveillance operates in shaping spaces of racial exclusion transnationally. As Stuart Elden (2003, p. 247-248) writes, Foucault understands the police "with regulations in a more general sense for the smooth running of society, for good governance [...] in this sense police are concerned with the general set of rules and regulations for the government of a society, a rationality, a way of thinking". This indicates an important function of policing is not only to enforce law but to defend the wider "regulations for the government of a society" (Eldon, 2003, p. 248). Seen like this, targeted police surveillance on suspicious and 'deviant' multi-ethnic and Aboriginal bodies is justified and seen as necessary, because 'society must be defended' (Foucault, 2003). This provides some insight into the ways that racialized suspicion and surveillance has emerged as key issues for Black Lives Matter in London and Sydney.

5.32 *Counter surveillance*

In response to surveillance, Black Lives Matter activists demonstrated agency and resistance through using counter-surveillance strategies. While there is a wide literature on counter-surveillance, I am specifically referring to methods used by the public to counter-surveil the police. As such, Monahan (2006, p. 515) provides a useful definition of counter-surveillance as, "intentional, tactical uses, or disruptions of surveillance technologies to challenge institutional power asymmetries". Beutin (2017, p. 8-9) suggests there are three political orientations of police counter surveillance. First, "cop watching orientation" is a community strategy that seeks to build wider resistance to oppression within communities. Cop watching works from

the predication that surveilling the police will force them to change their behaviour in the present and limit or prevent brutality from taking place. Second, the “punitive evidence orientation” seeks to specifically video record police wrongdoings and use this as evidence to prosecute police officers and change the wider narrative on the criminal justice system. Third, the “police self-monitoring orientation” advocates for police-worn body cameras as a strategy to promote police accountability and prevent acts of brutality. Black Lives Matter organisers in the US have promoted phone applications and social media pages such as ‘CopWatch’, to broadcast where police are located and record interactions with law enforcement before automatically uploading content to the internet (Haimson, 2020, p. 22). As such, counter surveillance is a key issue for Black Lives Matter (Canella, 2018), and I also found this in London and Sydney.

5.33 *Making Aboriginal Lives Matter: strategies in Sydney*

In Sydney, I was made aware of the Facebook group ‘Inner West Transit Cop Watch’ (henceforth IWTCW), as a means of counter surveillance against police, as well as the mobile phone application ‘CopWatch’. I was given access to IWTCW, which is a private⁶⁸ group, and members share updates and photographs of the police and transit officers, to make group members aware of the location of law enforcement. This tool is used to provide Aboriginal people, and others targeted by the police, with a warning that law enforcement are in a specific area, and this permeates the tactics used by Black Lives Matter. Below are a few examples of content posted:

- Pigs [police] on wheels [bikes] at St Peters Station.
- TOs [transit officers] USYD [University of Sydney] city road bus stops.
- 4 TOs [transit officers] boarded 370 bus from City Rd bus stop USyd. [University of Sydney].

⁶⁸ The group is ‘private’ to provide a secure space for those who are disproportionately targeted by police and want to avoid police encounters in Sydney.

- 2 cops at Redfern.

(Netnographic notes: 5th May 2020).

Some participants expressed that this is a simple but effective tool in keeping Aboriginal communities safe and harassment free. For example, Jen, a Latino woman, and ally of Aboriginal people⁶⁹ told me at a post-Invasion Day forum,⁷⁰ “its [IWTCW] a good way for allies to help the [Aboriginal] struggle [...] it gives us some power back because we can watch them [the police] and avoid being harassed”. Jen seems to indicate the IWTCW averts the gaze of the panopticon and enables the “prisoners” to not only minimise the risk of being caught by the glare of the “guards”, but also to redirect the gaze toward the police. This form of counter-surveillance represents an example of the ‘cop watching orientation’ (Beutin, 2017, p. 7). However, I found that the IWTCW extended beyond its practical purpose in attempting to help members avoid police encounters, but was also highly political, in that it represented a collective community of members who wanted to help each-other. As such, the IWTCW also signified solidarity through working together to achieve “common goals” of staying safe during police encounters (see Featherstone 2012, p. 23).

Evie, an Aboriginal woman and Black Lives Matter campaigner, spends a lot of time going into schools and community groups to educate Aboriginal people on effective strategies to limit police brutality. As such, Evie is an advocate for the use of CopWatch and mobile phones during police encounters:

We’ve established an app here in Sydney that you can put on your phone called CopWatch. It tells you your legal rights.

[...]

⁶⁹ I was introduced to Jen by Aboriginal participants.

⁷⁰ Ethnographic notes from conversation with Jen at a forum Glebe, 26th January 2020.

Evie: it teaches you your rights, filming the police in public spaces, being locked up in general or in a cell. It was mainly brought out for Aboriginal youth to empower them to record what the police are doing. The first thing police would say to you when they come up to you is 'everything is being recorded on my body camera la la la' and maybe everything is being recorded at the time. But through history and the court cases I've been through, when you get to the courthouse, there's editing done to the camera. So, you only ever see the child being the aggressor. You don't see the child asking, 'excuse me officer, what did I do wrong?' You don't see that, until it's at a time when the child is like, 'fuck you, you racist White dog'. Then you get to see the camera and then the magistrates only see that. But in fact, we know that this happened 20 minutes later. But what happened before? So, we thought, OK, fuck this, let's turn our phones on. Let's turn our cameras on. So, we talked to our people and we found loopholes so that we can record in public spaces, as long as it isn't in anyone's faces. [...] You have the right to even address, 'excuse me officer, just to let you know right now I am recording you and I have all rights to do so'.

(Evie).

Evie's account goes beyond counter-surveillance as a means of avoiding the police and extends this to during police encounters. As such, she advocates for the use of video recording during police encounters by Aboriginal people, but also looks to discredit police video evidence as factual, as this can be manipulated. The increasing use of police bodycams worldwide, has been promoted as a "win for all... because of their potential to serve as a check against the abuse of power by police officers" (Stanley, 2015, p. 1). However, as Evie suggests, this is not a viable solution, as edited police video footage can create imagined criminal cases. As Mirzoeff (2020, p. 21) suggests, bodycams are "like any other device, the machines can be manipulated" and does not necessarily reduce racial police violence. Seen like this, evidence produced through bodycams can be manipulated and work to reframe those being harassed as aggressors.

Relevant to this, Judith Butler (2009, p. 74-75) explores the reframing of violence through the cases of the Abu Ghrabib prison in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay in the US. She argues that the superior framing power of the state (e.g., the military in these cases) over those who are subject to violence can be challenged through reframing violence and putting the state into the frame. For Butler (2009), the publication of leaked photographs evidencing state torture in Abu Ghrabib and Guantanamo Bay demonstrates how violence can be reframed. In relation to Evie's testimony, this is useful in understanding how Aboriginal people use CopWatch and video recording as a means of reframing evidence and direction onto the police.

In this sense, counter surveillance is more than just a tool to circulate photographs or video footage of wrongdoings by the police. It empowers those who are subjected to violence (e.g., Aboriginal people) to reframe the (il)legitimacy of the racial police violence. While such counter-surveillance techniques are also used as evidence to prosecute police officers and deter acts of brutality (Beutin 2017, p. 7), reframing racial violence in this way helps change the wider narrative of self-defence and the aggressor. As such, this reveals the ways that Aboriginal participants permeate and reshape the counter-surveillance tactics used by Black Lives Matter.

5.34 *Making Black Lives Matter: countering surveillance in London*

In London, Black Lives Matter activists sought to use counter surveillance strategies and specifically mobile phones to video record police encounters. For example, Jessie, a Black female, activist explained why this method of counter surveillance is useful:

You've got to understand the truth. It's important for us [Black Lives Matter London] to help people stay safe. One of the most important weapons we have is this [holds up her mobile phone]. Its powerful, posting things on social media and in recording what the police do. [...] Imagine if Eric Garner's murder wasn't caught on camera? People wouldn't know the truth.

(Jessie).

Jessie's testimony captures much of what I heard during interviews and what I saw at protests in both Sydney and London, as the use of mobile phones during police encounters was a constant feature. The use of mobile phones in recording police encounters is presented as a powerful tool for Black Lives Matter activists in preventing physical police brutality (Black Lives Matter Sacramento, N.D). By referencing the case of Eric Garner, who died in 2014 after being put in a chokehold by police (Jee-Lyn Garcia and Sharif, 2015, p. 27), Jessie seems to suggest that had Garner's death not been recorded, he would be 'just another statistic' (Brooks, 2018, p. 811) and perhaps Black Lives Matter would not exist.

The language used is also symbolic as Jessie speaks of a "weapon" to present a tool that can be used in self-defence. In this sense, mobile phones were not only used to record police actions and post on social media, but also as a deterrent against police brutality during encounters. As Singh (2017, p. 680) suggests, police officers who are being filmed are more likely to "discipline their own behaviour" based on the threat of the footage being broadcasted on social media and watched by a wide audience. This challenges existing power differentials between the police officer and individuals being harassed and draws similarities to Beutin's (2017, p. 7) perspective on CopWatch, in highlighting how mobile phones are useful for targeted people in police encounters.

The mobile phone's presentation as a "weapon" reveals an attempt to respond to the actual weapons held by the police. However, much like some weapons used in conflict, the mobile phone is presented as a deterrent, which only has consequences if the police abuse their power (Ariel et al., 2018). Moreover, Jessie's account does not limit mobile phone usage to those engaged in police encounters but can also be used by bystanders in recording abuses of power, as in the case of Eric Garner. While I did not find the same degree of organised counter surveillance in London as I did in Sydney, Jessie's testimony demonstrates the usage of mobile phones as a means of self-defence in counter-surveillance.

5.4 'Stop and search'

While the use of police surveillance creates intelligence, this then becomes actionable through other forms of violence, such as 'stop and search' and 'strip searching'. By suggesting that expressions of racism through police violence exist on a continuum, racialized 'stop and search' represents a form of violence that is 'more visible' than racialized suspicion and surveillance.⁷¹ My fieldwork found that personal searches often stem from racialized police suspicion and surveillance, and this shows how 'slow', and 'less visible' forms of violence develop into other forms of violence when racialized intelligence becomes actionable. These are important issues for Black Lives Matter activists in both contexts, and the issue of 'strip searching' is particularly contentious for Black Lives Matter activists in Sydney. Through the issue of 'stop and search', I build on the argument that suspicion and criminality is always racialized, suggesting 'stop and search' practices create public spaces of racial exclusion. Moreover, the racialization of 'stop and search' represents a wider abuse of police power and gives insight into the structural racism pervading the police.

Sydney

In Australia, personal searches are categorised into two types: 'frisk' and 'strip search'. A 'frisk search' refers to "a basic search which involves the police officer quickly running their hands over the outer clothing of the person or using a metal detector". A 'strip search' "involves the person removing their clothing in a private place, only in the presence of persons of the same gender". Moreover, strip searches are the most controversial in recent years, as anyone over the age of 10 years old can be strip searched by law enforcement (Makela, N.D). As such, this reveals problematic presumptions of guilt in racialized Aboriginal childhood (Faulkner, 2022).

In the case of children, a parent or guardian should be present while a 'strip search' is conducted, unless an immediate search is necessary to prevent evidence

⁷¹ By more visible, I mean more visible to the public, since 'stop and search' mostly happens in public space.

from being lost. This approach has been heavily criticised, with campaigners suggesting this poses a loophole for law enforcement to strip search children without their parents or guardians being present (Hickey and Nedim, 2019). According to New South Wales law, police officers should hold “genuine suspicion” before conducting a ‘frisk’ or ‘strip search’ (Criminal Law, N.D). However, there has been widespread criticism of the police interpretation of “genuine suspicion”, with suggestions that Aboriginal people are disproportionately targeted. Statistics support such claims, showing that in New South Wales from 2016 to 2018, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders accounted for approximately 3.4% of the population, yet represented 12% of all personal searches conducted by police (McGowan, 2020). These figures illustrate the extent of racialized suspicion.

On the issue of strip searching, data collected from police stations across New South Wales found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples accounted for 10% of documented strip searches in the field, and 22% of documented strip searches in police stations, despite making up just 3% of the population (Grewcock and Sentas, 2019, p. 31, Aboriginal Affairs NSW, 2016). These figures highlight the highly disproportionate rate at which Aboriginal people are subjected to personal searches. Moreover, Grewcock and Sentas (2019, p. 31) argue “the disproportionate numbers of strip searches conducted on Indigenous people reflects wider discriminatory and harmful impacts of the criminal justice process”. This is also seen in the disproportionate rates that Aboriginal people are incarcerated. A (2017) report by PWC Indigenous Consulting found that in 2016, Aboriginal people accounted for just 3% of the population in Australia, yet more than 27% of the Australian prison population were Aboriginal people.⁷² In terms of young people, over 55% of juveniles in youth detention were Aboriginal.

London

According to British Transport Police (N.D) ‘stop and search’ is enforced by an officer if they have ‘genuine suspicion’ that items that could be used to commit crime or are evidence of an offence (such as stolen property or weapons) will be found on a

⁷² Aboriginal includes Torres Strait Islanders.

person. Their suspicion must seem reasonable to an independent observer. However, there are additional 'stop and search' powers in England and Wales that do not require the police to hold such reasonable suspicion. Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (s60) and section 44 of the Terrorism Act (s44 since repealed) allow police to 'stop and search' with or without reasonable suspicion (Keenan, 2020). It is Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 that has been most controversial, as it allows police to search with no grounds of suspicion. As such, Section 60 legitimises the racialized suspicion to become actionable.

Statistics from 2018/19 highlight the disproportionate rates that Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities in London experience personal searching by the police. Data suggests Black Asian Minority Ethnic people were stopped at five times the rate of White people, and under Section 60 of the Criminal Justice Public Order Act,⁷³ Black Asian Minority Ethnic people were searched at 11 times the rates of White people in London from 2018 to 2019 (Stopwatch, 2020). Such racialization is evident in the findings of the Lammy Review (2017, p. 3) which analysed incarceration rates of Black Asian Minority Ethnic people in the UK between 2006-2016. The report found, that despite making up just 14% of the population of the UK, Black Asian Minority Ethnic people accounted for 25% of all prisoners, and over 40% of all young people in custody.

5.41 *Racialization of 'stop and search' in Sydney*

In Sydney, Rachel, an Aboriginal woman, who lives in Glebe, told me how Aboriginal people experience regular and targeted searching in her community in Glebe:

⁷³ Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 gives officer power to 'stop and search' if they believe a serious crime may be about to take place. Therefore, officers do not have to hold grounds for reasonable suspicion (Metropolitan Police, N.D).

I have seen Aboriginal children strip searched in public. Not so long ago, there was even an Uncle⁷⁴ strip searched here [in Glebe], just down the road, for no reason. The police know we are Aboriginal and that is the problem. These kinds of things wouldn't happen to a non-Aboriginal person.

(Rachel).

Maria, who also lives in Glebe, elaborated on this point:

Young Aboriginals can be walking around the street and the police will just pull them up. I was standing outside of my property a couple of weeks ago and there were these two older Aboriginal gentlemen. They were just driving down the street and the police were driving slow next to them. They asked them where they were going because 'we know you are not locals'. They tend to do that because they are out of area.

[...]

Dan: What do you mean by 'out of area'? Do the police try to contain [Aboriginal] people to certain areas?

Maria: Oh yeah. It happens all the time. They'll stop you if you don't live in an area.

[...]

I see it all the time here in Glebe. The police drive past my place at least 100 times a day. There was another incident recently with an Elder in his 50s or 60s. He was near the book shop just up the road and it's a busy, busy, road and they just strip searched him. For no reason. He was only sitting there.

(Maria).

⁷⁴ 'Uncles' refers to male Aboriginal Elders.

These accounts reveal the depths of racialized suspicion and personal search practices that Aboriginal people experience. Glebe was historically a 'safer' neighbourhood for Aboriginal people,⁷⁵ however these testimonies seem to suggest that this is no longer the case, as Aboriginal bodies, both young and old, are subject to discriminatory searching. The point on justifying personal searches based on Aboriginal people "being out of area" also goes beyond racialized suspicion and exposes the central role of the police in the contemporary manifestation of Aboriginal land dispossession through spatialized segregation. This extends Anthony and Blagg's (2021, p. 74) suggestion that Aboriginal people were segregated in "missions, orphanages, pastoral properties, government settlements, ration depots" and reveals another layer of how racialized police suspicions of criminality are manifested in creating spaces of exclusion for Aboriginal bodies. Spatial exclusion is thus interconnected with restrictions of mobility, and in the case of the two Elders "being out of area", such police harassment was justified through historical racialized perceptions of belonging and segregation (Cunneen, 2019, p. 30).

Fischer's (2019) work on the redevelopment of Boston during the 1960's and 1970's, discusses how the presence of Black women in 'White' downtown Boston, lead to a large-scale 'crack down' by police based on racialized and gendered understandings of criminality. The case of Boston, Fischer (2019) argues, demonstrates how the police were utilised to remove Black women from Boston to redevelop and "secure" Boston as 'White' space. While Glebe is not undergoing such a radical transformation, the policing of Aboriginal bodies similarly represents how space is 'secured'. However, differences are seen through how Maria's testimony is connected to Aboriginal land dispossession. Moreover, as Summers and Howell (2019, p. 1090) suggest, regulatory measures of public space work to limit and exclude certain activities and bodies from public space. Maria's account exposes how the police use methods of suspicion, surveillance and 'stop and search' to control and decide who cannot enter space; or at least attempt to deter people from using spaces;

⁷⁵ Conversations with Maria and Rachel.

as well as maintaining a visual presence in the neighbourhood to remind residents that they are nearby.

Cook and Whowell (2011) take a Foucauldian perspective, suggesting both police visibility and invisibility are important elements of power and control in understanding how space is produced. For example, invisibility in terms of CCTV and plain clothed officers creates a panoptic fear of being watched; but also, through visibility, where “the public must see penal justice in action”, through unpaid community service (Cook and Whowell, 2011, p. 122) or in Maria and Rachel’s accounts, through stopping and searching Aboriginal people. Space is thus organised through visible and invisible forms of policing. Importantly, in Maria and Rachel’s accounts, Aboriginal people who were stopped and searched were not engaging in illegal activity but were searched based on racialized suspicions of criminality. This links to ‘broken windows’ policing theory which suggests that all misdemeanours (including loitering, graffiti, littering, public intoxication etc) should be taken seriously, to deter a lawless environment which would likely lead to more serious crimes being committed; thus, justifying an increased police presence (Camp and Heatherton, 2016, p. 257; Kohler-Hausmann, 2018, p. 26). However, as Cahill et al., (2018, p. 1130) point out, broken windows policing has consistently criminalised communities based on racialized understandings of criminality that labels certain bodies and areas as ‘deviant’.

On the issue of searching children, Flacks (2018, p. 367) suggests that young people often are often the primary users of public space and so are unevenly impacted by discriminatory surveillance strategies. This can be taken further by borrowing Crenshaw’s (1989, p. 139) perspective on intersectionality, in analysing how Aboriginal children experience the violence of ‘stop and search’ based both on their age and Aboriginality; but also, potentially through their class, as most Aboriginal participants did not have access to private outside space. Evie, who lives in Marrickville, told me about when she was stopped and searched in 2018:

I’m a mother of three boys. I have a fear every day when my 21-year-old walks out of my door. I have an internal fear that I shouldn’t have.

My boys know, if you see the police coming, unless they are hurting someone else, my boys know to turn their phones on and record the polices behaviour. If the police are walking in my son's direction, I've taught my children, you've got to be humble, head down and you don't even make eye contact. And if the police do come and talk to you, you give them name, address, a parent contact number. Say nothing more, say nothing less. No attitude. But even teaching my children that, I've seen young boys and girls in my community in Waterloo, in Redfern, in Marickville even that have been fully intimidated, profiled, down to a strip search in public. I've been strip searched myself.

Dan: When did this last happen?

Evie: End of last year. 2018. It was right here in Newtown.

Dan: Why did they 'stop and search' you?

Evie: I was a passenger in a car, I told them 'excuse me, why are you talking to me? You pulled over the driver, not the passenger'. Do you think I am about the commit a crime? Or have you checked on your ID and you know who I am? I know the police around here. And seriously, three, four, more police cars pulled up and I was with my eight-year-old son at the time [...] It happens all the time.

(Evie).

Evie's testimony shows how expressions of racism through police violence exist on a continuum, starting with racialized suspicion and surveillance and developing into other forms of violence through being stopped and searched. This marks the middle ground in the continuum and the point where violence is co-constituted. Evie went on to explain how what started off as a 'routine' traffic stop, quickly escalated into other forms of violence, through incarceration and brutality:

I was in a police cell. They took my clothes. They left me fully naked in a cell.

Dan: On what grounds?

Evie: The reason was to make me uncomfortable. Brutalise me, bully me. For the first hour to be honest, it worked. I sat in the corner of the cell in a little ball, all abusing them “fuck you White dogs”. They are laughing at me, they’re loving this. So out of nowhere, I don’t know how I did it, but I stood up fully naked. I don’t know, something just went and you’re letting them. My deep Black sense said sit up, stop crying, so what you’re naked. You’re born naked, your culture is naked.

[...]

Dan: How long did they keep you for?

Evie: Five hours. For fuck all. Profiling. Saw me around, picked me up. No warrant check at the moment, but we can keep her this long while we do a warrant check. They were thinking, hopefully she will twist on us, and we can get a trump charge [...]

This is how a lot of our kids end up inside over-night [...]

I could flood this café with Black mothers who would tell you the same fucking story.

(Evie).

Evie’s account illuminates’ the connections between different forms of violence and supports recent developments in the slow violence scholarship in thinking beyond binaries of intensities, temporalities, and spatialities (Cahill and Pain, 2019; Christian and Dowler, 2019; Pain, 2015; Pain and Cahill, 2022). This is evident through how she believed she was racially targeted by the police as an Aboriginal woman, and when nothing illegal was found following a ‘strip search’,

she was then taken into custody and further brutalised. This exposes not only an extreme abuse of police power, but also the physical and symbolic extent that racialized police perceptions of criminality were used to exclude her from wider society. As such, Evie's account reveals the spatialities of racial violence: first, in creating an 'internal fear' that her children may be racially profiled in a public space, and second, through Evie being physically locked and caged naked in a police cell. While police violence is manifested through different intensities, speeds, and spaces, these violence's are mutually constituted in working to confine and exclude Aboriginal communities from space.

Evie's testimony shares some similarities with that of Maria and Rachel; and further shows how public spaces (e.g., shopping centre, walking the streets, and driving a car) represent spaces of racialization, where Aboriginal people have a chronic fear of being watched, searched, and are made to feel uncomfortable inhabiting such spaces. This is further evidenced in Evie's account, as she raises concerns of her children encountering the police when they leave home. On this issue of fear, Evie seems to indicate that violence is not necessarily a physical act, but also 'emotional' (Pain, 2009) and is manifested through the chronic fear it creates, in shaping spaces of Aboriginal exclusion. In an interview with Naomi Murakawa, Camp and Heatherton theorise police violence through fear:

Police brutality is a hollow term, in the sense that all police interactions, by definition, occur under the threat of brutality. They unfold under the threat of violence. If you are being questioned by someone who has a gun strapped to his or her hip and is authorised to use it, and you know that this person uses it in particular against people of your race in your neighbourhood, you may agree to the transaction. The transaction happens because there is a threat of brutality. The gun might not be used against you, but the act is still brutal (2016, p. 232).

Encounters with the police are defined through the threat of violence, that is authorised by the state and used by the police because 'society must be defended'

(Foucault, 2003). This makes any space where police encounters happen, potential spaces for racial police violence. The fear of being watched, stopped, or brutalised, creates spaces of Aboriginal exclusion, and restricts mobilities. However, these forms of violence's must be understood as interconnected in revealing the depths of fear. Cahill et al., (2018, p. 1130) suggest, 'stop and frisk' has the potential to remake neighbourhoods into criminalised spaces; and such criminalisation is used to justify exclusionary and restrictive practices. While Evie seemed to indicate that the areas of Marrickville, Waterloo and Redfern were once 'safe' for Aboriginal children, she revealed that this was no longer true after multiple cases of Aboriginal children being strip searched. This further provides an example of how 'stop and search' shapes neighbourhoods into "criminalised spaces" (Cahill et al., 2018, p. 1130).

However, Evie's testimony also shows agency and resistance in teaching her children and her community how to stay safe when encountering the police. Although the fact that Aboriginal children must be taught techniques to stay safe when encountering the police illuminates the structural racism pervading policing; the use of mobile phones and behavioural techniques demonstrate powerful actions of agency in negotiating police encounters. Thus, signifying attempts by Aboriginal people to reclaim safe access to public space and resist restrictive mobilities. Kelly and Lobo (2017, p. 373-375) document the "noisy" and "quiet" ways that Aboriginal communities have looked to reclaim space through taking to the streets in protest, holding vigils and cultural celebrations.

While Blomley's (2004, p. 131) work in Canada suggests, "Native people have not only resisted historic dispossession but have also remapped a continuing Native presence reminding observers that the settler city not only was but still is Native land". As such, counter-mapping by Indigenous communities in the Canadian context works in similar ways to counter-surveillance in the Australian Aboriginal context, by marking attempts to reframe settler colonial narratives. Evie's account adds to these debates by suggesting that while the police use 'stop and search' to racially control space and continue the dispossession of land; Aboriginal people continue to (re)claim belonging to these spaces and demonstrate agency in developing techniques to stay safe during police encounters. As such, this reveals

some of the ways that policing has emerged as a key issue for Black Lives Matter in Sydney.

5.42 *Racialization of 'stop and search' in London*

In London, 'stop and search' is a long-standing issue that has emerged as key for the Black Lives Matter movement. William, a Black man, from Croydon, explained why he got involved with the Black Lives Matter movement:

Like I said, when I was a bit younger, there was robbing, gang activity, drugs in my community. The police came in, they patrolled and watched us. I got used to being stopped.

Dan: How did the police watch?

William: 'Stop and search' is regular you know. Happens all the time. They see a Black man walking the street, they search him. Its regular. You don't have to do anything wrong; you've just got to be Black.

[...]

William: They just think you've got a knife or part of a gang. It's a big part because every Black person has the fear of being stopped. You don't know what's going to happen next.

Dan: Why did you get stopped?

William: Because I am Black, and they think I'm up to no good.

(William).

William's experiences and perceptions of the police draw parallels with other Black Lives Matter activists who I spoke with in London. On social media, campaigns

to halt practices of 'stop and search' (and the controversial section 60)⁷⁶ are prominent within Black Lives Matter activism. I attended a Black Lives Matter forum, where, Reyes, a South-Asian man, spoke about his most recent experience of 'stop and search':

The Met police was tailgating me. I asked what the search was for, they threw handcuffs on me. They said my vehicle was smelling of cannabis which wasn't true. They started making up other things [...] They said that they believed I had class A or B drugs. They smashed my window in within 4 minutes. I got assaulted, drug tested. They arrested me, I got taken into custody. [...] I got strip searched but again, nothing found. When they released me in the morning, I got put under investigation for obstructing the drugs search. But nothing was found [...] Only 2 weeks ago, I was stopped again. Put in handcuffs. They said I had stolen property in my vehicle. To me it's just racist policing. When they don't find anything, they want to incriminate people.

(Ethnographic notes: Reyes, 17th October 2019).

These accounts give insight into why 'stop and search' has emerged as a key issue for Black Lives Matter campaigners in London. The targeted surveillance and searching of Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities' illuminates racialized police perceptions of criminality and the 'real' impacts of structural racism in policing. Similar experiences of racial stigma were documented in Pittman's (2020) work in retail settings, suggesting that Black shoppers must negotiate racial hierarchies when shopping, including being suspected of shoplifting. Pittman (2020, p. 3) argues that racial stigma in such spaces "raises the costs and reduces the rewards" for Black shoppers. William and Reyes' accounts reveals the ways that Black Asian Minority Ethnic people are similarly stigmatized as criminals in London, and how 'routine'

⁷⁶ "Section 60 (s60) of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (CJPOA) enables officers to conduct 'no suspicion' 'stop and search' for dangerous instruments or offensive weapons" (Home Office, 2022).

experiences of 'stop and search' work to dilute the "reward" of walking in public space or driving a car. Moreover, such excessive targeting contributes to further marginalising Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities in society (Honwana, 2019, p. 11).

Joseph-Salisbury et al., (2020, p. 5) argue, "the police (and societal) 'intelligence' that precedes police interactions is racialized in such a way as to produce racist outcomes". Reyes' account illuminates the depths that police "intelligence" is racialized, as he was suspected of first, being in possession of drugs and second, being in possession of stolen property. Institutionally armed with section 60 of the of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, the police were able to 'stop and search' Reyes on both occasions, despite him not committing any crimes. This demonstrates how 'slow' and 'less visible' forms of violence (e.g., racialized suspicion and surveillance) are connected to violence that then becomes actionable through intelligence (e.g., 'stop and search'). As such, this gives explanation for why William had a fear of being stopped, as he seemed to indicate a fear that a routine 'stop and search' could quickly escalate onto physical violence, incarceration or worse.

Racialized perceptions of criminality are not fixed within policing but are also seen in wider society. As Elliot-Cooper (2019, p. 543) points out, in places such as London and Manchester "gangs have become the Black devil folk used to justify racist state violence". William's account adds to this, through illustrating how racialized police perceptions of knife and gang violence justifies the searching of Black bodies. As such, the searching of 'deviant' (Hope, 2019, p. 223) bodies is seen as necessary to protect society from (Black) criminal gangs and knife crime. These empirical accounts further reveal how public space has become racialized space through employing racialized suspicion, surveillance and 'stop and search' strategies. As such, Section 60, which works on a highly subjective measure of what constitutes "suspicion" and gives (racist) institutional support for individual police officers to make judgments on who is suspicious. Yet, racial violence projected through Section 60; on both individual and institutional levels, should be understood as mutually constituted because they each reciprocally produce justifications for racializing criminality. Racialized intelligence thus plays a key role in the

disproportionate ways that people in London are stopped and searched and works to restrict mobilities and exclude Black Asian Minority Ethnic people from certain public spaces. As such, this provides insight into why 'stop and search' has emerged as a key issue for Black Lives Matter in London.

5.5 Police brutality and racialized deaths in custody and in prison

I now turn to the most representable and physical forms of police violence, where I refer to some of the key cases surrounding Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal deaths in custody and in prison. As such, this reveals how 'slow' and 'less visible' forms of violence feed into the 'fast' and 'highly visible' ways that Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal communities die in custody and in prison. I argue that such 'extreme'⁷⁷ cases of racial police violence in London and Sydney provide catalyst moments in transnational Black Lives Matter activism, as well as provide explanation for why transnational Black Lives Matter activism is necessary, and what this enables in terms of ideas and initiatives surrounding campaigns to 'defund the police' and for prison abolitionism. Moreover, I suggest racialized deaths in custody and in prison stem from uneven racialized suspicion, surveillance, and the searching of Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal bodies, that set's the context for deaths in custody to happen. This reveals the different ways that racialized deaths in custody shape Black Lives Matter activism across place.

5.51 Deaths in custody

A 'death in custody' is broadly understood as "a death of those in custody of the state". The UK Crown Prosecution Service (2020) give detail on the types of spaces and situations where a death is considered a 'death in custody':

- whilst under arrest in a police station;
- whilst held as a prisoner in a prison or police station;

⁷⁷ This not to suggest that these acts are "extreme", as it is argued that such extreme forms of brutality have become the norm.

- whilst under arrest by a police officer;
- whilst being detained for the purposes of a search;
- whilst in other lawful detention e.g. immigration detention (but not where the victim is compulsorily detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 **except** where the person is still in police custody before being transferred to a medical facility);
- whilst a child or young person is in custody for their own protection;
- as a result of being shot by a police officer; or
- following any other 'contact with the police' where there may be a link between the contact and the death.

In Australia, Aboriginal deaths in police custody have long been recognised as a key issue and the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) was created in 1987 in response to high incidences of Aboriginal deaths in custody⁷⁸ during the 1980's, where over 100 deaths were investigated (Cunneen, 2001, p. 53). In 1991, the RCIADIC submitted its report to the federal government and made 339 recommendations to prevent Aboriginal deaths in police custody, but very few have been implemented. In addition, since the 1991 RCIADIC report was published, there has been at least 437⁷⁹ more Aboriginal deaths in custody (Allam, Wahlquist, Evershed, 2020).

Black Lives Matter activists in the UK have also sought to draw attention to the disproportionate rates that Black Asian Minority Ethnic people die in police custody. For example, a study into deaths in custody in England and Wales between 2010-2020 shows that while Black people account for 3% of the population of England and Wales, Black people account for 8% of all deaths in custody. These figures suggest that a Black person is more than twice as likely to die in police custody than a White person (Afzal, 2020).

⁷⁸ Deaths include those who died while under police pursuit, arrest, in prison and detention centres.

⁷⁹ By June 2020.

5.52 *Aboriginal deaths in police custody*

In February 2004, a 17-year-old boy named TJ Hickey died after being impaled on a fence, following an encounter with police. The death of TJ in police custody was the catalyst for what would become known as the 'Redfern Riots' (Newman-Storen, 2008), which in turn, became a catalyst itself for wider debates on issues of police violence, racism and Aboriginal inequality in both Sydney and in the wider Australian context (Budarick, 2011, p. 38). Importantly, the work of Black Lives Matter in Sydney does not end with TJ's case but draws on other Aboriginal deaths in police custody. Black Lives Matter activists emphasised the importance of making connections amongst different Aboriginal deaths in custody cases to address the wider issue of structural racism in policing. Caroline, an Aboriginal woman, told me why this is an issue for Black Lives Matter:

There are lots of similarities between Black Lives Matter and the oppression by police of Aboriginal people [in Australia] and First Nations in North America as well. These are issues that we have been addressing for quite a long time. What the Black Lives Matter movement has done, is to publicise, and use social media to highlight and document those crimes as they actually occur and then raise the issue [of Aboriginal deaths in custody] more generally. Globally, as well.

[...]

The use of police as a force of control of Aboriginal people is still very much institutionalised today. That's why you get such a high rate of Aboriginal deaths in custody [...] Mr Ward [2008], an Elder in WA [Western Australia] who was put into the back of a truck and taken 300km in the back. There was no air conditioning, and he was killed through that process. His skin had burnt to the base of the truck [...] it's a combination of institutional racism and racism on an individual level. Another case, Ms Dhu [2014] was jailed in WA for failing to pay fines. She was in pain, and they took her to the hospital and back without her

being properly assessed. So really, she died because of her own poverty [...] Tanya Day [2017] needed medical attention and was taken in jail because she was drunk on a train. So, they jailed her, and she has multiple falls and instead of giving her medical treatment, they locked her up [...] Eric Whittaker [2017] is another case, he was picked up for warrant. They chained him to a bed and his family had to come and see him with his feet chained to the foot of the bed.⁸⁰

(Caroline).

Caroline's account exposes the scale of Aboriginal deaths in custody and the role of Black Lives Matter in mediating and drawing attention to the issue. While all these cases represent physical and brutal forms of violence at the hands of the police, they also reveal the 'slow' and violent ways that Aboriginal bodies were dehumanized in police custody prior to their deaths. For example, the declaration that Mr Ward had died is presented as 'fast' and 'highly visible', but the way he died was 'slow' and 'less visible', as he slowly burned to death in the back of metal caged truck. In each case mentioned, Aboriginal people died in custody because they were denied their basic human needs. While the Black Lives Matter movement has most prominently drawn attention to the police shootings of young, Black men in the US (Chernega, 2016, p. 234), these cases indicate death through negligence in the Aboriginal context.

Work on dehumanisation has reduced Black people as "animalistic", "violent" and "criminals" who should be feared (Adedoyin et al., 2019, p. 115) and thus are given sub-human status and denied of their basic human rights (Boucher, 2019, p. 7).⁸¹ In the case of Mr Ward, he was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol. After being denied bail, he was transported four and a half hours from Laverton to Kalgoorlie in Western Australia. The temperature was reported to be above 41 Celsius and Mr Ward later died in hospital after suffering from heat stroke and third-degree burns to his abdomen (Aboriginal Legal Service of Western

⁸⁰ Note: all cases mentioned resulted in Aboriginal deaths in custody.

⁸¹ As in the example of French settlers in Algeria.

Australia, N.D.). The failure to provide Mr Ward with basic human needs such as sufficient water supplies and air conditioning, as well as medical attention, illuminate such dehumanization and how he was stripped of his basic human rights.

As Sturman (2003, pp) suggests, the dehumanization of Aboriginal people often creates feelings of “inadequacy” and “self-doubt” and institutionalises people, “not so much through institutions of the past as our people have suffered, but rather society in itself becomes the institution”. As such, the treatment of Aboriginal bodies in such violent ways, is justified through broader ideas of racialized criminality and perceptions of “who is disposable and who is not” (Mbembe, 2003, p. 27). The case of Tanya Day further illustrates the interconnections between different forms of violence, as she was first, racially profiled by police, second searched, and then taken into custody on the grounds of public intoxication, where she later died. As such, the dehumanization of Aboriginal bodies by police, not only has physical impact in such cases, but also shapes a chronic fear for Aboriginal people, that non-physical violence may quickly escalate into physical forms. Expressions of racial violence in policing are thus connected to time, space, and different intensities of violence (Colebrook, 2020, p. 497).

While Caroline’s account indicates that institutional racism sets a pre-cursor for Aboriginal deaths in police custody. Other accounts similarly sought to draw on the systematic nature of Aboriginal deaths in custody:

Grayson: You can’t just focus on one death in custody case. You’ve got to focus on them all because the problem is systemic [...] they are all connected.

(Grayson).

Grayson and Caroline’s testimonies seem to reject prevailing explanations that a ‘few bad apples’ are responsible for racialization in the criminal justice system; and thus, can be ‘fixed’ through removing the ‘bad apples’ (Sandoval, 2020). They seem to support arguments that suggest “it is not a few bad apples, but a rotten apple cart;

in referring to the systematic nature of why Aboriginal deaths in custody happen at disproportionate rates (Joseph-Salisbury 2021, p. 6). There have been over 437 Aboriginal deaths since the 1991 Royal Commission report made its recommendations into Aboriginal deaths in custody (Allam, Wahlquist, Evershed, 2020), and not a single police officer or prison guard has been made criminally responsible to date;⁸² thus, illustrating the scale of racial injustice. While scholarship has used slow violence in conceptualising various institutional forms of violence (e.g., Gamu and Dauvergne, 2018; Ward, 2015), Grayson and Caroline's accounts add to this by exposing the structural nature of Aboriginal deaths in custody.

5.53 *Black Asian Minority Ethnic deaths in police custody*

In London, Black Asian Minority Ethnic deaths in custody has been a pressing issue in Black Lives Matter campaigns. Karen, a young, Black woman told me why she first got involved with Black Lives Matter:

Why did I get involved with Black Lives Matter? We just want them [the police] to stop killing us. People think it just happens in America, but it happens here as well.

[...]

Police in England are institutionally racist and that's why they [the police] are killing Black people and getting away with it.

(Karen).

What Karen says is representative of other Black Lives Matter activists that I engaged with in London. There is feeling amongst activists that while police shootings and subsequent killings of young Black men in the US are important, Black Asian Minority Ethnic deaths in custody are also happening in London and the wider UK. This poses questions of American exceptionalism on race and challenges

⁸² As of July 2022.

the idea that the US Black Lives Matter movement is replicated across place. Carby (2021) in her book review of Wilkerson's *Caste*, discusses the role of American exceptionalism on race and critical race theory, suggesting much academic work has focused on the American experience of 'Blackness' and has failed to account for other diasporas. What Karen says supports this, as she looks to decentre the narrative away from the US and onto structural forms of racism in London.

There seems to be a suggestion that structural racism in UK policing is not only manifested through racialized deaths in custody, but also through not holding individual police officers to account. This is reflected in the cases of Mark Duggan (2011), Rashan Charles (2017) and Edson da Costa (2017), who were all killed in police custody in London and officers were not held accountable. While the death of Stephen Lawrence (1993) in a racially motivated attack was catalytic in igniting conversations on institutional racism in UK policing, parallels are seen in Julia Dehm's (2020, p. 220) work on climate change, indicating that slow forms of violence are manifested through the "deferral of responsibility" by states and corporate polluters, as well as the refusal for reparation for "loss and damage". As such, this draws some similarities with Karen's testimony; in that violence does not end when a person has died in custody but continues to manifest itself through struggles for justice and accountability. This further exposes the intersections of different forms of police violence as existing on a continuum.

Following the death of Stephen Lawrence and subsequent incompetence by the Met's police investigation⁸³ which revealed the depths of structural racism in the London Met Police, Stuart Hall (1999, p. 187-188) questions, "who guards the guards?" The cases of Edson da Costa and Rashan Charles (as well as Mark Duggan) are commonly referenced by Black Lives Matter activists as pivotal moments in exposing structural racism. Both Black men died within a 31-day period; da Costa died after being stopped and searched by police in Beckton, where he attempted to put multiple bags of class A drugs into his mouth and died following police restraint, as he could no longer breathe (Townsend, 2020). Rashan Charles died in similar circumstances in Hackney after being pursued and restrained by police. He

⁸³ As revealed through the Macpherson Inquiry (1999).

swallowed a package containing paracetamol and caffeine and following police restraint died because of an obstruction in his airway (Taylor, 2018).

Following inquests into both cases, officers were found not to be responsible for the deaths of either men; thus, once again asking the question; “who guards the guards?” (Hall, 1999, p. 187-188). While the Macpherson Inquiry (1999) exposed the “professional incompetence, institutional racism and failure of leadership by senior officers” following the death of Stephen Lawrence (Lea, 2000, p. 219), the cases of Duggan, da Costa, and Charles⁸⁴ question how much progress has been made on institutional racism in the London Metropolitan police. Interestingly, both Lawrence and Duggan’s deaths precede the Black Lives Matter movement, yet these cases are still referenced by activists today, which indicates the movements’ ability to build on historical acts of racial police violence. Such debates remain relevant today, as Black Lives Matter activists in London continue to call for acknowledgement of institutional racism by the London Metropolitan Police (Black Lives Matter, UK, N.D). However, as Rowe (2012, p. 38) points out, the response by the London Metropolitan police in diversifying the recruitment of its workforce to include more Black Asian Minority Ethnic officers, has merely resulted in the marginalisation of Ethnic Minority police officers, and has not sufficiently addressed racial discrimination (also; Cockcroft, 2013).

Alternative accounts focused on personal experiences of racialized deaths in custody. For example, William got involved in activism following the death of a close friend, who died in police custody following a ‘routine’ ‘stop and search’:

My best friend died at a police station. He was arrested, taken to the police station. I think the night before he died, we were meant to go out. But then I get a call, and he is dead. Then I was upset, and it was like me against the world. [...] It’s actually a big reason why I became an activist.

⁸⁴ Along with Nuno Cardoso, Jermain Baker, Julian Cole, Olaseni Lewis, Sean Rigg and many more (Lawrence-Jones, 2020).

(William).

While in Sydney, I met with and spoke to many Black Lives Matter activists who were directly impacted by a death in custody case; in London, William was the only participant who spoke about a personal experience on this issue. During the interview, William was emotional and indicated that this was a difficult topic for him to talk about. However, this personal experience was also a catalyst event, in his decision to become an activist, and later get involved with Black Lives Matter. As such, William's testimony not only reveals how a 'routine' 'stop and search' escalated into the death of his friend, but also the ways that participants demonstrate agency and resistance in response to such tragic events. This has also been evident following the death of George Floyd and subsequent wave of Black Lives Matter protests in London, with calls growing to not only stop police violence, but to systematically 'defund the police', with some arguing for a radical restricting of police powers and autonomy (Fleetwood and Lea, 2021, p. 2), while others argue for the redirection of police funding into community and social support (Joseph-Salisbury et al., 2021 p. 21).

While limited meaningful structural action has yet to take place in terms of 'defunding the police', Black Lives Matter activist voices were pivotal in the resignation of London Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick, after "failing to acknowledge racism within the force" (Dodd and Skopeliti, 2022). In addition to prompting a nation-wide 'working group on racism' in the National Police Chief Council (NPCC) in 2021, with independent chair, Abimbola Johnson⁸⁵ asserting, "plan[s] needs to accept institutional racism, if it is to be anti-racist... the idea is to win the trust of Black communities, policing needs to start by acknowledging both the historical and current manifestations of racism in policing" (Dodd, 2021).

Other accounts sought to draw on the issue of UK Black deaths in police custody to challenge narratives that essentialise Black Lives Matter and police

⁸⁵ Abimbola Johnson is a Black, woman and barrister who is tasked with scrutinising proposals from the NPCC in tackling racism in England's police forces.

brutality “as a US thing” (Joseph-Salisbury et al., p. 21). Jessie, a Black woman, originally from the US, moved to London as a child and got involved with the first Black Lives Matter protests in London in 2016. When talking about those first protests and her subsequent involvement with the Black Lives Matter movement in London, she expressed:

Oh, people don't think it [racialized deaths in custody] is as bad as in America because we don't have guns. But then they were listing names of people that died in police custody in this country.

[...]

It's [Black Lives Matter] important because Black people are dying here [in London] too.

(Jessie).

Jessie has long campaigned against police brutality and Black deaths in custody in the US, however it was not until she got involved with Black Lives Matter in London that she became aware of the scale of racialized deaths in custody in the UK. Perez (2020, p. 36) in his work on Black Lives Matter in the Pacific Islands, offers a criticism of Pacific Island politicians who stand in solidarity with Black Lives Matter in the US, but fail to acknowledge the police brutality and structural racism that is happening in their own countries, referring to this as “Blackwashing”. While solidarity with Black deaths in the US is key, Perez (2020) highlights how many Black, Indigenous and Pacific Islander communities are drawing on Black Lives Matter to address the structural racism in their own countries. William and Jessie's accounts seem to build on this, indicating that while Black Lives Matter in London offers solidarity to Black deaths in US custody, they also mark attempts to address Black Asian Minority Ethnic deaths in UK custody. As such, the issue of racialized deaths in custody marks a catalyst in Black Lives Matter activism and offers insight into why the movement is seen as necessary in London, as well as the possibilities in terms of ‘defunding the police’.

5.54 *Aboriginal Deaths in Prison*

While the previous section draws on Aboriginal and Black Asian Minority Ethnic deaths in police custody, here I expand on the continuum of police violence to include discussion of Aboriginal deaths in prison. In this short section, I focus on the Sydney context, and provide insight into the death of David Dungay Jnr in 2015, as a central case in shaping Black Lives Matter activism in Sydney. As such, this reveals how Black Lives Matter activism seeks to challenge the carceral system and is central in renewed calls to 'defund the police' and prison abolitionism.

David was a 26-year-old, Dunghutti, man, born in Kempsey, New South Wales. David had been described to me as an "outgoing character with a good heart".⁸⁶ He was a keen sportsman and known for his love of poetry. After leaving school, David became known to Kempsey local police and was later charged with robbery in 2007, aggravated attempted sexual assault and actual bodily harm in 2008. On January 22nd, 2008, David was taken into custody and received a nine-and-a-half-year sentence with no parole at Long Bay Correctional Complex in Sydney (Justice Action, N.D). David was said to have developed several behavioural problems while in prison, including schizophrenia. This led to him being placed as an involuntary patient inmate. David also had other medical needs. He was a diabetic, and after buying a packet of biscuits from the prison shop, the nurses were concerned that this may have elevated his blood sugar levels and he needed medical care (Deep-Jones, 2017). However, he did not get the medical care he needed.

A prison guard called for the Immediate Action Team (IAT), who stormed David's cell, where he stood alone eating biscuits. The plan was to transfer David to another cell, but after he refused to stop eating the biscuits, six guards took David to the ground, where one administered a sedative. Video footage shows David screaming "I can't breathe" 12 times while being pinned to the ground by guards. He then lost consciousness and was left to die on floor for several minutes, until anyone attempted any form of resuscitation. It was too late. David died in December 2015, just three weeks before he was due to stand before a parole hearing. The coroner

⁸⁶ By Evie.

found that no-one was to blame for David's death and did not recommend any charges be made to the prison guards involved (Davidson, 2020).

David's case was at the centre of the first large-scale Black Lives Matter protest in Sydney in 2019 and has continued to be a key reference point for Aboriginal activists. Evie is the cousin of David, and she described the pain that she and her family has suffered after losing him:

Unless something drastic happens, and Australia wakes up the reality of why we say 'Black Lives Matter'. I understand that for a lot of Australians and for a lot of White people here say, 'Black Lives Matter, that's an American thing. You know, it's not in Australia'. Excuse me, go and check the statistics. Go and check the murders of Aboriginal men and women under police duress; last time I checked, that comes under Black Lives derivative. Black boys, Black men, women, children being killed by a fucking police officer or someone who owns a badge or someone who is part of government. In my cousins' case, David Dungay, you can see Eric Garner, we shadow these two cases from America to here because our poor brother Eric over there and my cousin David here, their last words that are physically seen and recorded on fucking video are "I can't breathe". And yet the world can watch that and say, 'well, he should have complied with police'. They should have complied; excuse me? Have you not seen the video? What part of blindness did you not remove when you watched the video? To watch young men physically held down, restrained in a chokehold to the extremity where they are screaming for breath and then a minute later, you still watch this video while their dead bodies are laying in front of you. But then they tell you; it was an accident; that was protocol; that was policy; they should have complied. And you can hear that hundreds of times outside the courthouse, I had to hear it with my poor Auntie.

[...]

And then you can go and sit in a fucking coroners court and listen to 6 murderers. That's what I say, murderers. Walk out scratch free because there wasn't proper training. It's just bullshit. Another young brother gets sent to the grave, no justice.

(Evie).

As Evie indicates, the circumstances surrounding David's death draws many parallels with the death of Eric Garner in Staten Island,⁸⁷ New York, in 2014. This is an important connection to make as both David and Eric's last words, as seen on video, were "I can't breathe"; as they were physically restrained, and this prompted a similar response by Black Lives Matter activists taking to the streets and courtroom in both contexts. As such, this reveals how local interpretations intersect with transnational ideas of Black Lives Matter. There are also important temporalities here, as the words "I can't breathe", more than five years later, where the last words of George Floyd, who died in police custody in Minneapolis, Minnesota in the US (Singh, 2020). Scholarship has conceptualised the use of "I can't breathe" in Black Lives Matter activism as manifesting the different ways that structural racism is suffocating (Apata, 2020, p. 241), including through pollution (Roberts et al., 2022, p. 1) and the disproportionate rates that Black Asian Minority Ethnic people died because of covid-19 (Mukhtar, 2021, p. 255).

Walcott et al., (2018, p. 82-83) indicate that while Black Lives Matter sprang into action in light of specific cases of police violence in the US, the travelling of the movement is underpinned not by specific events, but rather "sits in a genealogy of Black activist eruptions meant to transform the state as we know it [...] Black people in the US and elsewhere have been shocked and traumatized by forms of naked racist violence that many perceive to be behind us". While David's last words were the same as Eric Garner's (and George Floyd's) and enabled transnational connections to be made, Walcott's perspective reminds of us the importance in situating the Black Lives Matter movement in the historical struggles of state and

⁸⁷ Which along with the death of Mike Brown, was a catalyst for the Ferguson uprising.

police violence. As such, David and Eric's deaths are catalytic in sparking place-based Black Lives Matter activism, but their deaths have wider significance in drawing attention to the structural racism that precedes the Black Lives Matter movement.

Evie's account indicates the centrality of place-based violence and seems to reject US imperialist ideas on racial violence, asserting that Aboriginal deaths in custody and in prison are not Black Lives Matter 'as well', but rather are 'Black Lives Matter'. On this note, Strong (2017, p. 13) proposes that while the Black Lives Matter movement offers the most promise in the fight against white supremacy, privilege, and power for the "global Black family", scholars should be cautious not to essentialise the movement in the American context and attend to the movement outside of the US. Evie's testimony connects Aboriginal deaths in prison directly to the state, suggesting that Davis's death and subsequent lack of justice represents violence through the contemporary manifestation of anti-Black colonialism. This marks an explicit way that Black Lives Matter in the Sydney context is directly connected to decolonial struggles. This claim is supported by Green (2019), whose work on the policing of Aboriginal people in New South Wales argues that colonialism runs deep through the structures of policing, and thus is evidenced through the negative and disproportionate number of Aboriginal-police encounters, which leads to their overrepresentation in the criminal justice system and deaths in police custody.

The impact of structural racism is never singular, but results in disproportionality (Bailey, 2017, p. 1455; Cunneen and Porter, 2017, p. 669; Siegel, 2020, p. 1071). At Invasion Day 2020, I was made aware of the deaths of two other young Aboriginal men in prison; Tane Chatfield and Nathan Reynolds. In 2017, 22-year-old Tane Chatfield died in hospital after being held at Tamworth Correctional Centre in New South Wales while on trial. His death was unexpected and said to 'not be suspicious' (Cromb, 2020). In 2018, 36-year-old Nathan Reynolds died in a Correctional Centre police cell in Western Sydney. He died following a severe asthma attack, after prison guards did not respond to calls for help for 20-40 minutes (Gibson, 2018).

These cases, along with the case of David Dungay Jnr are important reference points for activists in highlighting the structural impact of Aboriginal deaths in prison. Writing in *Indigenous X*, Cromb discusses the need to reignite conversations on 'defunding the police' and prison abolitionism:

We say that the prison system itself is destructive and the bars must come down. There is no rehabilitation, there is no making society any safer. People go in and just get an education in how to be a better criminal. They have their mental health destroyed. They develop no skills and get no opportunities to better contribute to society. We say build communities not prisons. We can see from the evidence in this inquest that Black Lives still don't matter in the NSW prison system. Throughout this [Tane Chatfield] inquest we have seen plenty of people trying to cover each other's arses (2020, p. 1).

The issue of Aboriginal deaths in prison, as highlighted through the cases of David, Tane and Nathan reignited debates on prisons in Australia. The above account illustrates much of what I heard from Black Lives Matter activists in the field, in documenting the disproportionate rates of Aboriginal incarceration, deaths in custody and in prison, followed by injustice. This further illuminates the ways that expressions of racism through police violence can be understood as existing on a continuum and give some explanation into why Black Lives Matter activists have a fear that one form of police violence may lead to another. While in London, some, (albeit limited) acknowledgement has been made by police forces in the need to address racism, in Sydney, calls from activists to 'defund the police' and for prison abolitionism have not been met with the same degree of optimism (Knaus and McGowen, 2021). However, as Joseph-Salisbury et al., (2021, p, 21) indicate, abolitionism is first about "imagining" a world without the police and second, "creating futures beyond policing".

On the issue of prison abolitionism, I worked with Ben for over two and a half months at Justice Alliance,⁸⁸ a local Sydney based NGO, working on the human rights of incarcerated people in Australia. Ben was involved in David Dungay's case and has worked on penal reform for decades and is a former prisoner himself. He expressed why prison abolitionism in Australia is key addressing structural racism:

Prison should not be understood as punishment but rehabilitation. But what happens is people serving short sentences misbehave and then they are disproportionately punished or given longer sentences. The system makes it harder for prisoners to escape and keeps punishing them.

[...]

You've got to remember, David Dungay, here in Sydney was killed for eating a biscuit. What happened to David could have happened to anyone. But it didn't, it happened because he was Aboriginal.

(Ben).

Ben's testimony draws parallels with Foucault's (1977, p. 277) claim that the prison has succeeded in "producing the delinquent as a pathological subject" and illuminates the intensified ways that Aboriginal people experience "revolving door" imprisonment (Cracknell, 2021, p. 7). As such, Ben's remarks suggest that the prison does not function to rehabilitate, but to continuously punish prisoners. On this issue, Angela Davis famously referred to prisons as "obsolete":

The prison therefore functions ideologically as an abstract site into which undesirables are deposited, relieving us of the responsibility of thinking about the real issues afflicting those communities from which prisoners are drawn in such disproportionate numbers. This is the

⁸⁸ Justice Alliance is a pseudonym.

ideological work that the prison performs [...] Despite the important antiracist social movements over the last half century, racism hides from view within institutional structures, and its most reliable refuge is the prison system (Davis, 2003, p. 103).

While prison abolitionism activism emerged in the US during the 1960s, Black Lives Matter has reignited debates on prisons and has been referred to as “the emerging movement for police and prison abolitionism” (Taylor, 2021). The participant accounts reveal how ideas of police and prison abolitionism are connected to structural police violence and decolonization. As seen through Evie, Ben, and Comb’s (2020) accounts, Davis’ perspective holds relevance beyond time and place, and this is reflected in how ideas of Black Lives Matter are understood in Sydney. As such, this reveals some of the ways that Black Lives Matter activists demonstrate agency and look to “create futures beyond policing” (Joseph-Salisbury et al., 2021, p, 21).

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has suggested that the issue of racialized policing is central in understanding the mobilization and creative adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter across transnational place. In framing expressions of racism through police violence as existing on a continuum, this chapter has revealed the interconnections between different forms of slow (Nixon, 2011; Pain 2019) and fast (Christian and Dowler, 2019; Colebrook, 2020) police violence. This has shown how racialized suspicion and surveillance is connected to racialized ‘stop and search’, and the disproportionate rates that Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal people are incarcerated and die in custody. In doing so, I add to scholarship that challenges the binaries of violence and reveal how different forms of police violence are co-constituted (Cahill and Pain, 2019; Christian and Dowler, 2019; Cuomo, 2016; Pain, 2015; Pain and Cahill, 2022). This exposes the different ways that criminality is racialized, and how racial police violence shapes spaces of racial exclusion and

restricts mobilities both consciously (e.g., through suspicion and surveillance) and physically (e.g., through incarceration and brutality) from wider society.

Through examining slow and “routinized” (Bagelman and Gitome, 2021, p. 360) forms of police violence, this chapter revealed racialized perceptions of criminality within policing and how this is manifested through the uneven targeting of surveillance on ‘deviant’ (Hope, 2019, p. 223) Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal bodies. Foucault’s (1977) work on the panopticon is central to this analysis and gives insight into the self-regulating impacts of racialized surveillance and how participants were aware of their “hypervisibility” (Khoury, 2009) and in some cases, sought to alter behaviours in navigating spaces of in/visibility. As such, chronic fear of what may happen if being watched, including escalation onto other forms of violence (e.g., incarceration and death in police custody), played a key role in creating spaces of racial exclusion (e.g., on the streets and in shopping centres) and in restricting mobilities. ‘Stop and search’ demonstrates the point when intelligence becomes actionable, and how racialized intelligence creates racialized outcomes (Joseph-Salisbury et al., 2020, p. 5). However, Black Lives Matter activists sought to counter-surveillance through using technologies (e.g., Copwatch; IWTCW) to avoid police encounters and build community solidarity against racist policing, as well as developing behavioural techniques to stay safe during police encounters, including, the dissemination of legal rights, mobile phones, and parental guidance on how to manage police interactions. This shows some of the ways that Black Lives Matter activists sought to resist racial police violence in (re)claiming rights to space.

Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal deaths in police custody and in prison are presented as catalytic events in transnational Black Lives Matter activism which are central in drawing attention to place-based racial police violence. As such, Black Lives Matter activists in London and Sydney have not only stood in solidarity with Black deaths in US police custody, but also sought to raise issues of racialized deaths in custody and in prison in their own localities. This shows how Black Lives Matter is adopted and adapted across transnational place and picks up on and raises awareness of long-standing struggles against racialized police violence.

The cases of London and Sydney reveal some similarities in the ways that participants sought to challenge US centric narratives of Black Lives Matter, rejecting notions that Black Lives Matter here ‘too’, but rather, Black Lives Matter ‘here’. As such, this reveals the different ways that participants stand in solidarity with the US, but also sought to reshape Black Lives Matter in the context of racial police violence in their own localities. Differences are seen through how participant accounts in London seemed to indicate that they were stopped and searched because of a racialized suspicion of having committed a crime (e.g., possession of drugs) and through section 60. While in Sydney, some participants talked about being stopped not necessarily on the grounds of criminal suspicion, but for being ‘out of area’ or using public space. This seems to suggest that that while in London, trivial reasons were used by the police to justify ‘stop and search’, in Sydney, the police did not always feel the need to justify stopping Aboriginal people, and this illuminates the centrality of Aboriginal land dispossession in shaping the narrative of Black Lives Matter in Sydney.

There was also a key difference in terms of counter-surveillance, with participants in London, such as David, altering his behaviour and acting ‘White’, in attempting to navigate the in/visibility of suspicion and surveillance. While in Sydney, participants signalled those police encounters were inevitable and focused more on strategies to either actively avoid contact with police or keep safe during encounters. Differences are also seen in how structural racism within policing is understood; in Sydney, participants directly framed Aboriginal experiences of racial police violence within the context of settler colonialism and the dispossession of Aboriginal land. While in London, participant accounts indicated structural racism in policing emerged directly from racialized perceptions of criminality and deviance, with Black Asian Minority Ethnic people unevenly targeted. While Black Lives Matter activists calls to ‘defund the police’ and for prison abolitionism were evident in both London and Sydney, the resignation of London Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick and the creation of the NPCC ‘working group on racism’ signal more confidence for structural change in London than in Sydney. However, abolitionism begins with “imagining” (Joseph-Salisbury et al., 2021, p, 21), and calls to defund the police and prisons signal key possibilities within

transnational Black Lives Matter activism. This marks some of the different ways that Black Lives Matter is reshaped and redeveloped transnational across place and reframes diverse long-standing struggles against racial police violence as issues for Black Lives Matter.

Chapter 6.0 Neoliberal urbanism, territorial stigma, and Black Lives Matter

6.1 Introduction

I now turn to the issue of neoliberal urbanism in examining the transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter movement. Drawing on activist perspectives, I argue that Black Lives Matter exposes the way neoliberal urbanism and racial violence are mutually constituted and both London and Sydney illustrate distinct yet connected aspects of this connection. The cases of Grenfell Tower in London and The Block in Sydney reveal the different ways that Black Lives Matter shapes the narrative of an event (e.g., Grenfell Tower; The Block), but also how these contexts reshape Black Lives Matter activism. As such, Grenfell demonstrates the centrality of multi-ethnic racial violence in Black Lives Matter London activism, while The Block exposes the connection between Aboriginal land dispossession and Black Lives Matter activism in Sydney. This demonstrates some of the ways that Black Lives Matter takes on new meaning as it travels across transnational place. Neoliberal urbanism is characterised through austerity, budget cuts, gentrification, privatisation and has contributed to a wide-spread endemic culture of divestment in inner-cities (Peck, Theodore, and Brenner, 2009, 2013). Although neoliberal urbanism plays out differently across transnational place, its co-constituted relationship with racial violence is systematic and this has shaped diverse forms of Black Lives Matter resistance in response to events.

By examining the cases of Grenfell Tower in London and The Block in Sydney, this chapter contributes to work on gentrification, neoliberal urbanism, and urban territorial stigma in two ways (Danewid, 2019; Nayak, 2019; Shaw, 2000, 2007; Wacquant, 2007; Wacquant et al., 2014.). First, I consider the transnational place-based impact of neoliberalism in shaping urban contexts and in (re)producing racial violence; with specific reference to how racialized urban territorial stigma both justifies localised divestment and conceals systematic violence. This gives some explanation for why transnational Black Lives Matter activism is seen as necessary in each context. Second, I consider the potential for participant agency and resistance in the face of stigma attached to both racialized identity and place by building on critiques of Wacquant's (2007) thesis that marginalised communities "internalize"

stigma which presents them negatively as victims, undermining agency (Cairns, 2018; Cretan and Powell, 2018; Nayak; 2019). I draw on acts of place-based protest, charity, community organisations stepping in for the state, artwork and nostalgia in re-framing stigma and demonstrating how participants attempt to (re)assert rights to place. As such, this reveals anti-racist and decolonial resistance permeated through Black Lives Matter activism.

By conceptualising Grenfell Tower as the visible tip of the iceberg in understanding racial and class inequality in London; I illuminate the racialized dynamics of neoliberal urbanism, and this relationship is crucial in understanding how the fire unfolded, racialized place-based stigma, and anti-racist resistance from Black Lives Matter activists. While The Block, a former Aboriginal-led social housing neighbourhood in Sydney which was subject to demolition and gentrification (Perheentupa, 2021) further demonstrates the mutually constituted relationship between racial and class violence and how Aboriginal participants sought to challenge territorial stigma and reassert rights to place through nostalgic discourse and artwork. As such, these cases illuminate the different ways that Black Lives Matter is shaped by and responds to neoliberal urban racial violence across transnational place.

While Grenfell Tower and The Block similarly reveal the systematic co-constituted relationship between neoliberal urbanism and racial violence, they also expose key differences in how Black Lives Matter is understood and enacted in each context. In London, Grenfell Tower is embodied through acts of slow violence (Cahill and Pain, 2019; Pain et al., 2019; Pain, 2019), where the multi-ethnic community was racially stigmatized as undeserving and powerless, and suffered violence through negligence. While in Sydney, the case of The Block represents racial violence in more visible ways, through the dispossession of Aboriginal land, and thus signalling the contemporary manifestation of colonialism. As such, the case of Grenfell shows the multi-ethnic take up of Black Lives Matter in London, whereas in Sydney, Black Lives Matter has been forged into Aboriginal rights struggles. Key differences also emerge in how places were stigmatized; with Grenfell Tower illustrating stigma through negligence and isolation, while The Block was territorially stigmatized as a dangerous place that needed “saving” (Lloyd and Bond, 2018). These cases offer

crucial insight into the relationship between neoliberal urbanism and racial violence and give some explanation into the ways that transnational Black Lives Matter activism is shaped across place.

6.2 Race, neoliberal urbanism, and territorial stigma

In 2019 I met Sandra, a Grenfell Tower campaigner, community leader and anti-racist activist who was an organiser for Black Lives Matter in London. I met Sandra at the Grenfell Tower site, and she said:

It's happening [the Grenfell Tower fire] because of neoliberalism. Its systematic. Which is why the [Grenfell Tower] campaign was formed. We felt that we needed to do something to address not just what happened [with the fire] but the deeper systemic problem.

(Sandra).

Peck, Theodore, and Brenner define neoliberal urbanism as:

More social-state retrenchment and paternalist-penal state expansion, privatisation and de-regulation, more subjection of urban development decisions to market logics, a continued delinking of land-use systems from relays of popular-democratic control and public accountability, more courting of mobile events, investment and elite consumers, and a further subordination of place and territory to speculative strategies of profit-making at the expense of values, social needs and public goods (2013, p. 1092).

Seen like this, neoliberal urbanism has many “mutations”⁸⁹ (Peck, 2012, p. 651) and operates in different ways, but it works toward minimising state control over private business, reducing corporation tax, downsizing and/or privatizing the public sector and services, including the welfare state, and works in favour of local competition in stimulating the urban economy (Peck, Theodore and Brenner, 2009, p. 50). As a result, the neoliberal city is thin on public services and welfare and marks an entrepreneurial place where “citizens bear the responsibility for their own successes, failures and welfare” (Büdenbender and Zupan 2017, p. 299).

As Theodore (2020, p. 12) points out, austerity is “part and parcel of the consolidation of neoliberal urbanism, driven by its underlying logics and deepening its effects on governance arrangements and everyday life”. The point here is that austerity is often central to neoliberal urbanism and its impacts are uneven in that public and social services, along with welfare provisions bear the brunt of such state restructuring. This suggests that there are inevitably casualties through neoliberal urbanism, and it is often those on the lower side of the socio-economic scale and marginalised communities that get hit the hardest (Donald et al., 2014, p. 4).

Expanding beyond economics, work on neoliberal urbanism has highlighted its role in producing inequalities, including racial violence. Mele’s (2013, p. 601) work on the redevelopment of Chester, Pennsylvania, argues, colour-blind racial discourse is rooted in neoliberal urbanism, exposing redevelopment as a tool to deflect from structural problems of racism and further isolate poor Ethnic Minority groups. Danewid’s (2020, p. 293-294) work on Grenfell Tower adds to this, suggesting, the “making of global cities has typically gone hand in hand with racialized forms of displacement, dispossession and police violence”, citing neoliberal urbanism and gentrification as central to the process of racialized displacement.

Work on urban territorial stigma is also crucial here in understanding how places become racialized. Wacquant (2007, 2010) is often credited as the first to use the term; combining Goffman’s conceptualisation of stigma as an “attribute, behaviour or reputation which is social discrediting” (1963, p. 3) with Bourdieu’s

⁸⁹ Mutations – meaning neoliberal urbanism has many faces and functions. For example, through austerity and/or gentrification.

(1989) conceptualisation of symbolic power. By combining the two, urban territorial stigma conceptualises stigma not through interactions on the individual level but through the “institutional mechanisms of regulation [...] and through the operation of symbolic power” (Sisson, 2021, p. 661).

Wacquant’s conceptualisation of urban territorial stigma refers to “stigma attached to territory which becomes superimposed onto and redoubles the stigmata of race and poverty” (2010, p. 216). Such stigma then works to further marginalise communities and has been used to explain the creation of the “ghetto” in the US, the “shantytown” in Latin America and the “deteriorating” European city (Wacquant et al., 2014, p. 1270). Territorial stigma creates a list of “notorious neighbourhoods” known locally or sometimes globally, as places to avoid and places “mythical” representations of communities in front of lived experiences (Pinkster et al., 2020, p. 523).

The state is central to such a process, where “blemishes of place” provide the rationale for “fixing” areas and the implementing of neoliberal urban policies (such as gentrification) that work to further marginalise communities and deepen inequalities (Kallin and Slater 2014, p. 1351; Lloyd and Bond, 2018). Paton et al., (2017, p. 580) build on this, suggesting, as stigmatization and redevelopment work in tandem, this creates strategies to manage marginalised populations and commodify land, thus increasing its value, while at the same time, “devaluing” already marginalised people and further producing inequalities. A key element of Wacquant’s (2007, p. 68) thesis suggests that residents often internalize and or even perpetuate stigma themselves.

While urban territorial stigma is a useful concept in understanding how territorial stigma is used to justify the neoliberal urban gentrification of a place, scholarship has suggested that Wacquant’s thesis of stigma represents communities negatively as victims and undermines the potential for agency and resistance (Cairns, 2018; Cretan and Powell, 2018; Nayak 2019). Zebechi (2012, p. 203) refers to this as counterhegemonic and suggests that marginalised populations should be understood through their potential to challenge neoliberalism and regain control of their own territories (also; Kirkness and Tijé-Dra, 2017, p. 160; Schwarze, 2021, p. 1). Others

such as, Nayak (2019, p. 933), have contributed to these debates by examining attempts to “re-script” and “challenge” stigma by industrial workers living in post-industrial cities, such as Middlesbrough. I agree with these critiques of Wacquant’s thesis and in the second part of this chapter, I add to these debates by discussing the different ways that Black Lives Matter activists in London and Sydney sought to resist neoliberal urbanism and (re)claim rights to place. Seen like this, urban territorial stigma is useful in understanding how places become racialized and how this justifies neoliberal urban policies, but attention should also be given to the potential for community agency and resistance through Black Lives Matter activism.

6.3 Grenfell Tower in an era of Black Lives Matter

During my fieldwork in London with Black Lives Matter activists, Grenfell Tower emerged as a central issue in explaining why transnational Black Lives Matter activism was viewed as necessary in London. One of my key informants in London was Sandra, a Black woman, who I spoke with many times and met at the Grenfell site. Sandra’s accounts are key to this chapter, given her proximity to Grenfell. Not only does she live just across the road from Grenfell, and so had experienced similar inequalities in her local community, but she also had close friends who lived in the tower. Sandra has a personal connection to Grenfell; while she had always been a community leader and was a Black Lives Matter organiser, she emerged as a key voice in public campaigns after the Grenfell Tower fire in demanding justice for the community both nationally and internationally.⁹⁰

At 12:54am on the 14th June 2017, a call was made to emergency services to report a fire at Grenfell Tower, a 24-storey building of mostly social housing one- and two-bedroom flats in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Just a few minutes later, the first of four fire trucks arrived at the scene and by 01:07am, the first fire crew entered flat 16, where the initial fire broke out. Within minutes, the fire had spread up the exterior cladding of Grenfell Tower and engulfed most of the upper floors. By 03:00am, all four sides of the building were ablaze (BBC News, 2019,

⁹⁰ Sandra has featured in international media, acknowledging her role as a community leader.

Hokinson, 2019, p. 1, Lamont, 2019). At least⁹¹ 72 people could not escape the burning tower and tragically died that night.

Located in North Kensington's Lancaster West Estate,⁹² Grenfell Tower is within one of the most deprived areas in the country. This is in stark difference to neighbouring Kensington Palace or Knightsbridge, which is amongst some of the least deprived and wealthiest areas in England. Figure 11 highlights the level of deprivation in North Kensington in comparison to other areas within Kensington and Chelsea.



Figure 11 Deprivation in the Kensington and Chelsea.

Source: The Economist, 2017.

While the geography of inequalities is significant, there are also stark differences in the demographics of Kensington and Chelsea. According to the 2011 census, 47.2% of the population in Notting Dale, where Grenfell Tower is located, were from Black Asian Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Camden in comparison, where Kensington Palace is situated, had a much smaller Black Asian Minority Ethnic

⁹¹ I say “at least” because many reports suggest that many undocumented migrants lived in the tower and thus are not accounted for in the death toll (Bulman, 2017; Hiam, 2017). In addition, some reports suggest that the actual death toll (including undocumented migrants) may be up to twice as high as the official 72 deaths reported (Clancy, 2020, p. 12).

⁹² Much of the Lancaster West Estate is social housing.

population (21.7%). Therefore, the proportion of Black Asian Minority Ethnic residents in Notting Dale was 25.5% higher compared to Camden (RBKC, 2012, cited in Clancy 2020, p. 6). While the exact number of people living in Grenfell Tower remains unknown, Danewid (2020, p. 290) points out that many marginalised Ethnic Minorities lived in the tower, including “Black, Brown, Arab, and Muslim, and European migrants and refugees from the Global South”.

According to statistics from 2017, in the year of the fire, the average salary in Kensington and Chelsea was £123,000, which represents the highest in the UK; yet the median annual income for this borough was only £32,700, with many residents in the Lancaster West Estate earning far less (Bell, 2017). Data on life expectancy shows even more stark inequalities; in parts of Kensington and Chelsea near Harrods in Knightsbridge, life expectancy was 95, while a couple of miles down the road, around Grenfell Tower, life expectancy was just 72 (Gentleman, 2017). Social housing in Kensington and Chelsea has rapidly declined over the last two decades, despite growing demand in the borough. In response to the social housing crisis, the Kensington, and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO) was made responsible for managing several council properties on behalf of the RBKC Council in 1996 as an Arm’s Length Management Organisation. By 2017 the KCTMO managed 10,000 council properties, including Grenfell Tower (MacLeod, 2018, p. 472).

While the KCTMO managed Grenfell from an “arm’s length”, the company agreed to undertake refurbishments on the tower between 2015-2016. This refurbishment was worth £8.6 million,⁹³ and included the exterior cladding, replacing windows, installation of a communal heating system and some remodelling of lower floors; however, it did not include sprinklers, fire alarms or an additional escape group, as consistently requested by residents (Vaughan, 2020). The refurbishment was designed by architectural firm Studio Ex; the cladding provided by Arconic; insulation by Celotex and Kingspan; and the work outsourced to construction company the Rydon Group (Fire Protection Association, 2020). Grenfell

⁹³ A drop in the ocean for the RBKC councils £274 million budget for 2017 (Vaughan, 2020).

Tower's exterior was encased with Reynobond PE, an aluminium based material that is highly flammable. The non-flammable alternative Reynobond FR, would have increased cost by just £293, 369 and many argue would have prevented the fire from spreading (Budds, 2017; Vaughan, 2020).

Being occupied by "London's racialized poor" (Danewid, 2020, p. 290), Grenfell thus marks the visible tip of the iceberg in understanding racial and class inequality in London. It has been widely documented that there were early warning signs that the Grenfell fire would happen. For example, the community had repeatedly voiced concerns over insufficient smoke detectors, escape routes and sprinkler systems⁹⁴ (Vaughan, 2020). In November 2016, just seven months before the fire, the Grenfell Action Group published the following blog post:

It is a truly terrifying thought, but the Grenfell Action Group firmly believe that only a catastrophic event will expose the ineptitude and incompetence of our landlord, the KCTMO [Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation], and bring an end to the dangerous living conditions and neglect of health and safety legislation that they inflict upon their tenants and leaseholders. We believe that the KCTMO are an evil, unprincipled, mini mafia who have no business to be charged with the responsibility of looking after the everyday management of large-scale social housing estates and that their sordid collusion with the RBKC [Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea] Council is a recipe for a future major disaster. ... It is our conviction that a serious fire in a tower block or similar high density residential property is the most likely reason that those who wield power at the KCTMO will be found out and brought to justice!" (Grenfell Action Group, 2016, cited in, MacLeod, 2018, p. 468-469).

⁹⁴ Grenfell Tower did not have sufficient smoke detectors, escape routes or sprinkler systems in place.

The concerns over safety that Grenfell residents voiced were ignored by both the local authorities and management of the building. Cooper and Whyte (2018, p. 7-8) in this context argue, the Grenfell Tower fire represents institutional violence at the hands of the local and housing authorities, in that the neoliberal politics of austerity, driven through budget cuts, deregulation and the persistent refusal to listen to tenants' concerns created the context for Grenfell to happen. The scale of these cuts is emerging through the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, and it has recently been uncovered that the KCTMO had cut over half of its workforce by the 2017 fire because of austerity measures; with one senior surveyor, John Hoban, telling the Grenfell Inquiry that he was overseeing 120-130 projects at any given time. Hoban quit his post just two months before the fire, explaining "I wasn't able to do the job how I was trained to and it was effecting my health and I decided I didn't want to work there anymore" (Ing, 2020).

Tombs (2020, p. 120) suggests that we should focus on Grenfell Tower through the lens of state-corporate violence, where "both the state and corporate acts and omissions resulted in a fire producing range of social harms". I agree with Tombs, and do not think that we should view the KCTMO or the council as innocent or even passive bystanders; but rather Grenfell Tower represents violence at the hands of both the state and corporations in the broader context of neoliberal urbanism. In October 2017, Lucy Masoud, a firefighter involved in the Grenfell Tower fire held a panel discussion with Grenfell survivor Bellal El Guenuni, highlighting the institutional racism and austerity that made the fire possible. Masoud asserted:

What we do know and what we believe is austerity caused that fire [...] Why did Grenfell have flammable cladding and no sprinklers and only one dry riser? Because it was social housing and the decision makers don't care about the social housing tenants [...] The minute rich people in Kensington and Chelsea decided they no longer wanted to look at an ugly building, those tenants' fates were sealed" (Press Association, 2017).

This puts into context the size of cuts and depth of austerity that pervaded Grenfell's already marginalised multi-ethnic community. However, Black Lives Matter is central in shaping the narrative of Grenfell Tower, as well as broader resistance to racialized neoliberal urbanism. Rutten (2020) from the Town and Country Planning Association calls for city planners to learn from the UK Black Lives Matter Movement and address the institutional racism that is embedded in how cities are planned. Rutten (2020) suggests that deregulation characterises the English planning system and works to intensify already existing institutional racial inequalities; where Black Asian Minority Ethnic people who disproportionately live in inadequate and overcrowded housing, are disproportionately evicted (from social housing) to make room for (private) gentrification and are more likely to be housed in areas with high levels of pollution.

6.31 Grenfell: neoliberal urban stigma

While the Grenfell Tower fire represents the visible tip of the iceberg in understanding racial and class inequality in London, it is important to examine the place-based impacts of neoliberal urbanism in (re)producing racial violence in the Grenfell community. In this section, I examine the role of territorial stigma in both justifying divestment and in concealing systematic racial violence toward Grenfell's Black Asian Minority Ethnic community. Moreover, I draw on the concepts of territorial stigma and slow violence in illuminating the intersection of race and class violence inflicted on Grenfell's "racialized poor" (Danewid, 2020, p. 290). As such, this reveals some the ways that Grenfell Tower has emerged as a key issue for Black Lives Matter activists, as well as the multi-ethnic reframing of Black Lives Matter in the London context.

As others have documented (Cooper and Whyte 2018; MacLeod, 2018), concerns over the safety of Grenfell Tower were voiced repeatedly by residents only to be silenced by the authorities. Such negligence represents an act of racial violence and can be used to understand the construction of Grenfell as an undeserving and powerless place. I asked Sandra why this is an issue for Black Lives Matter:

If you see the demographic of our community, you can see the extent in which marginalised groups and people are involved. People who are disadvantaged. There is an old preconception that council housing, they had no option. But people lived in there [in Grenfell Tower] most of their lives, 10 years, 20 years and so on. A long time. It's a very rooted community. But if you look at who died, the demographic is predominantly BAME.

[...]

Race and the response to them survivors and bereaved families; race and religion definitely played a role. BAME communities are very conscious that people think, "oh you're just playing the race card". You know that people may be treating you in a particular way because of your ethnic background. And this stems from institutional racism and we had to unpick it as a community. I mean, look at us, a lot of us are so used to this community as Moroccan, Spanish, Portuguese, we also have newer immigrants, Ethiopian, Eritrean people. We are very mixed culturally.

(Sandra).

Sandra's testimony indicates the presence of stigma in the Grenfell community, as residents were stigmatized as "nuisances"⁹⁵ and their concerns were both ignored and not deemed legitimate. Social housing has long been a geographic place of stigmatization. For example, Garner (2011, p. 1) uses the term "estatism" to refer to the stigmatization of social housing estates which reveals the socially constructed prejudices towards communities that live there. Other work has suggested that social housing is stigmatized as "just an estate" and does not earn "place" status (Kallin and Slater, 2014, p. 1359). However, the case of Grenfell goes deeper and reveals the intersection of territorial stigmatization with race and class.

⁹⁵ According to Sandra.

The issue of racism is particularly powerful in Sandra's testimony, as it suggests that the community was treated differently because of their multi-ethnic backgrounds and as social housing tenants. While much work on urban territorial stigma and race has focused on the construction of place as "dangerous" or "ghetto's" (see Hancock et al., 2013; Sotomayor, 2017), the case of Grenfell reveals alternative ways that stigma was constructed. For example, the stigmatization of the community as 'nuisances' or insinuating that concerns with the building's safety were bogus, on the basis that people are "playing the race card", shows how racism was used to justify the dismissal of resident's concerns. Seen like this, Grenfell is constructed as a place that is underserving of help and this stigma was used to justify neoliberal austerity and cuts to the community. Moreover, in responding to why Grenfell is an issue for Black Lives Matter, Sandra shows us that ideas of Black Lives Matter in London are not limited to solidarity with the US or Black ethnicity (Agozino, 2018), but are represented through multi-ethnic racialized struggles in London.

The issue of Grenfell emerged in other accounts, where participants sought to connect Grenfell Tower with Black Lives Matter through its multi-ethnic take-up in London:

What about Grenfell? Do you think it's a coincidence that it was mostly poor, Black people that lived there and died? Do you think this would happen in a rich, White neighbourhood? I don't think so. They were made to live in a dangerous building. [...] it's institutional racism. Grenfell is just another reason why Black lives don't matter here. That's the truth.

(Jessie).

Money [in Kensington] is everywhere. Then you get Grenfell, just around the corner, people are struggling to get by. A lot of people from

our community live there in complete poverty. It's like two different worlds.

Dan: Is it an issue of race?

Jerry: People say, "well, it could have happened in any tower block". But it didn't. It happened in the Black and Asian community. What about their right to safe housing?

(Jerry).

While Sandra offers an insider perspective as someone who lives in the Grenfell community, Jessie's testimony is from a Black woman, who lives outside of the Grenfell community. As such, her account seems to make connections between race and class violence in explaining why mostly poor Black people lived in Grenfell Tower, despite safety concerns. Her questioning of whether this would happen in a White and wealthy neighbourhood indicates that Blackness has an explicit relationship with class in the London context and this exposes Grenfell as a symbolic case in wider systematic struggles against neoliberal urbanism through Black Lives Matter.

Jerry, a Black Muslim man, adds to this by illuminating the depths of racial and class inequalities in Kensington, asserting that racism was central in why Grenfell's multi-ethnic residents were neglected of the right to safe housing. As such, this reveals not only how Black Lives Matter shapes the narrative of Grenfell, through making connections between race and class violence, but also shows how Grenfell expands ideas of Black Lives Matter beyond a focus on Black ethnicity, to account for multi-ethnic racial violence. Moreover, both accounts indicate that the Grenfell community was racially stigmatized in a way to symbolise that their lives matter less or are 'undeserving' of living in safe and suitable housing. Such stigma plays a role in the place-making process of Grenfell, as divisions are not only seen through income and wealth disparities, but also in representing how life is valued in the borough.

The attachment of stigma to the Grenfell community as ‘underserving’ and as ‘nuisances’ generates a negative perception of the neighbourhood and is reflected through both the budget cuts in the neighbourhood and the refusal to listen to residents’ concerns about building safety. Moreover, as Tyler writes on the issue of transporting asylum seekers to detention centres in the Czech Republic, “racial stigmatization dehumanizes people to the extent that it becomes possible to keep them caged and hidden in transport units” (2018, p. 1797). The participant perspectives expose the ways that racial stigma was used to neglect and contain Grenfell’s residents in an unsafe tower block, and justify the neoliberal urban violence surrounding austerity, cuts, deregulation, and privatisation. As such, Black Lives Matter discourse permeates Grenfell in illuminating the intersections of race and class violence.

Importantly, other work has made similar links between structural racism and high-rise housing, showing that this is not explicit to Grenfell. As Dorling (2011) writes, six years before Grenfell:

Most children who live above the fourth floor of tower blocks in England are Black or Asian. High-rise living with children in Britain is almost always not luxury living. Most of these children are poor and Britain tolerates a much high proportion of its children living in poverty than does anywhere else in Western Europe.

While I have suggested that territorial stigma was central in shaping the systematic neglect of Grenfell’s multi-ethnic community, this is in stark contrast to the neoliberal gentrification that has permeated through the borough. As such, territorial stigma was not only used to justify the systematic neglect of Grenfell, but also in justifying redevelopment and dispossessing many poor multi-ethnic communities from the borough. This provides insight into the wider context of neoliberal urban racial violence. As Sandra and I walked around the Lancaster West Estate, we stopped under Westway, a busy dual carriageway, connecting Central and

West London suburbs. She told me about the broader issue of gentrification and how it impacts her community:

‘There’s a lot of gentrification going on. They’ve been trying to force us out for a long time’. Sandra points out an old warehouse; it looks completely abandoned. ‘That used to be a school’ she says. She tells me of how young people in the area occupied this [abandoned] building and made it into their place, only to be later forced out. She asks me to look up at three tower blocks that sit parallel to where Grenfell stood. And says, ‘did you know, they tried to knock those three down as well. Where would all the people go? They said they were going to make it into affordable housing’. North Kensington has a problem of the ‘undeserving poor’ [according to Sandra], many of whom are BAME, and attempts are being made to force them out.

(Ethnographic notes: Grenfell Tower, 22nd November 2019).

Sandra’s testimony illuminates the central issue of gentrification and indicates that divestment from her community has been intentional in allowing developers to capitalise on the ‘rent gap’⁹⁶ (Smith, 1979, p. 545) and redevelop her neighbourhood. The example of the three tower blocks that stand parallel to Grenfell is particularly powerful, as Sandra scoffed at the prospect of the authorities redeveloping the tower blocks into affordable housing; instead implying that their development would not house the community that currently lives there and would instead attract “wealthy newcomers” (McElroy and Szeto, 2017, p. 10). Interestingly she also referred to her community again as ‘nuisances’, suggesting that the authorities and developers viewed the Black Asian Minority Ethnic community as an obstacle to economic redevelopment. This perspective demonstrates an example of the “city as the growth machine” (Molotch, 1976, p. 310) where local authorities and land-based elites work together in a symbiotic pursuit to achieve maximum growth (1976, p. 310). However,

⁹⁶ “The rent gap is the disparity between the potential ground rent level and the actual ground rent capitalized under the present land use” (Smith, 1979, p. 545).

as Sandra suggests, the consequences of this are highly racialized, as many Black Asian Minority Ethnic residents are forced out. As such, this provides an example of Harvey's (2005, p. 65) conceptualisation of "accumulation by dispossession".

Sandra's account not only reveals connections between gentrification and racial violence, but also provides an explanation for why the issue of neoliberal urban gentrification is such a pressing issue for Black Lives Matter in London. In response to the Grenfell Tower fire, Black Lives Matter activists sought to build on this case in shaping resistance against neoliberal urban policies in London. For example, Black Lives Matter joined forces with London Renters Union in campaigning against systematic racism in the London housing market. In a solidarity statement with Black Lives Matter, London Renters Union (2020) stated:

The housing system prioritises profit and incentivises gentrification, forcing Black people from their homes, their support networks, and their communities, as many of our members experience. Families are driven out of their estates, their boroughs, and even their cities.

This demonstrates some of the ways that Black Lives Matter not only reshapes the narrative on Grenfell, but also seeks to influence broader resistance in the context of neoliberal urban gentrification. As such, Grenfell Tower and the issue of gentrification are central to ideas of Black Lives Matter activism in London. Gentrification has also emerged as an issue in other global cities. Maharawal (2017) examines Black Lives Matter activism in San Francisco following the real estate and tech boom. Maharawal (2017, p. 338) suggests that the gentrification of San Francisco has shaped an "eviction epidemic" through the removal⁹⁷ of mostly low-income Black residents. While Maharawal makes some reference to Hispanic residents who were also removed, the narrative of Black Lives Matter in San Francisco is predominantly centred on African American racial violence. This marks a key

⁹⁷ Often removed with the support of the police.

difference to how Black Lives Matter is permeated through Grenfell, and its focus on multi-ethnicity.

Other work echoes this argument; for example, Elliott-Cooper et al., (2020a, p. 1354) examined the 1980's 'right-to-buy'⁹⁸ legislation in the UK, arguing that this shaped an "illusion" that residents would indefinitely be allowed to remain within their homes after purchasing. However, in practice, homes remain subject to compulsory purchase and redevelopment if in the "public interest". In interviews with mostly Ethnic Minority communities in inner-London, Elliott-Cooper et al., (2020a, p. 1365) illuminate the ways that class and racial violence intersect, through the shaping narratives of Ethnic Minority estates being "dangerous" places and using this to legitimize development of Ethnic Minority homes 'in the public interest'.⁹⁹

Relevant to this, Stuart Hall et al., (1978, p. 26-28) suggest the 'moral panic' over mugging in Britain in the 1970's was imported from the US and framed through "the race conflict; the urban crisis; rising crime; the breakdown of law and order". As such, inner city Ethnic Minority neighbourhoods were stigmatized as "slums" and "dangerous for innocent folk", and this narrative was used to legitimize the deployment of the police in cleaning up "troublesome" areas. There is a paradox in neoliberal urban racial violence, that while austerity, cuts, privatisation, and outsourcing signify the shrinking of the state; the police are deployed to facilitate neoliberal urban redevelopment (Collins et al., 2022). However, Grenfell marks key differences, as stigma was not produced through a perceived fear of criminality, but rather presents Grenfell's multi-ethnic community as 'undeserving' and powerless; thus, marking racial violence through systematic negligence. As such, this discussion shows the influence of Black Lives Matter in reshaping narratives of Grenfell through exposing connections between racial and class violence; but also, revealing how the multi-ethnic racial violence of Grenfell reshapes Black Lives Matter in London.

Sandra, Jerry, and Jessie's accounts point to the 'slow' and systematic ways that neoliberal the context shaped the fire in Grenfell Tower. As such, a discussion of slow violence is relevant here, and how ideas of Black Lives Matter in London

⁹⁸ Right-to-buy legislation refers to council tenants right to buy their homes and right to remain within such homes.

⁹⁹ Also see, Elliott-Cooper et al., (2020b).

attempt to make 'less visible' forms of racial violence visible. Crucially, this builds on the connections made in chapter five on the co-constituted nature of all forms of violence police violence and illuminates the different ways that Black Lives Matter shapes wider narratives of structural racism in London.

Scholars such as Kern (2016, p. 442-443) have expanded representations of slow violence to account for the discriminate displacing of "undesirable" residents through gentrification in Toronto (2016, p. 442-423). Rachel Pain's (2019, p. 392) work in a former coal mining village in North East England, highlights how chronic urban trauma is "hardwired in place" and slow violence is embodied through the place-based and temporal impacts of housing dispossession. Building on this, Pain et al., (2019, p. 1104) conceptualise Grenfell through slow violence and the "chronic malaise of poor living conditions, ill-health and restricted opportunities that largely remains unseen" (2019, p. 1104). The participant perspectives in this thesis provide empirical contributions, by revealing how ideas of Black Lives Matter in London have worked to make "unseen" violence 'seen'. As such, Black Lives Matter activism in London not only offers solidarity with Grenfell but works to disseminate 'less visible' forms of structural violence that shaped the neoliberal context of Grenfell. While slow violence is represented as occurring "out of sight" (Nixon, 2011, p. 2), Sandra's account reveals how such violence was always highly visible to her community.

6.32 *Making Grenfell Lives Matter: challenging stigma and rights to place*

While Wacquant's (2007) conceptualisation of urban territorial stigma is useful in understanding the justification of the neoliberal urban context that Grenfell occurred in, I now turn to acts of anti-racist resistance and agency as permeated through Black Lives Matter activism. One aspect of Wacquant's (2007) thesis that I find problematic, is that communities internalize stigma and "corrode their sense of self... undercutting their capacity for collective action" (Wacquant et al., 2014, p. 1275). Several papers (Cairns, 2018; Cretan and Powell, 2018; Nayak, 2019; Pinkster et al., 2020; Tyler, 2018) have offered deviations from Wacquant's (2007) thesis, and Grenfell adds to this scholarship through illuminating Black Lives Matter anti-racist resistance in challenging stigma and (re)asserting rights to place. In this section, I

focus on acts of place-based protest, charity, and community organisations stepping in for the state and outspoken grime artists in resisting territorial stigma.

While I have discussed the mutually constituted relationship between neoliberal urbanism and racial violence and how territorial stigma works to legitimize gentrification, some participant accounts attempt to challenge stigma through reframing the narrative of what happened on the day of the fire. Sandra told me how the Black Asian Minority Ethnic community responded to the fire and stepped in for the state:

On the day of the fire, I was running around looking for a health and safety official, but they were nowhere to be seen. I had to go to a local hardware store and start giving out masks to people. I saw one of the council officials walking up the street in his suit and shouted at him, 'oi you, what the fuck are you doing about this?'

[...]

If you look at the response to what happened, and the people affected, support was given by the Mosque; the Sikh Temple gave food – the faith groups played an important role in bringing people in; BAME communities.

(Sandra).

Sandra's testimony specifically emphasises the multi-ethnic agency in the immediate aftermath of the fire. Her remarks appear to suggest that while the community experienced years of neglect and being ignored by the state, they developed agency to look after themselves and each other. This challenges earlier conceptions of Grenfell as a stigmatized and powerless place and reveals the presence of multi-ethnic agency through faith groups. Similar forms of resistance to territorial stigma are documented in Pasquetti's (2019, p. 848) work on heavily the

surveilled Palestinian districts of Lydda-Lod,¹⁰⁰ where Palestinians responded to being stigmatized as “worthless”, by developing a stronger collective Palestinian community and showing care for the dilapidated built environment. As such, there are some transnational parallels seen in how stigmatized communities respond to violence and develop self-determined agency in the absence of the state.

Adding to Sandra’s account, one Grenfell resident said, “groups like St Helen’s church, the Clement James centre and the Westway Centre became the local government” (Sherwood, 2018). Diverse faith groups thus provided a physical space for those left homeless from the fire, as well as necessities, such as food, shelter, and clothing. By referring specifically to the Mosque and Sikh Temple in providing support in the aftermath of the fire, Sandra not only reveals the multi-ethnic and multi-faith response to the fire but responds to stigma that represents her community as powerless. As such, this provides some explanation into how the multi-ethnic community attempts to reassert rights to place in the context of neoliberal urbanism. Moreover, this provides further insight into how Grenfell and multi-ethnic empowerment are permeated through ideas of Black Lives Matter in London.

While Sandra’s first-hand account demonstrates agency on the day of the fire on a local level, other ethnographic accounts spoke out in solidarity with Grenfell:

I am a firm believer that if you fix housing, you fix all kinds of problems. Look at Grenfell for example, we need to highlight [this] as an issue of racism. Mostly BAME people died and that’s why we need to say, Black Lives Matter.

(Grace).

Grenfell Tower was just devastating. The people were left to their own means and the community had to be resilient [...] We stand together for Black Lives [Matter].

¹⁰⁰ A city 15km from Tel Aviv in Israel.

(Maya).

Grenfell Tower is thus presented as a key case of racial violence that shows why Black Lives Matter is viewed as necessary in London. The accounts from activists seem to acknowledge the systematic injustice and stigma inflicted on the Grenfell community, but also reveal attempts to challenge it through Black Lives Matter activism. Nayak (2019, p. 939) in his work with industrial workers in Middlesbrough demonstrates how stigmatized communities “speak back” in responding to stigma, through “re-scripting” narratives of place. In my participant accounts, activists use Black Lives Matter to ‘speak out’ on the racialized context that Grenfell occurred in and demand justice. In Maya’s account, recognition is given to the resilience of the Grenfell community and offers a deviation from the narrative that labels them as powerless. While in Grace’s account, she “speaks back” (Nayak, 2019) in demanding justice and making wider calls for the safe housing of Black Asian Minority Ethnic people. In addition, the significance of Grenfell was evidenced following the first wave of UK Black Lives Matter protests in 2020,¹⁰¹ when the protest symbolically ended at Grenfell Tower (Brown, 2020). However, the participant account’s above demonstrate that Grenfell has long been central in reshaping Black Lives Matter in London.

In addition to place-based protest, the role of faith groups and acts of solidarity in challenging territorial stigma, several grime artists (e.g., AJ Tracey; Akala; Big Zuu; Dave; Stormzy) have used their platforms to “speak back” (Nayak, 2019) on Grenfell and demand justice through Black Lives Matter activism (Bakare, 2020; Durosomo, N.D.; Muir, 2022). For example, Stormzy has been an outspoken critic of the handling of Grenfell Tower and in his 2018 speech at the Brit Awards, he used part of a free-style rap to say, “Theresa May, where’s the money for Grenfell? ... [you] just forgot about Grenfell, you criminals, and you got the cheek to call us savages” (Beaumont-Thomas, 2020). Other London based artists, such as Dave, at the 2020 Brit Awards, used the platform to keep up momentum on Grenfell, questioning, “mass incarceration? Not racist! Grenfell? A ‘tragedy’, rather than anti-Black social

¹⁰¹ Following the death of George Floyd in 2020.

murder” (Okundaye, 2020). This marks some of the ways that grime artists have sought to “speak back” (Nayak, 2019) at stigma and reframe the narrative of Grenfell.

Stormzy and Dave have emerged as key figures in the Black Lives Matter London movement and have used their own platforms to draw attention to Grenfell. The language used by Stormzy places Grenfell into the wider context of racial violence in Britain, but by specifically mentioning Grenfell, the speeches attempt to divert stigma toward the state and those responsible for Grenfell. This questions who the real ‘criminals’ are and marks an attempt to shift the narrative away from Grenfell being an unfortunate accident, and toward structural racism. While Dave makes connections between the issue of incarceration and Grenfell, indicating that both issues share similarities in manifesting “anti-Black social murder”. As such, this further reveals some of the ways that Black Lives Matter in London is shaped by Grenfell, but also how Black Lives Matter activists have sought to reshape the narrative of Grenfell as connected to broader forms of structural racial violence.

6.33 *Survivors policy: the role of undocumented migrants in reframing Black Lives Matter*

A lesser-explored issue in the Grenfell scholarship, is the poor treatment of undocumented migrants who lived in Grenfell Tower (with exceptions; Bulley and Brassett, 2021; Clancy, 2020; Danewid, 2020). Grenfell Tower was home to an unknown number of undocumented migrants (Danewid, 2020, p. 300), and my fieldwork revealed how the aftermath of the fire exposed a fear of punishment and/or deportation if undocumented people sought help from the government. As such, the multi-ethnic take up of Black Lives Matter in London also sought to represent undocumented people, who in the case of Grenfell were subjected to stigma and violence after the fire. Sandra told me why undocumented people are central to this struggle:

That day was a massacre. I have always said that [undocumented] victims needed full amnesty. But the government didn’t do that, and

[undocumented] people were afraid to come forward in fear of what may happen if they did.

(Sandra).

This issue was documented in the media following the fire, as volunteer doctors and lawyers revealed that they had provided medical and legal support to undocumented survivors, who would not go to hospital or seek help from the authorities because of a fear of being reported to the Home Office, arrested, or deported (Gentleman, 2017). This meant that many undocumented survivors were made homeless and unable to get the medical and legal help that they needed, outside of the sanctuary of faith groups. The government did not grant full amnesty to undocumented migrants, but rather introduced the 'Survivors Policy', stating that survivors can initially stay for one year; then extend it for two years, and then by a further two years – amounting to five years, whereby survivors can apply for permanent residence. This is with two specific conditions; first, undocumented survivors were given a deadline of 31st January 2018 to come forward and second, all applications were subject to “security, criminality and fraud checks” (Home Office, 2020).

Limited attention has been paid to this outside of activist circles, but the 'Survivors Policy' represents further systematic racial violence in the aftermath of Grenfell; and made the route to re-settlement for undocumented survivors extremely traumatic. As activist Bradley (2019) suggests, “the government set out a tortuous route of resettlement, but it was no amnesty. People would face three rounds of applications over five years and the state reserved its right to refuse and deport them on the basis of their perceived character, criminality or associations”. This echoes Sandra's testimony and extends the multi-ethnic narrative of Grenfell to include the systematic racial violence toward undocumented people in the days after the fire. This issue has merged into wider debates on deportation and the treatment of undocumented people and created calls that:

If Black Lives are to truly Matter in Britain, then the government must also stop exiling Black people to foreign countries (Matiluko, 2020).

This reveals how Grenfell Tower not only embodies multi-ethnic violence through racism and class violence, but also through precarious legal status, and the ways this permeates ideas of Black Lives Matter in London. While the fieldwork in this thesis precedes the 2020 global Black Lives Matter protests following the death of George Floyd in the US, the symbolic end of the first wave of protests at Grenfell Tower illuminates the centrality of Grenfell in reshaping Black Lives Matter in London. Figure 12 was taken at this protest and illustrates connections between Grenfell and Black Lives Matter in London. As such, this statement goes beyond solidarity and demonstrates how Black Lives Matter activists are fighting for justice for Grenfell. The case of Grenfell has exposed the mutually constituted relationship between neoliberal urbanism and racial violence and given explanation for why these are pressing issues for Black Lives Matter. This section has shown the different ways that Black Lives Matter reshapes the narrative of Grenfell, but also how Grenfell shapes Black Lives Matter in London. As such, Grenfell is central to the multi-ethnic take up of Black Lives Matter in London and this provides insight into the new meanings of Black Lives Matter as it travels across transnational place.



6.4 Gentrification in Redfern and making 'Block' Lives Matter

I now turn to my fieldwork in Sydney, where I found racialized neoliberal urbanism to be a pressing issue for many Aboriginal Black Lives Matter activists. As Peck (2012, p. 651) points out, neoliberal urbanism is not replicated, but “mutates” across place. As such, in Sydney, I examine the case of ‘The Block’, a former Aboriginal-run social housing community, owned by the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC) in inner-city Redfern that housed a large Aboriginal community and was subject to demolition and gentrification (Perheentupa, 2021). This case reveals the centrality of decolonization and Aboriginal land dispossession in how Black Lives Matter is reshaped in the context of neoliberal urbanism in Sydney. As such, The Block represents a long-standing issue for Aboriginal people that Black Lives Matter picks up on and provides an impetus that merges expressions of anti-neoliberal urbanism, and decolonisation with Black Lives Matter.

Drawing on participant perspectives, I argue, the case of The Block illuminates the different ways that neoliberal urbanism, through urban re-development and gentrification is mutually constituted with racial violence. I highlight the use of urban territorial stigma in legitimizing the demolition of The Block and by extension, the dispossession of Aboriginal (Gadigal Nation) land, but also how Aboriginal people challenge stigma and contemporary manifestations of colonialism through reasserting rights to place, protest, artwork, and nostalgia. While Block activism long precedes Black Lives Matter, in this section, I demonstrate how ideas of Black Lives Matter have permeated historical and contemporary narratives of Aboriginal urban land dispossession, but also, how such long-standing issues reshape Black Lives Matter in Sydney. As such, The Block provides an exemplar of urban Aboriginal land dispossession in the context of neoliberal urbanism, and this is conceptualised as a contemporary manifestation of colonialism.

6.41 *Situating 'The Block'*

Before proceeding, it is important to give some history of The Block and explanation into why this site is important to Aboriginal people. The Block has a long history of political Aboriginal struggle and was formed in response to a vicious 1970's campaign by landlords to evict all Aboriginal residents from Redfern. Following a series of lobbying campaigns, the AHC was given a AU\$530,000 federal grant and purchased terraced housing along four inner-city streets in Redfern, which would provide Aboriginal people with affordable housing and was Aboriginal led (Bellar, 1976, p. 4; Koori History, N.D). The formation of The Block was viewed as radical (both positively and negatively) at the time by the media, with The Sydney Morning Herald (1973. p. 1) calling the project "home for an Aboriginal community".

Many of the older Aboriginal people whom I met in Sydney had warm and nostalgic memories of The Block, and similarly those who were not old enough to remember, had been told stories of what The Block symbolised; "the heart of Aboriginal Australia".¹⁰² Rachel,¹⁰³ an Aboriginal woman, who had spent many years at The Block, told me, "[The Block] was a meeting place for Aboriginal people from anywhere". I learned that Aboriginal people from all over the country would travel to Sydney, just to go to The Block; thus, it symbolised a formal "home for an Aboriginal community". Moreover, this was the birthplace of the Australian Black power movement and was a key site in Black and Aboriginal solidarity.¹⁰⁴

In the 1990's, The Block gained a notorious reputation for social problems, violence, crime, and drug problems (Shaw, 2007 p. 7). By the mid-1990's, media representation and perceptions of The Block varied; with some calling The Block "a dream for self-determination" while others referred to it as "a shameless slum" (Spark, 2003, p. 35). The Block's deterioration paved the way for the Pemulwuy¹⁰⁵ project in 1997, initiated by the AHC, which looked to replace The Block and provide a "clean, healthy and safe environment in which the next generation of Aboriginal children can live harmoniously" (Pollock, 2008). While the prospect of better and

¹⁰² Informal conversation with Aboriginal participant at Invasion Day, 26th January 2020.

¹⁰³ Interview with Rachel in Glebe, 21st February 2021.

¹⁰⁴ Conversation with Amanda 3rd June 2020.

¹⁰⁵ Pemulwuy - named after an 18th Century Aboriginal man, who is best known for his resistance to British colonisation at Botany Bay in Sydney.

safer housing for Aboriginal people was generally well received by Block residents; there were significant concerns with commercial aspects of the proposals, as well as the lack of air-tight guarantees for affordable Aboriginal housing post redevelopment (Hromek, 2016, p. 537). There were anxieties early on, that the AHC's proposals, led by CEO Mick Mundine would "sell out" the community and erase Aboriginal people from Redfern. But geography is also crucial here, in that these divides were further driven by the forces of neoliberal urbanism. As Greenland highlights:

The Block is the most valuable vacant lot in Sydney. Ten thousand square metres of prime real estate located right in the heart of gentrifying Redfern and less than two kilometres from the CBD (2014, p. 1).

The forces of gentrification are further evident in the ethnographic notes of former non-Block Redfern/Darlington resident, Wendy Shaw:

I have certainly observed a series of well-planned offences (by developers and the state) against the Aboriginal community. The history of the area includes a monumental fight against the formation of The Block (in the 1970's), and local non-Block residents continue on this trajectory... by the advent of unwanted apartment development but as the character of the area began to change with gentrification, mobilizations focused again on The Block, which continues to be targeted to this day (2007, p. 8).

Greenland (2014) and Shaw (2007) provide insight into the context of neoliberal urban gentrification and redevelopment in Redfern, as well as the undoing of a place that was once called "home for an Aboriginal community" (Morning Herald, 1973, p. 1); thus, marking an attempt to "re-space place" (Dourish, 2006, p.

306). By 2004, the last remaining resistance of The Block, Auntie Joyce Ingram, was finally evicted from her home at 78 Eveleigh Street,¹⁰⁶ which stood alone, surrounded by the bulldozed remnants of the rest of The Block; and by 2011, The Block was demolished (Simon, 2021).

But resistance did not end here; as on 26th May 2014,¹⁰⁷ the Redfern Aboriginal Tent Embassy was set up on the former Block by Aboriginal Elder, Jenny Munro amongst others such as the late Uncle Ray Jackson. The Tent Embassy was set up after it emerged that the Pemulwuy project¹⁰⁸ (approved in 2012), initiated by the AHC, had AU\$70 million in financial backing for its commercial phase, including proposed six storey student accommodation; but did not have funds to provide the proposed 62 affordable homes for Aboriginal families (Gregorie, 2014). Following 15 months of occupation, the Redfern Aboriginal Tent Embassy folded in 2015 after it secured AU\$5 million from the federal government for the building of 62 rent-controlled homes for Aboriginal families at The Block (Joyner and Pen, 2015).

However, just one year later in 2016, the AHC put forward new proposals to increase the proposed student accommodation from six-stories, up to 16 stories, which would provide over 500 dwellings for students; while the number of affordable houses for Aboriginal families remained at just 62 (Zhou, 2017). In response, Jenny Munro brought back the Tent Aboriginal Embassy to nearby Waterloo Green, citing the disproportionality of affordable Aboriginal housing versus the increase in expensive student housing; the earmarked further demolition of nearby Waterloo Towers¹⁰⁹ which would further reduce the amount of affordable housing in the area; and the fact that some 35,000 Aboriginal people lived in Redfern when The Block was first established, but now there are just 300 Aboriginal people left (Fieldes, 2017; Teese-Johnson, 2016).

¹⁰⁶ Conversation with Amy 2nd February 2020.

¹⁰⁷ Notably, this is also National Sorry Day in Australia – to remember, apologise and attempt to heal the mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

¹⁰⁸ The Pemulwuy project includes the building of a gym, commercial space, retail space, a gallery student accommodation, a childcare centre and 62 affordable homes for Aboriginal families (Aboriginal Housing Company, N.D).

¹⁰⁹ Waterloo Towers are two twin towers providing mostly public housing with more affordable rental prices.

There were concerns amongst the Aboriginal community that the AHC had further diluted the Aboriginal element of the Pemulwuy project in providing affordable housing. Moreover, there was a feeling that “developers have been concerned for years to clear Aboriginal people from the Block, which to them merely represents desirable real estate and the chance for big profits” (Fieldes, 2017). This contributes to wider debates on the gentrification of Redfern, with Jenny Munroe asserting “it’s all been deliberately designed to push the Black community out” (Zhou, 2017). The emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement in Sydney was initially centred on the issue of Aboriginal deaths in custody (Allam et al., 2020), however the narrative has since shifted to include other issues that create the context for racial violence to happen. For example, a Black Lives Matter rally in Redfern in 2015 was organised alongside the Redfern Tent Embassy in response to the gentrification of The Block. As such, Black Lives Matter represents a recent movement that is tied to long-standing Aboriginal struggles in Sydney (Hutchens, 2020).

6.42 20 years on: Continued stigma, gentrification, dispossession, and the call for Aboriginal Lives Matter

While The Block once symbolised “the heart of Aboriginal Australia”, The Block is a very different place today. My fieldwork builds on previous work (notably; Shaw, 2000; 2007), in examining the contemporary manifestation of colonialism through the redevelopment of The Block, and how this reshapes Black Lives Matter in the Sydney context. As with Grenfell, The Block represents an exemplar of the mutually constituted relationship between racial violence and neoliberal urbanism. However, unlike the multi-ethnic narrative that is central in London, The Block permeates Black Lives Matter through a different type of Blackness that is manifested through Aboriginality and land dispossession. In this section, I first, explore the role of urban territorial stigma, suggesting that territorial stigmatization was used to justify the neoliberal urban redevelopment of The Block into non-Aboriginal space, and in marking the dispossession of Aboriginal land.

As others have pointed out, by the 1990s, The Block gained a notorious reputation as a dangerous and violent place that needed to be 'fixed' (Hromeck, 2016; Shaw, 2007; Spark, 2003). Such territorial stigmatization marked the justification for the demolition and economic redevelopment of The Block, with assurances that affordable homes for Aboriginal people would be built. However, the contemporary manifestation of The Block continues to stigmatize Aboriginal people through creating neoliberal urban spaces of exclusion and excluding Aboriginal people from their land in Redfern. I asked participants to elaborate on the connections between Black Lives Matter and gentrification in Sydney that I had seen evidence of at protests and events.¹¹⁰ Some participants traced back to the undoing of The Block and indicated that the gentrification of Redfern was predicated on the condition that Aboriginal people would be excluded from the redevelopment. As such, this exposed the ways that the struggle for The Block and self-determination was permeated through ideas of Black Lives Matter in Sydney.

Grayson: Gentrification is a bit skewed because really the people making the money from it are the big developers. But then you have the new layers of the middle-class who are considered the problem. Yeah, Yuppies are shit.

Dan: By yuppies, do you mean kind of the hipster coffee shops and stuff like that?

Grayson: Oh yeah. I mean, look at what's happened there [in Redfern]. The Block is gone, and the place is... well they are building student accommodation at where The Block was; the [AHC] company that was building advertised those buildings and apartments at that area on the basis that all the Aborigines are gone.

(Grayson).

¹¹⁰ Several protests and events over the course of fieldwork in Sydney.

Caroline: There was a campaign to push out Aboriginal people and they did it by suggesting that all this run-down housing would be re-developed, and low-income housing would be re-developed [for Aboriginal people].

(Caroline).

These accounts indicate that racial violence was central to the re-development of The Block from the beginning, with the dispossession and exclusion of Aboriginal people at the core of the project. Grayson and Caroline's testimonies seek to rebut arguments (often put forward by those in favour of redeveloping The Block)¹¹¹ that the dispossession of Aboriginal people from their land was temporary or even an unfortunate consequence of gentrification. Instead, these perspectives seem to illuminate the structural nature of racial violence in deliberately shaping Redfern as a space of Aboriginal exclusion through neoliberal urbanism. As such, ideas of Black Lives Matter are not fixed to the present but are similarly referred to in reshaping narratives of the past.

Grayson's account seems to indicate that real estate developers and Redfern's 'new' middle-class residents were both complicit in the continued dispossession of Aboriginal land and the undoing of attempts for self-determination. While developers are represented as making substantial profits from developing the land, given its proximity to central Sydney; the high rent prices thus can only be afforded by wealthy students, the middle class and 'yuppies'; which excludes most Aboriginal social housing residents. Recent ethnographic work on the gentrification of Redfern/Waterloo highlighted feelings of (Aboriginal) community disintegration and "poor" and "ethnic cleansing" in revealing the racialized and class-based impacts of neoliberal urban redevelopment (Wynne and Rogers, 2021, p. 404). As such, Grayson and Caroline's testimonies seem to support this work in illuminating

¹¹¹ See Shaw (2000, p. 294).

the ways that the redevelopment was “sold” through the false promise of Aboriginal and low-income housing guarantees.

Similar processes are evident in Oregon, US, where urban redevelopment has been linked to the displacement of large, low-income, African American communities in attempts to attract young, White, and wealthy, newcomers, who identify with the subculture of “hipsterism” and “yuppiedom” (Fowler and Derrick, 2018, p. 191). While some similarities are seen through how racial and class violence is perpetuated, and the emergence of “hipsterism” in both contexts, the case of The Block marks a key difference through its symbolic importance to Aboriginal people, and their unique relationship to land. Porter (2018, p. 241) in her work on the gentrification of Collingwood in Melbourne, shows how Aboriginal people were made “houseless on their own lands” as land values rapidly rose in the face of gentrification. This suggests some parallels in how neoliberal urbanism shapes urban Aboriginal land dispossession in Australia, and therefore provide insight into why gentrification has emerged as an issue for Black Lives Matter in Sydney.

Relevant to this is Kerns’ (2016, p. 442-443) conceptualisation of slow violence in examining the “quiet displacement” of undesirable (low-income) communities through the case of gentrification in Toronto. Kerns examines the ways that displacement is manifested in ‘slow’ and ‘less visible’ ways; through the creation of privileging spaces (e.g., festivals; farmers markets) that work to exclude and make invisible some people. However, in Grayson’s account, the displacement of Aboriginal people from The Block is presented in ‘highly visible’ ways, as he accuses the AHC of advertising The Block on the condition that Aboriginal people would be removed; thus, suggesting that the land would be more valuable if Aboriginal people did not live there. As such, the dispossession of Aboriginal land was not presented as consequence of redevelopment, but rather a condition of the deal and occurred in much more visible ways.

Caroline’s testimony supports previous work suggesting that The Block was territorially stigmatized as a place of dilapidation and social problems (Shaw 2007, p. 7) and how this was used as a justification for fixing “blemishes of place” (Kallin and Slater 2014, p. 1351), with the assurance of affordable homes for Aboriginal people.

However, the language used by Caroline offers a slight deviation from Grayson's account, as she signals that dispossession occurred in more covert and gradual ways; and was "sold" to the Aboriginal community through the false promise of better housing. In talking about The Block, both Grayson and Caroline's accounts indicate an emphasis in making connections between the historical struggles of The Block and the contemporary struggle for Black Lives Matter in Sydney. As such, ideas of Black Lives Matter in the Sydney context are not only connected to contemporary struggles for land, but also have a temporal dimension, that makes specific connections between long-standing land struggles.

Maharawal's (2017) work in the San Francisco Bay area explores the Black Lives Matter movement's work on anti-gentrification. He suggests that Black Lives Matter protests emerged following a racialized "eviction epidemic" and represent "a racialized security regime designed to protect capitalist urban redevelopment, tech-led property speculation, gentrification and the regional restructuring of the Bay Area's regional economy" (2017, p. 340). While there can be some similarities seen in both London and Sydney in making connections between gentrification and racialized displacement; Black Lives Matter in the Sydney context is presented as specifically permeating Aboriginal rights and historical struggles of land dispossession. As such, historical and contemporary struggles of The Block are central in reshaping the meaning and narrative of Black Lives Matter in Sydney.

6.43 *Whiteness and recolonizing The Block*

On the issue of Aboriginal urban land rights, some participants sought to build on Grayson and Caroline's perspectives, in revealing how new orthodoxies of capital and whiteness were key in shaping in the contemporary manifestation of The Block as a space of continued stigma and exclusion for Aboriginal people. I asked participants why the gentrification of The Block remains an issue for Black Lives Matter today:

[The redevelopment of The Block was an attempt] to get rid of the Aboriginal people [in Redfern] so that the nice White people can sip

their lattes in peace and the students have somewhere nice to live [...] and not have the bad Aboriginal people to worry about.

(Evie).

The student development is an issue. You have some very rich international students moving in, while affordable housing isn't being built. Its profit before the community.

(Amanda).

While territorial stigma was presented in Grayson and Caroline's accounts in legitimizing the redevelopment of The Block, Evie seems to indicate that such stigma is present today in creating division between those who are desirable versus those who are not. However, such divisions are not presented in a fixed way, but rather desirability is dependent on white privilege that goes beyond ethnicity and includes new orthodoxies of capital and hipsterism (Buerkle, 2019, p. 173). Shaw (2007, p. 4) in her work on The Block, exposes the "slippery character" of whiteness by challenging claims that whiteness is tied to ethnicity; arguing that non-White ethnic people can experience the privilege of whiteness through diverse spatialities of empowerment. As such, Shaw (2007) reveals the ways that whiteness can be claimed through gentrification, and the relevance of this work is supported in Evie's account, exposing the construction of spaces of privilege that continue to exclude Aboriginal people.

The stigmatization of Aboriginal people as "bad" shows parallels with the types of territorial stigma deployed in the aftermath of the 'Redfern riots', which were in part, used to justify redevelopment as a "response" to violence (Chaterjee et al., 2021, p. 5). As such, Evie's account not only demonstrates temporalities in how territorial stigma is deployed to legitimize neoliberal urban redevelopment, but also signals the continued significance of racial violence in shaping neoliberal spaces of Aboriginal exclusion. Therefore, it makes sense that The Block is presented as a key case in shaping the narrative of Black Lives Matter in Sydney. The issue of student

accommodation on the land where The Block once stood came up as a particularly pressing issue for participants.¹¹² Specifically, the issue of creating a market for wealthy, East Asian, international students, was viewed as a driving catalyst for the construction of student accommodation. While all participants that I engaged with did not suggest any anti-Asian sentiment toward Sydney's large East-Asian student population,¹¹³ there was a feeling that new orthodoxies of capital would benefit from the redevelopment of The Block, and thus were driving demand for the redevelopment.



Figure 13 Student accommodation building work taking place at the site where The Block once stood

Source: Author.

While the emergence of the covid-19 pandemic exacerbated anti-Asian racism for Australia's large Asian student population (Barber and Law, 2020, p. 101), solidarities were forged between Aboriginal and Asian communities through Black Lives Matter campaigns (Daozhi, 2022, p. 3). However, despite this solidarity,

¹¹² Informal conversations with several Aboriginal participants.

¹¹³ This is contrary to what many centre-right local newspapers reported when plans for The Block were published. For example, Daily Telegraph (2014).

participants' accounts reveal feelings that new orthodoxies of international capital and demand for inner-city living were key in shaping The Block as a place of Aboriginal exclusion. In this sense, white privilege is not only attached to ethnicity, but is shaped through those who benefit from the development of The Block, such as, "yuppies", "new layers of the middle class" (Grayson) and new orthodoxies of international capital. As such, this reinforces the centrality of Aboriginal land rights in shaping ideas of Black Lives Matter in the Sydney context.

Alternative perspectives sought to make connections with historical acts of colonialism and contemporary Black Lives Matter activism. As such, participants signalled the redevelopment of The Block as the "recolonization" and "retaking" of Aboriginal land:

It's the continued dispossession of our land. The Block has always been important for Aboriginal people.

(Ethnographic notes: Catherine at Invasion Day 26th January 2020).

What has happened at The Block is colonialism again.

(Rachel).

These responses indicate that the urban redevelopment of The Block is embodied through the contemporary manifestation of colonialism. There is a suggestion that the redevelopment of The Block marks the continued dispossession of Aboriginal land, and this creates temporal connections between historical and contemporary acts of colonialism. As such, the role of Black Lives Matter in Sydney is not limited to contemporary acts of racial violence but is connected to long-standing struggles for Aboriginal land rights. Relevant to this, Burns and Berbarry (2021, p.

656) in their work on redevelopment of Kitchener, Ontario,¹¹⁴ argue that “placemaking is a process of unmaking” because not only does redevelopment occur on stolen land and create places that are exclusionary, but placemaking also works to erase the violence that created the “need” for revitalisation in the first place. Other work (Atkinson and Bridge 2013: 52) has conceptualised revitalisation as “new urban colonialism”, where vulnerable and marginalised populations are increasingly becoming displaced for more privileged classes. However, participants’ responses seem to indicate that there is nothing “new” about how colonialism is manifested in the redevelopment of The Block. Although presented differently, these issues are connected to longer historical struggles against colonialism and land dispossession.

Shaw discussed the “retaking process” of The Block in the late 1990’s:

The (re)‘taking’ process is gentrification. For a Manhattanising inner Sydney, the agenda for gentrification may not be as ‘official’, but in this era of resentment and backlash, there appears to be a similar non-Aboriginal Australian belief in a ‘duty’ to ‘take’ (back) The Block from Aboriginal Australia. After all, the wagons of gentrification are circling, and the existing Aboriginal residents fit readily into the colonial frontier (2000, p. 299).

Shaw (2000) illuminates the central roles of whiteness and colonialism in the early stages of the redevelopment of The Block. This reveals a sense that land should be “taken back” to secure The Block as a safe space for whiteness. 20 years on from Shaw’s work on The Block, a continued sense of territorial stigma, dispossession and recolonization are evident in creating a space of Aboriginal exclusion. Through the case of The Block, participant testimonies reveal the ways that Aboriginal land dispossession and decolonization are central in shaping Black Lives Matter in Sydney, but also how ideas of Black Lives Matter reshape the narrative of The Block through exposing the mutually constituted relationship between neoliberal urbanism

¹¹⁴ In Canada.

and racial violence. As such, this demonstrates some of the ways that long-standing Aboriginal rights and land struggles shape the adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter in Sydney.

6.44 *Making Aboriginal Lives Matter: Nostalgia, art, and rights to place*

While territorial stigma was evident in the case of The Block, I will now build on critiques of Wacquant's (2007) thesis that participants "internalize" stigma (Nayak, 2019). I highlight acts of resistance in attempting to challenge stigma attached to racialized identity and place. Specifically, I draw on the role of 'yarning',¹¹⁵ artwork and nostalgia in examining the ways that participants reassert rights to place, and how this refracts Black Lives Matter in Sydney, but also shapes wider understandings of the movement. As Beckett writes:

In a political mode, nostalgia for lost places can be converted into a struggle for Indigenous Land rights at a national and even transnational level [...] In an artistic mode, a lost place can be remembered in a painting, a song, or a story, creating an aestheticized nostalgia, which is poignant for those who remember the old home, but exerts a non-specific charm for those who do not (1996, p. 313).

Nostalgia of The Block is evident through both political and artistic modes. Politically, through the continued struggle for Aboriginal land rights and artistically, through artwork and paintings. I found that the gentrification of The Block had left many Aboriginal people feeling disconnected from their community.¹¹⁶ Yet, nostalgia is created, not broken and when talking with participants about Black Lives Matter, some participants attempted to reassert their rights to place through the process and exchange of yarning. Thus, ensuring that while the physical presence of The Block

¹¹⁵ "Yarning" in Aboriginal culture refers to a conversation-like process and exchange of knowledge and story sharing (Walker et al., 2013).

¹¹⁶ Conversations with Rachel and Caroline.

had been erased, the symbolic importance of Aboriginal land lives on through nostalgic discourse:

Rachel: The Block was the meeting place of Aboriginal people from anywhere. We found family members that way. Especially if you were stolen generation. Somehow, you'd sit there long enough and say, "hey you their mob, what's your family name? Where'd you come from?" Word gets round, "oh I think I know your uncle, he's at the pub over here". These conversations sound very vague, but people remember who is related to who. And who you could possibly be related to. Yeah, it had its problems, but The Block was a safe place for Aboriginal people from anywhere.

(Rachel).

[The Block] is a historic site for Aboriginal people all around the country. All Aboriginal people knew, if you go to Sydney, go to Redfern. That's where the Aboriginal community is based.

[...]

It's the heart of the Aboriginal community. It's such an important space and it's important that you get that story in. The campaign to try and save that area was unsuccessful and that says something about the power disparity between Aboriginal people and the state. That land was given precisely for low-income housing, and it hasn't managed to be protected.

(Caroline).

Rachel's account indicates feelings of nostalgia when talking about The Block, as she refers to The Block as more than just a physical place,¹¹⁷ or even affordable homes for Aboriginal people to live, but instead, as a place serving important functions for the Aboriginal community. The point on oral histories is important, as this is used in Aboriginal culture, not only to exchange stories but to find family members, which as Rachel says, is particularly important for people who were of stolen generation.¹¹⁸ Interestingly, there is also a sense of acknowledgement of The Block's social problems, but this is used to present an unbiased account of the positive impact of The Block for Aboriginal people. As such, this demonstrates some of the ways that nostalgic discourse of The Block and self-determination permeates ideas of Black Lives Matter in Sydney.

In Caroline's account, The Block is similarly presented as a place that holds deeper meaning, as the "heart" of Aboriginal Australia. There is no indication that stigma was internalized, but rather a suggestion that the gentrification of The Block, reveals uneven power dynamics in the shaping of Redfern. Moreover, Caroline's perspective seems to signify the importance of reframing how The Block is presented; with the focus not being on stigmatization, but rather through the continued symbolic importance of The Block for Aboriginal people. Seen like this, there appears to be a fear that by accepting the stigmatization of The Block as a place that 'needed' fixing, its symbolic meaning would become lost. However, this is challenged through yarning and nostalgic memories that participants express in maintaining The Block as the "heart" of Aboriginal Australia. Thus, demonstrating some of the ways that participants challenge stigma and attempt to reassert rights to place.

The symbolic importance of The Block and its connection to Black Lives Matter in Sydney was evident in 2017, when leaders of the Black Lives Matter US movement were invited to the Redfern community centre to meet with local

¹¹⁷ Note: Park and Burgess talk about this in their book *'The City'* (1925, p. 1).

¹¹⁸ Aboriginal and Torres Strait children, who were forcibly taken from their families by the state and placed into (non-Aboriginal) foster homes or missionaries. This happened throughout 1890's to the 1970's as a process to "breed out" the Aboriginal population (Korff, 2021), and oral histories, particularly from Elders, have been used to reunite families from stolen generation.

Aboriginal communities (Cullors and Diverlus, 2017). The purpose of the visit was to accept the Sydney Peace Prize and build transnational networks across different international contexts.¹¹⁹ But the symbolic location of the meeting prompted yarning on the importance of the neighbourhood for Aboriginal people, as well as wider discussions surrounding the police, land dispossession and colonialism. As such, Black Lives Matter in Sydney is not only concerned with solidarity with the US Black Lives Matter movement but has sought to shape an inflection of Black Lives Matter that is centred on Aboriginal rights, decolonisation, and land dispossession.

Other forms of displacement through neoliberal urban redevelopment have been observed in global cities; for example, in Toronto, the rapid gentrification of Parkdale forced out many poor, Black and Indigenous communities from the neighbourhood and has been met with Black and Indigenous Black Lives Matter resistance (Parish, 2020; PQWCHC, 2020). However, the case of The Block reveals some differences, as resistance is more specifically centred on Aboriginal land rights and memories of a specific place that once represented self-determination. Price (2019, p. 30) in her work on the stigmatization of council estates in Britain, suggests that one of the ways that residents resist stigma is through reinvigorating nostalgic discourse. Participants' accounts demonstrate some of the ways that Aboriginal people resist stigma through nostalgia and attempt to keep alive the symbolic importance of The Block. As such, this reveals how The Block is a key anchor in the reshaping and redeveloping of Black Lives Matter in Sydney.

While The Block is mostly associated with the Aboriginal community, it should be noted that it was also a place for many Torres Strait and Australian South Sea Islanders and formed a key role in Black solidarity making:

I spent many years at The Block watching Black theatre. [...] It was about Black collaborate movements. The Black Panther Movement formed the dance theatre. An African American woman led that charge working with Aboriginal, Torres Strait, South Sea Islander people on

¹¹⁹ Black Lives Matter leaders visited the UK, Palestine and countries across the Americas, in addition to Australia.

setting up the Black dance school. The Block was a special place for our community.

(Amanda).

From talking with Amanda,¹²⁰ I learned that The Block was a central meeting place for Black collaborations. Although Australian South Sea Islanders are not Indigenous, they experience similar forms of marginalisation and racism to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Quanchi, 1998, p. 31-32). Thus, the undoing of The Block does not only represent the fragmentation of the Aboriginal community, but also many of the Black collaborative movements that Amanda talks about. However, Amanda's testimony provides a positive nostalgic reflection on her memories of The Block and what that place enabled, in terms of Black collaboration. As such, this marks an attempt to reshape narratives of The Block and reassert rights to place through nostalgic discourse.

Artwork

Nostalgia of The Block for Aboriginal people is also presented artistically, through the struggle to preserve and restore Aboriginal artwork and murals. Although these struggles precede the emergence of Black Lives Matter in Sydney, such forms of resistance are key in shaping the narrative of land dispossession in Black Lives Matter discourse in Sydney. Some participants spoke about the cultural significance of artwork in shaping nostalgic memories of The Block and in symbolising the continued importance of The Block for Aboriginal people:

There are so many great Aboriginal artists. The murals in Redfern were beautiful. There was a campaign to save the [Aboriginal] artwork [...] The murals remind people of The Block and what it stands for. We

¹²⁰ Both over the phone and through regular email chains.

can't forget that history. But it doesn't make up for what has happened [at The Block] and can actually be a selling point for settlers.

(Rachel).

To understand BLM here [in Sydney], you've got to understand our history and [that] this is our land [...]. Go to Redfern; it's an important place for Aboriginal people. Go and see our community's artwork; a lot of it has gone but there's a big a mural [outside of Redfern Station].

(Emily: ethnographic notes from at Invasion Day 26th January 2020).

There was a campaign to keep [Aboriginal] murals because they wanted to remove a lot of the artwork. You know the big one outside of the station? The community managed to save that through the campaign.

(Amanda).

Much of the original Aboriginal artwork and murals were destroyed along with The Block, but members of the Aboriginal community fought to preserve and recreate as many murals as possible. The participant accounts reveal how the preservation of Aboriginal artwork is represented through a "longing for different time and place" (Atia and Davies, 2010, p. 181). I interpret feelings of nostalgia through continued desires for self-determination, Aboriginal community cohesion and rights to place. However, the artwork also serves an important function in the present, as both Rachel and Emily seem to indicate that artwork illuminates both the history of The Block as Aboriginal land, but also exposes violence through recolonization and land dispossession. In this sense, nostalgia is not limited to "romanticism of the past" (Murtono and Wijaya, 2021, p. 4252), but is viewed as essential in shaping future resistance and rights to place in the present. As such,

Emily's testimony seems to suggest that Aboriginal artwork is central in enabling long-standing Aboriginal struggles to permeate ideas of Black Lives Matter.

The mural outside of Redfern station that Amanda refers to (Figure 14) is important geographically, as it is situated on the corner of the former entrance to The Block, but also politically, as it tells longer histories of colonialization and land dispossession. The mural was initially painted by young Aboriginal artists (Tracey Moffat and Avril Quail) in the 1980's but has since been restored by young Aboriginal artists as part of the campaign. Amy¹²¹ told me how the mural tells a story of how Aboriginal people have lived on this land for the last 40,000 years and specifically of the importance of The Block as a meeting place for Aboriginal people. It shows the first Aboriginal footsteps on the land and people hunting and fishing; as well as an image of a young Aboriginal boy, who represents the stolen generation. Although The Block no longer physically exists, this mural captivates memories of The Block as a place symbolic importance and of political resistance.



Figure 14 Aboriginal mural outside of Redfern Station.

Source: Carol Ruff and team.

¹²¹ Conversation with Amy at The Block, 2nd February 2020.

While Aboriginal artwork and murals play a key role in shaping nostalgia and situating contemporary struggles within longer histories of dispossession; Rachel's testimony seems to indicate a note of caution, as Aboriginal artwork can be exploited in creating 'cool'¹²² places for non-Aboriginal consumption (Hammond et al., 2018, p. 260). This was evident in Bond and Browder's (2019, p. 239) transnational work in the US and South Africa, which exposed the ways that businesses sought to profit from feelings of racialized nostalgia by "re-racializing" spaces in a bid to create 'cool' places for the 'White', middle and upper class to consume.

In other scholarship, Turnbull in his work in Calgary suggests, "the contained and controlled manifestation of nostalgia in the gentrified centre of Calgary allows for the city's history to be available for consumption while not infringing upon the daily promotion of sophistication and progress so central to Calgary's contemporary urban identity" (2009, p. 43). As such, this suggests that that nostalgia is powerful in giving newly gentrified spaces a sense of 'character', but such nostalgia should not be outspoken and should be contained for consumption purposes. Thus, while the campaign to re-create the Redfern Station mural was successful, Rachel's testimony illuminates the power of neoliberal urban forces in allowing some pieces of artwork to remain for settler consumption, while other (more politically charged and outspoken) pieces were removed. As such, we should acknowledge that the redevelopment of The Block exploits some exposure to Aboriginal cultural heritage. However, as participants have suggested, artwork remains central in symbolising the continued cultural significance of The Block and in shaping contemporary movements like Black Lives Matter in dialogue with historical decolonial struggles of land dispossession.

Several participants¹²³ emphasised the significance of The Block in understanding Black Lives Matter in Sydney and urged me to include this case within this thesis. I interpret this as having deeper meaning, where participants sought to emphasise the importance of dialogue between long-standing and

¹²² A term I heard several times from non-Aboriginal people when talking about Redfern's cultural heritage.

¹²³ Notably Caroline, Rachel, Grayson, and Maria.

symbolic place-based struggles for Aboriginal land and contemporary forms of Black Lives Matter activism. Although the demolition of The Block began more than 20 years ago, its redevelopment continues today, and this section has revealed the ways that neoliberal urbanism and racial violence remain co-constituted over time and represent contemporary manifestations of colonialism. However, the use of yarning, artwork, and nostalgia demonstrates some of the ways that participants sought to resist territorial stigma reassert rights to place in the face of neoliberal urbanism and land dispossession. As such, nostalgia is central in how participants communicate both their sense of loss and resistance, and scholars should consider the role of nostalgic discourse as an expression of reclaiming rights to place in rapidly changing gentrified environments. Moreover, this section has not only revealed how Black Lives Matter works to reframe the narrative of The Block, but also how The Block and issues of Aboriginal urban land dispossession reshape broader meanings of transnational Black Lives Matter activism in Sydney.

6.5 Conclusion

Grenfell Tower in London and The Block in Sydney demonstrate the different ways that neoliberal urbanism and racial violence are mutually constituted across place and how these events are reflected in understandings of Black Lives Matter. The case of Grenfell and The Block reveal how Black Lives Matter shapes the narrative of an event (such as: Grenfell Tower; The Block), but also how these contexts reshape Black Lives Matter activism. As such, Grenfell demonstrates the centrality of multi-ethnic racial violence in Black Lives Matter London activism, while The Block exposes connections between Blackness and Aboriginal land dispossession and how this is permeated through ideas of Black Lives Matter in Sydney. This demonstrates the ways that Black Lives Matter is not replicated across place, but rather takes on new meaning as it travels across and through transnational contexts.

The cases of Grenfell Tower and The Block reveal the place-based impacts of neoliberal urbanism in (re)producing racial violence and in the spatial organisation of cities. Wacquant's (2007) conceptualisation of urban territorial stigma is useful in

examining the different ways that multi-ethnic and Aboriginal people are racially stigmatized in justifying the divestment and redevelopment of place. This provided some explanation into why transnational Black Lives Matter activism is viewed as necessary and why activists are concerned with issues of neoliberal urban racial violence. However, by drawing on critiques of Wacquant's (2007) thesis that marginalised communities "internalize" stigma and are negatively depicted as only victims (Carins, 2018; Cretan and Powell, 2018; Nayak, 2019), I illuminated how acts of place-based protest, charity, community organisations stepping in for the state, 'yarning', artwork, and nostalgia, represent some of the ways that participants "speak back" (Nayak, 2019), and (re)assert rights to place. As such, these forms of anti-racist and decolonial resistances are permeated through Black Lives Matter and illuminate how contemporary ideas of Black Lives Matter activism works in dialogue with longer-standing place-based struggles.

Although Grenfell Tower and The Block reveal the systematic mutually constituted relationship between neoliberal urbanism and racial violence, Black Lives Matter is understood and enacted in overlapping yet distinct contexts. The case of Grenfell demonstrates the centrality of multi-ethnic racial violence in how Black Lives Matter is understood in London, while The Block illustrates how Black Lives Matter in Sydney is understood in dialogue with historical struggles of Aboriginal land dispossession and for self-determination. Drawing on ideas of slow violence (Davies, 2019a; Kern, 2016; Nixon, 2011; Pain, 2019), Grenfell's multi-ethnic community is presented as stigmatized as 'undeserving' and 'powerless' and experienced violence through negligence; while The Block reveals how racial violence was enacted in more visible ways, through the demolition of The Block and rapid dispossession of Aboriginal land. Moreover, The Block was stigmatized as a violent place that needed "saving" (Lloyd and Bond, 2018), while Grenfell exposed territorial stigma through negligence and isolation. As such, the cases of Grenfell Tower in London and The Block in Sydney provide crucial insight into the different ways that Black Lives Matter reframes the narratives of these events, but also how these events reshape Black Lives Matter across transnational place.

Chapter 7.0 Environmental justice and the struggle for Black Lives Matter

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I turn to the relationship between environmental and racial justice, showing how this relationship has been refracted through Black Lives Matter in London and Sydney. Using an intersectional approach, I analyse the direction and impact of environmental injustice in relation to Black Lives Matter, suggesting the struggle for environmental justice is connected to the struggle for Black Lives Matter. Environmental racism provides further insight into the different ways that Black Lives Matter is adopted and adapted transnationally. As such, this reveals how ideas of Black Lives Matter are reshaped by place-based environmental racisms, but also how Black Lives Matter reframes the narrative of long-standing place-based environmental racisms. While the previous chapter explored the connections between neoliberal urbanism and racial violence through Black Lives Matter activism, in this chapter, I build on this, through further investigating the relationship between neoliberalism and environmental racism in both urban and non-urban contexts.

The cases of London and Sydney provide diverse examples of the ways that environmental issues are taken up by Black Lives Matter activists across transnational contexts. The environment is a central concern for Black Lives Matter in Sydney, and I suggest that the Sydney movement is a path-leader on environmental racism in Black Lives Matter activism. The environment is a crucial issue for Aboriginal communities and is manifested through multiple struggles, such as, land rights, natural resource extraction, pollution of rivers and water sources, and the environmental impact of bush fires. While in London, environmental racism is represented as an emerging issue for Black Lives Matter and is developing as part of a transnational debate on environmental racism. The issue of air pollution and its disproportionate effect on Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities has emerged as an issue for Black Lives Matter in London, as well as campaigns surrounding the disproportionate impact of climate change on “darker nations” (Pulido, 2020, p. 117) contributing to debates on racism and the Anthropocene. As such, the of London and

Sydney reveal the ways that Black Lives Matter is reshaped by diverse issues of environmental justice across place.

I seek to contribute to environmental racism scholarship in three ways. First, through exposing how Black Lives Matter has enabled a more transnational intersectional approach to environmental justice, and by illuminating the different ways that environmental injustice disproportionately impacts Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal people. Second, by conceptualising environmental racism as another layer of structural racism for Black Lives Matter (Forbes et al., 2021; Pellow, 2016); this helps explain the wider adoption and adaption of the movement into environmental justice. As such, this gives further insight into some of the ways that transnational Black Lives Matter activism seeks to decentre US narratives of Black Lives Matter and create both parochial place-based movements, as well as transnational solidarity on environmental racism. The third aspect I address is the relationship between neoliberalism and environmental racism by highlighting the central role of neoliberalism in the production of place-based environmental racisms.

This chapter begins by providing a brief conceptual introduction on environmental racism, before situating how I seek to contribute to these debates. I then examine environmental justice in the Sydney Black Lives Matter movement, where I draw on the cases of the Adani coal mine in Queensland, the pollution of the Murray-Darling River and Australia's 2019/20 bushfire season in revealing the diverse and disproportionate ways that environmental racism impacts Aboriginal communities. Specifically, I expose how the neoliberal context of commodifying resources and "resource extractivism"¹²⁴ represent acts of racial violence and this provides some insight into why these cases are pressing issues for Black Lives Matter in Sydney. I then turn to the emerging role of environmental justice in the London Black Lives Matter movement, where I explore environmental racism through the impact of air pollution and its disproportionate impact on Black Asian Ethnic Minority communities in London. Moreover, I highlight the contributions of Black Lives Matter activists in framing the global climate crisis as an issue of racism, not

¹²⁴ "A nonreciprocal approach where resources are removed and used with little care or regard to consequences" (Bambrick, 2018, p. 272; also; Preston, 2017; Aristil et al., 2021).

only in terms of disproportionality, but also in challenging the historically White representation in environmental justice movements. I conclude by arguing that environmental justice is a powerful, transnational theme pointing towards new forms and futures for Black Lives Matter, and its adoption and adaption. As such, this provides insight into some of the different ways that the environment has emerged as an important issue for Black Lives Matter in London and Sydney, and why transnationalism is both possible and necessary.

7.2 Situating environmental racism

In recent years, environmental justice and particularly climate change, has re-emerged as a key issue not only in activist circles but for states around the world (Yeo, 2019). Greta Thunberg, along with millions of other young environmental activists have been central in efforts to put environmental justice on the global agenda (Marris, 2019). However, the re-emergence of environmental justice in the mainstream has also raised fresh questions regarding the whiteness of environmentalism, as well as the disproportionate environmental impacts that Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal communities face (see Baird, 2008). While environmental justice is a lesser-examined issue than police brutality in the Black Lives Matter literature, the environment is a key issue in the Black Lives Matter Sydney movement and is emerging as a transnational debate in the Black Lives Matter London movement.

The concept of environmental racism was first coined in 1982, by American civil rights leader, Benjamin Chavis, following the 1982 protests against the dumping of toxic waste in Warren County, North Carolina (Holifield, 2001, p. 83). Chavis defines environmental racism as:

Racial discrimination in environmental policy-making and enforcement of regulations and laws, the deliberate targeting of communities of color for toxic waste facilities, the official sanctioning of the presence of life-threatening poisons and pollutants for communities of color, and the history of excluding people of color from leadership of the environmental movement (1994, p. 12).

Chavis highlights the structural nature of racism in environmental policy, the disproportionate impacts of environmental injustice toward Ethnic Minority communities, as well as the historical exclusion of Black and Minority voices from the environmental justice movement. In more recent work, scholars have drawn out the role of whiteness in environmental justice. For example, Seamster and Purifoy (2021) situate environmental racism as key in the production of 'White' places, suggesting resources are taken from Black communities and reinvested into the production of 'White' places. Purifoy (2021), builds on this through the case of municipal incorporation in North Carolina, arguing that racism plays a significant role in determining environmental outcomes, as Black and Latinx communities are structurally deprived of the same access to environmental amenities, as White communities. While other work has examined the racialization of whiteness in environmental justice movements, citing the underrepresentation of Black voices (Curnow and Helferty, 2018; Gibson-Wood and Wakefield, 2013).

However, leading geographer on environmental racism, Laura Pulido (2015, p. 809), cautions scholars from a limited focus on white privilege in relation to environmental justice, as neoliberalism conceals the presence of structural racism and reduces racism to an individual level. For this reason, she suggests that scholarship should pay more attention to the power dynamics that create racial injustice and not reduce acts of white supremacy to white privilege. Bonds and Inwood (2016, p. 728) build on this, arguing that routinized "taken for granted" forms of white privileges should be understood in the context of white supremacy, which is often reduced to historicized understandings of racial domination and violence (e.g., European colonization of Africa, and white power groups). As such, they reveal the ways that logics of racism are "reproduced through spectacular and mundane violence's that reaffirm empire and the economic, social, cultural and political power of white racial identities" (Bonds and Inwood, 2016, p. 721). Others have contributed to this work, conceptualising environmental racism as a structural manifestation of neoliberalism, suggesting that governments continue to put the economic interests of corporations before the environmental health of communities, with Black people bearing a

disproportionate impact of such environmental injustice (Benz, 2019; McKenna, 2018).

In her recent work, Pulido (2015, 2016, 2017) conceptualises environmental racism through the lenses of racial capitalism and state sanctioned violence, suggesting local authorities and corporations are fundamental in understanding how environmental racism is produced. Her work is philosophically underpinned by the late Cedric Robinson's (2000) conceptualisation of racial capitalism and asserts that capitalism is dependent on the devaluation of Black bodies. Pulido draws on the case of Flint, Michigan, that revealed the toxic poisoning of water for a predominantly poor and African American community, in illustrating how environmental racism was produced through the context of neoliberal austerity and how "devaluation is based on both their blackness and surplus status" (2016, p. 1). Willie Jamal Wright (2021, p. 791) contributes to this scholarship, by suggesting "environmental racism includes the mutual devaluation of black bodies and the spaces in which they inhabit", and this is important because like police violence, environmental injustices often have direction, toward Black bodies and space. Wright's (2021) thesis is motivated by the wide-spread disproportionality of death and violence that Black communities experience (e.g., deaths in custody and police violence) and seeks to make connections between the environment and racial violence. This work goes beyond the physical dumping of toxic waste into Black neighbourhoods and instead, begins to interrogate the devaluation of Black geographies and bodies through the lens of environmental racism.

Other work has explored environmental racism on a macro level (Almeida, 2019; Baird, 2008; Tuana, 2019). For example, Baird (2008) illuminates the impacts of climate change, as seen through a rapid increase and severity in flooding, droughts, hurricanes, burning temperatures, spreading of disease and weather-related disasters. However, he indicates that after decades of systematic discrimination on macro and micro levels, the impacts of climate change are disproportionately felt by Ethnic Minority and Indigenous populations (Baird, 2008, p. 1).¹²⁵ Place is also

¹²⁵ 'Minority' refers to groups that are normally numerically smaller, and who share a common religious, ethnic, or linguistic identity. Examples are the Roma across Europe, Dalits and Muslims in India and Afro-descendants in Colombia. 'Indigenous' refers to groups who have a special connection with the natural environment and are 'First People' to inhabit territory (Baird, 2008, p. 1).

significant in examining the direction of climate change in relation to race and the Anthropocene (Baldwin and Erickson, 2020; Joo, 2020; Pulido et al., 2019; Tuana, 2019). As Pulido (2020, p. 117-118) points out, climate change has everything to do with race, as it is the “darker nations”¹²⁶ with majority non-White populations that suffer the greatest consequences of climate change in terms of lives lost, well-being and livelihoods. In contrast, many wealthy, industrialised, Western countries, with majority White populations, experience milder consequences, despite historically being the largest emitters of excess carbon (Pardikar, 2020).

7.3 Environmental racism matters in Sydney

7.31 *The Adani coal mine and continued dispossession of Aboriginal land*

Environmental racism has long been a pressing issue for Aboriginal people and there is an important historical and cultural relationship between land and the natural environment for Aboriginal people (Walker, 2006, p. 2). The relationship between Aboriginal people and the environment long precedes the Black Lives Matter movement; however, environmental racism has emerged as a key issue for Black Lives Matter in Australia, with Sydney as an epicentre in representing wider rural environmental struggles. One of the most contentious issues of environmental racism for Aboriginal people is the Adani Carmichael coal mine in Queensland. At Invasion Day 2020, connections between the Adani coal mine, environmental racism, land dispossession and Black Lives Matter were evident through interchanging chanting:

“STOP ADANI, STOP, STOP ADANI”.

“WHO’S LIVES MATTER? BLACK LIVES MATTER”.

“ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE, ABORIGINAL LAND”.

(Ethnographic notes: Invasion Day, 26th January 2020).

¹²⁶ A term borrowed from Vijay Prashad (2017).

The construction of the Adani Carmichael coal mine was first announced in 2010 and following approval from both the federal and Queensland governments, the project was planned to be one of the largest coal mines in the world (Hall, 2020). But after facing fierce opposition from Aboriginal landowners and environmental activists, the Adani Carmichael coal mine was initially scaled back from production of a staggering 60 million tonnes of coal a year to 10 million tonnes (Chaterjee, 2021). However, environmental activists claim leaked documents from Adani submitted to the Queensland government suggest the annual “ramping up” up to 27 million tonnes initially and later 55 million tonnes (Smee, 2020). In addition, campaigners believe that the Adani Carmichael mine will prompt a snowballing effect, and pave way for at least six more mines to open in the area. As well as the proposed coal mine, Adani has gained approval to build a 189km train line across Wangan and Jagalingou country near to the ports of Hay Point and Abbot Point, which will allow coal to be easily transported onto ships ready for export (Carter, 2020).

The Adani Carmichael mine is based on the Galilee Basin which is Wangan and Jagalingou country and has been firmly opposed by the (landowning) Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council. The Council (N.D) have rejected the land use agreement from Adani (and by extension, the Queensland and Federal government) and assert “we will PROTECT and DEFEND our Country and our connection to it [...] Our traditional lands are an interconnected and living whole; a vital cultural landscape. It is central to us as a People, and to the maintenance of our identity, laws and consequent rights”.



Figure 15 Map of Adani coal mine in relation to the Great Barrier Reef.

Source: Google Earth.

The Adani Carmichael coal mine has long been opposed by the Aboriginal community and these feelings have emerged within Black Lives Matter activism, showing how environmental injustice is connected to the struggle for Black Lives Matter. In 2020, the Stop Adani (N.D) movement¹²⁷ made a solidarity statement with Black Lives Matter:

Stand with #BlackLivesMatter and the fight to stop Black deaths in custody. As #BlackLivesMatter protests and calls for justice reverberate around the world, we cannot turn away from the reality here in Australia. Since the Royal Commission in 1991, 437 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have died in police custody. As organisers, we've invited everyone in the #StopAdani movement to join us in calling for justice for First Nations communities in Australia and Black

¹²⁷ A movement created in 2016 in response to the Adani Carmichael mine.

communities across the US who are fighting for their lives against systemic violence and discrimination.

Many of you have joined us, but many have also asked what our fight to stop Adani has to do with the fight to stop Black deaths in custody.

We often answer that there is no climate justice without justice for First Nations people – but what does that actually mean?

1. First Nations people are on the frontlines of fossil fuel extraction.
2. First Nations people are on the frontlines of the climate crisis.
3. For First Nations people, injustice is an interconnected, lived experience.
4. Climate justice cannot be separated from other struggles for justice.

This intersectional statement not only illustrates solidarity between Black Lives Matter and the Wangan and Jagalingou people, but also represents the connectedness between struggles for environmental justice and Black Lives Matter. The Adani Carmichael coal mine illustrates the need for an intersectional approach to environmental justice, and this provides an example of how Black Lives Matter offers a platform for Wangan and Jagalingou Aboriginal people in their struggle against Adani.

In other accounts, Caroline explained why Adani is an issue for Black Lives Matter in the Sydney context, describing the legal and cultural implications:

It's in central Queensland and is just north of where my traditional mob's¹²⁸ land was. So, they had Native title,¹²⁹ but the issue of Native

¹²⁸ Mob – meaning 'clan' or extended family.

¹²⁹ Native title was achieved in 1993 and "is the recognition that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have rights and interests to land and waters according to their traditional law and customs as set out in Australian Law" (Kimberly Land Council, N.D).

title actually puts an obligation to consult with the traditional owners. It's weak as piss, it doesn't give any control or capacity to stop mining on this land. But it gives an obligation consult. Anyway [...] they removed that; those people's Native status was unilaterally removed by the government. What that does is criminalise Aboriginal people. So, if they undertake traditional ceremonies, go hunting for food on their traditional lands, they are criminalised for doing that. It's another example of where the state is using the law and the police to repress Aboriginal people and to dispossess them. That dispossession is still going on today.

(Caroline).

Caroline's testimony highlights how the construction of the Adani Carmichael coal mine on Aboriginal traditional land without Aboriginal consent signifies the undoing of Native title and continued dispossession of Aboriginal land. The Queensland government's controversial decision in 2019 to extinguish Native title in 1355 hectares of Wangan and Jagalingou Country meant that traditional landowners were effectively banned and legally deemed "trespassers" on their own traditional lands (Doherty, 2019). As such, Caroline's account not only indicates the centrality of the natural environment and land dispossession in reshaping Black Lives Matter discourse in Sydney, but also reveals how this manifests structural racism through the legal system and use of the police. Thus, Aboriginal people who resist the Adani Carmichael mine and continue to use the land for traditional ceremonies and food gathering are criminalised as "trespassers".

Adrian Burragubba of the Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council, is a traditional landowner on the site of Adani and has been criminalised for using the land. Since the extinguishment of Native title in parts of Wangan and Jagalingou Country in 2019, Mr Burragubba continued to oppose the construction of the mine by camping on the land, conducting traditional ceremonies, and pursuing multiple legal challenges to Adani. But Mr Burragubba was removed by the police and ordered to pay AU\$600,000 in outstanding legal costs, which made him bankrupt; and as a

result, he had his property seized, and he was threatened with jail time, if he “trespasses” on “Adani’s’ land” again (Gregorie, 2019). This supports Caroline’s claims and illuminates how Aboriginal people were criminalised for resisting the construction of the Adani mine.

Relevant to this, is Blomley’s (2003, p. 128) work on the relationship between violence and private property, as he suggests that the survey and grid have long been used in “frontiers” to first secure land in the imagination, and second reconstitute the land as colonial. The issue of Native title draws some parallels with this argument, as the legal responsibility to consult landowners is undermined by the ability to extinguish Native title by the state. As such, this indicates that the state continues to use violence to secure private property and redraw colonial boundaries. Violence in this sense is represented as legal and symbolic, as well as physical; in that it is used to legally extinguish rights to Native title; it symbolically undermines the special relationship between Aboriginal people and traditional lands; and is physical through the removal of Aboriginal people from their land or incarcerating those who resist. As such, Caroline’s response seems to indicate interconnections between different forms of violence in manifesting the dispossession of Aboriginal land and this gives crucial insight into the centrality of environmental racism in shaping Black Lives Matter in the Sydney context.

In other accounts, participants sought to draw attention to the relationship between neoliberalism and environmental racism, indicating that profit took precedence over local Aboriginal communities and the natural environment. On 23rd January, I attended a Black Lives Matter forum in Newtown, Sydney, where Grayson was talking:

Capitalism with its relentless strive for profit is responsible for the dispossession and oppression of my people. I mean look at the Adani coal mine and the attempted construction there. It’s literally a planet destroying disaster. They were going to override land rights for the Aboriginal community in order to do that. The Queensland Labour government has no problem in doing this for the profit of a wealthy few. Nor are they bothered

about the Adani corporation bankrupting Adrian Burragubba by half a million dollars.

(Grayson).

Moreover, at Invasion Day 2020, I met Lou, an Aboriginal woman who elaborated on the connection between environmental justice and Aboriginal land rights:

We know the [Adani] mine is toxic for the planet. But it also weakens land rights in favour of profit and corporate greed.

(Lou).

These accounts acknowledge the environmental consequences of the Adani coal mine and sought to present the wider neoliberal context that they view as responsible for the dispossession of Aboriginal land. As such, this signals that the Adani coal mine is viewed as a case in exemplifying wider issues of environmental racism, and this indicates that such acts of violence go beyond individual acts of racism and are presented as structural racial violence in the context of neoliberalism. Moreover, in Grayson's account, he speaks in his capacity as a Black Lives Matter organiser¹³⁰ and makes connections between the Aboriginal struggle against Adani and the struggle for Black Lives Matter through the narrative of environmental racism and contemporary decolonial struggles against land dispossession. These testimonies draw some parallels with other work, conceptualising the case of the of the Adani mine as a structural product of the neoliberal Australian state (Morgan and Cole-Hawthorne, 2016, p. 59; Parker and Cox, 2020, p. 623).

However, the participant perspectives seem to suggest that the state is not a passive bystander in the case of Adani but is central in the destruction of Aboriginal land rights and the dispossession of land, which indicates that environmental racism

¹³⁰ At a Black Lives Matter event in Sydney.

is viewed as “state-sanctioned” (Pulido, 2017, p. 525) in the violent dispossession of Aboriginal land. There are also similarities with the previous chapter (six), in how neoliberal urban gentrification manifested the dispossession of Aboriginal people from urban land. However, the case of Adani illuminate’s dispossession of traditional rural land and this marks a unique way that Black Lives Matter is reshaped in the Sydney context; with the issue of (rural and urban) land dispossession central.

On the key issue of land rights, Caroline explained the cultural connections between Aboriginal people and the natural environment and why the case of Adani is a reference point for Black Lives Matter discourse in Sydney:

Huge environmental issues. It’s quite astounding how they can justify it because it’s going to damage all of the land there and the Great Barrier Reef, which is the biggest draw for the Queensland government. Can you imagine the shipping coming in and out? They pump out all this crap. For Aboriginal people, the environment, land and water management are central to Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal culture is tied to the land. It’s a custodial responsibility to nurture and look after the land. Traditionally we didn’t have a concept of owning land, rather we live on the land and we have a responsibility to maintain it. But also, that responsibility for all the generations to come. The concept that anyone can own land and destroy it is inconceivable because you have to look after that land for the next generation. First Nations in North America talk about seven generations ahead and behind. But here, it’s more than seven.

(Caroline).

Caroline’s account illuminates the environmental impacts of the Adani mine; as seen through the destruction of land, pollution of water and the cascading environmental impacts that has potential to lead to the destruction of eco-systems,

including huge parts the Great Barrier Reef. The Great Barrier Reef is commonly used as an illustration of the impacts of climate change (Readfearn, 2021), however Caroline sought to reframe this narrative by drawing attention to the role of the state in the dispossession of Aboriginal land, and how this not only erodes land rights, but also the cultural role of Aboriginal people as custodians of the land. This signifies the special relationship between Aboriginal people and the natural environment and how the Adani coal mine poses deeper violence on Aboriginal people given their special relationship to land. As such, Caroline's perspective provides insight into why environmental racism and land dispossession have emerged as key issues in Black Lives Matter Sydney, but also how ideas of Black Lives Matter have reframed narratives of Adani and environmental justice, as issues of racial violence.

Building on this, research from the Mackay Conservation Group suggests that the environmental impacts of the mine are not limited to Galilee Basin but will stretch to (mostly Aboriginal) communities that rely on the Great Artesian Basin for water (McKeown, 2018). The Adani Carmichael mine will drain at least 270 billion litres of ground water, dump polluted mine water in the Carmichael River and put 160 ancient springs (part of the Doongmabulla Spring system) at risk, which is an essential water source during times of drought for many Aboriginal communities (McKeown, 2018). This reveals that environmental violence is not contained to the site of Adani but poses environmental injustices that disproportionately impact rural Aboriginal communities beyond the Galilee Basin.

7.31.1 Transnational Wet'suwet'en resistance and Black Lives Matter in Sydney

While the Adani coal mine has permeated environmental racism into Black Lives Matter discourse in Sydney, the Wet'suwet'en resistance toward the Coastal GasLink Pipeline (CGL)¹³¹ in the Canadian context was presented as a shadowing case; and transnational solidarity marches were organised in Sydney. I interviewed Carl, a First Nations man from Canada, who was an organiser of Wet'suwet'en

¹³¹ The CGL is a pipeline project under construction and will transport natural liquified gas from Dawson Creek in British Columbia (BC), 420 miles southwest to Kitimat, BC. Controversially, the pipeline runs directly through the middle of Wet'suwet'en traditional lands and has been firmly opposed by Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs, citing the potential to contaminate the land which is a vital source of food, water, and medicine for First Nation communities (Brown and Bracken, 2020).

transnational solidarity rallies in Sydney and he explained why Black Lives Matter is useful in making connections between diverse struggles of environmental racism:

A lot of people working on the ground, we see ourselves as land and water protectors instead. We are not protesting; we are just doing what we are told you do. If the land and water is under threat, then you fight
[...]

Building solidarities between these [Black, First Nations and Aboriginal] communities is very natural because of the issues; especially forcibly moving these communities into an inner-city ghetto or out of a reservation, police brutality, all of these things happen to us. [...] Decolonization is a big part of that and a lot of groups organising under Black Lives Matter have put that as a central part of the message. Anti-Blackness also came through colonization. The links are happening.

(Carl).

Carl's account suggests that Black Lives Matter has been used as an organising principle to bring together multiple long-standing issues of land dispossession and environmental racism transnationally. His testimony indicates that environmental racism, like police brutality, is part of the struggle for Black Lives Matter in these transnational contexts, and resistance is formed through struggles for land rights and decolonization. Parallels are also seen in the cases of Adani and the CGL pipeline, as resistance through roadblocks from anti-pipeline activists were met with an overwhelming police presence, as officers suited in tactical gear and armed with tear gas and rubber bullets, arrested scores of campaigners (Cecco, 2020). Spice (2018, p. 40) argues that CGL pipeline represents the criminalisation of First Nations people who oppose economic projects on their traditional lands; with the police deployed to quash resistance and ensure the construction of the pipeline. Moreover, as Bagelman (2015, p. 102) points out, the pipeline is presented as cutting through vast

“wilderness”, rather than sovereign lands where First Nations people have lived for thousands of years.

In this sense, the case of the CGL pipeline and Wet’suwet’en resistance draws some similarities with the ways that the Wangan and Jagalingou people were dispossessed from their land and criminalised for posing resistance. As such, this provides further insight into the ways that Black Lives Matter is reshaped through decolonial narratives and enables connections to be made not only between environmental and racial justice, but also across transnational contexts. However, the Wet’suwet’en and Wangan and Jagalingou struggles are not presented as essentialist, but rather, demonstrate how Black Lives Matter is differently employed in negotiating solidarities between place-based struggles. Relevant to this is Featherstone’s (2015, p. 15) work on maritime labour and subaltern geographies of internationalism, examining the ways that subaltern maritime actors sought to decentre and navigate uneven leftist-elite power relations in organising. As such, transnational Black Lives Matter activism through the Adani coal mine and the CGL can be seen as both challenging whiteness in environmentalism, as well as decentring US imperial narratives of Black Lives Matter, through reshaping parochial movements.

7.32 The Murray-Darling River and commodification of water

The case of the Murray-Darling River also emerged as a key reference point for participants when talking about Black Lives Matter in Sydney. This case demonstrates how the commodification of water further produces environmental racism through the dispossession of communities from traditional lands. As such, this provides further insight into the connections between environmental justice and the struggle for Black Lives Matter, as well as the role of neoliberalism in commodifying land and undermining cultural and spiritual significance for Aboriginal people (D’Odorico et al., 2017, p. 2235). The Murray-Darling Basin connects the Murray and Darling Rivers that flow through three Australian states: South Australia, New South Wales, and Victoria. Some historians suggest that Aboriginal people have inhabited the Darling River for at least 30,000 years and the

Murray-Darling River system for at least 40,000 years (Murray-Darling Association, N.D).

This issue of water is intensified along parts of the Murray-Darling River in Western NSW, a region scattered with cotton farms along the river. Water in NSW is regulated through Water Sharing Plans (WSP) which were signed in 2012 and falls under the Water Management Act (2000). The WSP are used to “set the rules [10 yearly] for sharing water between users and the environment and bring water users into a licensing system” (NSW Government, N.D). Under this arrangement, water is intended to be ‘fairly’ shared between commercial users (such as cotton farms and companies), private landholders, town water supplies, the natural environment¹³² and Aboriginal communities. However, in recent years, the increased frequency of drought has put pressure on the Murray-Darling and further scrutinised the use of WSP in regulating the use of water. As a result, the river is either dry or polluted, and many Aboriginal communities who rely on the Murray-Darling have either gone dry and had no option but to buy expensive water or have been forced to drink polluted water (Grant, 2019).

Some participant accounts suggested that limited water access for Aboriginal communities marked deliberate attempts to remove Aboriginal people from their traditional lands, in favour of allocating land for financial investment:

They sell off water rights to companies and cotton farmers; meanwhile, communities are going dry. The Darling River is almost dry and where there was water left, it was stagnating. So, 100-year-old Murray cod, these huge native fish were all killed. People haven’t been able to drink. Aboriginal communities who are impoverished and being told to buy water in to drink. People have said to me that they feel that the water has been sold off to try and pressure them to move from Country, from our traditional lands. You cannot survive without water. Where those cotton farms are, the chemicals go into the river and the kids swim in

¹³² To preserve the health of rivers, ecosystems, and the wider natural environment.

them. There is a high rate of deformities from kids swimming in the rivers. Pollution, water and land management are really key issues for Aboriginal people because of the relationship to land.

(Caroline).

The Darling has gone dry because they have sold off all the water. A lot of our people had to leave because they don't have access [to water] [...] It's the same story, it's the dispossession from our lands.

(Rachel).

These accounts illuminate the disproportionate ways that Aboriginal communities experience environmental racism through the commodification of water and dispossession from traditional lands. As such, this reveals the role of neoliberalism in the uneven allocation of natural resources, which threatens the survival of Aboriginal people on traditional land. These testimonies expose multiple ways that environmental racism is manifested: first, through the unfair allocation of water, where it is suggested that water is prioritised for financial interest. Second, through the ecological impact that cotton farms have on the river; indicating that water sources are either depleted or unsafe to drink because of pollution. And third, through limited access to safe drinking water which left Aboriginal communities with little option but to leave traditional lands. As such, this provides insight into the diverse ways that environmental racism and land dispossession are manifested through neoliberalism and gives explanation for why the issue of the Murray-Darling River has emerged Black Lives Matter discourse in Sydney.

Participant accounts also illustrate the cultural and symbolic importance of the natural environment and land to Aboriginal people, and how this special relationship has been undermined through selling water to private companies. Acts of environmental injustice, as seen through the pollution and drying up of the river, as well as the deaths of thousands of native fish (Davies, 2019b), are not only presented as physical violence, but also through symbolic violence toward

Aboriginal people (Kojola and Pellow, 2021, p. 106). Waterways are special places for Aboriginal people and are used not only for food, drink, and medicine, but also in many cultural ceremonies. In the Murray-Darling Basin, water is considered a sacred symbol of life and beliefs have long shaped the relationship between Aboriginal people and nature, in different ways to Western understanding (Jackson, Woods and Hooper, 2021, p. 315).

On the issue of water allocation, research conducted in the NSW portion of the Murray-Darling Basin,¹³³ revealed that in 2018, Aboriginal communities made up 9.3% of the population of 10 catchment areas along the basin but only held 0.2% of all available surface water within the same 10 catchments (Hartwig et al., 2020). In addition, data from the Australian Rivers Institute showed out of 158 license holders in the Barwon-Darling River area, 10 holders' control 86% of access to river water and 4 license holders' control 75% (Sheldon, 2019, p. 13). This illustrates the unevenness of water sharing through the WSP and supports claims from campaigners that the hoarding of water by corporations and cotton farmers is partly responsible for a dry and polluted Murray-Darling. Thus, shaping narratives of environmental racism in the Aboriginal context that permeate place-based understandings of Black Lives Matter.

On the issue of commodifying land, some participant accounts sought to further draw out the relationship between neoliberalism and environmental racism more specifically:

The logic of markets and economics, that say this is the best way to structure and organise production and society; and in order to do that, there needs to be land theft, there needs to be massacres, there needs to be the moving away of Aboriginal people in order to develop that land and make capital. What does that mean? It means destroying entire forest lands, grass lands and the pollution of rivers. And then you have an explosion of mineral extraction and mining which means that the

¹³³ Conducted in 10 catchment areas of NSW: Lower Darling, Intersecting Streams, Barwon-Darling, NSW Border Rivers, Gwydir, Namoi, Macquarie-Castlereagh, Lachlan, Murrumbidgee, NSW Murray.

same land is just looked at as another commodity to be sold on the market. But then that brings up other questions; what if the land where you moved these [Aboriginal] people to has lots of mineral deposits under them? Which they did.

(Grayson).

[A] lack of concern for the lack of resources and the impact on Aboriginal people. Profiteering from selling water. Water is fundamental to people's survival. It shouldn't be sold off to the highest bidder. Companies are buying all this water and there is no understanding of how much water there is to sell. That's the whole environment issue, but everything is interconnected.

(Caroline).

These testimonies seem to indicate that natural resources (on Aboriginal land) are viewed as commodities, to be extracted and traded for financial gain. The destruction of the natural environment forced removal of Aboriginal people from traditional lands and use of physical and symbolic forms of violence (Kojola and Pellow, 2021, p. 106) are presented as 'necessary' acts of violence in the pursuit of financial gain by the state and corporations. Building on this, Cooke et al., (2017, p. 438) point out in their work on the Bakun Dam in East Borneo, Malaysia, that the commodification of land and water can be understood as the "colonization of their land and their cultures". In this sense, commodification of land and water works in tandem with the process of what Preston (2017, p. 356) refers to as "racial extractivism"; the process where "colonial histories and reiterations of race-based epistemologies inform the discursive practices used by the oil and gas industry, for example, and by the [Canadian] White settler government in promoting and managing 'resource extraction'". The case of the Murray-Darling supports these claims and reveals a different manifestation of the relationship between the state and

corporations in dispossessing Aboriginal people from traditional lands and extracting natural resources for profit.

The case of the Adani Carmichael coal mine further illustrates this point. As Lyons (2019, p. 763-764) argues, the Adani coal mine signifies the “neo-liberalisation of resource extractivism” in Australia and reveals “the states explicit interventionist and coercive role as enabler for the resources sector”. As such, this illuminates the state’s central role as a “co-conspirator” (Pulido, 2017, p. 529) in producing environmental racism. The cases of the Adani coal mine and the Murray-Darling River represent diverse places where the dispossession of Aboriginal land is crucial in gaining access to natural resources. Such cases reveal contemporary manifestations of colonialism on Aboriginal land, where the use of private property via the doctrine of *terra nullius* continues to be significant in snatching control of Aboriginal traditional lands (Mulrennan and Scott 2000, p. 682). However, in both cases, Sydney is presented as a place where Black Lives Matter resistance is formed and represents wider rural struggles against land dispossession. Participant perspectives reveal the centrality of environmental justice in the Sydney Black Lives Matter movement, and how the cases of the Adani coal mine and the Murray-Darling River permeate Black Lives Matter discourse in drawing attention to the unique and place-based relationships between Aboriginal people and land. However, they also demonstrate the ways that Black Lives Matter reframes narratives of place-based environmental racisms, in connecting environmental justice struggles with the struggle for Black Lives Matter.

7.33 2019/20 Australian bushfires: Making Aboriginal Lives Matter in the environmental justice movement

While I have so far discussed the ways that environmental justice is connected to the struggle for Black Lives Matter in the Sydney context, I now turn to the issue of representation in the environmental justice movement. Crucially, Aboriginal voices are consistently silenced and left out of the environmental justice movement (Birch, 2018, p. 2-3). Through the case of the 2019/20 Australian bushfires, I argue that while the environmental justice movement remains predominantly White, the emergence

of Black Lives Matter has reasserted long-standing struggles for Aboriginal people to be represented in environmental justice movements, as well as the importance of drawing on Aboriginal knowledge in responding to environmental injustice.

At the core of Black Lives Matter in Sydney are issues of land, sovereignty, and self-determination. As Hughes (2020), an Aboriginal Black Lives Matter organiser asserts: “in Australia, BLM occurs in the context of colonization. The call to value Indigenous Lives extends beyond equal treatment and includes the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty and the right to self-determination”. The issue of land dispossession and the preservation of the natural environment is thus central to this narrative, as well as recognising the special physical and bodily relationship between the natural environment and Aboriginal people, which is different to Western understandings of land (Lewis and Scambary 2016, p. 223). While conducting fieldwork during the 2019/20 Australian bushfires, which saw between 11-18 million hectares of land burnt,¹³⁴ participants asserted the need to have Aboriginal people in positions of representation on the environment and sought to decolonize the environmental justice movement:

[Environmental] movements are taking the narrative away from communities who are most affected by these issues. When we talk about climate change; White, well-off liberals are taking over that narrative. But what about those who it really affects?

Dan: Who does it really affect?

Linda: Indigenous people. It is their land that is being burnt to the ground [...] That’s the problem, the White liberals have removed Indigenous people from the conversation.

(Ethnographic notes Linda: 22nd February 2020).

¹³⁴ Estimates put this scale comparable to the land mass of Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands combined (BBC News, 2020; Jalaudin et al., 2020 p. 1).

Linda is a White, non-Aboriginal woman, and environmental justice activist whom I met while working with Justice Alliance.¹³⁵ Her account seems to indicate that Aboriginal people are excluded from positions of representation in environmental justice movements, despite bearing disproportionate consequences from the bushfires. Linda's testimony suggests that whiteness is not only embedded in the production of environmental racism but also in movements addressing environmental injustice. Relevant to this, Searle, and Muller (2019, p. 411) argue that whiteness is constructed when Aboriginal people feel "defeated", and whiteness is presented as the only solution; and instead, we should attempt to "reverse the gaze" and co-develop solutions with Aboriginal people. However, my fieldwork revealed that participants did not feel "defeated", but rather the emergence of Black Lives Matter reaffirmed long-standing efforts for Aboriginal representation on environmental justice.

For example, some participant accounts sought to highlight the importance of Aboriginal knowledge on the environment, suggesting that we can learn from the ways that Aboriginal people have historically managed the natural environment:

Traditionally, Aboriginal people burnt off the land so that there wasn't a lot of waste on the ground to make fires not as hot as they are now. If there is less stuff on the ground, it doesn't burn as hot. They used to call it fire stick farming where they would burn. National parks are starting to draw Aboriginal people in to learn but we still need Aboriginal people in decision making to manage the land and water. We need to move away from this neoliberal framework of selling off everything. [...] They need to be in positions of decision making. You can't just have corporations making the decisions, making their own agendas. Aboriginal people bring knowledge and cultural foresight of looking ahead. Not just an election cycle but generations ahead.

(Caroline).

¹³⁵ NGO where I volunteered while based in Sydney.

I think we have to say that the climate crisis and racism are fundamentally intertwined [...] Before [settlers] came, we had a haven. We had a social system whereby nature was considered everything that we did. Our social relations were structured around managing populations of animals. The totem system is about saying that a certain individual is responsible for a certain animal. When the settlers came, they said it was like rocking up to a fucking harp. It was perfect. The trees were all managed in a particular way. It was managed in a way that meant it operated in a symbiotic relationship. So, this is about the relationship between environment and racism in the early days. It's about land theft, genocide and the destruction of an entire eco-system to create capitalist markets.

(Grayson).

These testimonies seem to draw on the experience of Aboriginal knowledge in managing the natural environment and in putting forward arguments for Aboriginal representation. This demonstrates some of the ways that Aboriginal participants did not only see themselves as 'victims' of environmental injustice but also agents in managing environmental problems (Etchart, 2017, p. 1). This illuminates how participants sought to decolonize environmental justice through asserting Aboriginal knowledge and agency. The issue of stick farming is particularly interesting, as bushfires are not a new phenomenon that settlers have had to control,¹³⁶ but rather, Aboriginal people had traditionally controlled bush fires for thousands of years using fire stick farming. Aboriginal writer, Bruce Pascoe, provides accounts from "old timers"¹³⁷ detailing the ways that Aboriginal people used fire to manage the land:

¹³⁶ Note: settlers have contributed to the increasing scale of bushfires.

¹³⁷ "Old timers" Pascoe (2018, p. 165) uses to refer to several archaeologists from the early-20th century.

While Aboriginal people used fire as a tool for increasing the productivity of their environment, Europeans saw fire as a threat. Without regular low intensity burning, leaf litter accumulates, and crown fires can result, destroying everything in their path. European settlers feared fire, for it could destroy their houses, their crops and it could destroy them. Yet the environment which was so attractive to them was created by fire (2018, p. 165).

Caroline's testimony draws on fire stick farming as an exemplar, in supporting broader claims concerning the historical misunderstandings¹³⁸ of the environment by settlers and its contemporary manifestation through the managing of the 2019/20 bushfires. Others have supported the benefits of fire stick farming and have documented the increased frequency of large-scale fires after practices were removed by settlers (Jones, 2020, p. 7; Pyne, 2020, p. 33). As such, Caroline's assertion to promote Aboriginal knowledge and agency shows how participants sought to challenge Western understandings of the natural environment and attempt to decolonize environmental justice.

Grayson's perspective similarly indicates connections between colonialism and environmental racism, as he asserts that the devastation seen through forest fires and the wider climate crisis is not a natural occurrence, but rather was constructed through the arrival of settlers and the beginning of a *new* Anthropocene (Edmonds, 2018; Erickson, 2020). This claim indicates parallels between the (mis-)management of the natural environment when settlers first arrived in Australia and the contemporary management of the natural environment by the Australian state today. Others have proposed similar arguments, suggesting that "Australia's climate crisis demands a confrontation with Australia's colonial crisis" (Williamson et al., 2020, p. 15). However, by referring to the management of the natural environment prior to colonialism, Grayson sought to challenge contemporary (Western) methods of

¹³⁸ Misunderstanding - not only limited to this example, but also through the cases of Adani, the Murray-Darling and wider practices of resource extractivism evidenced throughout this chapter.

managing the natural environment and assert the importance of Aboriginal knowledge and agency in managing environmental problems.

Both Caroline and Grayson's accounts mark attempts to go beyond the representation of Aboriginal people as victims of environmental injustice, and instead draw on the successful historical management of land by Aboriginal people to put forward the case for decolonizing environmental justice. This not only promotes the need to draw on Aboriginal knowledge in managing the environment but also signals some of the benefits of having Aboriginal representation on the environment. While issues of Aboriginal representation on the environment are part of long-standing struggles, the emergence of Black Lives Matter has refracted connections between environmental and racial justice, as well as promoting Aboriginal knowledge and agency in responding to environmental injustice. As such, this reveals some of the ways that Black Lives Matter is presented in dialogue with long-standing place-based environmental racisms in the Sydney context.

7.4 The emergence in environmental racism in London Black Lives Matter

While the environment is presented as a central issue for Black Lives Matter Sydney, in London, environmental racism is a developing transnational debate in Black Lives Matter activism. In this section, I draw on the issue of air pollution in London and its disproportionate impact on Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities, as well as attempts by Black Lives Matter activists to make external interventions on climate change, citing the disproportionate effects on people of colour. As such, these issues reveal some of the different ways that environmental racism has emerged within Black Lives Matter activism in London, as well as how Black Lives Matter reshapes narratives of environmental racisms.

7.41 *London airport Black Lives Matter blockades*

In 2016, Black Lives Matter activists organised a national shutdown across the UK and blocked key transport links within cities across the country.¹³⁹ In London,

¹³⁹ Including in Birmingham, Manchester, and Nottingham.

activists chained themselves together and blocked part of the M4, a key route into Heathrow Airport, holding a banner stating, “THIS IS A CRISIS” (Siddique, 2016). The M4 was brought to a standstill for a couple of hours and tensions emerged amongst motorists who would have their travel plans disturbed. But as Black Lives Matter activist, Qasim (2016) explains, “this disruption was part of the point [...] people can mostly go about their daily lives unimpeded. But the everyday disruption that is suffered by those who experience racism in Britain is as much an inconvenience as not being able to get to your flight on time”.

One month later, Black Lives Matter activists constructed a second London blockade; this time on the runway at London City Airport. Nine campaigners chained themselves together with a tripod, and aerial footage showed two banners stating, “CLIMATE CRISIS IS A RACIST CRISIS” and “BLACK LIVES MATTER” (Weaver and Grierson, 2016). While the blockade represented wider perspectives of racialization through the climate crisis, Britain’s historical role in global temperature changes and elitism of freedom of movement (Cullors and Nguvu, 2017); another important and key factor in choosing London City Airport stems from the air pollution it causes in nearby areas with larger Black Asian Minority Ethnic populations, such as Newham. On the significance of London City Airport, Kelbert explains:

Why are communities like east London’s Newham, where 40% of the population survive on £20,000 or less, hosting airports such as London City, where passengers earn on average £114,000 a year? When we say Black Lives Matter, we mean *all* Black Lives, and that includes the lives of those who live in proximity to airports, to power plants, to the busiest roads, and whose children grow up with asthma, and skin conditions exacerbated by air pollution (2016, p. 1).

This statement provides insight into why Black Lives Matter activists suggest air pollution is discriminatory. These issues are presented because of structural

inequalities and indicate connection between the homes of Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities and living near air polluting industries such as airports (Vidal, 2016). However, the emergence of Black Lives Matter into issues of environmental justice were criticised by some activists in the movement, as the blockades were seen as a distraction or divergence from Black Lives Matter's important work on police brutality (Francis, 2021). But other Black Lives Matter perspectives defended the blockades, indicating that "an end to police brutality against Black people and an end to climate injustice and environmental racism – were always the same, both part of an expansive vision for Black liberation" (Kelbert, 2020). As such, this provides some insight into why environmental justice has emerged as an issue for Black Lives Matter in London. Thus, indicating that the blockades represented attempts to connect struggles of environmental and racial justice, as part of an intersectional Black Lives Matter movement in London.

7.42 *Black Lives Matter: racialized air pollution in London*

From motor vehicles to the coal industry, London has a rich and troubled history with air pollution; and legislation trying to tackle it has been traced back as far as 1306 (London Air Quality Network, N.D). As we have become increasingly aware of the health and environmental injustices of air pollution, Black Lives Matter activists in London have sought to draw attention to the discriminatory impacts of air pollution. Some participants talked about the link between Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities' homes and their proximity to pollution:

BAME people are more likely to die because of covid [...] In fact, BAME people are more likely to die from the air we breathe, because we live in areas with more [air] pollution.

(Ethnographic notes Karen: 3rd June 2020).

How can it be that Black lives live in the postcodes with the worst air quality?

(Ethnographic notes (phone call) Maya: 25th January 2020).

These testimonies present air pollution as an issue of environmental racism and indicate structural racial inequalities are responsible for the presence of harmful toxic substances in areas where multi-ethnic communities live. While ecologically speaking, air pollution does not discriminate (Buzzelli and Jerrett, 2004), participants seem to suggest that the localities of where Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities live in relation to areas of increased air pollution are a consequence of structural forms of racism. While several studies from the US have shown the disproportionate ways that people of colour are exposed to toxic pollution, through living near industrial infrastructure, areas of traffic congestion, or nearby to sites for dumping toxic waste (Demitillo et al., 2021; Servadio et al., 2019; Terrell and Julien, 2022), there is limited data on the ways Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities in London are impacted by air pollution. However, in a recent longitudinal study, Karamanos et al., (2021) found that Ethnic Minority children in London were disproportionately exposed to harmful air pollutants,¹⁴⁰ and as a result, were at an increased risk of developing conduct problems. The participant accounts provide anecdotal insights into the disproportionate ways that Black Asian Minority Ethnic people live in areas of air pollution in London, and this demonstrates how air pollution is emerging as a transnational debate in Black Lives Matter London discourse.

Karen's link to covid-19 is powerful and seems to suggest similarities between the presence of a deadly virus that disproportionately impacted Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities and the air that is breathed by them in London. As such, the 'fast' and 'highly visible' impact of covid-19 (see Colebrook, 2020) as seen through hospitalisation and mortality statistics, are used to draw attention to the fact that while air pollution is 'not visible', its consequences are fatal, and this has direction toward Black Asian Minority Ethnic bodies. Relevant to this, is Njoku's

¹⁴⁰ Specifically Fine Particulate Matter and Nitrogen Dioxide (Karamanos et al., 2021, p. 2029).

(2021, p. 5) work on the racially discriminate impacts of the covid-19 pandemic, where she frames environmental racism in connection with other forms of structural racism, such as police brutality. She illuminates how uneven structural exposure to pollutants in homes, workplaces, food, water, air, and soil increased the risk of covid-19 mortalities for people of colour. As such, participant's testimonies share similarities through presenting racially discriminate air pollution as an issue of structural racism and in making connections with the covid-19 pandemic.

Long-term exposure to air pollution has been presented as a "silent killer" and has been linked to an increase in multiple health issues, including lung disease and asthma (Rockey, 2021). Relevant to this is Nixon's (2011, p. 2) conceptualisation of slow violence, as "a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all". Although 'less visible' than other forms of violence, such as police brutality, disproportionate exposure to air pollution is presented as a 'slow', structural, and 'less visible' form of racial violence (Davies, 2019a, p. 3). However, this is not to say that the consequences of such violence are not visible, as participants assert awareness of the health impacts that manifest from air pollution. As such, this reveals some of the ways that racially discriminate air pollution is emerging as a debate in London Black Lives Matter activism.

Writing in *Skin Deep*, Black Lives Matter campaigner Kelbert adds to these debates, explaining why the issue of pollution continues to be an issue for Black Lives Matter:

From Blackpool to Newham, the most deprived areas and communities are sacrificed to make room for roads, for airports, for polluting industries, and for profit. Statistically, it's no surprise that the first person in the UK to potentially have air pollution listed as a cause of death is a Black girl from Lewisham; nine-year-old Ella Kissi-Debrah suffered a fatal asthma attack in 2013 after pollution on the road near her house repeatedly broke legal limits in the years leading up to her death. Campaigns like 'Clean Air for Southall and Hayes'

(CASH) are yet another painful reminder that the most toxic substances, most dangerous industries and the most polluted roads are in the backyards of the poor, which in this country all-too-often means the backyards of Black people and people of colour (2020, p. 1).

Kelbert's testimony illuminates some of the interventions by Black Lives Matter in drawing attention to racism in environmental justice debates. In 2020 (seven years after Ella's death), the Assistant Coroner for Inner South London brought an end to this tragic story:

Air Pollution was a significant contributory factor to both the induction and exacerbations of her asthma. During her illness between 2010 and 2013 she was exposed to levels of Nitrogen Dioxide and Particulate Matter in excess of World Health Organization Guidelines. The principal source of her exposure was traffic emissions. During this period there was a recognized failure to reduce the level of NO₂ to within the limits set by EU and domestic law which possibly contributed to her death (Mehta, 2020).

Moreover:

Ella's mother was not given information about the health risk of air pollution and its potential to exacerbate asthma. If she had been given this information, she would have taken steps which might have prevented Ella's death (Sainsbury and Keen, 2020).

Seven years on, it was confirmed that Ella's fatal asthma attack was in-part triggered by toxic air pollution in the area where she lived and went to school. This case marks the first to record air pollution as a medical cause of death; and

illuminates the centrality of social and racial inequalities embedded within environmental injustice. London has the highest levels of air pollution in the UK (Enenkel et al., 2020), and the tragic case of Ella, provides some explanations into why racially discriminate air pollution is emerging as a transnational debate within Black Lives Matter discourse in London. As such, the issue of air pollution demonstrates some of the unique ways that Black Lives Matter is reshaped in London.

7.43 *Climate change is racist*

While Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities are disproportionately impacted by air pollution in London, other participants sought to draw attention to the disproportionate impacts of climate change on “darker nations” (Pulido, 2020). Seen like this, Black Lives Matter in London is used to make external interventions on debates on environmental racism. Maya, a south Asian woman from London, and Jessie, a Black woman from London expressed why Black Lives Matter is connected to climate change.

Maya: With the climate struggle, the tiny percentage of people who are behind this, don't seem to realise that when the seas rise, it rises not only for the 99%, but it also rises for them [...] When it comes to Black Lives Matter, part of the issue is that Africa is phenomenally rich in resources, and the West has abused and controlled this, either through owning these lands through colonialism or through controlling money through trade deals or unjust taxation. At the moment, Britain has declared a climate emergency, but they are locking poorer countries into deals that will force them to use fossil fuels. Racism isn't just because of the colour of your skin but using that as a way of oppressing nations.

[...]

It's interrelated. We wouldn't have a climate crisis, if we had social and racial justice. They are happy to destroy people and planet in order to maintain their power, but the people and the planet are not separate. They are together. [...] We can't solve the climate crisis until we realise that we have to solve the inequalities that have been created through white supremacy.

(Maya).

My world view is that all people on the bottom of society worldwide are the darkest people. That's the truth. The darkest people are at the bottom. Me, as a dark person, that's just the direction I have started to go in. One day, there is going to be a climate change disaster and who's going to be worse off? Dark people and Africa. So that's why I have decided to move in this direction [of being involved with Black Lives Matter].

(Jessie).

These accounts seem to indicate that racial violence was central in shaping the origins of the climate crisis and continues to be relevant through its disproportionate impacts on people of colour. Maya's testimony reveals connections between colonialism and white supremacy in framing the climate crisis and suggests that contemporary manifestations of colonialism are responsible in the funding of fossil fuel enterprises in predominantly non-White countries. This draws connections to Mahony and Endfield's (2018, p. 11) work, which suggests that the consequences of climate change were fundamental in shaping colonial enterprise. Notably, Britain has portrayed itself as a global leader in the climate crisis yet continues to fund fossil fuel dependent infrastructure in nations that are disproportionately impacted by climate change. However, a study¹⁴¹ from Global Justice (2020) revealed that since signing

¹⁴¹ Study published in June 2020. Notably, in 2020 the UK government announced in December 2020 that it will end investments in overseas fossil fuels, but campaigners remain wary of this pledge (Willis, 2020a).

the Paris Agreement in 2016, the UK had invested more than £3.9 billion in fossil fuel energy projects overseas. These investments were used to support heavy oil dependent power plants in some of the poorest countries on the planet, such as Cameroon, Kenya, Ghana, Guinea, and Mali. While locking in high carbon fossil fuel energy sources, the UK's strategy has also moved towards privatising energy supplies, in a move that has been described as an attempt "to re-establish the UK's economic power over the Global South" (Willis, 2020b).

The problem here is presented as multi-faceted; first, fossil fuel dependent infrastructure has a negative impact on local communities; for example, in South Africa, communities living in undeveloped townships of the Highveld¹⁴² region have long suffered from the direct impacts of the country's dependency on coal. Highveld is a heavily polluted area and has registered levels of sulphur and nitrogen dioxide up to ten times the levels deemed safe for humans to breathe; as a result, exposure to such toxic air in Highveld has been directly linked to multiple health consequences for communities living in nearby townships, including asthma and cancer (Williams, 2020). As such, this example further illuminates the disproportionate ways that people of colour experience environmental injustice through living close to fossil fuel dependent infrastructure and gives insight into why Black Lives Matter activists in London are concerned with issues of environmental racism globally.

Second, in Maya's account, the building or funding of fossil fuel dependent infrastructure is presented as adverse for people of colour because "darker nations" (Pulido, 2020) disproportionately suffer the consequences of climate change. This was evident during the devastating 2015 floods in Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe that displaced more than 400,000 people as communities lost their homes, agriculture and in some cases, lives (Friends of Earth, 2020). A similar story is evident in the case of Lake Chad, which has been described as "one of the worst in the world" by the United Nations. Lake Chad is home to 17.4 million people from four¹⁴³ different African countries and has shrunk a staggering more than 90% over the last 60 years; and left more than 10 million people in need of

¹⁴² Highveld is home to 12 coal powered mines and a refinery.

¹⁴³ Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria.

emergency assistance due to food and water insecurity and conflict (Mohanty et al., 2021).

Seen like this, it makes sense that Black Lives Matter activists in London, such as Maya, have sought to make external interventions on the climate crisis. Maya's claims not only indicate that people of colour suffer disproportionately from climate change, but also seem to illuminate connections with historical and contemporary contexts of colonialism, that continue to fund fossil fuel projects. As such, this demonstrates how Black Lives Matter discourse in London is not only shaped by attempts to make external interventions on the climate crisis, but also how diverse place-based struggles from other parts of the non-Western world shape the narrative on climate change through Black Lives Matter in London.

Jessie's account builds on this by indicating that the climate crisis provides another example of the multiple ways that Black Asian Minority Ethnic people experience structural racism. Jessie implies that the disproportionate impact of climate change on 'darker nations' was part of the reason why she engaged with Black Lives Matter in London. As such, this reveals the ways that Black Lives Matter in London has been shaped by diverse issues to include, but also go beyond, police brutality, and makes wider interventions on structural racism through environmental injustice. Moreover, Jessie and Maya's accounts also mark significant differences in how environmental racism is presented in Black Lives Matter Sydney discourse, where the focus was on the special relationship to land and the internal impact on Aboriginal communities; while in London, some participant accounts sought to include internal impacts of environmental racism through air pollution, but also go beyond, in making external interventions on climate change.

Black Lives Matter co-founder Patrisse Cullors and organiser Nyeusi Nguvu (2020) praised the 2016 Black Lives Matter blockade at London City Airport as not only an internal intervention on environmental racism and pollution in London, but also an external one beyond London, because of "inequalities that turn an extreme weather event into a disaster or human catastrophe [...] that causes the disproportionate loss of black and poor life globally". These inequalities are further evident through the examples of pollution in South Africa, the shrinking of Lake

Chad and the 2015 floods in Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. As such, this provides further insight into some of the issues that Maya and Jessie talk about. Environmental racism here is conceptualised as an emerging transnational debate in Black Lives Matter activism in London. While the racially discriminate impact of air pollution in London has shaped the narrative of environmental racism in the Black Lives Matter movement, there have also been attempts to make external interventions globally on the racialized impacts of climate change. As such, these cases reveal some of the diverse ways that Black Lives Matter has been adopted and adapted to struggles of environmental justice across place.

7.5 Conclusion

The cases of London and Sydney reveal the diverse ways that the environment comes to the fore in Black Lives Matter activism and contributes to transnational debates on environmental racism. Through employing an intersectional approach, I have shown how the relationship between environmental and racial justice has been refracted through Black Lives Matter in London and Sydney. As such, environmental racism demonstrates some of the different ways that Black Lives Matter is adopted and adapted transnationally; revealing how ideas of Black Lives Matter are reshaped by different place-based environmental racisms, but also how Black Lives Matter reframes the narrative of different place-based environmental racisms.

While in Sydney, Black Lives Matter is conceptualised as a path-leader on environmental racism, this is presented as an emerging transnational debate in London. The cases of the Adani coal mine, the Murray-Darling River and the 2019/20 Australian bushfires illuminate the disproportionate impact of environmental injustice on Aboriginal people, as well as the need for Aboriginal knowledge and representation in the management of environmental issues. As such, Black Lives Matter in Sydney is permeated by the special relationship between Aboriginal people and the natural environment (Pascoe, 2007, p. 92), and feeds into long-standing struggles to decolonize environmental justice and draw on Aboriginal knowledge and agency in creating solutions to environmental issues. While in London, the racially discriminate impact of air pollution exposed how participants

sought to use Black Lives Matter to draw attention to racism in debates on environmental justice. Moreover, participant accounts from London illuminated the ways that Black Lives Matter sought to include, but also go beyond place-based issues of environmental racism in London and make external (global) interventions on the disproportionate impact of “darker nations” (Pulido, 2020). As such, this demonstrates how the intersectional foundations of Black Lives Matter have enabled the movement to be adopted and adapted across transnational place.

The cases of London and Sydney revealed the different ways that environmental racism is conceptualised as another layer of structural racial violence that Black Lives Matter activists are concerned with (Forbes et al., 2021; Pellow, 2016). As such, this provided some insight into how transnational Black Lives Matter activism sought to decentre US narratives of Black Lives Matter and the focus on structural police brutality and reshape parochial place-based movements through diverse issues of structural environmental racism; but also, the ways that it sought to build transnational solidarity across place. In Sydney, Black Lives Matter is permeated through struggles for land, and participant accounts exposed structural connections between different forms of racial violence, such as police brutality, neoliberal urban gentrification, and environmental racism, in further dispossessing Aboriginal people from traditional lands. In London, participants depicted examples of racially discriminate air pollution and the climate crisis in illuminating the ways that structural racism underpins why Black Asian Minority Ethnic people are disproportionately impacted by environmental injustice both within and beyond London. As such, environmental racism was connected to the structural violence that disproportionately houses Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities in areas of air pollution in London, and in explaining the disproportionate impact of the climate crisis on “darker nations” (Pulido, 2020) as a form of structural violence.

A key overlapping issue in this chapter has been the issue of neoliberalism in constructing places of environmental racism and shaping place-based Black Lives Matter responses. The issue of commodifying land and water in Australia was prominent in participant accounts and suggests that such ‘extractivist’ practices represent the contemporary manifestation of colonialism through the dispossession of Aboriginal land. As such, participants in Sydney presented neoliberalism as not

only central in constructing places of environmental racism, but also in shaping Black Lives Matter responses to environmental injustice. While in London, neoliberalism was presented through the funding of fossil fuel projects in “darker nations” (Pulido, 2020) and in shaping places of racially discriminate air pollution in Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities. This exposes some of the different ways that neoliberalism permeates Black Lives Matter narratives on environmental racism across transnational place. However, as the previous chapter (six) has illuminated, racial violence in the context of neoliberalism is evident across multiple forms of struggle and is not limited to the environment.

London and Sydney provide crucial insight into the different ways that Black Lives Matter is understood and enacted through place-based narratives of environmental racism. An intersectional approach reveals how diverse Black Lives Matter activists sought to make interventions on environmental justice across place and demonstrates how environmental justice should not be understood as separate from the struggle for Black Lives Matter. Moreover, the adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter into issues of environmental justice, demonstrate the movements’ ability to draw attention to ‘slow’ and ‘less visible’ forms of violence (Nixon, 2011, p. 2) that emerge across place; illuminating some of the ways that Black Lives Matter in London and Sydney has sought to include, but also go beyond, the central issue of police brutality. This chapter provides some insight into the different ways that environmental justice has emerged as an issue for Black Lives Matter in London and Sydney and why transnational Black Lives Matter activism is both possible and necessary in these places.

Chapter 8.0 Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This thesis has investigated the transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter movement through the cases of London and Sydney and sought to understand how Black Lives Matter has been adopted and adapted across place. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork between August 2019 – June 2020, including participant observation, informal conversations, 30 semi-structured interviews, the use of photographs and collection of ephemera, this thesis has attempted to better understand how and why Black Lives Matter has been taken up by activists across transnational place. Crucially, the methodological approach was shaped by a critical self-awareness of my position as a White and non-Aboriginal man and the power differentials that this creates in working with Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal participants in relation to fieldwork, interpretation, and writing (Parsons, 2019; Roegman, 2018). The timing of this thesis is significant, as it captures the evolution of a movement that was predominantly known in the US, with some take-up in other international contexts, into a movement of global proportion. The death of George Floyd in 2020 and global protests that followed illuminate the fact that I am now writing in a different time to when I first began, as Black Lives Matter has emerged into a more visible transnational movement. As such, the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter is not just a study on a US topic but is central in how we understand Black Lives Matter.

In selecting the sites of London and Sydney to conduct this work, this thesis not only provides an attempt to go beyond the parochial context of the US, but also to understand the different ways that transnational Black Lives Matter activism is both shaped by place-based struggles, and (re)shapes the narratives of long-standing place-based issues. As such, the meaning of Black Lives Matter is reshaped and redeveloped as it travels across transnational place, and thus has formed a polycentric narrative that permeates diverse actors and racialized struggles. The sites of London and Sydney reveal some of the ways that transnational Black Lives Matter activism not only marks solidarity with the central issue of the deaths of young Black men in the US, but also how Black Lives Matter is employed in drawing attention to racial violence that is explicit to place. For example, in London, participants reshaped

the meaning of Black Lives Matter to reflect the multi-ethnic context of London, and as such, reframed the narrative of long-standing place-based racialized struggles (e.g., Grenfell Tower; discriminate air pollution) as issues for Black Lives Matter in London. While in Sydney, Black Lives Matter was presented in dialogue with long-standing struggles for Aboriginal rights, decolonization, and land struggles, and as such, reframed the narratives of these place-based struggles (e.g., The Block; Adani coal mine) as part of the wider struggle for Black Lives Matter. These cases thus provide explanation into the diverse ways that Black Lives Matter is creatively adopted and adapted across transnational place.

8.2 Summary of research findings

At the beginning of this thesis, I proposed four guiding research questions, which have shaped the foundation and direction of this research. In relation to these questions, this thesis suggests the following findings:

- 1) Why does Black Lives Matter which originated in small town Ferguson, Missouri, resonate with activists transnationally?

Ferguson is a common reference point for Black Lives Matter activists in both London and Sydney, as it emerged as the birthplace of Black Lives Matter following the death of Mike Brown in 2014. Ferguson is representative of many of the struggles that participants spoke about, in that Black Lives Matter made largely 'unseen' racial violence in Ferguson become 'visible' through the death of Mike Brown and the ways that Black Lives Matter resistance was formed and disseminated to wider audiences. As such, chapter four showed how the building of transnational alliances and translation of solidarities enabled transnational Black Lives Matter activism in London and Sydney. This chapter revealed how the intersectional and decentralized organising principle of Black Lives Matter was key in allowing diverse Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal participants to both stand in solidarity with US Black Lives Matter activism, but also in creating their own place-based Black Lives Matter movements that reflected racial violence in their own localities.

The issue of racialized police brutality and particularly the deaths of Black young men in the US is well documented as a central issue for Black Lives Matter (Leach and Allen, 2017), and in chapter five, the cases of London and Sydney revealed many commonalities through the ways that Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal people disproportionately experience police brutality and die in police custody. While Ferguson exposed the depths of structural racism in US policing (Davis, 2016; Taylor, 2016), chapter five showed how racialized suspicion of criminality and structural racism were driving forces in the mobilization of Black Lives Matter in London and Sydney. Although participants emphasized the need to build solidarity with the US, they also sought to decentre US-centric narratives of Black Lives Matter through indicating that racial violence was not unique to the US, but also prevalent in their own contexts. As such, Ferguson is symbolic in shaping transnational solidarity with the US, but also, as a case that Black Lives Matter activists have been inspired by and sought to build on in creating their own Black Lives Matter movements that attend to specific manifestations of racial violence in place.

- 2) What difference does place make to how Black Lives Matter is understood and enacted in different urban contexts?

Place is central in how Black Lives Matter is understood and enacted transnationally. Drawing on theories based in cultural translation (Benjamin, 1923; Bhatta et al., 2009; Jhumpa, 2000; Maitland, 2017), transculturation (MacDonald, 2016; Ortiz, 1940; Schiwy, 2007) and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Dhamoon, 2011; Davis, 2016; Roberts and Jesudason, 2013), chapter four demonstrated the creative ways that Black Lives Matter is reshaped and redeveloped as it travels across transnational place and takes on 'new' meaning that reflects diverse people and racialized struggles that emerge in place. As such, place is an important unacknowledged form of intersectionality in enabling transnational Black Lives Matter activism to go beyond the replication of the US movement, and shape parochial place-based movements. In London, Black Lives Matter was reshaped to reflect its diverse multi-ethnic community, and Black Lives Matter activism was permeated through translating Black Asian Minority Ethnic solidarities; while in

Sydney, Black Lives Matter emerged in the context of Aboriginal rights and land struggles. Although the deaths of young Black men at the hands of the police is a central issue for Black Lives Matter in the US (Leach and Allen, 2017), chapter five revealed how participants in London and Sydney similarly stood in solidarity with the US, but also sought to decentre US centric narratives of Black Lives Matter by reshaping ideas of Black Lives Matter to recognise racialized police violence in their own contexts. However, differences also emerged in how racialized police violence was understood across transnational place; for example, in London, Black Asian Minority Ethnic participant accounts indicated that they were stopped and searched because of a racialized suspicion of having committed a crime (e.g., possession of drugs); while in Sydney, Aboriginal participants suggested that they were stopped for being “out of area”, thus signifying connections to Aboriginal land dispossession and spatialized segregation. This gave some insight into how different manifestations of police violence shaped the adoption and adaption of transnational Black Lives Matter activism across place.

Chapter six added to this by exposing the mutually constituted relationship between neoliberal urbanism and racial violence through transnational Black Lives Matter activism. This chapter showed how Black Lives Matter shaped the narrative of an event (e.g., Grenfell Tower, The Block), but also how these contexts reshaped Black Lives Matter activism. The case of Grenfell demonstrated the ways that multi-ethnic racial violence was central in shaping Black Lives Matter in London, while The Block, reinforced the centrality of Aboriginal land dispossession and decolonization in permeating ideas of Black Lives Matter in Sydney. The Block and Grenfell represent diverse long-standing place-based struggles that precede the Black Lives Matter movement; however, these cases should not be understood as separate to the struggle for Black Lives Matter but rather are key in shaping Black Lives Matter activism in London and Sydney. Drawing on an intersectional approach to environmental racism, chapter seven showed the different ways that environmental justice has emerged as an issue for Black Lives Matter across transnational place. The cases of London and Sydney demonstrated the different ways that environmental justice struggles were permeated Black Lives Matter and this showed how place-based environmental racisms shaped Black Lives Matter activism, but also showed

how Black Lives Matter reframed the narratives of such place-based environmental racisms. Discussion of the Adani coal mine, the pollution of the Murray-Darling River and the 2019/20 Australian bushfires revealed the significance of environmental racism in the Sydney Black Lives Matter movement: with special connections to Aboriginal land dispossession and the commodification of natural resources as contemporary manifestations of colonialism. While in London, environmental racism was presented as an emerging transnational debate in Black Lives Matter discourse. The issue of racially discriminate air pollution in London and the disproportionate impacts of climate change on people of colour emerged as some of the ways that participants sought to make internal and external interventions on environmental justice through Black Lives Matter.

While issues of racialized policing, neoliberal urbanism and environmental racism emerged as key in London and Sydney, chapters five, six and seven showed how these racisms are differently shaped by Black Lives Matter activism across place. As such, place reshapes the meaning of Black Lives Matter as it travels across and through transnational place: permeating diverse Black Asian Minority Ethnic racialized struggles in London, and with a connection to Aboriginal rights and land dispossession in Sydney. However, it is important to say that this thesis is focused on London and Sydney, and Black Lives Matter will continue to transform and redevelop as it travels to across and through other transnational places.

3) What is the relationship between neoliberalism and transnational Black Lives Matter activism?

The issue of neoliberalism similarly emerged in London and Sydney as key in underpinning diverse forms of structural racism that Black Lives Matter activists were concerned with. However, neoliberalism is manifested differently across place, and Black Lives Matter responds to this in dialogue with how this emerges in place. The cases of London and Sydney determine some of the ways that neoliberalism constitutes urban and non-urban, as well 'slow' and 'fast' forms of racial violence. As such, neoliberalism is understood as central in (re)producing places of racial violence and transnational Black Lives Matter activism marks a response to this. Chapter six

discussed how Black Lives Matter exposes the way neoliberal urbanism and racial violence are mutually constituted and both London and Sydney illustrate distinct yet connected aspects of this connection. The case of Grenfell Tower in London illuminated this relationship, and Black Asian Minority Ethnic participant accounts revealed how decades of neglect, territorial stigma, and an aggressive gentrification agenda in the context of neoliberalism created the conditions for the fire to occur. While the case of The Block in Sydney showed how racialized neoliberal urbanism was manifested through territorial stigma that stigmatized The Block as a 'dangerous' place that needed saving. Such stigmatization was used to justify the demolition and redevelopment of The Block and dispossess Aboriginal people from their land. As such, chapter six revealed how neoliberalism systematically underpinned diverse urban forms of racial violence that participants sought to make as issues for Black Lives Matter in London and Sydney. Moreover, this showed how long-standing struggles in the context of neoliberal urbanism are not understood as separate to Black Lives Matter but are permeated in dialogue with the struggle for Black Lives Matter.

Chapter seven added to this by discussing the issue of neoliberalism in creating urban and non-urban place-based environmental racisms and in shaping place-based Black Lives Matter responses. In Sydney, environmental racism was presented as a key issue for Black Lives Matter, and the issues of commodifying land and water in Australia were prominent in participant accounts and in illuminating 'extractivist' practices that represent contemporary manifestations of colonialism through the dispossession of Aboriginal land. Moreover, Sydney was presented as an epicentre representing wider rural environmental struggles across Australia. While in London, neoliberalism was presented through the funding of fossil fuel projects in "darker nations" (Pulido, 2020) and in explaining the racialized nature of why Black Asian Minority Ethnic people disproportionately live in areas of air pollution. As such, Black Lives Matter activists in London sought to respond to these issues by making external interventions on climate change and drawing attention to the discriminate impacts of pollution causing infrastructure. This exposed some of the different ways that neoliberalism underpins environmental racism, and as such, chapters six and

seven provide insight into how neoliberalism forms racial violence, and the diverse ways that Black Lives Matter activists respond to this.

4) What does transnational Black Lives Matter activism foreclose and enable?

Although much of this thesis focused on the possibilities and futures of transnational Black Lives Matter activism, chapter four considered how the heterogenous and non-deterministic nature of Black Lives Matter can create tensions amongst different place-based inflections of the movement. For example, the tensions between Black Lives Matter activists from the US and UK during a solidarity event in London illuminated how the take-up of Black Lives Matter to represent diverse people beyond Black ethnicity can create friction through different understandings of racialized struggle across transnational place, as well as friction in terms of the direction of the movement. Moreover, chapter seven touched on some of the tensions that transnational Black Lives Matter activism faces when it goes beyond the central issue of police brutality and makes connection with environmental justice struggles. As such, this raises broader questions in terms of the limits of decentralized social movements, and questions if Black Lives Matter would benefit from a more centralized organising structure. Moreover, the fact that the US emerged as a topic of discussion throughout this thesis reinforces the issue that Black Lives Matter remains largely known for its take-up in the US, and other transnational place-based Black Lives Matter movements may be viewed as solely in solidarity with the US, and not raising awareness to their own place-based racialized struggles.

However, in chapter four, participant accounts from London and Sydney sought to directly attend to these tensions by signalling the benefits of transnational Black Lives Matter activism in putting 'less visible' racialized struggles on the map through raising awareness through Black Lives Matter, and by building solidarity both with the US and between diverse communities within place in creating intersectional transnational solidarities. As such, transnational Black Lives Matter activism not only decentres the US-centricity of Black Lives Matter but refutes the claim that Black Lives Matter do not matter here 'too', in place of Black Lives Matter 'here'. A discussion of counter-surveillance methods in chapter five revealed some of the ways

that Black Asian Minority Ethnic participants in London and Aboriginal participants in Sydney sought to build on the methods used by Black Lives Matter activists in the US to stay safe during police encounters. Moreover, this chapter also demonstrated how Black Lives Matter activists in London and Sydney sought to ‘ride the wave’ of the mediatization of the Black Lives Matter movement, in drawing attention to issues of racialized police violence in their own contexts. Chapter’s six and seven added to this by showing the effective ways that transnational Black Lives Matter activism allows for expansion beyond the central issue of police brutality in drawing awareness to other forms of place-based racialized struggles through neoliberal urban racial violence (e.g., Grenfell Tower; The Block) and environmental racism. This demonstrates how transnational Black Lives Matter activism reflects the “intersectionality of struggles” (Davis, 2016, p. 20) across place, and allows diverse people and racialized struggles to be represented as issues for Black Lives Matter.

8.3 Contributions to knowledge

This thesis is underpinned by the aim to make an original contribution to Black Lives Matter scholarship by attending to the current gap of transnationalism. The work presented is amongst a few, but an emerging body of literature, to examine the Black Lives Matter movement outside of the US (Bond et al., 2020; De Genova, 2018; Joseph-Salisbury et al., 2021) and is amongst the first to explore the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter across multiple contexts. While substantive, I have signalled limitations in existing work through its parochial focus on the US and fixed to the issue of police killings of young Black men. As such, I attend to this gap by recognising the different ways that ideas of Black Lives Matter travel and by arguing that the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter is understood through its creative adoption and adaption across diverse place. The transnationalism of Black Lives Matter is thus reshaped and redeveloped as it travels across and through transnational place and has shaped a polycentric narrative that permeates diverse people and racialized struggles.

The cases of London and Sydney reveal some of the ways that transnational Black Lives Matter activism not only marks solidarity with the issue of the deaths of

young Black men in the US, but also how participants employ Black Lives Matter in drawing attention to issues of racial violence in their own contexts. As such, this demonstrates how Black Lives Matter has been shaped by narratives of multi-ethnic racial violence in London and is presented in dialogue with long-standing Aboriginal-rights and decolonial land-rights struggles in Sydney. Moreover, the issues of policing, neoliberal urbanism and environmental racism provide insight into the diverse adoption and adaptation of Black Lives Matter to include, but also go beyond the central issue of policing. For example, in London the case of Grenfell Tower was permeated through Black Lives Matter activism and resistance toward a racialized neoliberal urban agenda; while in Sydney, the issue of environmental racism was presented as a key issue for Black Lives Matter and the movement was reframed through the struggle for Aboriginal land rights. Thus, the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter is not replicated, but is reshaped and redeveloped across place. This provides an original contribution of intellectual knowledge to scholarship on Black Lives Matter and transnationalism. Moreover, this also marks contributions to work on transnational social movements and the geographies of race and place.

While the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter marks the central knowledge contribution of this thesis, I also make wider contributions to debates on policing, neoliberal urbanism, and environmental justice through applying an intersectional approach to each of these issues in relation to racialization. Chapter five contributed to a rich literature on racist policing (Camp and Heatherton, 2016; Chernega, 2016; Davis, 2016; Taylor, 2016), through conceptualising expressions of racial police violence as existing on a continuum. I add to work that conceptualises slow and fast forms of violence as co-constituted (Cahill and Pain, 2019; Christian and Dowler, 2019; Colebook, 2020; Pain, 2015; Pain and Cahill, 2022) through exposing the interconnections of different forms of racialized police violence that Black Lives Matter activists are concerned with. This includes attending to violence that is not easily counted in the 'slow' and 'fast' violence binary, such as 'stop and search', which falls somewhere in the middle and marks the point when racialized intelligence becomes actionable, and violence escalates into a different form. As such this reveals the different ways Black Lives Matter is shaped by, and shapes, diverse forms of place-based police violence. Through framing perceptions of criminality as

racialized, I add to wide body of work on the racialization of criminality (Cahill et al., 2018; Fischer, 2019; Welch, 2007) as well as work on surveillance (Cook and Whowell, 2011; Foucault, 1977; Jefferson, 2017, 2018).

Moreover, this chapter contributed to Foucauldian perspectives through demonstrating how certain public spaces are racialized by the police in creating spaces of racial exclusion and in restricting mobilities. This provided theoretical and empirical contributions to work on the panopticon, by examining the “internalizing” impact of surveillance across transnational place, and as existing on a continuum. Empirical contributions are also made to work on counter surveillance (Beutin, 2017; Haimson, 2020; Mirzoeff, 2020; Singh, 2017), through the diverse use of counter-surveillance strategies in London and Sydney, such as, the use of CopWatch, the dissemination of legal rights, mobile phones, and parental guidance on how to manage police interactions. Such methods sought to reframe violence (Butler, 2009), act as methods of self-defence during police encounters and resist exclusionary police practices and in (re)asserting rights to space.

Chapter six provided contributions to wider work on gentrification, neoliberal urbanism, (Danewid, 2019; Kallin and Slater, 2014; Mele, 2013; Shaw, 2006; Tyler, 2015, 2018) and territorial stigma (Paton, 2017; Schwarze, 2021; Shildrick, 2018; Sisson, 2021; Wacquant, 2007, 2008; Wacquant et al., 2014), by examining the cases of Grenfell Tower in London and The Block in Sydney. I make contributions by attending to the different ways that neoliberal urbanism (re)produces racial violence across place, and how place-based violence is permeated through Black Lives Matter. Grenfell Tower and The Block reveal the different ways that urban territorial stigma operates in justifying and legitimizing neoliberal urban racial violence. Grenfell’s multi-ethnic community were stigmatized as ‘powerless’ and ‘underserving’, while The Block exposed how stigma presented the Aboriginal community as ‘dangerous’, in justifying redevelopment and Aboriginal land dispossession. As such, Black Lives Matter activism in London and Sydney demonstrate the co-constituted relationship between neoliberal urbanism and racial violence, and the different ways that urban territorial stigma operates in shaping neoliberal urban racial violence.

The second main contribution was through considering Black Lives Matter resistance and agency in re-framing stigmatization attached to both racial identity and place. By building on critiques of Wacquant's (2007) thesis that residents "internalize" stigma and are negatively represented as victims; thus, undermining agency (Cairns, 2018; Cretan and Powell, 2019; Nayak, 2019; Tyler, 2015, 2018; Zebechi, 2012) I showed the different ways that participants sought to resist stigma and (re)claim rights to place. The case of Grenfell demonstrated diverse acts of participant agency; for example, through place-based protest, charity and community organisations stepping in for the state and outspoken grime artists in the case of Grenfell. While The Block demonstrated the ways that Aboriginal participants sought to resist stigma; through place-based protest, artwork, and nostalgia. As such, these cases expose different contexts of shared neoliberal urban phenomenon in understanding the diverse ways that Black Lives Matter is reshaped by place, but also reframes the narratives of events (e.g., Grenfell, The Block). Moreover, this chapter also contributed to work on the relationship between race and urbanism.

While environmental justice has been largely neglected within current Black Lives Matter literature,¹⁴⁴ chapter seven made contributions to work on environmental racism by employing an intersectional approach in arguing that the struggle for Black Lives Matter is connected to the struggle for environmental justice. By framing environmental racism as another layer of structural racism that Black Lives Matter is concerned with (Forbes et al., 2021; Pellow, 2016), and by examining the disproportionate ways that Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Aboriginal people are impacted by environmental injustice across transnational place, I showed the ways that transnational Black Lives Matter activism looks to decentre US narratives and create both parochial and transnational solidarity movements. As such, the cases of the Adani coal mine, pollution of the Murray-Darling River and the 2019/20 Australian bushfires revealed the centrality of environmental racism and land dispossession in the Sydney Black Lives Matter movement. While in London, environmental racism was presented as an emerging transnational debate in Black Lives Matter and is shaped by the issues of discriminate air pollution and external

¹⁴⁴ With exceptions (see Pellow 2016; Lennon, 2017).

interventions on the disproportionate impact of climate change on people of colour. These cases provide empirical contributions to wider work on environmental racism.

Second, I contributed to work on the relationship between neoliberalism and environmental racism (e.g., Benz, 2019; Parker and Cox, 2020; McKenna, 2018; Pulido, 2015, 2016, 2017) by examining the ways that neoliberalism shapes places of environmental racism across transnational contexts. The cases of the Adani coal mine, the pollution of the Murray-Darling River, and the 2019/20 Australian bushfires revealed the ways that neoliberalism underpins the issue of natural resource commodification and is connected to the dispossession of Aboriginal people from traditional lands. As such, this demonstrates how the relationship between neoliberalism and environmental racism is central in shaping the Sydney narrative of Black Lives Matter. While in London, Black Lives Matter is engaging in environmental justice debates through protesting the neoliberal funding of fossil fuel projects in the Global South. These cases demonstrate some of the different ways that neoliberalism is key in understanding the production of environmental racism, but also how Black Lives Matter reshapes the narrative of environmental racism across place.

This thesis makes wider contributions to scholarship on social movements (Chernega, 2016; Roberts and Jesudason 2013), through examining how Black Lives Matter as a decentralized organising principle makes transnationalism possible, as well as its futures and possibilities. I contribute to work on the study of intersectionality (Anthias, 2012; Purkayastha, 2012), through exposing how intersectionality is lived through different place, and how transnational alliances and solidarities through Black Lives Matter enable a form of transnational intersectionality. I also make broader contributions to the geographies of race and place through examining how Black Lives Matter is reshaped and translated as it meets different places where differently racialized struggles exist.

8.4 Future research directions

While this thesis has sought to provide better understanding into the transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter movement through the cases of London

and Sydney, this does not provide a full explanation for how Black Lives Matter emerges in other transnational contexts. The conceptual, methodological, and practical choices made in this thesis inevitably focus on specific features of these issues and overlook other aspects. This thesis provides insight into the transnationalism of Black Lives Matter in specific sites, times and in relation to specific issues. Thus, it does not provide an entire history of Black Lives Matter, nor a complete understanding into the transnational dimensions of the movement in every place where it comes to the fore. It is crucial to suggest some important future avenues for research that build on the work presented in this thesis. Although this thesis is amongst the first to investigate the transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter movement, such activism is not limited to the contexts of London and Sydney, and I encourage scholars to think beyond these contexts, as well as the US, in investigating diverse the adoption and adaptation of Black Lives Matter in different transnational settings. I encourage work to go beyond the Global North and explore transnational Black Lives Matter activism in the Global South. For example, what is the meaning of Black Lives Matter in Indonesia? How is Black Lives Matter understood in Brazil? Why is Black Lives Matter connected to Palestine? How are ideas of Black Lives Matter reshaped in contexts in the Global South? As such, this will reveal further ways that Black Lives Matter is reshaped and redeveloped across time and place. Moreover, a focus on the Global South will mark important contributions in terms of decentring Black Lives Matter as a movement in the Global North.

A central feature of this thesis has focused on Aboriginal-rights and how these issues have permeated ideas of Black Lives Matter in Sydney. As such, an interesting avenue for further exploration is through examining how different Indigenous communities in different parts of the world have engaged with Black Lives Matter and reshaped the movement in their own contexts. This not only challenges essentialist ideas of Indigeneity, but further attends to the difference that place makes in how Indigenous peoples understand and have engaged with Black Lives Matter. As part of the original proposal for this thesis, I planned on investigating Black Lives Matter in the contexts of London, Sydney, and Vancouver. Black Lives Matter has since been documented across diverse Indigenous contexts in the world (da Silva and

Cordoba, 2020; Nawaz and Buhre, 2020), and I suggest more work in this direction is crucial in recognising the contemporary manifestations of colonialism and how this intersects with racial violence. The adoption and adaption of Black Lives Matter provides a useful frame in decentring Black Lives Matter from the US, and in analysing how the movement has been taken up across place; and as such, future research should conceptually build on ideas of transnational intersectionality in better understanding the meanings, futures, and possibilities of Black Lives Matter.

Appendix

Appendix A: Project Information Sheet for Interviews



Project Information Sheet for Interviews

PhD Title: The transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter Movement: London to Sydney

Any questions of queries, please contact the researcher (Daniel Barwick) at
d.barwick2@ncl.ac.uk

Brief outline of project

This project seeks to understand how and why ideas of Black Lives Matter (BLM) have spread beyond the borders of the United States and has gained representation internationally. I am interested in how ideas travel across borders. In terms of methods, I am conducting a series of interviews and focus groups with BLM activists in Sydney (Australia) and London (UK). I will also be living within these contexts and collecting data by immersing myself in protest and event settings. My research aims to provide political insight into why and how BLM has resonated with activists, and the types of networks that have this possible.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in a one to one or online Skype interview with the researcher. This will take up no longer than 40 minutes of your time and will for the most part be in the format of a conversation.

Do I have to take part?

If you want to take part, GREAT. If you wish not to take part that is of course also OK. You do not have to give a reason for not wanting to take part, and you can withdraw from the interview at any stage. If you do withdraw, the information you have provided will be destroyed and not used in the project.

What will happen to the information?

With your consent, the one to one or online interview will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher into text. If you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions asked during the interview, please abstain from answering and let the researcher know immediately. Data will be password protected, locked in a safe and stored securely within the central storage system at Newcastle University, and in compliance with the UK Data Protection Act of 2018. The data will be deposited with a responsible repository after collection, in accordance with the ESRC Research Data Policy and will be handled and transcribed only by the research

Appendix B: Consent Form for Interviews



Consent Form for Interviews

PhD Title: The transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter Movement: London to Sydney

Any questions or queries, please contact the researcher (Daniel Barwick) at d.barwick2@ncl.ac.uk or the PhD main supervisor (Prof Anoop Nayak) at anoop.nayak@newcastle.ac.uk

Written Consent:	Yes	No
I voluntarily agree to take part in this project.		
I understand that I can withdraw from the interview at any time and do not have to give a reason for this. If I do withdraw, I understand that my input will be disregarded and not used in the final project.		
I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me, been provided with a participant information sheet, and given the opportunity to ask any further questions.		
I agree to be recorded in the interview.		
I understand that direct quotes taken from the interview may be used in future research.		
I understand that my responses will be kept confidential, and my identity will not be linked to the final thesis.		
I agree that my anonymous data may be used in additional conference presentations, journal articles and reports, as a result of the research.		

Signature of research participant and Date

Signature of researcher and Date

Appendix C: Project Information Sheet for Focus Groups

Project Information Sheet for Focus Groups

PhD Title: The transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter Movement: London to Sydney

Any questions or queries, please contact the researcher (Daniel Barwick) at d.barwick2@ncl.ac.uk or the PhD main supervisor (Prof Anoop Nayak) at anoop.nayak@newcastle.ac.uk

Brief outline of project

This project seeks to understand how and why the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has spread beyond the borders of the United States and has gained representation internationally. I am interested in how ideas travel across borders, and how this has created an international BLM movement. In terms of methods, I am conducting a series of interviews and focus groups with BLM activists in Sydney (Australia) and London (UK). I will be living within these contexts and collecting data by immersing myself in BLM protest and event settings. My research aims to provide political insight into how BLM has resonated with activists, and the types of networks that have this possible.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in a small focus group with the researcher and other participants. This will take up no longer than 60 minutes of your time and will for the most part be in the format of an informal conversation.

Do I have to take part?

If you want to take part, GREAT. If you wish not to take part that is of course also OK. You do not have to give a reason for not wanting to take part, and you can withdraw from the focus group at any stage. If you do withdraw, the information you have provided will be destroyed and not used in the project.

What will happen to the information?

With your consent, the focus groups will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher into text. Please note that although anonymity/confidentiality cannot be upheld internally within focus groups, this project prioritises the protection of participant's personal information, and all measures will be taken to uphold the anonymity of participants to third parties. If you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions asked during the focus group, please abstain from answering and let the researcher know immediately. Data will be password protected and stored securely within the central storage system at Newcastle University, and in compliance with the UK Data Protection Act of 1998.

Appendix D: Consent Form for Interviews

Consent Form for Focus Groups

PhD Title: The transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter Movement: London to Sydney

Any questions or queries, please contact the researcher (Daniel Barwick) at d.barwick2@ncl.ac.uk or the PhD main supervisor (Prof Anoop Nayak) at anoop.nayak@newcastle.ac.uk

Written Consent:	Yes	No
I voluntarily agree to take part in this project.		
I understand that I can withdraw from the focus group at any time and do not have to give a reason for this. If I do withdraw, I understand that my input will be disregarded and not used in the final project.		
I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me, been provided with a participant information sheet, and given the opportunity to ask any further questions.		
I agree to be recorded in the focus group.		
I understand that direct quotes taken from the focus group may be used in future research.		
I understand that my responses will be kept confidential, and my identity will not be linked to the final thesis. However, I also understand that anonymity cannot be guaranteed during the focus group, as other participants will also be taking part.		
I agree that my anonymous data may be used in additional conference presentations, journal articles and reports, as a result of the research.		

Signature of research participant and Date

Signature of researcher and Date

Appendix E: Interview Schedule - ‘Guiding Questions’

Theme: Biographical information

- What is your name?
- Which area do you live in?
- How do you racially identify?
- How long have you lived here?

Theme: Black Lives Matter General

- When I say, 'Black Lives Matter', what comes to mind?
- When did you first hear about Black Lives Matter?
- When did you first get involved with Black Lives Matter?
- How did you hear about Black Lives Matter?
- How active are you in the Black Lives Matter movement?
- Why did you get involved with Black Lives Matter?
- Are you affiliated with any other activism?
- Has Black Lives Matter permeated other activisms?
- Do you consider yourself to be a Black Lives Matter activist?
- How important is solidarity?
- What does Ferguson mean to you?
- What's different about Black Lives Matter to other anti-racist/decolonial movements of the past?

Theme: Transnationalism

- What was it about Black Lives Matter that resonated with you?
- Why is Black Lives Matter necessary here?
- Is Black Lives Matter making progress here?
- Is Black Lives Matter limited to the US?
- Is Black Lives Matter about solidarity or something more?
- What issues are most important to you, and how have they informed your decision to get involved with Black Lives Matter?
- Is an international Black Lives Matter movement possible? Or do you think that we are already there?
- What does Black Lives Matter offer London/Sydney?
- What is the relationship between Black Lives Matter and Aboriginal people?
- What is the relationship between Black Lives Matter in the US and in London?
- How has Black Lives Matter been taken up here? And who by?
- Does Black Lives Matter need to be international? If so, what does this offer?
- How important has social media been for you?

Theme: Diverse issues of racial violence

- What types of racial violence's exist here? Are these issues for Black Lives Matter?

- How important is the issue of racist policing?
- What is it about policing that makes Black Lives Matter important here?
- Does racist policing exist beyond the US?
- How has racist policing shaped Black Lives Matter here?
- I read about the London airport blockade. Has that been an issue for Black Lives Matter here?
- What other environmental racisms are important to Black Lives Matter?
- Given the relationship between Aboriginal people and the natural environment, does this feed into Black Lives Matter in Sydney? Or not?
- Does Black Lives Matter feed into longer-standing issues?
- How is Aboriginal land dispossession understood in the context of Black Lives Matter?
- Is environmental justice an issue for Black Lives Matter here?
- Are there any other place-based events that make Black Lives Matter important?
- There is a lot of gentrifications in Sydney/London. Is this an issue for Black Lives Matter? If so, how, and why?
- What other struggles are Black Lives Matter connected to?

Theme: Whiteness, positionality and power

- Do you have to be Black to be part of Black Lives Matter?
- Can White people be involved in Black Lives Matter? If so, what role should they take?
- What does Blackness mean in the Aboriginal context? How is it understood?
- How do you feel about my position as a White, man, doing research on Black Lives Matter?
- Is there anything that you would like to know about me?
- Is there room for white people in Black Lives Matter?
- I am aware of my position as a White, man, and I want to try and decolonize my work. Do you have any advice on how I can try to do that?

Theme: Closing questions

- Is there anything else that I should know which we have not talked about?
- In your mind, what needs to be included in this thesis?
- Can I contact you again if I have any further questions or clarifications?
- Do you have any advice on things that I should consider in doing this work?
- Do you have any further questions for me, or about the project?
- Did you enjoy the interview? Or do you have ideas on how I can improve?

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