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Kunjan, Priya

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‘Captain Cook was a S***t C***t’ or ‘a
nation less divided?’ Indigenous
sovereignty, settler common sense and
Australian media

Priya Kunjan

ORCID 0000-0002-7977-35350

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School of Social and Political Sciences

Faculty of Arts

The University of Melbourne

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Abstract

The Australian settler state's claim to political legitimacy relies on the disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty, alongside a constant renewal of possessive investments in the nation. However, the persistence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' sovereign relationships to the lands and waters across Australia continues to unsettle the dominant narrative of a singular, justified settler authority. This thesis investigates competing claims to Indigenous and settler sovereignties made in relation to Australia's national day, January 26, which marks the advent of forcible appropriation of Indigenous land by the British in 1788. The thesis employs a mixed-methods analysis of public discourse around January 26, as captured across 895 mainstream and independent media items and 25 instances of official communication from political figures, to explore how claims to sovereignty are embedded in discussions about history, time, identity and nationhood in Australia.

Informed by a theoretical framework attuned to relationships between epistemology, race and representation, the thesis' analysis reveals that settler claims to sovereignty and representations of Indigenous peoples' political incapacity circulate discursively as taken-for-granted, common sense components of contemporary Australian nationalism. Despite Australia's shift in self-representation from a white ethno-state to a liberal multicultural democracy over the past four decades, its existence continues to rely the suppression of unceded Indigenous sovereignty. Rather than engaging with the substance of Indigenous peoples' political claims, liberal multiculturalist nationalism is oriented towards the development of a more inclusive form of settler coloniality through processes of recognition. Against this, a subset of Indigenous activists and commentators across both mainstream and independent media continue to challenge reductive representations of their resistance against nationalist celebrations on January 26 as being primarily about insufficient recognition by the state and settler polity. Maintaining a focus on the fundamental illegitimacy of the Australian settler state, these individuals articulate comprehensive but frequently sidelined political analyses of sovereignty, race and resistance against ongoing colonisation.

Declaration

I declare that:

- (i) this thesis comprises only my original work towards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy;
- (ii) due acknowledgment has been made in the text of this thesis to all other materials used, and;
- (iii) this thesis is fewer than 100,000 words, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies, and appendices.

Priya Kunjan

December 2022

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Introduction

250 years

2020 marked the 250th anniversary of Britain's claim to the east coast of Australia, an act which laid the foundations for the wholesale appropriation of the continent. The federal Liberal-National Coalition government, first under Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and then Scott Morrison, had begun planning for nationwide commemorations several years prior. In April 2018, Turnbull (2018) made a joint announcement with the New South Wales (NSW) state government that \$50 million would be provided to revitalise Kamay Botany Bay National Park in the lead up to the 250th anniversary. The federal budget 2018-19 pledged \$48.7 million over four years (including the joint NSW initiative) to commemorate James Cook's 1770 voyage (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, p. 78). Listed under government expenditure on Communications and the Arts, this package included resourcing for a range of events, exhibitions, and "cultural engagement and consultation with Indigenous communities, including specialised training for Indigenous cultural heritage professionals in regional areas" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018, p. 78). In a media release the following year, then-Prime Minister Scott Morrison (2019) announced that part of this funding would be used to resource a circumnavigation of the continent by the Australian National Maritime Museum's replica of Cook's HMB *Endeavour*, with events and activities to be held at a selection of ports. Activities were scheduled to begin in March 2020 and to last for a 14-month period, with other highlights including a commemoration at Botany Bay on April 29 and several festivals at Cooktown in Far North Queensland.

Although Cook never circumnavigated the continent himself, the planned voyage and associated events were described by Morrison (2019) as follows:

“As the 250th anniversary nears we want to help Australians better understand Captain Cook’s historic voyage and its legacy for exploration, science and reconciliation,” the Prime Minister said.

“That voyage is the reason Australia is what it is today and it’s important we take the opportunity to reflect on it.

“From Far North Queensland and the Cooktown 2020 Festival across to Bunbury and down to Hobart, our Government will ensure Australians young and old can see firsthand [sic] the legacy of Captain Cook and the voyage of the Endeavour.”

Morrison’s statement is a proud affirmation of the centrality of colonial possession to Australia’s establishment, spoken about in terms of the triumph of British imperial exploration. His choice to frame the program as contributing to an improved collective understanding about the nation’s history neatly summarises the brand of historical revisionism characteristic of conservative approaches to the anniversary. Morrison’s decision to link Cook’s legacy to the concept of reconciliation is also notable, given that this term is commonly understood to mean repairing the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous peoples.¹ Bringing colonial dis/possession and reconciliation together in this way symbolically binds a celebration of the nation’s colonial foundations with harmonious Indigenous-settler relations, skipping over unresolved questions about ongoing colonisation. Both the discourse and funding associated with the 250th anniversary signalled a desire by the Morrison Coalition government to connect its own political legacy to the veneration of Cook and his contributions to the genesis of the Australian nation. Ultimately, however, much of the planned commemorations were cancelled due to the emergence of COVID-19 and the global pandemic that followed. Despite this, the implied claim in Morrison’s discussion of the anniversary still holds significance: that the Australian state maintains a legitimate claim to sovereignty based on Cook’s individual act of possession.

The 250th anniversary was variously engaged and represented by Australian mainstream media outlets, whose interventions in public discourse circulated particular set of narratives about the nation and its British colonial foundations. Conservative media outlets—for the most part publications owned by Rupert Murdoch’s News Corp—were actively involved in providing

¹ In this thesis, ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’ and ‘Indigenous’ are used to refer in general to the many peoples who are in sovereign relation to the lands and waters of Australia. Where this information is available, specific Indigenous persons discussed in the thesis are referred to by their nation group (Roberts et al. 2021).

positive coverage of the anniversary and of Cook himself. This formed a significant proportion of media coverage of the anniversary year in early 2020. Other mainstream media outlets also included some coverage of the anniversary at this time, engaging with settler anxieties about national identity and many Indigenous peoples' expressions of anger and incredulity at the government's celebratory plans. However, alternative representations were fairly limited compared to the volume of conservative, triumphalist coverage produced by News Corp publications. This approach was exemplified by several feature articles on Cook published by News Corp mastheads over the January 26, 2020 weekend, overlapping with the celebration of Australia's national day. These included national newspaper *The Australian* publishing several pieces on Cook, including: a January 27 essay by conservative historian and commentator Geoffrey Blainey titled 'An epic Endeavour, a vexed debate'; a January 25 news article following up key statements made in Blainey's piece, and a January 27 collection of letters responding to it, and; two editorials on the 25th and 27th which reiterated Blainey's core arguments and related them to 'Australia Day'. All of these pieces devoted significant attention to Cook's (positive) influence on Australian history and encouraged the celebration of the 250th anniversary.

The Australian's coverage presented Cook as a heroic character, attempting to strike a balance between humanising him and portraying him as a larger-than-life 'founding father' of Australia. In his piece on Cook's voyage south, Blainey (2020) describes him as "a giant of the sea," asserting that "to deprive him, his scientists, and his crew of high praise would be mean-spirited and would mock history." However, this is followed by the statement that Cook "indirectly made possible present-day Australia," minimising his pivotal decision to claim possession of the east coast of the continent on behalf of King George III and denying responsibility for Australia's admitted "many [unnamed] failures." At the same time, Blainey (2020) includes multiple disparaging references to Indigenous people throughout the piece, using the pejorative and outdated term "Aborigines" (see Z. Roberts et al., 2021), critiquing the land rights movement, undermining Indigenous land management practices, and finally stating that Indigenous people may rightfully claim to be the "first discoverers of Australia," though "Aboriginal leaders have failed to take up suggestions... that they should erect their own discovery monument." Read alongside Morrison's plans for the anniversary, Blainey's description of Cook as a valiant explorer provides an affectively charged—and, given Blainey's academic credentials, institutionally authoritative—endorsement of the celebrations. *The Australian* editorial team's pieces bookending the national day included several paragraphs

repeating Blainey's key claims, including reference to Indigenous people as "first discoverers," and linking them into a broader narrative encouraging unselfconscious celebration of Australian national achievements (The Australian Editorial, 2020a, 2020b). Blainey's article was complemented by a January 25 article by *The Australian's* Indigenous Affairs Correspondent Paige Taylor (2020) titled 'Push for statues of indigenous 'first discoverers'', as well as a collection of letters to the editor published on January 27 including positive feedback ('Monuments to the First Australians Are Worth Building', 2020). Taken together, these five items in *The Australian* paint a picture of a nation strongly attached to its British colonial origins. Importantly, while they include acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples' prior occupation, this is consistently caveated to undermine Indigenous sovereignty.

Queensland-based News Corp publication *The Courier Mail* also published a long-read feature article by journalist Peter Michael (2020) in its *QWeekend* magazine on January 25 titled 'The old man and the seafarer'. The piece was accompanied by a set of evocative photographs, one of which featured on the front cover of the issue. This image depicted a stylised re-enactment of Cook meeting with Guugu Yimithirr Elder Ngamu Yarrbarigu in 1770 in Far North Queensland. Ngamu Yarrbarigu is painted head to toe with patterns in yellow ochre and is dressed in a woven reed skirt. He stands with one leg raised, holding an oval shield with one hand and a tall staff and short spear in the other. Cook is dressed in 18th century naval garb, a blue coat with broad white cuffs, a white shirt with a frilled collar, white culottes and leggings, buckled black shoes and a black hat. His hands are clasped in front of his stomach. Both men look at each other with narrowed eyes but neutral expressions, positioned close together and at near equal height (though Ngamu Yarrbarigu stands on a rock to achieve this). They are implied to be standing at Reconciliation Rocks, a site on the banks of Walumbaal Birri (the Endeavour River) where Guugu Yimithirr Bama came into contact with Cook and his crew in July of 1770 (Queensland Government, 2016).

The image mirrors Michael's approach in the article, which covers the encounter and Ngamu Yarrbarigu's offering of peace after Cook's crew was found to have been poaching turtles in the river. Michael draws on Cook's diaries as well as interviews with Guugu Yimithirr residents of present-day Cooktown to build a narrative about Cook's individual brilliance and the mythic, gentle wisdom of Ngamu Yarrbarigu. Michael also describes Ngamu Yarrbarigu's descendant Fred Deeral, Waymbuurr clan leader, in this same register of noble savagery. Writing about a peace ceremony Deeral re-enacts with him, Michael (2020) states "I find it

hard to explain how, whether magic, his intense eyes, or the primal ritualistic act, but it's true, the gesture does gild the soul. Cook recognised it too." Overall, the piece presents a collection of largely positive assessments of Cook's personal morality disconnected from the systemic violence of settler colonialism, downplaying its many injustices and Cook's fundamental role in enabling them. Unlike Blainey in *The Australian*, Michael actively seeks out the perspectives of Indigenous people. However, while he includes some limited dissent in the form of quotes from Worimi man and history professor John Maynard speaking about the "cataclysmic consequences" of Cook's later claim of possession in August 1770, these are far outweighed by appeals to reconciliation and critiques of protests planned around the anniversary.

Reflections on the 250th anniversary in other mainstream media outlets included attempts to grapple with what this form of commemoration said about Australia, and whether things might be done differently. For instance, in a February 6, 2020 piece for *The Guardian*, columnist Paul Daley (2020) used the anniversary celebrations to draw attention to the erasure of Indigenous historical figures in Australia's approach to public commemoration and ritual. Daley focused on Bungaree, an Aboriginal man from the Broken Bay area of northern NSW, who joined Matthew Flinders to circumnavigate the continent between 1801-1803 but has received less public veneration in Australia than Flinders' cat Trim. Daley (2020) points to Bungaree's relative historical obscurity, chastising "the enduring colonisation of Australia's national memory and commemoration - as well as history." The article emphasises the injustice of denying Bungaree his due recognition as an important figure in the early colonial period. Daley presents a summary of Bungaree's life and exploits in support of the proposal that he should be considered with much greater significance and monumentalised accordingly. Before drawing to a close, Daley very briefly notes the disturbing desecration of Bungaree's body after death, devoting two short paragraphs to the colonial trade in Indigenous peoples' remains before returning to the primary focus of the article. The conclusion Daley reaches is that Bungaree must be memorialised in the form of a statue on Sydney's Macquarie Street alongside that of Flinders' cat. He writes:

“If the federal government can spend \$50-plus million celebrating the sesquicentennial of Cook’s arrival – including almost \$7m on a replica Endeavour circumnavigation that the great navigator never, in history, undertook – surely it can stump up for a monument to the first Australian who did actually sail right around the continent.

National memory and Bungaree deserve no less.” (Daley, 2020)

Daley’s column makes a point of identifying Australia’s selective approach to history, and he chooses to do this by drawing attention to the remembrance of individual historical actors. Reading about Bungaree’s remarkable life navigating the upheaval of his world through the establishment of the NSW colony, however, it is clear that there are concerns at play that extend far beyond the modest public display of recognition Daley advocates for. In Bungaree’s brief biography, while Daley (2020) touches on “dispossession and violent encounters” as well as the treatment of Indigenous peoples’ remains, his engagement with these historical facts is more contextual than political. Though Daley identifies Bungaree’s agency in actively negotiating changing conditions in the early colony, he is still eventually folded into a teleological narrative of white nationhood and colonial possession, a “first Australian” who is rhetorically tied to Australia’s “national memory.” Ultimately, the concerns Daley raises about commemoration and representation in relation to the 250th anniversary are reduced to the differential honouring of historical figures, divorced from any consideration of the ongoing systemic oppression of Indigenous people. Bungaree and his extraordinary story are reified and instrumentalised in service of a critique of federal government expenditure. While this piece avoids the romanticised approaches to history outlined in *The Australian* and *The Courier Mail* it engages in a different and subtler form of political closure, restricting possibilities for change within a register of liberal recognition.

In contrast to these media framings of the 250th anniversary, Dr Mariko Smith, a Yuin woman and First Nations Assistant Curator in the Engagement, Exhibitions and Cultural Connection branch of the Australian Museum, has written on the different meanings of the year for Indigenous peoples. Through her involvement in the 2020 Project—the Australian Museum’s attempt to provide a platform for Indigenous communities to respond to Cook and 1770—Smith (2019) discussed the significance for Indigenous stakeholders of telling the truth about Australian history and colonisation. While the conservative commentators above fed into the general valorisation of Cook in Australia’s national narrative as a symbol of discovery and harbinger of western modernity, respondents to the Australian Museum’s First Nations

community consultations emphasised their negative perceptions of Cook and the impacts of his voyage. When asked about what they *would not* like to see in an exhibition covering Cook and 1770, the most frequently recorded response was that there should be “no further praise or glorification of Cook, and not to present him as a hero” (M. Smith, 2019). When asked about issues they *would* like included in any such exhibition, the most popular topic (selected by 59% of participants) was the discussion of colonisation and its effects (McBride & Smith, 2019, p. 18). These findings indicate a very different type of significance attributed to Cook and the 250th anniversary by Indigenous respondents as compared to conservative settlers.

As Wiradjuri activist and museum curator Nathan ‘Mudyi’ Sentance (2019) writes, in this country, “anniversaries and national celebrations are more about erasing history than remembering it as they rely heavily on the suppression of dark parts of Australian [sic] history, especially in regard to First Nations history.” There is a national interest in constructing positive representations of Australia’s origins and lionising individuals associated with colonisation instead of engaging with dispossession and structural violence. Mythologised representations of Cook loom so large in the national imaginary that many Australians are far more likely to be familiar with these constructions than with historical facts about Cook’s life and voyages or their relationship to ongoing colonisation (Sentance, 2019). Further, and as demonstrated in the piece published in *The Guardian*, this narrative production also occurs through more liberal or progressive reflections on Australian history. Engagement with Bungaree’s historical significance is restricted within the boundaries of liberal recognition, where while Daley is able to name some of the violences of colonisation, these are disconnected from a consideration of the ongoing processes of settler colonialism. Investments in the nation as a white possession are not solely restricted to conservative nationalists, but instead become part of common sense approaches to understanding and responding to the realities of colonisation (Moreton-Robinson, 2015; Rifkin, 2013). The media samples above gesture towards some of the ways that colonial possession has become entrenched in the national imaginary. This occurs through the mystification of settler colonialism as a historical event rather than an enduring structure (Wolfe, 2006), reliant on the diminishment or marginalisation of Indigenous peoples’ analyses of ongoing colonisation.

In line with Sentance’s (2019) assessment of Australia’s approach to history and anniversaries, the excerpts above also touch on the same range of issues that arise each year across the Australian media landscape around January 26. Some of these pieces, including those in *The*

Australian, explicitly situate January 26, 2020 as a nationally significant event occurring within a particularly important anniversary year, drawing links between Cook’s act of formal possession and its terrestrial fulfilment through the 1778 landing of Captain Arthur Phillip. While nationalist mythology is far from unique to Australia, of interest is how narratives of nationhood in this context are inextricable from the colonial origins of the state, given its establishment on the lie of *terra nullius* and disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty. The way that Australian politicians and media platforms choose to engage with and represent colonial anniversaries has significant bearing on the scope of ‘legitimate’ public discourse about these events. Analysis of these representations requires attending to the simultaneous erasure of history and the active production of narratives that distance the ugliness of colonisation from the sanctity of the nation state. This is particularly pertinent on January 26, where possessive investments in the white supremacist settler state are directly challenged through public and increasingly widely supported expressions of Indigenous sovereignty.

January 26

January 26, 1788 marked the beginning of formal terrestrial dispossession of Aboriginal people on behalf of the British Crown. Enabled by Cook’s claim, Captain Arthur Phillip raised the Union Jack at Warrane (Sydney Cove) to inaugurate the establishment of the NSW colony. The date was first celebrated as First Landing Day, Foundation Day or Anniversary Day in NSW in the early 1800s, and by 1946 was recognised across all Australian states and territories (W. Pearson & O’Neill, 2009, p. 76). However, it has only been uniformly celebrated across the country as Australia’s national holiday since 1994, as announced under Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating in 1993 (Macnamara & Crawford, 2013; see also Council of Australian Governments, 1993). The choice to hold a national day of celebration on the anniversary of colonial settlement is indicative of deep cultural and political investments in glorifying and naturalising the colonial origins of the country—what Goenpul scholar Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2015, pp. 113–114) refers to as “white possession.”

In 1938, the 150th anniversary of the colonisation of NSW, members of the Aborigines Progressive Association and the Australian Aborigines League called for the day to instead be commemorated as a Day of Mourning and Protest. They used this inaugural protest to demand the status of full citizenship and equal rights in Australia, challenging their subjection to

systemic racism. The 1938 Day of Mourning and Protest has been characterised as “the first significant Aboriginal political action of the 20th century in that it received reasonable media coverage” (Foley & Anderson, 2006, p. 85). Since then, the date has occasioned demonstrations and celebrations of survival by Indigenous peoples across the country, challenging the myth of peaceful settlement and the veneration of a colony founded on genocide. The original Aboriginal Tent Embassy was erected on the lawns of old Parliament House on January 26, 1972 as part of the land rights movement, and mobilisation in Sydney to protest the bicentennial celebrations on January 26, 1988 constituted one of the largest Indigenous-led resistance gatherings in the country at that time. In the words of Gumbaynggirr historian and veteran land rights activist Professor Gary Foley (2007, p. 122):

From that day in 1938 to the present day, Indigenous people know 26 January as ‘Invasion Day’, whereas Anglo-Australians refer to it as ‘Australia Day’. This simple but symbolically powerful appropriation by Indigenous people of white Australia’s most important national day is in itself both an assertion of Aboriginal sovereignty and the most enduring legacy of the 1938 ‘Day of Mourning’ protest.

Foley emphasises the importance of Indigenous peoples’ symbolic appropriation of January 26 as an assertion of sovereignty as well as an enduring legacy of the first Day of Mourning. This speaks to both the continuity of Indigenous resistance over time and to the grounding of these protests in a concrete political claim which directly challenges the authority of the Australian settler state. January 26 protests continue into the present, refusing settler colonial nationalism while also being vital sites of resurgence, connection and celebrations of survival.

Indigenous-led resistance events on January 26 include the expression of a range of political messages and demands for change by organisers and speakers. However, the way that these statements are interpreted and conveyed in Australian public discourse is shaped in relation to pre-existing “maps of meaning” (S. Hall, 1971, p. 44). Descriptions of these events, and of Indigenous-settler political conflict more broadly, are influenced by normative “frameworks of value and meaning” that guide public understanding (S. Hall, 1971, p. 44). While these frameworks are not fixed, they provide individuals within a society with the interpretive resources to make sense of events, and given their articulation to the status quo, tend to reinforce pre-existing social hierarchies. Further, these frameworks are engaged and reproduced through mainstream media agencies and political elites, both of which play a role in defining the dominant “political reality” (S. Hall, 1971, pp. 19–20). In practice, this

translates into a range of misrepresentations, including of the particular political messaging deployed, the reason for protests on January 26, or the level of support for Indigenous-led protests by the broader settler public. Such misrepresentation is not new; Meadows and Oldham (1991) reflect on the extent to which media mischaracterised and downplayed protests around the bicentennial in 1988. Aboriginal protestors defined the events far beyond simplistic media representations of a “large gathering,” instead identifying its importance as “a march of mourning and a celebration of surviving 200 years of white oppression” and “a further attempt to raise publicly the issues of prior and continuing Aboriginal ownership of land and the subsequent effects of dispossession” (Meadows & Oldham, 1991, p. 30). Meadows and Oldham (1991, p. 36) note the role of racism and ideological bias in Australian media at the time, critiquing narratives from institutions associated with the bicentennial events and media organisations as configuring the “real issue” on the day as “the celebration of Australia’s 200th birthday.” Far from resolving over time, these concerns about representation and meaning construction have persisted alongside Indigenous-led January 26 protests into the present day.

Any analysis of Australian mainstream media production about Indigenous people must be situated in relation to the settler colonial state, which relies on the lie of *terra nullius* as a fundamental condition for its existence. This legal fiction troubles representations of the nation as a success story of liberal multicultural integration, requiring a particular characterisation of Indigenous people and of the nation’s history. While early approaches to Australia Day heavily emphasised the nation’s British colonial origins, over time, and particularly after the end of the White Australia Policy in the 1970s, there has been a shift towards the creation of more inclusive celebrations in line with the nation’s changing demographic makeup (W. Pearson & O’Neill, 2009, p. 79). This has involved concerted efforts by the National Australia Day Council to celebrate both “British political ancestry and a plural multicultural nation” (W. Pearson & O’Neill, 2009, p. 79). It has also involved uneasy attempts to recognise Indigenous peoples. However, attempts to craft a national narrative that balances recognition of Indigenous peoples’ prior occupation and place within the nation alongside the legitimacy of settler claims to sovereignty has led to a pattern of inconsistencies and silences. As Arrernte blogger and writer Celeste Liddle (2017) identifies,

the things we were fighting for decades ago... seem to be very similar to the things we're still fighting for now. Australia is therefore not a country which has acknowledged and rectified its history; rather it seems content to reinforce this amnesia.

Australia is reinventing itself as an increasingly moral actor through the paradigm of liberal recognition, but as Liddle identifies, this occurs through the reinforcement of colonial amnesia rather than a historical reckoning. As the coverage of Cook and the 250th anniversary shows, the scope of this amnesia varies across the political spectrum, with the aperture of recognition widening or narrowing in relation to normative boundaries of political possibility. While this does not wholly preclude alternative readings of history, sovereignty and Indigenous resistance from being communicated, the presentation of alternatives are restricted by a relative lack of access by Indigenous activists to the “means of signification” (S. Hall, 1982, p. 77). In addition to this, access—either hard won or selectively provided—may still be restricted through the framing of alternative ‘points of view’.

In the case of January 26, the present thesis argues that framing restrictions come into play in the form of various misrepresentations of the political content of Indigenous-led protests, and of Indigenous peoples’ claims to sovereignty. One example of this is the recent increase in popularity of calls to ‘change the date’ of Australia Day, a message which has gained significant traction among settler institutions and individuals, but which is largely distanced from calls for structural change (Johnston, 2022). However, as noted previously, Indigenous resistance to nationalist celebrations has never proposed that these festivities are insufficiently inclusive. Instead, January 26 protests have always been about dispossession of land, denial of sovereignty and oppression of Indigenous peoples. As Meriki Onus (2021), a Gonnai and Gunditjmarra woman and organiser with Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance (Naarm/Birraranga),² stated in the lead up to Invasion Day 2021,

We march against what the day represents, not so much the date, but the white nationalism, racism and the ongoing colonial project that is destroying our country and killing our people. This is the reality of the Australia we live in.

² Naarm and Birraranga are, respectively, the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung names for the lands and waters now known as Port Phillip Bay and Melbourne, Victoria. While Naarm/Birraranga is the preferred term used to refer to this Country, Melbourne will also be used in this thesis for international readers.

In an article for independent Indigenous-owned media website *IndigenousX*, Martu descendent and writer Karen Wyld analyses nationalist celebrations on January 26 by peeling back the layers of stories inscribed onto the continent before and since colonisation. Starting with the songlines which “criss-crossed over the land, out to the sea, and up into the skies,” Wyld (2018) lays out the new stories of “Invasion,” “Crops Sown in Blood,” and “Cultural Genocide” which were imprinted onto the land with progressive colonial expansion and consolidation of the Australian nation state. Significantly, Wyld (2018) locates the present moment within a part of the story she terms “The Great Forgetting,” where “government, media and white academics control the narrative and whitewash history.” In this piece, written in the days leading up to Invasion Day 2018, Wyld’s focus on narrative, colonisation and nationhood presents an entry point to the key concerns explored in the thesis. Broadly, she raises the question: what are the stories that settler Australia tells itself *about* itself? Speaking from outside the mainstream media space, Wyld questions the processes of dominant narrative construction and systems of meaning that serve to reproduce the settler state and continually disavow Indigenous sovereignty. Wyld identifies that one of the areas where settler colonialism is reproduced is within the realm of representation and meaning. This indicates the importance of attending to the struggle over meaning conferred to Australian nationalism, political legitimacy and Indigenous resistance on January 26. Drawing on these issues, the present research represents an attempt to address some of the concerns outlined above through an investigation of contested claims to sovereignty and their refraction through mainstream media and political discourse in contemporary Australia.

Aims and scope

This thesis has two primary aims: to investigate how Indigenous peoples’ claims to sovereignty are articulated and represented in media narratives and statements by politicians, and to identify how Australian settler claims to sovereignty come to be normalised and continually re-invented under the guise of liberal multiculturalism and tolerance. These aims are addressed through the following research questions, with a focus on January 26, 2020:

1. How are Indigenous peoples’ claims to sovereignty publicly articulated in relation to January 26?

- a. How are these claims engaged and represented by Indigenous and alternative media sources, mainstream media and key political figures in Australia?
2. How are settler colonial claims to sovereignty normalised or challenged across these same media and political sources?

The choice to investigate contested claims to sovereignty is informed by a recognition of the racial hierarchy of being and knowledge that underpins Australia's present political consensus. Moreton-Robinson (2015) has written extensively about the way that notions of race shaped Cook's choice in 1770 to take possession of the east coast of the continent on behalf of the British Crown, naturalising the disavowal of Indigenous peoples' sovereignty. Celebrating Australia's national day on January 26 signals the nation's continued attachment to its colonial identity and to the legitimacy of the Crown's claim, despite more recent attempts at multicultural inclusion (Moran, 2017). The official selection of this date underscored the connection between the physical act of raising the Union Jack in 1788 and the racialised nature of contemporary Australian nationalism. Despite the formal overturning of *terra nullius* through the establishment of native title, Australia continues to suffer from a "psychological *terra nullius*" which stands in the way of substantive political and legal justice for Indigenous peoples (Behrendt, 2002, p. 6). Further, and as will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1, while the concept of sovereignty and its western roots are inherently fraught, this does not negate its utility for Indigenous peoples making political claims against and beyond the settler state (A. Simpson, 2020). The thesis' analysis of public discourse about January 26 as reflected through media representations and political statements is therefore grounded in an engagement with the political claims that underpin Indigenous resistance on the one hand and Australian nationalism on the other.

This research also includes specific attention to independent Indigenous media production, guiding the analysis of discourses of sovereignty, nationalism and Indigenous resistance on January 26. Indigenous journalists and commentators regularly produce a wealth of nuanced critique about settler celebrations of January 26 each year as well as reporting on protests, Survival Day events and vigils held by Indigenous people around the country. Celeste Liddle's (2016, 2020) analysis of mainstream media reporting on nationwide Invasion Day rallies has consistently highlighted concerns about the complicity of the media in diminishing both the demands of and support for Indigenous activists. Darumbal and South Sea Islander journalist Amy McQuire's (2018a) piece 'To Celebrate Australia Day Is To Celebrate Violence'

describes settler Australia as a “perpetrator of violence” that silences its Indigenous victims through suppressing the ugly truths of colonisation and ongoing genocide. Gamilaroi man and founder of *IndigenousX* Luke Pearson’s (2019) piece ‘Why I no longer support #changethedate’ interrogates the co-optation and reduction of the #changethedate campaign by settler Australia to a debate over changing the date of the national holiday. The present thesis is indebted to the work of these writers and others in challenging normative framings of both national celebrations and Indigenous resistance.

This research would not have been possible if not for the intellectual groundwork of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activists, scholars, writers and artists, categories which almost always overlap. Indigenous-led media production (across mainstream and alternative media spaces) provides an invaluable source of critical commentary on Australian nationalism and mainstream media narratives as well as theoretical insights into the normalisation of colonialism through public discourse. The thesis also acknowledges the overlap between Indigenous protest organisers and Indigenous media production due to participatory media innovations. It attends to the choices of different media outlets and political actors to engage with and amplify or to divert focus from political claims expressly forwarded by organisers. The thesis also incorporates an analysis of media and political actors’ cultivation of possessive investments in settler state sovereignty in opposition to Indigenous sovereignties. In doing so, it explores the tenacity of Indigenous sovereign resistance counterposed against the aggressive cultivation of common sense investments in the nation as a white possession (Moreton-Robinson, 2015; Rifkin, 2013).

The following chapters present a systematic analysis of public discourse surrounding Indigenous-settler political conflict on January 26, 2020, focusing on the way that meaning is constructed around this event in relation to the status quo of white possession. This undertaking is motivated by a commitment to interrogating the constructed ‘naturalness’ of Australian settler sovereignty, developed through participation in resistance actions and engagement with Indigenous scholarship and media. Engaging with Indigenous critique of the politics of recognition reveals that both conservative appeals to honour Australia’s British origins *and* progressive positions focused on issues such as ‘changing the date’ of the national holiday both tend to avoid substantive engagement with the question of Indigenous sovereignty. This spectrum of representation can be characterised within what anthropologist Ghassan Hage (1998, pp. 90–91) describes as the liberal management of nation state. In this dynamic,

regardless of whether the particular discourse employed is white ethnonationalist or liberal multiculturalist, there is still the assumption that white settlers are the legitimate managers of the nation-space. Australia's current political consensus is geared towards reducing Indigenous peoples' claims to sovereignty to the level of special claims for ethnic recognition rather than challenges to the legitimacy of the status quo and framing Indigenous resistance against colonial injustices as unhealthy attachments to the past (Coulthard, 2014, p. 111). These forms of recognition function to maintain settler sovereign authority while providing a veneer of legitimacy to the nation's self-identification as a post-colonial multicultural state and must be actively contested.

Overview

The first half of the thesis contextualises the investigation and presents the research design, building a foundation for the proposed media analysis. Chapter 1 situates the thesis' aims in relation to four key areas of literature: Indigenous versus settler claims to sovereignty and political legitimacy, the reinvention of Australian nationalism as liberal multiculturalism, practices of Indigenous resistance and resurgence, and issues of race and representation in the Australian media landscape. Chapter 2 distils insights from the first chapter into a theoretical framework that guides the thesis' analytic approach. This chapter explores theoretical insights on epistemology with a focus on white possession and knowledge production associated with the racial contract, insights from cultural studies on ideology, common sense and the construction of mainstream media representations, and finally turns to critique of the colonial politics of recognition and process of Indigenous resistance and refusal of such containment. Chapter 3 builds on the theoretical framework to develop the methodology and methods for the thesis. The research design involved the collection of primary data through a combination of participant observation and interviewing of Indigenous organisers of the Meanjin/Brisbane³ Invasion Day rally in 2020, and secondary media sources and political statements focusing on January 26, 2020 and the 250th anniversary and published between January 12 and February 9, 2020. Data analysis involved a combination of descriptive statistics, content/thematic analysis

³ As will be discussed in Chapter 3, Meanjin is the Turrbal name for the place now known as Brisbane, Queensland. While Meanjin is the preferred name, Brisbane will also be used in this thesis for international readers.

and elements of critical discourse analysis to investigate discourses related to contested sovereignties, nationhood and colonisation.

The second half of the thesis explores key insights from the data analysis. This begins with Chapter 4, which unpacks how Indigenous peoples' and settlers' claims to sovereignty are articulated in relation to January 26 across the media data, political statements and interview transcripts. While the term 'sovereignty' is not commonly used in mainstream media and political discourse, and particularly not in relation to the Australian settler state, Chapter 4 identifies a number of implicit and explicit ways in which sovereignty as a concept is assumed, inferred and bolstered around January 26. Drawing on these insights, Chapter 5 examines the construction of normative conceptions of history, temporality and Indigeneity in the Australian national imaginary via mainstream media representation. By severing Indigenous peoples' experiences of 'past' injustices from present 'disadvantage', settler colonialism is reduced from a structure to an event. This functions to minimise settler responsibility for ongoing invasion, with 'common sense' understandings of history and Indigeneity mobilised to artificially narrow possibilities for political engagement and redress.

Chapter 6 presents a more concerted focus on January 26 and Australian multicultural nationalism, exploring how national identity invoked in relation to settler sovereignty. This becomes the background against which Indigenous critiques of January 26 celebrations emerge into public discourse, resulting in selective representations of alternative narratives of Australian history and present-day Indigenous-settler relations. Chapter 7 consolidates insights into expressions of sovereignty and representations of history, nationalism and Indigenous-settler relations in order to explore the ascendancy of 'change the date' narratives around January 26. This final analysis chapter begins with an exploration of mainstream representations of Indigenous-led resistance events on January 26, looking at how hollowed-out calls to 'change the date' have gained the status of normative critique within the bounds of the current political consensus. Despite these misrepresentations, however, Chapter 7 argues that the political aspirations of Invasion Day protest organisers and speakers can never be fully contained within a colonial politics of recognition. Expressions of Indigenous critique continue to resist these discursive boundaries and the narrow promise of recognition, including through making claims on the future that are grounded in Indigenous sovereignty and a refusal to acquiesce to the Australian settler state.

Chapter 1: Situating the Research

Introduction

This present investigation of how Indigenous peoples' and settlers' claims to sovereignty are articulated and represented in public discourse is informed by insights from four key areas of literature: sovereignty, Australian nationalism, Indigenous resistance and media representation. These areas are by no means mutually exclusive, and in reality, overlap and interpenetrate by virtue of the constantly shifting dynamics of settler colonialism and Indigenous resistance. By building a narrative across these four areas, this chapter describes the rationale for presenting an interdisciplinary thesis, engaging with contributions from political theory and philosophy, critical Indigenous scholarship, studies of Australian nationalism, and media and cultural studies.

The first part of this chapter attends to differences between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' and the Australian state's approaches to sovereignty and political legitimacy. This is prefaced by a consideration of the conceptual relevance of 'sovereignty' in contemporary political discourse on Indigenous peoples' survival and resistance in settler colonial states. As argued here and with reference to the data in Chapter 5, sovereignty remains a key conceptual tool in Indigenous resistance movements *and* in the assertion and maintenance of Australian settler hegemony through the racial contract. After this, the chapter reviews the emergence of Australian nationalism in relation to white British identity and its multicultural transformation across the late 20th and early 21st centuries. This section attends to the Australian political consensus' shift towards liberal multiculturalism and its consequences for normative engagement with political challenges mounted by Indigenous peoples. The third part of the chapter explores how these political challenges have manifested over time, looking at various forms of resistance against the structural violence of settler colonialism. This includes an overview of some sites and strategies of Indigenous resistance and attends to the problematic nature of colonial recognition of Indigenous peoples. Finally, the chapter considers media, meaning and representation in Australia. This begins with attention to the particularities of the contemporary Australian media landscape, before looking at normative representations of Indigenous peoples and how these constructions relate to previously discussed concerns about race and settler colonialism. The last part of the chapter briefly considers alternative spaces of

media representation in the form of Indigenous-led and other community media interventions, identifying possibilities for different approaches to political discourse.

Sovereignty and political legitimacy

What is sovereignty? Does the term carry the same meaning regardless of where, how, why, with respect to whom, and *by* whom it is applied? How does a settler colonial liberal democracy deal with prior and competing claims to sovereignty by Indigenous peoples whose dispossession forms the basis of its very existence? This section of the chapter deals with the salience of ‘sovereignty’ to the present research, beginning with a note on the use of the term in relation to Indigenous rights and self-determination. While critiques of the adoption of a Eurocentric concept by Indigenous peoples to forward political claims are considered, the term is nonetheless retained in this research. This is because it has the capacity to be invested with multiple meanings that are underpinned by diverse epistemological approaches to the constitution of territorially-bound political communities. Having established the utility of the term, the section proceeds with a consideration of Indigenous peoples’ sovereign relations to lands and waters across the continent. This relational sovereignty is contrasted with the application of the Doctrine of Discovery and a Westphalian conception of sovereignty at the advent of British colonisation. Finally, the imposition of British sovereignty and its eventual consolidation as Australian sovereignty is explored, with a focus on its foundational “Racial Contract” (Mills, 1997).

On the use of ‘sovereignty’

While the word ‘sovereignty’ is used in this thesis when discussing Indigenous as well as settler relationships to land and governance, there is no doubt that the term carries multiple meanings and problematic connotations. The normative definition of sovereignty as exclusive jurisdiction over a particular territory was constituted through international law and consolidated via the negotiation of imperial powers from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries (Miller, 2010, p. 2). However, this framing does not exhaust the range of meanings that can be applied to the term. Lenape scholar Joanne Barker (2005) points to this by asserting that any understanding of Indigenous peoples’ use of the term sovereignty must proceed from a process of historical contextualisation. Barker (2005, p. 21) notes:

There is no fixed meaning for what *sovereignty* is—what it means by definition, what it implies in public debate, or how it has been conceptualized in international, national, or indigenous law. Sovereignty—and its related histories, perspectives, and identities—is embedded within the specific social relations in which it is invoked and given meaning.

This situated understanding of sovereignty is as significant for Indigenous peoples' uses as it is for settler colonial invocations of the term. It indicates that sovereignty may be multiply defined and strategically used by Indigenous peoples, for whom the Eurocentric construction of sovereignty proves inadequate to represent the relational nature of political and cultural structures of governance and responsibility (Moreton-Robinson, 2020; A. Simpson, 2020). Barker's framing also presents a response to concerns raised by Mohawk political theorist Taiaiake Alfred (2005), who has critiqued the reification of sovereignty based on its Eurocentric historical development as a descriptive category, pointing to its potential to undermine the integrity of Indigenous nationhood by centring a western framing in Indigenous political struggles.

In addition to Alfred's critique, another key concern arises in non-Indigenous invocations of Indigenous sovereignty, where there appears to be a different level of significance conferred to the term suggesting a diminished status with respect to settler state sovereignty. The sovereignty of particular Indigenous peoples is understood in this usage as something more akin to an intangible, spiritual connection to land or an identification with Indigenous ancestry and heritage, rather than an acknowledgement of statehood, political autonomy and self-determination. This conceptual disaggregation of spirituality from tangible ownership and political subjectivity is grounded in the imposition of colonial logic which configures Indigenous peoples as will-less objects in order to justify the white possession of Indigenous territory (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 114). Legislatively, this is most clearly manifest in the *Native Title Act 1993*, where usufructuary rights are recognised, as configured through the language of 'custom' and 'tradition', but political relationships to territory are not. This speaks to Barker's (2005, p. 21) assertion that the meaning of sovereignty in any given context is contingent on "the "located" political agendas and cultural perspectives of those who rearticulate it" to perform a specific function—and this function need not always be emancipatory. Nicoll (2002, para. 17) draws on Judith Butler's concept of performativity to identify the "epistemological hierarchy within which sovereignty debates are discursively embedded." This hierarchy, crafted in reference to the operation of whiteness as an

epistemological *a priori* (Moreton-Robinson 2004, p. 76), positions Indigenous peoples' assertions of sovereignty as inferior to those of the white-coded settler state. The circulation of a common sense understanding of Indigenous sovereignty as a diminished claim is both contingent on and constitutive of a normative settler colonial belief in supreme political authority. In the words of Koori writer Tony Birch (2007, p. 110), "a sovereign right to land and the interpretation of the past in Australia are inextricably linked." As will be discussed later in the chapter, the configuration of Indigenous sovereignty as lesser than settler sovereignty is entirely compatible with a paradigm of liberal recognition (Coulthard, 2014, p. 3).

Despite the aforementioned concerns, the concept of sovereignty retains significant strategic use for political claim-making by Indigenous peoples. The possibility of a redemptive usage of the term is gestured to by Alfred (2005, p. 43) himself when he concedes that while the western notion of state sovereignty must be jettisoned, there is scope for a more harmonious integration of sovereignty with Indigenous political struggles when considered under the rubric of personal or popular sovereignty. The emancipatory potential of invoking claims to sovereignty has been clearly established in its strategic use by Indigenous peoples internationally in the post-World War II era, coinciding with the wave of decolonisation sweeping the globe. While the term 'Indigenous sovereignty' emerged during the 1960s, it spoke directly to ongoing political relationships that "predate[d] the formation of the nation states that invaded and dispossessed" Indigenous peoples (Moreton-Robinson, 2007, p. 3; see also I. Watson, 2014). The refutation of ethnic minority status and insistence on being recognised as peoples have long been key concerns articulated by Indigenous peoples in international fora such as the United Nations, resulting in a strong linkage between notions of Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty (Barker, 2005, pp. 19–20). According to Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 158), in the 1960s and 1970s, this led to the strategic and tactical representation of Indigenous peoples' struggles "through a discourse of Indigenous rights," which in Australia was significantly configured in relation to land rights. Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 158) emphasises the significance of Indigenous sovereignty claims in land rights discourse, which led to successes including the establishment of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (see also A. Simpson, 2020). Since the 1990s, there has been a burgeoning literature on Indigenous sovereignty and rights across both the domestic and international arenas within which Indigenous peoples' struggles are waged (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 127). Moreton-Robinson (2020, p. 258) notes that despite a variety of conceptualisations of the term by

Indigenous scholars and activists over time, they ultimately “share a singular point of reference and negation: the assumption of state sovereignty.”

Regarding the practical mobilisation of ‘sovereignty’, Euhlayi legal scholar Larissa Behrendt (2013, p. 164) asserts that in the Australian context, Indigenous sovereignty covers a spectrum of claims that can be organised into the categories of equality rights, Indigenous rights, and empowerment rights. The third category, empowerment rights, relates to the rights of Indigenous peoples over decision-making and control over decisions that affect them, and “is the area in which there is the most resistance from the dominant culture” (Behrendt, 2013, p. 164). The Australian settler state’s failure to allow Indigenous peoples to exercise their empowerment rights by recognising Indigenous sovereignty remains a primary concern for Indigenous-settler political relations, especially considering that the enactment of empowerment rights underpins the fulfilment of the rest of the aforementioned claims (Behrendt, 2013). However, despite the Australian courts’ best efforts, Indigenous peoples have not stopped “seeking a political solution to the protection of Aboriginal rights and the exercise of sovereignty” (Behrendt, 2010a, p. 198). Given the ongoing political significance of the term and its continued mobilisation in Indigenous peoples’ political struggles, this thesis therefore positions sovereignty, across its multiple meanings, as a key conceptual anchor.

In *Theft is Property! Dispossession and Critical Theory*, Robert Nichols (2020, p. 5) draws attention to an important issue with projects that hinge on a single concept or word, cautioning against “conceptual reification”. Bearing in mind both the situated analysis of sovereignty advocated by Barker (2005) and Nichols’ (2020, p. 5) warning regarding the illusory temptation to believe “that because a term is used across a range of contexts, there must be some single, unified meaning undergirding them all,” this thesis takes a similar approach to sovereignty, as does Nichols in dealing with the term ‘dispossession’. Following Nichols (2020, p. 6), the present research approaches an investigation of contested sovereignties via “an analysis of a “space of problematization” (in Foucault’s terms) rather than [of the meaning of] a singular concept.” This thesis is therefore concerned with the problem-space of ‘sovereignty’ as a variously defined concept undergirding discourses and practices of Indigenous resistance and self-determination and settler Australian nationalism.

Indigenous sovereignties

Despite the multiple and ongoing violences of colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have never ceded sovereignty and have instead practiced and reconfigured the concept through political struggle against the settler state. In the field of Australian Indigenous studies, the theoretical development of local applications of ‘sovereignty’ has been spearheaded by Aboriginal scholars including Professors Aileen Moreton-Robinson and Irene Watson. Moreton-Robinson and Watson both bring narratives of their own sovereignties, articulated from an Indigenous woman’s standpoint, into conversation with the discourses and practices of settler colonialism in Australia, particularly as the latter have proliferated in academic, legal and political spheres. Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 12) and Watson (2014, p. 8) describe Aboriginal peoples’ relationship to Country as ontological—that is, Indigenous peoples are Indigenous in and through complex, mutual, communal and reciprocal relationships with Country.

Prior to British colonisation, there were hundreds of distinct Indigenous political entities across the Australian continent (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 11). While sharing an overarching *mode* of belonging to Country, different Indigenous peoples belong to and have ownership of distinct places and enact this in specific ways (Watson, 2009, p. 27). As noted by Brady (2007, p. 148), the collective sovereignty of each Indigenous nation is “structurally and historically based in country—that is, the traditional lands from which each nation originates.” This land-based ontology ties Indigenous peoples to their ancestral homelands through place-specific relationships and histories. Importantly, Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 12) asserts that “colonization did not destroy [Indigenous peoples’] ontological relationship to country.” Indigenous peoples remain both ontologically and distinctly sovereign despite repeated onslaughts of colonial violence. This is not an ambiguously defined relationship, but one that is concretely grounded in connections to Country. As Birch (2007, p. 107) identifies, the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples is “both actual and spiritual” and “exists in both psychological and political terms.” Indigenous sovereignties emerge from and are sustained through ontological relationships to kin, Country and ancestral beings. Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 12) argues that “the ontological relationship occurs through the intersubstantiation of ancestral beings, humans, and land; it is a form of embodiment.” Indigenous peoples carry sovereignty with them, and this sovereignty incorporates connections that shape their identities in relation to Country (Brady, 2007, p. 151). Such relationships are further based upon a “cultural and spiritual view of the world that embraces an ethic of caring for [one’s]

homelands” (Watson, 2009, p. 37). That is, Indigenous peoples’ sovereign relationships to Country incorporate a relational responsibility that does not create a hierarchy between humans and non-humans. Rather, Indigenous peoples are in relationship with Country, and such relationships are constitutive of one’s identity as Indigenous (Watson, 2009, p. 39).

Indigenous peoples’ sovereign relationships are inadequately captured within Eurocentric understandings of sovereignty, which assumes exclusive ownership over territory within a logic of capital (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 34). The dominant Eurocentric notion of sovereignty, discussed further below, emerged from the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, generally understood to be the foundation of an “international system of sovereign states” where each exercised unique political control over a discrete territory (Pateman, 2007, p. 39). However, Indigenous peoples’ prior occupancy and definition of sovereign authority on the basis of relationships rather than rules destabilises the validity of the Australian settler state’s claims to exclusive political and territorial sovereignty. This is not to say that Indigenous peoples do not have property-like relationships to country: rather, they are not configured within the same epistemological structure as European property rights. The latter depend upon an exclusive and individualised relationship to property. On the other hand, Indigenous rights in relation to land are better conceptualised as collective and distinct from the logic of capital (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 34). Conventional understandings of ownership are insufficient to capture the complexity of such relationships and the multiple terms that describe it across Aboriginal nations (Watson, 2009, p. 38). Instead, Watson (2009, p. 38) notes that by way of a general definition, “ownership is not viewed in relation to material goods but to other values: knowledge, a relationship, a problem, a dispute, a ceremony.” Watson (2014, p. 8) additionally argues that for Indigenous peoples, “there is no rule that would enable the extinguishment of the law and/or the extinguishment of our relationship to our ancient territories.” The principle of extinguishment simply does not make sense in a context of relational responsibility to country. However, since ways of relating made possible through this ontological framework cannot be mapped one-to-one onto a Eurocentric understanding of property law, they are ignored or invisibilised by the settler state. The origins of this erasure are discussed in the following section, which presents an overview of British possession of the Australian continent.

Colonial possession

When Cook claimed possession of the east coast of Australia in the name of King George III on August 22, 1770, he did so on the basis of his own determination that Indigenous people were not able to conceive of economic or legal value, and therefore of land tenure (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 112). Declaring the land *terra nullius* was an act of ontological and epistemic violence, an over-writing and undermining of Indigenous sovereignties without Indigenous peoples' consent or knowledge. While Cook was not the first imperial traveller to reach the Australian coastline, preceded by others including Dutch explorer Abel Tasman in the mid-1600s (see, for example, Douglas, 2010), he was the first to assert foreign sovereignty over the landmass. Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 113) asserts that this moment of possession was a "performative act of sovereignty" which "existed epistemologically and materially only for Cook and his crew, not for Indigenous people." It provided justification for the colonial expansion across and settlement of the continent and inscribed the territory with British property law. This foundational act of "white possession" (Moreton-Robinson, 2015) facilitated the further layering of foreign legal and political systems over Indigenous modes of governance, justifying the genocidal management of the Indigenous population. This performative act of sovereignty was underpinned by the Doctrine of Discovery, which supported the colonial expansion of western European states from the 15th century.

The Doctrine of Discovery (henceforth 'the Doctrine') is an instrument of international law that continues to shape the lives of Indigenous people in European-colonised settler states today. The Doctrine is one of the earliest principles of international law, developed to provide justification (within European legal and theological norms) for colonisation through the racialised denigration of Indigenous personhood and political capacity (Miller, 2010). Building on the individual sovereign statehood established by the Peace of Westphalia in western Europe, Miller (2010, p. 2) argues that the Doctrine essentially codified European/white supremacy in international law. This provided that "newly arrived Europeans immediately and automatically acquired legally recognized property rights in native lands and also gained governmental, political, and commercial rights over the inhabitants without the knowledge or the consent of the Indigenous peoples" (Miller, 2010, p. 2). Furthermore, the Doctrine provided the discoverer with the exclusive ability to purchase Indigenous peoples' lands should they consent to sell, a provision which sought to minimise conflict over territory between European states (Miller, 2010, p. 5). This relied upon an understanding that Indigenous peoples existed within a "state of nature," which in early modern Eurocentric thought was characterised as "a

condition in which many of the major institutions of the modern world do not exist” (Hindess, 2007, p. 6). For English liberal philosopher John Locke, the state of nature referred to an “absence of government and of private property in land” (Hindess, 2007, p. 6). This informed the creation of a normative understanding of Indigenous peoples as existing at the earliest stages of human development, compared to civilised societies of western Europe. Hindess argues that the developmentalism of Locke’s state of nature thesis continues to underpin contemporary western understandings of civil society, naming a “hold over the government of Indigenous peoples” (2007, p. 17) in settler states as a key example of its persistence.

Moreton-Robinson’s (2015) theorisation of white possession is particularly useful in understanding the developmentalism of the state of nature thesis and forms a core component of the theoretical framework of this thesis. According to Moreton-Robinson (2015, pp. 112–113), Cook’s assumption of such broad license to take ownership over the Australian continent was facilitated by the epistemological impetus of white possession. This was conditioned by knowledge of the racialised other which “was already operating as a discourse before Cook left England” (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 110), and which included a belief in the state of nature thesis. Such knowledge positioned all Indigenous peoples as “backward savages” in the eyes of the west (Watson, 2014, p. 5), providing an abstracted characterisation of personhood upon which white Europeans could justify colonial conquest. Indigenous peoples encountered by Cook were considered to be uncivilised and nomadic, incapable of possessing any form of land tenure (Moreton-Robinson, 2004, p. 76). Behrendt (2010b, p. 186) extends this to suggest that not only were Indigenous peoples in Australia seen as inferior to Europeans, but they were also “seen as inferior to other Indigenous people whose lands had also become part of the British Empire.” Therefore, while both international legal convention and the explicit instructions given to Cook by his peers at the Royal Society stated that he should seek consent from the native population prior to claiming possession, this is not what occurred (Behrendt, 2010b, p. 174; Falk & Martin, 2007, pp. 36–37; Moreton-Robinson, 2015, pp. 111–112). That Cook and other early colonists did not negotiate or treat with the Indigenous peoples they encountered in what is now Australia occurred on the basis of the doctrine of *terra nullius*. The land was interpreted as available within a logic of possession based on Cook’s understanding of what constituted “appropriate” land use, harking back to Lockean assumptions about Indigenous civilization (Behrendt, 2010b, p. 175; Moreton-Robinson, 2004, p. 76).

Cook believed that he could assert dominance over Indigenous peoples because of the power vested in him as a representative of the British sovereign. However, Watson (2014, p. 5) asserts that the suggestion that colonialism “carried with it and applied sovereignty” was a “myth,” and that in reality, “state sovereignty was claimed and constituted through colonialism.” This is an important point. Cook, acting in his capacity as a representative of the Crown, certainly carried with him an understanding of imperial sovereignty as codified in international law (Veracini, 2010, p. 3). However, this was British, not Australian sovereignty. The consolidation of the latter occurred over the 19th and 20th centuries via successive legislative changes and the concomitant cultivation of a (white) national consciousness. The justification for Australian sovereignty over the continent relied upon the establishment of a racial contract, which persists as the basis of contemporary political relations in the state.

Contract and domination

Liberal political theory, due to its focus on the creation of normative principles to guide political action, is necessarily reliant on a degree of abstraction (Owen, 2016). This involves the bracketing-off of a variety of populations or demographic groups for the convenience of developing normative claims (Hindess, 2001). Such bracketing reduces these groups to their perceived abilities—or lack thereof—to engage in political reasoning and the liberal consensus (Hindess, 2001). The notion of reason attributed to the liberal subject functions as a primary category of exclusion from or marginalisation within liberalism. The classical liberal theory of the social contract is fundamentally reliant on the exclusion of particular identity categories from participating in the political consensus on the basis of reason and capacity. Pateman’s (1988) *The Sexual Contract* locates patriarchal domination within the basis of the social contract, in the very genesis of our contemporary understanding of political rights. Charles Wade Mills (1997, p. 71) shifts the lens of inquiry to focus on the centrality of white supremacy to the social contract in his theorisation of the “racial contract”, arguing that political philosopher Immanuel Kant’s ideal theories of justice within a liberal framework relied explicitly on the racialization of reason.

Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 139) has applied Mills’ racial contract theory to the Australian context, identifying that the racial contract “allowed white colonists to treat Indigenous people as subhuman, appropriating Indigenous lands in the name of patriarchal white sovereignty.” In later work by Pateman (2007, p. 38), this appropriation is argued to constitute the establishment

of a settler contract, which she describes as modified version of the expropriation contract discussed by Mills which more directly accounts for the doctrine of *terra nullius*. The settler contract is a specific theoretical construct capturing settler colonial fictions of consensual governance that obscure the genocidal and appropriative foundations of settler colonies (Nichols, 2013, p. 168). A key feature is the notion that civil society is established on the Australian continent configured as a *tabula rasa*—“the state of nature disappears as soon as the contract is concluded” (Pateman, 2007, p. 39). Ultimately, however, I agree with Mills (1997, pp. 23–24) earlier characterisation of settler colonial relations as a specific, contextually-adjusted version of the racial contract. Mills’ (1997, p. 49) own discussion of *terra nullius* identifies that the application of this category is contingent on a racial hierarchy of personhood, and this focus on the relationship between race and colonisation provides a useful theoretical support for the present research.

By defining the Indigenous other as either property-less or incapable of participating in the social contract, Indigenous peoples were effectively locked out of the consensus legitimating liberal governance and instead relegated to “a state of nature without sovereign rights” (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 56). Moreton-Robinson (2004, p. 77) identifies that whiteness has been normalised and rendered invisible “as the measure of being human”, while the racialized other becomes situated “in the liminal space between the human/animal distinction.” The characterisation of Indigenous peoples as lesser than white settlers justified the denial of Indigenous sovereignty, and this occurred through a racial logic. As Barker (2005, pp. 16–17) argues, “the erasure of the sovereign is the racialization of the “Indian”.” The assumed racial inferiority of Indigenous peoples justified their exclusion from the realm of political capacity and thus participation.

While the advent of Indigenous political suffrage across settler states in the twentieth century indicates a willingness to retrospectively incorporate Indigenous peoples into settler polities, it is important to note the “regulative role of consensus” (Ivison et al., 2000, p. 18). Though consensus is an important consideration in the organisation of a polity, “it is never a sufficient condition for understanding relations of power since it is often a result of such relations” (Ivison et al., 2000, p. 18). In this case, Australia’s contemporary liberal democratic consensus obscures its genocidal foundation. The social contract, revealed to be a racial contract, depends on a particular notion of the “reasonable” liberal subject and reinforces that subjectivity through the process of validation that is engagement in the liberal consensus (Mouffe, 2000, p.

4). However, this explicitly relies on the oppression and marginalisation of certain social groups—in particular, Indigenous peoples, who have the prior right of possession of land. For classical European political theorists, Indigenous peoples represented the other against which reason was defined, and because of this definition were stripped of the possibility of self-governance and sovereignty (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 114). As Watson asserts, the Australian Constitution, rather than “discontinu[ing] the colonial construction of *terra nullius* and native savagery” instead retain these notions as “the foundation upon which the *Constitution* was established” (2018, p. 8, emphasis in original). The drafters of the Constitution “did not reserve any place within the foundational document for the recognition of Aboriginal people nor for their laws or sovereignty” (Behrendt, 2010a, p. 187). The later inclusion of Indigenous peoples into the Australian settler polity through various legislative amendments sits in uneasy tension with their unceded sovereignty and continued subordination. This brings the basis of Australia’s contemporary political consensus into question and has attendant consequences for conceptions of Australian nationhood and nationalism.

Nationhood, difference and justice

Australia’s colonial beginnings were explicitly based upon racial hierarchy and exclusion, features which continue to influence contemporary constructions of national identity and approaches to ‘difference’. Given the thesis’ interest in sovereignty and representation related to Australia’s national day, this part of the chapter explores the development of Australian settler nationalism and its changing orientation towards ‘difference’. This begins with an assessment of dominant constructions of Australian national identity and how these have shifted across the 20th and 21st centuries towards liberal multiculturalism. The second part of the section attends to a shift in national identity construction related to approaches to dealing with non-Anglo migrant settlers as well as Indigenous people under a paradigm of liberal recognition. It is argued that the development of a more inclusionary nationalism has concerning consequences for substantive engagement with Indigenous peoples’ political claims to sovereignty.

Constructing 'Australianness'

The constitution of Australia's national identity is an important consideration for the present research, given the legitimacy that this collective form of attachment lends to settler sovereign authority. As discussed previously, normative beliefs in a racial hierarchy of being both facilitated and shaped the constitution of the early Australian colonies, with Indigenous-settler relations borne out of white possession (Moreton-Robinson, 2015) coming to serve as the basis for settler identity formation (see Maddison, 2012). This was reinforced at federation with the adoption of the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, which prohibited non-European or "coloured" immigration into Australia (Stratton & Ang, 1994, p. 141). Post-federation Australian national identity continued to be strongly associated with Britishness, with nationalists deliberately choosing "to emphasise British ethnicity as a keystone of national cohesion" (McGregor, 2006, p. 500). This ethnic nationalist approach was somewhat tempered across the Second World War, with the intake of southern Europeans in the immediate post-war era requiring a shift in dominant conceptions of whiteness and reconsideration of the relationship between racial and cultural homogeneity (Moran, 2017, p. 177; Stratton & Ang, 1994, pp. 144–145). However, a primary attachment to British whiteness still strongly informed Australian expressions of national identity until the 1970s, until the formal end of the White Australia Policy and the adoption of multiculturalism as a federal government policy (Stratton & Ang, 1994, p. 132).

Occurring alongside the growth of the Indigenous land rights movement, the advent of official multiculturalism signalled a more interventionist approach to cultivating a new Australian national identity that, at least rhetorically, was less defined in relation to the country's British colonial roots. This has resulted in a somewhat syncretic approach to Australian national identity, where while strong currents of ethnic and civic nationalism both exist (with the latter dominating), there are "a range of overlapping characteristics associated with Australian identity" signalling increased diversity and complexity since the start of the 21st century (Austin & Fozdar, 2018, p. 287). In practice this means that contemporary Australian nationalism is characterised by both traditionalist and progressive features, explaining, for example, simultaneous beliefs in mateship as well as egalitarianism and diversity (Austin & Fozdar, 2018, p. 281). Importantly, however, the shift to a more formal embrace of multiculturalism at the policy level has not translated into active dismantling of racist institutions in Australia and sits uncomfortably in relation to the ongoing oppression of Indigenous peoples. Indeed, as identified by Maddison (2012, pp. 701-702), the cultivation of

Australian nationalism as a settler nationalism has bound notions of collective guilt about colonial violence to the project of national identity production.

Moran (2011, 2017, p. 180) describes Australian multiculturalism as a “nation-building policy,” gesturing to the development of a more inclusive Australian national identity as part of the consolidation of the state’s own political legitimacy. Despite greater inclusion, however, this nation-building approach to multiculturalism continues to rely on the disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty and the operation of white possession. Moreton-Robinson (2015, pp. 19–31) explores the relationship between Australian national identity and white possession in her essay ‘The House that Jack Built’, which tracks the persistence of this phenomenon from federation to the early 2000s. She identifies that despite the shift from a white British ethnonationalist conception of Australian identity to present-day multiculturalism, a belief in the nation’s status as a white possession remains constant (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 24). Further and crucially, she notes that this possessive logic holds true “regardless of whether multiculturalism is perceived as a threat or a promise” (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 27). This speaks to a need to attend directly to the relationship between official multiculturalism and ongoing settler colonialism.

It is also worth identifying some terminological slippage in the use of ‘multiculturalism’ in Australia between some key theorists. While authors such as Moreton-Robinson (2015) and Moran (2011, 2017) use the term to refer to the cultural diversity of immigrants, Povinelli (2002) writes of multiculturalism as a dynamic which also includes Indigenous peoples. However, common to all three authors (though to different ends), is a shared understanding of multiculturalism as a liberal democratic state-centric approach to mitigating inequities perpetuated against cultural minorities. As Povinelli (2002, p. 18) writes, “multiculturalism is represented as the externalized political testament to the nation’s aversion to its past misdeeds, and to its recovered good intentions.” To state this is not to suggest a conscious, bad-faith approach to dealing with difference in the settler state, but instead to acknowledge the persistence of the set of liberal ideals underpinning Australia’s social/racial contract (Povinelli, 2002, p. 25). The operation of this liberal, civic nationalist approach to difference-based injustices is discussed next.

Dealing with difference

The 20th century revival of liberal contractualism via theorists including John Rawls has had a significant influence on approaches to justice in democratic states, with particular implications for Indigenous rights claims. Rawls' ideal theory of justice depends on the "idealisation of strict compliance in order to work out the principles of justice that should structure a well-ordered society" (Owen, 2016, p. 175). This approach assumes an "original position" void of knowledge of the subject's race, gender, class, and so on, upon which the principles of organisation of a just society may be based (Nichols, 2013, p. 167). Nichols (2013, p. 181), analysing the continuation of this approach via the work of political theorist Jeremy Waldron, identifies that the abstract subject serves the colonial status quo insofar as the maintenance of this ideal position allows western theorists to avoid generative conversations with Indigenous peoples about concrete political claims. A reliance on this idealised original position also arbitrarily limits the broad intelligibility of Indigenous struggles to those that can be understood through translation into the language of acquisition of property or rights within the framework of social contract theory (Nichols, 2013, p. 174). Indigenous peoples' political claims are evaluated through an ahistorical process that solely focuses on distributive justice in the present while brushing aside questions of Indigenous sovereignty or racial hierarchy. Nichols (2013, p. 174, emphasis in original) critiques Waldron's negative assessment of these claims, stating that he translates "Indigenous claims into claims *to* sovereignty and property, not *about the very nature of* sovereignty and property." Waldron can therefore assert that there *are* forms of redress for Indigenous peoples within settler liberal democracies—they just need to focus on addressing contemporary instances of Indigenous disadvantage rather than accounting for the fact of ongoing genocide (Iverson et al., 2000, pp. 9–10).

Waldron's line of reasoning circumvents the question of Indigenous sovereignty altogether by undermining any such claims regardless of whether they are made on the basis of either of the (normative) principles of prior or first occupancy (Nichols, 2013, pp. 170–171). Such an approach then feeds conservative discourses around the necessity of continued paternalistic management of Indigenous peoples through social policy, rather than entertaining any change to the political arrangement of settler states. For example, conservative scholars such as anthropologist Peter Sutton have implied that interventionist management of the Indigenous population by the Australian state is appropriate, based on appeals to a primitivist discourse that infantilises Indigenous peoples without acknowledging the multiple harms of colonisation (I. Watson, 2007, pp. 22–23). This approach has also allowed historians such as A. Dirk Moses

to suggest that the Northern Territory Intervention was a humanitarian endeavour, supporting it as part of an argument against Indigenous cultural and political differences and ignoring the specific conditions leading to representations of the Indigenous Other as deviant (Moreton-Robinson, 2011, pp. 416–417). Thinkers like Sutton and Moses imply that it is both reasonable and appropriate to deny Indigenous sovereignties, while applying coercive techniques of population management and control in the name of justice and fairness.

A second strand of theorising regarding justice for Indigenous peoples falls under the umbrella of a politics of recognition. This encompasses a range of approaches by different progressive theorists attempting to identify how best to rectify the persistent marginalisation of particular groups within liberal democracies. Iris Marion Young (1989) and Charles Taylor (1994) both provide conceptual interventions engaging the opposing concerns of universal equality and the retention and validation of group differences within modern democracies. Young argues that equality of inclusion and participation for all “sometimes requires the articulation of special rights that attend to group differences in order to undermine oppression and disadvantage” (1989, p. 251). The notion of a “common good” as expressed in the ideal theory of justice discussed above serves to mask or diminish group differences, leading Young (1989, p. 258) to suggest that what is required to tackle oppression is “group differentiated citizenship and a heterogeneous public”. What is required is the institutionalisation of fairness via group representation in the democratic process (I. M. Young, 1989, p. 264). Taylor (1994, p. 25) similarly addresses the issue of group oppression by conceptualising non-recognition or “misrecognition,” which, following the Hegelian understanding of mutual recognition as a requirement for identity formation, can lead to harmful consequences for misrecognised parties. As does Young, Taylor (1994, p. 39) argues that a balance must be sought between a politics of universalism and a politics of difference, and that importantly, non-discrimination requires that the latter case must be difference-sensitive. Both Taylor (1994) and Young (1989) argue that beyond anti-oppression, there must be some systemic affirmation of group difference. However, these social changes still rely on those occupying positions of social power granting recognition to oppressed peoples (Coulthard, 2014, pp. 29–30). While both Taylor (1994, pp. 52–54) and Young (1989, p. 266) make brief mention of Indigenous peoples, there is no substantive engagement with Indigenous sovereignty’s requirement of a fundamental change to the political system.

Scholars have attempted to build on the work of theorists such as Taylor and Young to address the mechanisms by which justice for marginalised social groups may be achieved, with particular attention to redistribution and minority rights. Nancy Fraser (1995, p. 171) engages Young's argument, raising concerns about the suggested need to remedy oppression through the recognition of cultural differences, which ultimately "is no substitute for redistribution" of resources to oppressed groups. Fraser (1995, pp. 178–180) takes issue with Young's disaggregation of cultural oppression from oppressions associated with political economy, arguing that because issues of cultural, political and economic marginalisation are in complex interrelationship, this formulation can result in mechanisms for redress where recognition stymies redistributive mechanisms. Instead, Fraser (1995, pp. 179, 180) argues for the recognition of "different kinds of differences" sensitive to conceptual differences between "classes, subordinated sexualities, gender, subordinated racialized castes and ethnic groups" and thus able to guide redistributive politics. Regarding political mechanisms for recognising these different kinds of difference, Will Kymlicka (1995, p. 6) proposes that the normative framework of human rights should be supplemented by "minority rights." He distinguishes between three different proposals for minority rights: the right to self-government, "polyethnic rights (financial support and legal protection for certain practices associated with particular ethnic or religious groups)," and the right to special representation for groups within state institutions (Kymlicka, 1995, pp. 6–7). However, while both Fraser (1995, p. 178) and Kymlicka (1995, p. 8) do attend in more detail to the question of special, group differentiated rights for Indigenous peoples, their approaches to recognition are still configured within a rubric of multiculturalism which ultimately does not address the subordination of Indigenous sovereignties to the political authority of settler states.

As explored in the work of non-Indigenous scholar Sarah Maddison, reconciliation has come to predominate public and political discussions in Australia about how to repair the state and non-Indigenous population's relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. When driven by the state, the project of reconciliation has ultimately proved to be one of inclusionary nationalism, seeking to incorporate Indigenous peoples and emphasising the acknowledgement of historical wrongs—neglecting the ongoing structural violence of colonialism—over tangible political change (Maddison, 2019). Maddison (2019, p. 183) also notes that "Indigenous peoples may pursue reconciliation policies in order to *open up* public discourse both about past wrongs and about the sovereignty and collective rights they contest in the present." This indicates that the language and strategies of reconciliation are not

necessarily employed with a uniform political motivation, given that some Indigenous people may find it productive to push for change through this framework. Elsewhere, however, Maddison (2020) identifies that given the repeated disappointments of Australia's attempts at gestures of reconciliation including the establishment of Sorry Day and Kevin Rudd's 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations, other Indigenous people have chosen to turn inwards, prioritising political and cultural resurgence as opposed to unproductive engagement with a state that refuses to recognise their sovereignties. Approaches to Indigenous resistance and resurgence in Australia both through and beyond settler-recognised modes of political articulation will be discussed next.

Indigenous resistance

This thesis' analysis of Indigenous resistance and expressions of sovereignty around January 26 is also informed by a range of Indigenous scholarship on the praxis of refusal against settler state hegemony. The present section begins with a brief overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' approaches to resistance with a focus on public demonstrations, and in particular, mass protest actions. This includes consideration of theoretical approaches to analysing Indigenous resistance, in particular Simpson's (2014, 2017) work on Indigenous refusal. The second part of this section brings earlier questions of inclusion and recognition into conversation with the demands of anti-colonial Indigenous resistance. Coulthard's (2014) work on the colonial politics of recognition and Watson's (2007, 2014) critique of reconciliation both inform the thesis' critical approach to processes of inclusion in settler colonial liberal democracies.

Sites and strategies

Contemporary Indigenous protest actions present a direct challenge to the legitimacy of settler colonialism, troubling the basis of the state's institutionalised authority (Muldoon & Schaap, 2012).⁴ Indigenous peoples' political protest has always unsettled the Australian state precisely because Indigenous peoples' survival and resistance undermines the fiction of *terra nullius*.

⁴ Though it should be noted that some, such as Burgmann (2000, pp. 13–14, 2003, pp. 50–51) locate the challenge for the realisation of Indigenous peoples' political claims at the level of mobilisation towards their cause within liberal democracy. However, this reading takes a narrower view of the scope of Indigenous political claims and does not necessarily trouble the political system within which Indigenous peoples are forced to struggle.

Strategies of public protest employed by Indigenous peoples in Australia have changed over time, depending on the objectives of organisers and the political climate. The earliest forms of resistance took the form of the bloody frontier wars, where Aboriginal people across the continent fought against the progressive dispossession of their lands by white settlers. Massacres and other forms of brutality against Aboriginal people constituted the “principal means of expansion” (Wolfe, 2006, p. 392) of the colonies. This also involved sequestering Indigenous peoples to island missions or prisons for the interconnected purposes of punishment, clearing territory and undermining guerrilla resistance. An early documented form of protest was a petition drafted by Tasmanian Aboriginal people interned at Wybalenna (Flinders Island)—Walter George Arthur, his partner Mary and Thomas Bruny—who successfully campaigned in 1846 to rid the Wybalenna settlement of the harsh Superintendent Dr Henry Jeanneret (Attwood & Markus, 1999, pp. 30–31). Wolfe (2013, p. 259) argues that the closure of the frontier, which in Australia occurred over the late 1800s to early 1900s, led to different forms of regulation of Indigenous peoples, with techniques of elimination shifting from overt violence to assimilation. This policy-led turn resulted in the emergence of different forms of Indigenous resistance.

In the 1920s and 1930s, with many Indigenous people moving into the cities in search of employment, there was a rapid growth of Indigenous political collectives oriented against structural discrimination (Merlan, 2005, pp. 479–480). Scholars including Briscoe (2014) and Maynard (2007) suggest that the inter-war period was a time of mass political conscientisation of Indigenous people across Australia. The Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association was formed in Sydney in 1924 by Fred Maynard and Tom Lacey, both former members of the Sydney chapter of Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association (Foley & Anderson, 2006, p. 85; Maynard, 2005). In the mid-1930s, the Australian Aborigines’ League (AAL) was established in Melbourne by Cummeragunja exiles William Cooper and Doug Nicholls, and including other key figures such as Marge Tucker and Shadrach James (Foley & Anderson, 2006, p. 85). Foley (2007, p. 121) argues that land disputes in the community of Cummeragunja on the New South Wales-Victorian border were a precursor to the Indigenous land rights and sovereignty movement. Indeed, the AAL, in collaboration with the Aborigines Progressive Association in Sydney, with members including Jack Patten, Bill Ferguson and Pearl Gibbs, organised the first Day of Mourning protest in 1938 (Foley & Anderson, 2006, p. 85). Inspired by William Cooper, the protest was scheduled to coincide with the 1938 sesquicentennial celebrations of the New South Wales colony, challenging settler Australia’s

celebration of the inauguration of invasion. At this protest, “Cooper, Nicholls, Patten and others were asserting that ultimately it was Aboriginal land, and they were implicitly and explicitly challenging the legitimacy of the imposed sovereignty of Australia” (Foley, 2007, p. 122).

Indigenous peoples’ use of public demonstration as a political strategy continues, enjoying significant success in drawing attention to settler colonial injustice and varying levels of success in achieving policy change, such as in the case of Northern Territory land rights. Demonstrations have been used by Indigenous people in response to a variety of different issues related to colonisation. One such issue has been labour rights, with significant historical demonstrations including the Pilbara strike in 1946 (Scrimgeour, 2014) and the Wave Hill walk-off by the Gurindji people in 1967 (Merlan, 2005, p. 483). Highly publicised demonstrations also occurred in response to apartheid segregation of Aboriginal people in New South Wales in the form of the 1965 Freedom Rides, organised by Charles Perkins (Edmonds, 2012). The growth in prominence of the Aboriginal land rights movement across the 1960s and 1970s occurred alongside the development of the Aboriginal Black Power movement, which sought to employ more militant forms of activism than previous generations (Foley, 2011, p. 163; Lothian, 2007). On January 26, 1972 as part of the fight for land rights, the Aboriginal Tent Embassy was established on the lawns of Old Parliament House by Michael Anderson, Bertie Williams, Billie Craigie and Tony Coorey (Muldoon & Schaap, 2012). Since its establishment the Embassy has been a hub for Indigenous activism and an ongoing reminder of sovereign resistance. As Professor Gary Foley (2011, p. 616) puts it, “Aboriginal issues were put on the national agenda in 1972 by the Aboriginal Embassy and they remain there to this day.” In 1988, the January 26 Survival Day march against Sydney’s bicentennial celebrations drew Aboriginal people from around the country as well as thousands of non-Indigenous supporters (Foley & Anderson, 2006, p. 94). More recently, public demonstrations have continued across major capital cities and an ever-growing number of regional areas on Invasion Day, as well as specific protests against issues including the Northern Territory Intervention, Aboriginal deaths in custody, the Olympic and Commonwealth games, and the destruction of sacred sites.

Political activity in the form of public demonstrations and/or seeking inclusion and representation within the parliamentary process are far from the only strategies that have been mobilised by Indigenous peoples’ in resisting settler colonialism. However, Indigenous peoples’ resistance to settler colonialism does not always manifest in forms that are predicted

by or investigated within classic social movement studies (Duncan, 2014, p. 54). This means that while strategies of resistance can span from non-compliance with welfare regimes to nationwide annual Invasion Day protests, the richness of Indigenous resistance is not always captured within academic analysis. Here, a broader conceptualisation of Indigenous resistance as articulated by Audra Simpson's theorisation of 'refusal' is particularly relevant, offering a compelling framework for analysing motivations and strategies for Indigenous resistance. Developed through her work with her own Kahnawà:kehró:non community in the seminal text *Mohawk Interruptus*, Simpson (2017) defines refusal as both a stance and a theory for pushing back against settler colonialism's logic of elimination (Wolfe, 2006). Refusal is the "revenge of consent", a praxis which speaks truth back to settler assumptions of Indigenous consent to colonisation (A. Simpson, 2017, p. 26). Watson's (2009, p. 44) reference to the "unsettled native" as a counterpoint to absorption into the "whiteness of the colonial project" is also relevant here. Watson (2009, p. 44) locates in the "unsettled native... the possibility of surviving assimilation and absorption and the restoration of Aboriginal relationships to homelands".

Indigenous refusal synthesises insights into the motivations for Indigenous peoples' political engagement with an understanding of the political particularities of settler colonial liberal democracies. By recognising that Indigenous resistance occurs within states that are simultaneously enacting processes of elimination while elevating discourses of self-determination and recognition (A. Simpson, 2017), refusal opens up possibilities for more nuanced engagement with the politics of contemporary Indigenous social movements. Refusal also presents a counterpoint to dominant forms of reconciliation which, according to Wakeham (2012, p. 5), undermine Indigenous self-determination through "entrenching normative conceptualizations of good citizenship to which Aboriginal peoples are expected to conform". This effectively operationalises the discourse of reconciliation in pursuit of a "logic of social incorporation" that pivots away from self-determination and back towards the assimilation of Indigenous peoples (Wakeham, 2012, p. 5). This critique echoes concerns raised previously about liberal inclusion through formal multiculturalism, which ultimately reinforces white possession. Settler colonial state recognition of Indigenous peoples is further problematised in the following section.

Problematising recognition

That “‘recognition’ appears to be the only political game in town” (A. Simpson, 2017, p. 20) speaks to the extent to which the settler state’s political authority has been normalised, positioning it as a legitimate arbiter over processes of redress despite its status as a perpetrator of colonial violence. Framing recognition as an inevitability relies on the initial political exclusion laid down in the racial contract. The status quo in settler states relies on the assumption of settler sovereignty, bearing on the discursive parameters within which discussions of sovereignty can occur. Because of this, Indigenous scholars such as Alfred (1999, 2005), Coulthard (2014), A. Simpson (2014, 2017), and Watson (2007, 2014) encourage approaching Indigenous resistance and resurgence outside of state recognition. Watson (2007, p. 20) is particularly critical of reconciliation, questioning the Australian state’s intentions considering its basic lack of acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples’ humanity. Michael Mansell (2011, p. 670), a Tasmanian Aboriginal lawyer and secretary of the Aboriginal Provisional Government, further argues that the establishment of Australia as a white nation had “no effect on Aboriginal sovereignty... if anything, the racist constitutional provisions reinforced Aboriginals as an independent people.” Importantly, and as discussed previously, Indigenous peoples’ sovereignties are not determined by the architecture of the state (Brady, 2007, p. 150). Though Indigenous peoples may not have formal legal recognition of their sovereignties, “the way in which [they] conduct [themselves] and [their] relationship as individuals, communities and nations” keeps sovereignty as a constant in Indigenous peoples’ lives (Brady, 2007, p. 150).

Both ideal theoretical notions of distributive justice and narrowly framed forms of recognition are more invested in maintaining the status quo of political relations in the settler colony than meaningfully recognising Indigenous sovereignties. These approaches speak to a greater willingness to engage with Indigenous peoples’ political struggle through concessions that further interpolate them into the colonial project than to commit to broader processes of transformative justice (I. Watson, 2014, p. 3). Yellowknives Dene political theorist Glen Coulthard (2014, p. 2), whose seminal work *Red Skin, White Masks* focuses on Indigenous resurgence in the face of the colonial politics of recognition, identifies that initially, the pursuit of recognition of Indigenous peoples was a “central catalyst in the international Indigenous rights movement.” However, Coulthard (2014, p. 17, emphasis in original), drawing on Frantz Fanon, asserts that recognition has become “*the field of power through which colonial relations are produced and maintained.*” This is in line with Audra Simpson’s reading of the politics of

recognition. She notes that settler states tend to conceive recognition as “the philosophical and institutional remedy to matters of ‘historical injustice’” (A. Simpson, 2017, p. 19). This both discursively historicises ongoing colonial violence and indicates that the settler state is the legitimate arbiter of Indigenous peoples’ political struggles and their accommodation (A. Simpson, 2017).

In the Australian context, a critique of colonial recognition has been elaborated by Watson (2014) in *Aboriginal Peoples, Colonialism and International Law: Raw Law*. Watson (2014) addresses the futility of a paradigm of recognition for achieving tangible structural decolonisation. She notes that the very nature of recognition is that of “‘cultural’ differences where there is no threat to... the hegemony of the state” (I. Watson, 2014, p. 3). Moreton-Robinson (2007, p. 6) also draws attention to the fact that while there has been a proliferation of discussion across disciplines about “the status and rights of Indigenous peoples within ‘settler’ nation states”, this largely speaks to a “more populist view, which is shared by the present Australian government⁵, that Indigenous peoples’ rights are already realised through the bureaucratic infrastructure established to service communities.” This is the rationale underpinning recognition-based strategies to reconcile Indigenous sovereignties within settler colonial liberal democracies. It is an approach based in “neoliberalism, which privileges the democratic process by advocating that citizenship rights are the means through which Indigenous rights should be contained and exercised” (Moreton-Robinson, 2007, p. 6). Therefore, the conversation pivots back to what constitutes an appropriate mode of political participation, and who is in the position to adjudicate. Watson (2009, p. 37) notes that the state tends to frame Indigenous peoples’ relationships to Country as “antiquated and progress blocking”—only those which can be “assimilated and commodified” are recognised by the state. Fundamentally, in Nicoll’s (2002) words, recognition politics constitutes reconciliation *to* the settler colonial status quo by Indigenous people, not reconciliation *with* Indigenous peoples. While the former indicates an unequal power relationship, the latter suggests possibilities for future engagement that is not pre-determined by settler colonial logics of appropriation and elimination. It is clear that the settler state continues to push an Indigenous rights agenda by reconciling *to* and not *with* (Nicoll, 2002, see also Maddison, 2019). This has significant implications for processes of mass communication about Indigenous-settler

⁵ At that time, the Howard government.

relations and political conflict, given the close relationship between political and media apparatuses in Australia.

Representation and media

The Australian media has a long, fraught history of negatively representing Indigenous peoples, with representations both conditioned by and feeding back into racist public discourse. One of the core concerns of the thesis is interrogating representations of Indigenous peoples' expressions of sovereignty through protest on January 26 in Australian media and political discourses. Thus far, this chapter has explored theoretical and practical concerns regarding the issue of contested sovereignties in Australia, where the existence of the settler state is contingent on the disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty. The effect that this disavowal has had on political discourse is to confine Indigenous sovereignty to the "border of the unsayable," for fear of its locutionary effects (Goeder & Jacobs, 2000, p. 231) on the status quo of white possession. However, this unsayability in the political realm does not mean that such issues have escaped media attention (Moreton-Robinson, 2007, p. 3). Instead, as Moreton-Robinson (2007, p. 3) identifies, Indigenous sovereignty receives some mainstream media coverage, albeit within "restricted political terms" generally centring on "extensive coverage [of] conservative ideologues, who perceive Indigenous sovereignty as a threat to national interests and identity."

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson (2006) identified the significant role of news media in the cultivation of national imaginaries. He described the consumption of news media—at the time of writing in 1983, predominantly print media—as a "mass ceremony" that while "performed in silent privacy" nonetheless situated the individual within a routine practice being simultaneously performed by "thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion" (B. Anderson, 2006, p. 35). In the present day, though processes of media consumption have been greatly accelerated and diversified, Anderson's basic description of news media's role in the development and consolidation of national imaginaries still holds relevance. Additionally, and as will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, the mass media also function as one of the key definers of political reality in modern states (S. Hall, 1971, p. 20). This means that the

media has a significant, though by no means totalising, influence on the way that nationhood and political legitimacy are understood.

The contemporary Australian media landscape features one of the most concentrated levels of media ownership in the world, with consequences for the circulation of knowledge about Australian nationhood and the place of Indigenous peoples in relation to the national narrative. Since the height of Australia's media diversity in the 1920s, news media ownership has narrowed to a monopoly held by two media corporations: Rupert Murdoch's News Corp, the dominant player, and Nine Entertainment (Brevini & Ward, 2021). A 2021 report commissioned by campaign group GetUp! reviewed the state of media diversity in Australia, identifying that by readership, News Corp owned 59% of the share of metropolitan and national print media markets, while Nine Entertainment held a combined 23% share of the readership (Brevini & Ward, 2021, p. 4). Consolidated ownership also extends into other media spaces, with researchers reporting that "News Corp, Nine, and Southern Cross Media (and their associated entities) — control almost 90% of the lucrative metropolitan radio licences across the country" (Brevini & Ward, 2021, p. 4). News Corp's holdings include one of the two national newspapers—*The Australian*—as well as the only daily newspapers in Australian capital cities Adelaide (*The Advertiser*), Brisbane (*The Courier Mail*), Darwin (*Northern Territory News*), and Hobart (*The Mercury*). News Corp publications generally tend towards right-wing conservatism, demonstrating alignment with the values espoused by the Liberal Party and (sometimes) National Party. News Corp also owns one each of the two competing daily newspapers in Sydney and Melbourne—*The Daily Telegraph* and the *Herald Sun* respectively. The other two newspapers are owned by Nine, *The Age* (Melbourne) and *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney), and occupy a more centrist position. Nine also owns the one other national newspaper, *The Australian Financial Review*. This level of concentration has been met with long-standing policy and public concern in Australia, given "the capacity of media conglomerates to use their power across media to influence public opinion and to skew competition in their favour" (Papandrea & Tiffen, 2016, p. 726). While outside of the scope of the present research, therefore, this significant consolidation of media ownership raises concerns about the effects of such concentration on the development and unchallenged circulation of particular hegemonic narratives about Indigenous peoples.

The final section of this chapter presents an overview of media production and representation of Indigenous peoples in Australia. This begins with a discussion of mainstream

representations of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous-led protests, looking at how race structures normative representations of Indigenous people as deviant and deficient in the national imaginary. After this, the section attends to Indigenous-led media production, with an overview of interventions made by Indigenous media producers to engage in critical conversations about sovereignty, racism and colonisation across mainstream, alternative and social media. The section concludes with a brief overview of Australian mainstream media institutions' differential representations of Australian nationalism and Indigenous resistance on January 26.

Representing Indigenous peoples

As discussed earlier in the chapter, the structural relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers in Australia is based on a pathologizing racial regime of truth about the Indigenous Other. Relationships between knowledge, power and representation that solidified in the early days of British colonisation persist within the Australian mainstream media landscape, which has a long history of misrepresenting Indigenous peoples (Meadows & Molnar, 2002, p. 9). However, and per the shapeshifting nature of settler colonialism (L. B. Simpson, 2017, p. 46), these representations have modified over time to fit the nation's self-description as a multicultural yet "raceless" society (Nicoll, 2008, p. 59). Ultimately, this means that pejorative discussions about Indigenous peoples in Australian public discourse are now commonly "framed in terms of 'cultural dysfunction' rather than of racial inferiority" (Nicoll, 2008, p. 59). This discursive sleight of hand allows for the use of coded language to describe Indigenous people and communities as pathological not due to race but because of their failure to adhere to normative standards of white settler citizenship (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, pp. 154–155). The effects of colonisation and dispossession, such as poverty, poor health, and rates of incarceration, as well as Indigenous activism drawing attention to these issues, become reconfigured as evidence of Indigenous peoples' deficits with respect to the rest of the nation. This has consequences for broader understandings of Indigenous-settler political relationships, functioning as a tacit justification of Indigenous peoples' tenuous position in relation to the Australian settler polity (Muldoon & Schaap, 2012). Two key aspects of the representation of Indigenous peoples in mainstream Australian media are discussed below: the role of "deficit discourse" (Fforde et al., 2013, p. 162), and the question of inclusion of Indigenous voices and perspectives.

The circulation of deficit discourse about Indigenous peoples in the media, compounded by relationships between conservative media commentators and political figures, plays a role in reinvigorating colonial tropes of Indigenous dysfunctionality and passivity. Fforde et al. (2013, p. 162) define deficit discourse as “a mode of thinking, identifiable in language use, that frames Aboriginal identity in a narrative of negativity, deficiency and disempowerment.” Here, racial stereotyping continues to play a role in the construction of a regime of truth about the Indigenous other, reducing Indigenous peoples to an “exaggerated simplification” which becomes the “evidence” by which they are known (S. Hall, 2019d, p. 171). This regime of truth also includes settler assessments of Indigenous ‘authenticity’, where settlers police Indigenous identities and then make associated evaluations about the relative legitimacy of some Indigenous peoples’ political concerns (Maddison, 2013). The violence of representation surfaces in discourses of pathology characteristic of mainstream media reporting by publications such as *The Australian* and national broadcaster ABC leading up to and during the Northern Territory Intervention (hereafter, the Intervention) under former Prime Minister John Howard in 2007 (Nicoll, 2008). These representations led to disastrous political consequences, where the construction of remote Indigenous communities as a “theater of pathology” served to validate military intervention (Nicoll, 2008, p. 63). By amplifying erroneous government claims of child abuse in Indigenous communities, Nicoll (2008, pp. 57–58) argues that *The Australian* “effectively engage[d] readers possessive investments against Indigenous sovereignty claims”.

Mickler’s (2010, p. 2) comparative analysis of conservative reporting on Indigenous affairs in Canada and Australia similarly concludes that such commentary is “pivotal to the construction of public opinion, and therefore the political climate.” He notes that representations of Indigenous people as deficient involves the discursive conversion of Indigenous resistance to conditions of enforced poverty and marginalisation into radical separatism (Mickler, 2010, p. 8). During the Intervention, Indigenous people living in remote communities were subject to a range of derogatory characterisations: Indigenous men as sexually and physically violent, Indigenous women as incapable parents and the property of Indigenous men, and Indigenous children as neglected, abused and vulnerable (Mickler, 2010, p. 6; Moreton-Robinson, 2015, pp. 165–166; Nicoll, 2008). Through these sensationalist claims, the “theatrical production of Indigenous affairs” (Nicoll, 2008, p. 72) by media outlets such as *The Australian* legitimated government intervention and reiterated colonial assumptions about Indigenous dysfunction. In

this way, “rights of citizenship were deployed as weapons within the race war,” positioning social problems as “any forms of behavior that violate the norms of white civility” (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 160). The failure to amplify the voices of Indigenous people actually affected by the Intervention, or those who opposed it on the grounds of racial justice and human rights, indicates the extent to which feedback loops in political and media discourse can work to reinforce the oppression of Indigenous peoples.

When analysing mainstream media representations of Indigenous people, an important consideration is the extent to which Indigenous voices are incorporated into media narratives, and the nature of this inclusion when it occurs. Scholars have identified the role of journalists in mediating the voices of Indigenous people, noting their ability to either emphasise or minimise Indigenous peoples’ perspectives (McCallum et al., 2012, p. 106; Mesikämmen, 2013, 2016). Mesikämmen (2013) analysed media coverage of the first anniversary of the Intervention and identified that Indigenous people were variously afforded limited direct voice, mediated voice through the reporter or another source, or were denied a voice entirely. However, Indigenous affairs ministers and other government sources, as well as academic experts, were provided with much greater opportunity to provide unedited, directly attributed commentary on the Intervention (Mesikämmen, 2013, 2016). Mainstream Australian media also tends towards elevating the voices of select Indigenous figures who express support for Indigenous affairs policy changes. A key example is conservative Guugu Yimithirr lawyer Noel Pearson, who has been afforded significant media space via platforms including *The Australian* to champion paternalistic federal Indigenous affairs policy, including under the Howard government (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, pp. 162–163; Nicoll, 2008, p. 69; Waller & McCallum, 2016). Even in instances where more progressive Indigenous voices are granted space in mainstream reporting, however, the extent to which such voices might influence political decision-making is not guaranteed (Dreher et al., 2016).

Contributors to the edited volume *Does the media fail Aboriginal political aspirations?* (Thomas et al., 2019) have engaged some of the above-mentioned concerns, critically interrogating representations of Aboriginal standpoints and political aspirations in coverage of events including the presentation of the 1972 Larrakia Petition, the 1988 Barunga Statement, and the Uluru Statement from the Heart in 2017. Ultimately, they find a general failure of mainstream media to understand and faithfully represent political aspirations collectively articulated by Indigenous people, and therefore a failure to recognise Indigenous self-

determination (Thomas et al., 2019). While some rare cases were identified where mainstream Australian media was prepared to engage with Indigenous people as political equals, the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty and political agency was only consistently centred in Indigenous-produced media texts used to supplement the aforementioned analysis (Thomas et al., 2019). One media platform which has made a commitment to elevating Indigenous voices and engaging in progressive reporting on Indigenous rights issues in Australia is *The Guardian Australia*, which includes a collaboration with *IndigenousX* (discussed below) as well as through initiatives such as the 2018 ‘Deaths Inside’ and 2019 ‘The Killing Times’ projects, which involved dedicated coverage of Indigenous deaths in custody and massacres during the frontier wars respectively (Myers et al., 2021). However, *The Guardian* is an outlier in the mainstream Australian media landscape, and much of the explicitly politically engaged reporting on Indigenous affairs in the Australian media landscape continues to be primarily undertaken by Indigenous journalists and independent media producers. For the most part, Australia’s mainstream media continues to repeat problematic, simplistic representations of Indigenous peoples’ political aspirations, particularly when expressed through protest.

The trope of the ‘riot’ has been persistently applied in mainstream media to instances of Indigenous people resisting colonial violence, constructing protestors as irrational and without any discrete political motivations. Porter (2015, p. 297) suggests that characterising Indigenous peoples’ responses to violence as riotous may be explained by the fact that “moral panics ‘sell’” much better than stories about police brutality or colonisation—that is, the issues often sparking such protests. The Redfern and Palm Island uprisings, occurring in February and November of 2004 respectively, have both been subject to such framings, leading to critical analysis of media reporting on each event. The uprising in Redfern occurred after the death of 17-year-old Gamilaroi youth TJ Hickey, who was impaled on a fence as the result of a police pursuit. Technically a death in police custody, Hickey’s passing led to street protests by the Aboriginal community of Redfern, who have survived a long history of racist and violent policing (Birch, 2004). However, “mainstream media focused on the blameworthiness of the Indigenous ‘rioters’” (Anthony, 2011, p. 405), neglecting their grievances and representing Aboriginal people in Redfern as ignorant, dysfunctional and violent (Birch, 2004, pp. 19–20). Budarick (2011) conducted a comparative analysis of the *Koori Mail*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*’s coverage of the uprising, identifying that while the *Koori Mail* contextualised the events within broader histories of police intimidation and brutality and Indigenous experiences of socioeconomic deprivation, *The Daily Telegraph* valorised police

and chose to use racist stereotypes gesturing towards Indigenous peoples' lack of civility. *The Sydney Morning Herald* provided more context regarding long-standing grievances held by Indigenous people in Redfern against the police, but maintained the authority of the police and government and denounced the behaviour of the "rioters" (Budarick, 2011). The use of the riot trope again arose regarding the death of 36-year-old Palm Island man Mulrunji Doomadgee later that year. Mainstream media neglected the highly suspect circumstances of Doomadgee's death in police custody and instead categorised the Palm Island Aboriginal community's response as "an impulsive event that was incited by a 'mob' of rioters" (Anthony, 2011, p. 409). As Porter (2015, p. 294) notes, the choice to objectify and denigrate Indigenous people in the coverage of the Palm Island uprising both "create[d] suitable scapegoats and justify[d] the state's heavy-handed response."

In other instances of Indigenous-led resistance, protest events are framed by mainstream Australian media as farcical or disruptive, again with a lack of attention to the political demands being expressed. An example of this is media responses to Camp Sovereignty, which was set up by Indigenous activist group Black GST⁶ as part of demonstrations against the Melbourne Commonwealth Games in 2006 (Birch, 2018). Casey (2007, p. 80) argues that mainstream media portrayed Indigenous protestors through the use of "carnavalesque tropes" to "deny the authority of the protests". Some of these techniques are detailed by Birch (2018, p. 7), who critiques journalists from the *Herald Sun* and *The Age* for using thinly veiled racist insults, with the former arguing that the camp was unsightly, and the latter likening Camp Sovereignty to the "ghetto camp conditions surrounding Alice Springs." Right-wing conservative *Herald Sun* columnist Andrew Bolt went so far as to call protestors "eco ferals," "barbarians," "illegal campers" and referred to them as a "rabble" (Casey, 2007, p. 81). This derisive language frames protestors in binary opposition "to the subject, in this case the opposite of the citizen with rights, a voice and the authority to speak" which ultimately "represent[s] them as lacking a legitimate position from which to speak" (Casey, 2007, p. 80). In this way, representations of Indigenous protestors as unruly and undesirable through the use of racist tropes and neglect of political context allows mainstream media to undermine Indigenous claims to sovereignty without ever having to name them directly.

⁶ Standing for Genocide, Sovereignty, Treaty.

As has been discussed so far, the representation of Indigenous peoples and their varied political concerns is contingent on a complex interplay between institutional and political factors that structure dominant narrative formations about Indigenous people in mainstream media. However, as identified by Latimore and colleagues (2017), there remains the potential to re-assemble relations governing public representations of Indigenous people, including through engaging with Indigenous media innovations and with a wider range of Indigenous perspectives on social media to inform mainstream media reporting. The following section turns to a consideration of Indigenous-led media production and how a range of media platforms have been mobilised to resist and re-shape representations of Indigenous people.

Indigenous-led and community media interventions

While mainstream Australian media continues to provide limited opportunities for non-racist engagement with Indigenous people, the rise of the Indigenous and community media sectors over the latter half of the 20th century has presented alternative avenues for critical discussions about Indigenous rights and sovereignty. Community media in Australia refers to media platforms that are not commercially owned, covering print, online, radio and television media. Indigenous-led media production may occur either through independent Indigenous-owned platforms such as *IndigenousX* or the *Koori Mail*, particular programs on or contributions to output by community media organisations such as *The Black Block* show on 3CR and freelance journalism or commercial platforms such as *Guardian Australia*'s partnership with *IndigenousX* or the *Away!* program on *ABC Radio* (see also Dreher et al., 2016, p. 28). As Grieves-Williams (2020, p. 23) identifies, engaging in media production has provided an opportunity for Indigenous activists “to reinscribe the dominant colonialist tropes of laziness, backwardness, inferiority and frailty in the face of progress, to that of a proud people who had endured dispossession and segregation through inhuman and arguably illegal treatment.” This section reviews the contributions of Indigenous-led media production and its relationship to Indigenous activism, attending to both legacy and social media.

While Indigenous people have been producing and distributing independent media for over 180 years, formal acknowledgement of the Indigenous media sector in Australia only occurred in 2000 (Meadows & Molnar, 2002, p. 9). This media production has consistently had a strong connection with Indigenous activism (Langton & Kirkpatrick, 1979), with some of the earliest publications including *Abo Call*, published by Jack Patten of the Aborigines Progressive

Association for 6 months starting in April 1938 (Meadows & Molnar, 2002, p. 9), whose first edition included transcripts of speeches by Aboriginal activists on the 1938 Day of Mourning (Patten, 1938). Other Aboriginal activist organisations including the Aborigines Advancement League (later the Victorian Aborigines Advancement League) also produced community newsletters (Grieves-Williams, 2020, p. 23). Meadows and Molnar (2002, p. 10) identify a significant rise in the production of newsletters by Aboriginal land councils throughout the 1970s, which similarly circulated information relevant to the struggle for Aboriginal land rights. This coincided with the growth of Indigenous radio broadcasting from the early 1970s, both via community radio stations such as the path-breaking *Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association*, and later through the *ABC* and *SBS* (Meadows & Molnar, 2002, p. 11).

Burrows (2010, p. 37) notes that Indigenous media production across the 1960s to 1980s “not only kept Indigenous communities informed about the actions of organisations representing them by presenting Indigenous perspectives on various issues, but were also tools of resistance, empowerment and motivation.” One early example of the use of both independent media production and mainstream media engagement to advance activist goals is the role of Ngugi journalist John Newfong at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy. Newfong was the Embassy’s media strategist and supported it to receive widespread print, radio and television coverage, as well as engaging in lobbying of parliamentarians in the first few months after the Embassy was established (Grieves-Williams, 2020, p. 23). Newfong’s media advocacy and status as a journalist is linked to an issue that many Indigenous media producers across both mainstream and community media spheres face regarding balancing responsibilities to ethical reporting while also fielding challenges about objectivity (Burrows, 2018). Burrows (2018, p. 1128), in a study of Indigenous media producers’ navigation of tensions between professional and community responsibilities across Australia, Canada, Finland, Sweden and New Zealand, found that producers asserted the fact that “these media offer a counterbalance to mainstream media’s exclusion of Indigenous voices and to stereotypical, inaccurate and discriminatory coverage of Indigenous affairs.” Indigenous media producers were driven by both commitments to community as well as to challenging colonial representations of Indigenous peoples and the minimisation of their political struggles (Burrows, 2018).

The uptake of social media by Indigenous peoples in Australia over the past two decades has provided new opportunities for participatory media production, the real-time challenging of policy decisions and pejorative representations of Indigenous peoples, and fertile grounds for

activist organising. As Carlson (2013, p. 163) has found through her research on Aboriginal peoples' use of Facebook, "Aboriginal social network users do not necessarily take on an online identity that is somehow dislocated or removed from their offline identity"—rather, this offline identity strongly influences modes of self-representation and motivations for engagement in online communities. Importantly, Indigenous peoples' use of social media is frequently inflected by an acute awareness of the "settler gaze," which Carlson and Frazer (2020, p. 8) describe as a "digital panopticon." The ever-present potential for settler surveillance of Indigenous people online is thus a significant consideration when choosing to post explicitly activist content, requiring careful and intentional navigation about engagement with social media platforms and raising the stakes of self-representation. This echoes broader concerns about the power relations at play in mainstream media representations of Indigenous people, but is also a space where narratives can be productively contested.

The positive potential of social media engagement has been demonstrated through Indigenous peoples' development of online networks to critically interrogate the settler status quo, where "the social coalition afforded by Twitter and Facebook fosters communities of dissent that pose vital and often realtime challenge to existing social orders too often blindly reproduced by mainstream media" (Latimore, 2018, p. 51). One outcome of this is the development of new Indigenous-led media platforms, most prominently *IndigenousX*. *IndigenousX* was founded by Gamilaroi man Luke Pearson as a rotational curation Twitter account in 2012, providing a platform for both crucial "cultural interventions" about issues important to Indigenous people (Latimore, 2018, p. 52), as well as making a space for Indigenous people from different regions and backgrounds across Australia to tell their stories (Sweet et al., 2013, p. 105). It has since developed into a website which publishes written articles by Indigenous contributors, as well as a media consultancy and training organisation (IndigenousX, 2021). As mentioned above, *IndigenousX* has had a partnership with *Guardian Australia* since 2013 where *IndigenousX* Twitter account guest hosts have an opinion piece published on the *Guardian* website each week (Myers et al., 2021, p. 7).

Indigenous media production in the digital age also occurs beyond more traditional journalistic forms. Frazer and Carlson (2017) have analysed Indigenous peoples' production of memes as part of engagement in anti-colonial discourse, using the example of the Facebook page Blackfulla Revolution (2021). Such memes function as devices for collective identification and public pedagogy through their caricatures of colonial violence and white supremacy and by

enabling Indigenous social media users to actively engage in meaning production (Frazer & Carlson, 2017). There is also a close relationship between online and offline Indigenous activism, where anti-colonial social media activity translates into instances of physical resistance. For example, the creation and explosion of the #sosblakaustralia campaign by Sam Cook and Mitch Torres in opposition to the government's proposed forced closure of remote Indigenous communities in Western Australia led to mass mobilisation across Australian capital cities (Carlson & Frazer, 2016; Dreher et al., 2016, pp. 32–33). The relationship between online and offline Indigenous activism in Australia is arguably exemplified by the mass social media mobilisation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to protest 'Australia Day' celebrations on January 26 each year (though this is predated by the use of legacy media to rally protestors since at least the 1938 Day of Mourning).

Australian media and January 26

Macnamara and Crawford's (2010, 2013; Crawford & Macnamara, 2012) research on public relations and representation about Australia Day is particularly useful for understanding the relationship between media and politics for the purposes of the present investigation. The researchers track the development of the public relations industry in Australia alongside its use to influence nationalist sentiment and cultivate public investments in Australia Day, identifying active engagement by Australian nationalists and later the Australian government in "the creation and promotion of Australia Day" (Macnamara & Crawford, 2013, p. 305). Rather than being an "organic, spontaneous or straightforward social development," Australia Day is "the result of an active orchestrated campaign involving a range of public communication strategies, activities and tactics that fit within established descriptions of the practice of public relations" (Macnamara & Crawford, 2010, p. 10). Elsewhere, Crawford and Macnamara (2012, pp. 29–30) note that across the 19th century, media outlets rather than governments were actively involved in promoting January 26 as an occasion of national significance. They also identify close, durable relationships between the media and bodies tasked by government with organising anniversary celebrations such as the sesquicentenary and bicentenary as well as various Australia Day Councils at the federal and state/territory levels (Crawford & Macnamara, 2012, pp. 32–33). While public and media attention on the issue has waxed and waned over time, this long-standing public relations advocacy for positive reporting on Australia Day continues to inform contemporary coverage of the date. Representations of nationalism in media coverage of January 26 has also transformed in accordance with

previously discussed shifts in national identity construction towards multicultural inclusion (Macnamara & Crawford, 2010, pp. 9–10). The nature of the representational practices discussed so far also relate to the political orientations of particular news media outlets, which in Australia is further complicated by significantly concentrated media ownership.

While there has been extensive research on the representation of Indigenous peoples in Australian media, Indigenous-self representation in media, and some targeted analysis of Indigenous-led protest events, there is currently limited academic analysis on the relationship between Indigenous sovereignty and media representation on January 26. One important study is Meadows and Oldham's (1991) review of mainstream television media's coverage of the 1988 Bicentenary alongside Aboriginal programs on Brisbane's community radio station 4ZZZ. The authors identified that mainstream media engaged in fearmongering about the risk of Aboriginal violence at Bicentenary celebrations amplified through journalistic reliance on police information, even though the perceived threat of violence only arose because of a belief in racist stereotypes of Aboriginal people (Meadows & Oldham, 1991). When the feared violence failed to materialise, Aboriginal resistance to the Bicentenary was then "virtually eliminated from the news agenda" (Meadows & Oldham, 1991, p. 37). On the other side, coverage by Aboriginal radio programs charged mainstream media with "racism and sensationalism — which ultimately led to a boycott by march organisers of the Sydney-based media" (Meadows & Oldham, 1991, p. 32). This study is a valuable precursor to the present research, though it should be noted that the analysis therein occurred before the formal standardisation of January 26 as the national public holiday in 1994.

Since the Bicentenary protests, there has been some analysis of mainstream media coverage of official Australia Day celebrations such as Australia Day Live, identifying that this coverage neglects any mention of Indigenous protest or even critique of the day (Beer, 2009). As discussed previously, Crawford and Macnamara (2012; see also Macnamara & Crawford, 2010, 2013) have engaged in extensive research within the realm of public relations, theorising the construction of and consolidation over time of Australia Day as a highly mediated national holiday as an exercise in public relations, though with scant attention to Indigenous resistance. More recently, Cox and Kerr (2018) conducted an analysis of televised representations of January 26 in the wake of the 2016 decision by the City of Fremantle municipal council in Western Australia to change the date of national celebrations out of respect for Aboriginal people, finding that Indigenous media producers were far more likely to create nuanced pieces

engaging with Aboriginal critique of the celebration of invasion. Burgess, Bruns and Osman (2019) have also explored the impacts of academic contributions to public conversations about Australia Day, looking at how relevant articles published in *The Conversation*, an online platform translating scholarly work into a more broadly accessible format, related to Twitter and mainstream media discourse. Caple and Bednarek (2020) further investigated the construction of discourses around Australia Day across Australian newspapers and Instagram, finding clear evidence that media outlets sanctioned the use of ‘Australia Day’ as the dominant term to refer to the date as compared to the relatively rare use of ‘Invasion Day’. Elsewhere, Caple, Huan and Bednarek (2020) have applied corpus linguistics methods to analyse the discursive struggle around news media representations of Australia Day, though they do not draw broader conclusions about how this relates to Indigenous-settler political relations. Outside of academia, Arrernte blogger Celeste Liddle (2016, 2020, 2021) has engaged in extensive critical analysis of media representations of January 26. Liddle (2016, 2020) has repeatedly noted the tendency of mainstream media to downplay number of protesters by at least an order of magnitude, particularly in coverage of the Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane rallies. Liddle (2020) asserts that she is “convinced that the media don’t really want to report Invasion Day, as reminding the public to fear Indigenous people and our rights has been their practice for centuries now”.

Conclusion

The thesis investigation is framed by four key areas of literature: sovereignty, Australian nationalism, Indigenous resistance and media representation. Read together, these literatures build a justification for the approach taken in the research to situate representations of Indigenous-settler political contention in contemporary Australia in relation to the broader structural dynamics of ongoing settler colonialism. This chapter began with an exploration of different uses of the term sovereignty when applied to Indigenous peoples’ relational responsibilities and political struggles, comparing this to the establishment of the Australian settler state. The following section provided an overview of the emergence and transformation of Australian nationalism from its overt attachments to white Britishness to Australia’s present-day liberal multiculturalism. After this, the chapter explored Indigenous resistance and refusal with a focus on public demonstrations, engaging with concerns about the incompatibility between a colonial politics of recognition and the full expression of Indigenous sovereignties.

The final section began with a consideration of issues with media representation in Australia, looking at the creation and circulation of racist stereotypes of Indigenous deficit within mainstream media. This was followed by a brief consideration of alternative sites of media production either controlled or led by Indigenous people, and the possibilities that these spaces hold for more expansive political conversation.

Building on the insights into sovereignty, nationalism, resistance and representation discussed in this chapter, and particularly on the consistent issues of white possession and racial hierarchy, the next chapter presents the thesis' theoretical framework. This framework supports the analysis of Indigenous-settler political contention on January 26, 2020 with a focus on epistemology, meaning and colonial recognition.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The relationship between whiteness and knowledge is central to the assumed sovereignty of the Australian settler state and of the Australian nation more broadly conceived. In this thesis, this relationship is explored through a consideration of how whiteness and racial hierarchy operate at the level of knowledge production to structure media representations of Indigenous peoples' versus settler claims to sovereignty on January 26. As identified at the beginning of Chapter 1, there are clear differences between Indigenous peoples' claims to sovereignty, rooted in place-based relationality, and the racialised property logic underpinning the political authority of the Australian state. The latter operates through what Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 81) describes as the "possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty," reliant on a persistent disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty that continues to structure contemporary Indigenous-settler relations. Further, Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 110) notes that white possession operates "discursively within knowledge production through universals, dominant norms, values, and beliefs." This discursive operation is key to the present investigation, which does not seek to interrogate the comparative legitimacy of Indigenous peoples' versus Australian settlers' claims to sovereignty around January 26, 2020, but instead to look at how this political claim-making manifests in public discourse. Such an investigation necessitates attending to the way that certain political claims are *framed* as more or less legitimate. This includes instances where some political claims are presented as outside the realm of legitimate political contention altogether, while others are considered so fundamental to a nation's collective sense of self that they operate implicitly.

This chapter presents the theoretical framework underpinning the thesis, synthesising intellectual contributions from fields including critical Indigenous studies, political philosophy and cultural studies. The first section attends to epistemology, beginning with Michel Foucault's writing on knowledge, power and discourse and exploring Moreton-Robinson's (2015) engagement with this work in relation to the operation of white possession. This is read alongside Mills' (1997) writing on the racial contract, focusing on its associated racial hierarchy of knowledge and ideological reproduction over time. Attending to the ideological and epistemological features of the racial contract provides an insight into the selective production of both knowledge and ignorance in the Australian settler state. Strategies for

exploring the relationship between the epistemological operation of whiteness and the broader social formation of the contemporary Australian nation are further developed in the following section. This part of the framework draws on Stuart Hall's work on ideology, meaning and representation, identifying complementarities with Moreton-Robinson's use of Foucault for the present research. Of specific interest is Hall's engagement with and development of the work of Antonio Gramsci—in particular the notion of 'common sense'—as well as his approach to ideology, which Hall draws on and expands in relation to media representation. Gramscian 'common sense' is brought into conversation with Mark Rifkin's (2013, 2014) writing on 'settler common sense' as a phenomenon underpinning subconscious settler attachments to Indigenous land. The final component of the theoretical framework attends to questions of recognition and resistance, drawing first on Coulthard's (2014) *Red Skin, White Masks* to discuss the relationship between a colonial politics of recognition and the maintenance of status quo power relations. This last part of the chapter subsequently explores Indigenous theorising on resisting and refusing settler colonialism, supporting the thesis' engagement with expressions of sovereignty by Indigenous peoples both within and outside of mainstream media.

Epistemology

The question of epistemology is central to the current investigation into how political conflict and legitimacy are understood in relation to Australian settler colonialism. Exploring some of the ways that Indigenous peoples' versus settlers' claims to sovereignty are endorsed, disavowed, normalised or challenged in Australian media around January 26 requires taking a step back to look at the philosophy of knowledge underpinning normative understandings of Indigenous-settler relations. The way that we come to know the world and the resources available to us to interpret it are influenced by broader epistemic currents, which in the settler colonial case are inextricable from the constitution of white subjectivity and from global white supremacy. This section lays out the relationships between theories of discourse, knowledge and power, white possession, and white un/knowing via the racial contract, and their respective contributions to the thesis' analytic approach.

Discourse, knowledge and power

Michel Foucault's theorisation of the relationships between discourse, knowledge and power in society has been highly influential in the social sciences, and both directly and indirectly

informs the present investigation. Foucault's work can be broadly categorised into several phases, beginning with his early archaeological work on types of discourse or discursive formations, his later genealogical work, concentrating greater attention on the relationships between knowledge and power, and his final works on issues of ethics and morality (Fairclough, 1993, p. 39). Fairclough (1993, p. 49) identifies that Foucault's move from archaeology to genealogy incorporated a more in-depth analysis of power, shifting attention from discourse alone to a reading of discourse as "secondary to systems of power." Through this process of moving from archaeological to genealogical analysis, Foucault asserted that "meaning is not produced through the free play of signifiers alone, but signification is effected by power" (Olssen, 2003, p. 194). Beyond the deconstruction of literary texts, Foucault's approach incorporates an interest in the historical contingency of meaning and its mediation through relations between power and knowledge (Olssen, 2003, p. 195). The most significant contributions of Foucault's work to the present thesis are briefly outlined below, namely his mapping of the relationships between knowledges, power and discourses, and the notion of "regimes[s] of truth" (Foucault, 1980, pp. 131–132).

Foucault (2003, p. 29) identifies power as "something that circulates," something that "is exercised through networks" where individuals are "in a position to both submit to and exercise this power." Importantly, Foucault describes the existence of *relations* of power as opposed to the independent existence of power as such. Power is also not necessarily evenly distributed within a given society. Foucault (2003, p. 34) focuses his analysis on "techniques and tactics of domination," the ways that relations of power operate to constitute subjects. In his genealogical work, then, Foucault explores how the production of knowledge in society intersects with relations of power in the development of modes of social control and the production of certain types of individuals or behaviours as deviant. Knowledge is therefore instrumental for the exercise of "delicate mechanisms of power [which] cannot function unless knowledge, or rather knowledge apparatuses, are formed, organized, and put into circulation" (Foucault, 2003, p. 34). One of Foucault's key theoretical interventions is that knowledge and power are mutually implicated, and "that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault, 1984, p. 175). This formulation is particularly relevant in the study of settler colonial knowledge production, where colonisation involves processes of categorisation, othering and strategic exclusion or inclusion of Indigenous peoples by the settler state (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 110).

Foucault (2003, pp. 179–180) also describes the development of a hierarchy of knowledges through the Enlightenment period, where the emergence of positivism from a field of multiple knowledges was the product of state intervention. Other knowledges—what Foucault (2003, pp. 7–8) refers to as “subjugated knowledges”—were disqualified in relation to technical, positivist knowledge as insufficiently conceptual or scientific. In the settler colonial context, Indigenous knowledges may be considered within the realm of subjugated or disqualified knowledges, implicating this knowledge hierarchy in the creation of the nation as a white possession. The forceful assertion of western epistemic supremacy through intersecting notions of white personhood, ownership, property and international law laid the foundations for the appropriation of Indigenous lands (L. T. Smith, 2012, p. 67). This epistemic supremacy continues to function through the ongoing subjugation of Indigenous knowledges in contemporary settler states, as is explored through this thesis’ focus on the effects of Indigenous peoples both knowing about and expressing knowledge of persisting Indigenous sovereignties.

Building on the relationship between power and knowledge outlined above, Foucault asserts that power effects within a society manifest and circulate discursively as truths. The relationship between power, discourse and truth is identified by Foucault (2003, p. 24) as follows: “power cannot be exercised unless a certain economy of discourses of truth functions in, on the basis of, and thanks to, that power.” The additional consideration of truth provides an important complement to understanding how knowledge and power interact and function discursively to position and constrain subjects within a given society. As will be discussed later in the chapter, this discursive mode of operation is of central significance to Moreton-Robinson’s theorisation of the possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty. The role of discourse in positioning individuals and structuring social relations allows for the creation of Indigenous peoples first as *knowable* and then as *known* through a Manichaeian dichotomy with the colonist self (Fanon, 1963, p. 41). In this way, Indigenous peoples are constructed as un-knowing in themselves and as objects of knowledge within the racial hierarchy of knowledge production that enables and legitimises settler colonialism.

Foucault’s conceptualisation of a ‘regime of truth’ consolidates some of his earlier thinking on the relationship between truth and power-effects in society and presents an added layer of conceptual support for the present investigation. He writes:

Each society has its regime of truth, its “general politics” of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1980, p. 131)

Bringing together concerns about the operation of power and the social effects of knowledge, truth is here framed as a system for the creation, distribution and function of “statements,” integrally related to systems of power and power effects (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). Such regimes of truth structure the “conditions of possibility” of discourse—that is, what becomes possible and impossible to say and know in a particular society (Fairclough, 1993, p. 38). However, Foucault (1980, p. 132) also identifies that while such truth circulates broadly, it does not circulate uncontested—there is a constant “battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays.” Beyond identifying counterclaims on what is considered truth, this gestures towards epistemological conflicts over *how* something can be known to be true. Again, this has purchase in an analysis of the political relationship between Indigenous peoples and settler Australia, where epistemic hierarchy and settler claims to sovereignty circulate as discourses within the ‘truth’ of white supremacy, with attendant power-effects. Foucault’s (1980, p. 131) reference to the “‘political economy’ of truth” and general exploration of the function of truth in society has direct bearing on the thesis’ approach to unpacking media representations of Indigenous-led protest events and of Australian history and nationalism around January 26.

Foucault’s work on knowledge, power and discourse, particularly as expressed through the lecture series *Society Must Be Defended*, have significantly influenced Moreton-Robinson’s theorising of white possession and settler claims to sovereignty. This work by Moreton-Robinson forms a theoretical cornerstone of the current investigation, which is also supported by Foucault’s conceptual development of ‘regimes of truth’. However, it should be noted that there are some tensions between Foucault’s approach to studying power’s effects and the approach taken in this thesis. Foucault (2003, p. 34) is interested in a microphysics of power, privileging an analysis of power at the level of its effects rather than at the abstract level of grand, systemic theory, and in particular eschewing the notion of ideology. He instead emphasises the congruence and consolidation of various direct effects of power into broader orientations that can then be read in relation to political and economic functions in a given

society at a given time (Foucault, 2003, p. 32). However, the analytic approach taken in this research is, while partially theoretically indebted to Foucault, also informed by more structuralist analyses of the operation of power and domination at the societal level. This is particularly important given the thesis' requirement for a more robust analysis of the relationships between race, power and sovereignty within a settler colonial context than that provided by Foucault alone. In this regard, the theoretical contributions of Moreton-Robinson, especially as published in *The White Possessive*, situate an adaptation of Foucault's work in conversation with critical scholarship on race, Indigenous studies and feminism.

White possession

Moreton-Robinson's work on white possession has become a mainstay in critical Indigenous studies and provides foundational support to the thesis' analysis of investments in Australian settler colonialism. The present investigation is indebted to Moreton-Robinson's attention to relations between property, possession and settlers versus Indigenous peoples' subjectivity under settler colonialism, as well as to the operation of white possession within and beyond formal institutions of the state. White possession traces its conceptual lineage back in large part to critical Black scholarship from the United States concerned with the roles of whiteness, power, ideology and hegemony in the discordance between formal, legal racial equality and ongoing structural oppression (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, pp. 52–54). Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 53) builds in particular on critical legal scholar Cheryl Harris' (1993) influential essay 'Whiteness as Property', which outlines the historical development of property rights in white identity and cultural practices in the United States as enabled by the dispossession of Indigenous lands and the enslavement of Africans. Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 53) identifies the relative uniqueness of Harris' work (at the time of writing) in directly acknowledging the relationship between primary instances of Indigenous dispossession and the development of whiteness as property. However, she notes Harris' under-theorising of how Indigeneity and conditions of settler colonialism continue to shape whiteness (see also Bruyneel, 2021, p. 8). Elsewhere, Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 152) draws attention to the importance of a race-based analysis of Australian nationhood and settler anxiety, stating that "race indelibly marks the politics of possessive investments in patriarchal white sovereignty." This gestures towards the utility of white possession as an analytic tool to explore both the legal aspects of settler colonialism as well as broader social and cultural concerns, with these latter issues being of particular relevance to the thesis.

In 'The Legacy of Cook's Choice', Moreton-Robinson (2015, pp. 110–114) provides an in-depth elaboration of the relationships between white possession, subjectivity and settler colonialism through the vector of James Cook. The emergence of white possession is located at the "transition from feudalism to modernity, which precipitated the emergence of a new white subject in history in Britain" (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 113). Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 113) identifies that by the late 1700s, major reforms that took place across the realms of law, society, the economy and politics resulted in a fundamental change in the nature of relations between persons and property, resulting in the emergence of "a new white property-owning subject." Of critical significance here is the relationship between property ownership and the development of a shared understanding of property in oneself, or self-possession. Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 113) identifies possession in the "realm of intrasubjectivity" as "control over one's being, one's ideas, one's mind, one's feelings, and one's body," while in the intersubjective realm, possession involves ownership of "something that is beyond the subject, and in other contexts it can refer to a state of being possessed by another." Further, and clearly informed by the work of Foucault previously discussed, Moreton-Robinson (2015, pp. 113–114) characterises white possession as operating "socio-discursively." To name its operation as discursive is to identify the way that white possession comes to bear on the construction of knowledge and meaning in Europe and Britain, and through imperial expansion, to form the foundation of settler colonial societies.

The role of white possession in defining and objectifying Indigenous peoples and in constituting settler subjectivity is central to the present inquiry into contested claims to sovereignty. As discussed in Chapter 1, Cook's claiming of the east coast of Australia on behalf of the British Crown was informed by the circulation of discourses of racial hierarchy prior to his departure from England. Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 114) therefore argues that Cook's deployment of a "racialized discourse to mark the Indigenous Other as will-less and black" produced "through knowledge a subject of his own making, one he interprets for himself," and one that is denied political capacity. This negation of Indigenous will and sovereignty "violates the subjectivity of Indigenous people by obliterating any trace of [their] ontological and epistemological existence", thereby representing and discursively constituting Indigenous peoples as "white epistemological possessions" (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 114). The construction of the Indigenous Other as a category to be known rather than the source of legitimate knowledge directly facilitated the brutal colonisation of the Australian continent (see

L. T. Smith, 2012, pp. 57–58). Cook’s choice to ignore Indigenous will and sovereignty and instead fix Indigenous peoples within a “state of nature” functioned as a justification for colonial possession via the legal fiction of *terra nullius* (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 114), laying the foundations for the constitution of the Australian nation as a white possession. Through the exercise of positioning and producing the will-less Indigenous Other, Cook as a white, free and will-full subject, was therefore able to take possession of the east coast of Australia (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 114). This original act of ontological and epistemological violence is maintained and reproduced into the present through settler colonialism’s structural orientation towards the elimination of Indigenous peoples (Wolfe, 2006).

The discussion so far has demonstrated some of the flexibility of white possession as a concept, considering its capacity to refer to relations of ownership, occupation, accumulation, or domination as predicated on the possessive individualism of the white subject (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 113). The flexibility and discursive operation of white possession are key features in its conceptual relevance for the present analysis of contested claims to sovereignty as represented in Australian media around January 26. While this topic may seem somewhat abstract compared to critical analyses of whiteness, property and possession in the legal system, the relationship that Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 139) draws between these same issues in the broader realm of knowledge production gestures to the way that possessive investments in the Australian settler state serve to legitimise legal and political decisions that entrench the status of “the nation as a white possession”. This property relationship undergirds the state’s claim to sovereignty, with Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 139) describing “sovereignty within Australian modernity [as] both white and patriarchal” and as both “constraining and enabling” in its operation as a “regime of power.” Returning to Foucault’s work on knowledge, power and subjectivity, this indicates that patriarchal white sovereignty operates in the Australian settler state to shape and position subjects within a gendered and racialised hierarchy which is able to both confer privileges and restrict possibilities for individuals (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 139).

The “possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty” is intimately connected to the appropriation of the nation as a white possession, with “logic” referring to an overarching orientation towards the reproduction of white supremacy as a core feature of the settler colonial status quo (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 81). This speaks to the way that access through

citizenship to the privileges conferred by patriarchal white sovereignty creates investments at the individual and collective level in maintaining a system that upholds such privileges. It also suggests that sovereign settler subjectivity may be considered an identity category that *implies* a political claim to the nation as a white possession by virtue of its constitution in relation to the settler colonial nation state (Rowe & Tuck, 2017, p. 9). The operation of whiteness at the epistemic level works to naturalise this claim by making invisible the racial hierarchy, land theft and ongoing violence enabling the existence of the Australian settler state. As Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 81) puts it, the possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty is “operationalized to circulate sets of meanings about white ownership of the nation as part of commonsense knowledge, decision making, and socially produced conventions.” This is what Moreton-Robinson (2004, pp. 75–76) has elsewhere characterised as whiteness operating as “an epistemological *a priori*,” that is, “a way of knowing and being that is predicated on superiority, which becomes normalised and forms part of one’s taken-for-granted knowledge.” Attending to whiteness as an epistemological *a priori* forms a core part of the present investigation into expressions and representations of contested claims to sovereignty in Australia. The thesis’ investigation of the epistemological operation of whiteness in relation to political claim-making and possibilities is also significantly supported by Mills’ (1997) work on the production and circulation of knowledge associated with the racial contract, which is explored next.

White un/knowing

As discussed in Chapter 1, Charles W. Mills’ (1997) theorisation of the racial contract reveals the racial hierarchy that sits beneath the voluntaristic and egalitarian surface of the ‘social contract’ in societies structured by white supremacy. Mills’ (1997, pp. 13–14) comparison between the classical neutral conception of the social contract and actual conditions of racial domination within polities such as the United States explicates the central role of race in both shaping western liberal ideals and differentially privileging white citizens. Importantly, this work identifies whiteness as “a set of power relations” rather than a colour or inherent characteristic fixed to a particular social group (Mills, 1997, p. 127). Mills (1997, p. 13) explores the establishment of the racial contract as reliant on a hierarchy of being that affords different value to white and non-white life and cognition, such that the full personhood of the former and degrees of partial personhood afforded to various non-white peoples maps onto their assumed political potentialities. Ultimately, the racial contract is established “between

those categorized as white *over* the nonwhites, who are thus the objects rather than the subjects of the agreement” (Mills, 1997, pp. 11–12). This is consistent with the accepted source of legitimacy of the social contract in the Lockean/Kantian sense, which hinges on voluntaristic and consensual association between (a select group of) individuals. Non-white peoples’ consent to the contract is considered irrelevant on the basis of their assumed cognitive inferiority. Mills’ (1997, p. 83) identification of the non-neutrality of the racial contract reveals that conformity to the terms of this contract must then be *enforced* upon those excluded from it, given that this group of persons “will obviously have no reason to accept these terms voluntarily.” Therefore, the racial contract operates as a domination contract at the core of racial states.

Mills (1997, p. 18) also identifies that the racialised nature of the contract is rendered invisible through an “epistemology of ignorance” that results in parties to the contract internalising the fiction of race neutrality, despite the material existence of a white norm. This obfuscation is described in terms of a “racialized moral psychology” associated with the racial contract, which results in white people “act[ing] in racist ways *while* thinking themselves as acting morally” (Mills, 1997, p. 93). The cognitive norms of the racial contract therefore operate to produce specific forms of both knowledge *and* ignorance, where the creation of knowledge about a society as racially neutral is contingent on the erasure of knowledge about the exclusionary nature of the contract. Closely related to the epistemological operation of the racial contract is Mills’ identification of its enforcement through ideological conditioning. Considering that there is a need to secure white participation and to subjugate non-whites under the racial contract, Mills (1997, p. 89) states that “racism as an ideology needs to be understood as aiming at the minds of nonwhites as well as whites.” While Mills (1997, p. 89) identifies more overt expressions of non-white internalisation of the contract through “self-loathing and racial deference to white citizens,” this should also be understood as operating in subtler forms, including through engagement with mechanisms of inclusion that do not disrupt the foundational hierarchy of the racial state. Of concern is the way that this ideological coercion functions to win the ‘consent’ of non-whites who are afforded partial or conditional inclusion into the polity.

There is clear resonance between Mills’ description of white ignorance as part of the racial contract and Moreton-Robinson’s discussion of whiteness as an epistemological *a priori*, and indeed Moreton-Robinson has at times drawn directly on the racial contract in her analysis of

settler colonialism in Australia. In the Australian settler state, Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 54) notes the role of white possession in producing the racial contract “as a regulatory ideal,” referring to the normative power of this political system. The socio-discursive operation of white possession allows for a subtextual circulation of the terms of the racial contract as part of a shared stock of common knowledge in the Australian polity. As discussed previously, this enables, constrains and disciplines subjects within the polity, implicating white and non-white settlers and Indigenous people in different ways (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 54). However, the shift in framings of Australian national identity over the past few decades and embrace of the rhetoric of multiculturalism and liberal inclusion has functioned, along with the racial contract’s epistemology of ignorance, to further obscure structural racism and the fundamental issue of Indigenous dispossession. This shift has entrenched the pretension “that nonwhites *are* equal abstract persons who can be fully included in the polity merely by extending the scope of the moral operator, without any fundamental change in the arrangements that have resulted from the previous system of explicit de jure racial privilege” (Mills, 1997, p. 75). Mills (1997, p. 125) notes that the normative consideration of multiculturalism as “mutual misconceptions resulting from the clash of cultures” does nothing to disrupt the foundation of the contract, and instead “take[s] place within a conventional, if expanded, framework.” The ideological mystification of the contract’s racial hierarchy thus presents a constant source of frustration to non-white people, who find themselves unable to attain full equality despite their most rigorous adherence to its ideals. In the Australian settler colonial context, this reveals a fundamental limitation faced by Indigenous peoples in playing by the rules of the contract in pursuit of justice, given that the very existence of the settler state is predicated on the negation of Indigenous personhood.

Mills’ work sketches out the realm of legitimate political claim-making within societies structured in racial dominance, showing that political discourse is restricted by the terms of the racial contract. This contract, far from embodying the abstract ideals of classic liberalism, brackets out certain categories of person from participation in the political consensus, and by virtue of this bracketing negates or diminishes their legitimacy as political agents. The knowledge economy of the racial contract also presents the contract as eternal and its ideals as the horizons of moral and political possibility. In order to challenge the white supremacy of the racial contract, Mills (1997, p. 119) identifies the importance of “cognitive resistance,” encouraging opposition against its “epistemic hegemony.” While I am not wholly convinced by Mills’ (1997, p. 129) choice to withhold critique of the ideals of contractarianism, the

theoretical approach of the thesis is significantly influenced by Mills' interrogation of the epistemological and ideological operation of the racial contract as a domination contract underpinning contemporary racial polities.

This section of the chapter has explored theoretical interventions on the circulation of knowledge, power, and truth and their specific racialised quality in the settler colonial context. These concerns are succinctly woven together with particular relevance to the thesis in a question posed by Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 131) in her essay 'Towards a new research agenda?', within which she identifies the urgent need for further sociological investigation into settler colonialism in Australia. Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 131) asks:

to what extent does White possession circulate as a regime of truth that simultaneously constitutes White subjectivity and circumscribes the political possibilities of Indigenous sovereignty. How does it manifest as part of common-sense knowledge, decision-making and socially produced conventions and signs?

This question has significantly influenced the aims of the thesis, which draws on the theoretical contributions outlined so far to explore the representation of Indigenous peoples' versus settlers' claims to sovereignty around January 26. Foucault's work on how knowledge production intersects with power to elevate certain statements to the level of social truths supports an analysis of media discourse to unpack both explicit and implicit political claims to sovereignty and their associated referential architectures. The thesis is significantly indebted to Moreton-Robinson and Mills' interrogation of a racialised, Eurocentric hierarchy of knowledge that facilitates Indigenous dispossession and allowed for the Australian colonies to be established as racial polities, and later consolidated as a racial state. While Mills' and Moreton-Robinson's references to the ideological nature of both the racial contract and white possession provide useful starting points for identifying the schematic and orienting features of white supremacy, the thesis' approach is also reliant on a more in-depth exploration of ideology through the work of Stuart Hall. Hall's analysis of media representation and meaning and their relationships to political domination are discussed next.

Media and meaning

This thesis draws on contributions from a range of scholars who may be broadly situated within the critical tradition, approaching their work with the aim of understanding and transforming conditions of domination in society. For the purpose of the current investigation, one of the most important theorists working in this wider field is cultural theorist Stuart Hall, who applies this criticality to the analysis of processes of mass communication. Hall was a founding member of the New Left and involved in the highly influential Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Grossberg, 1996, p. 152). His work extends beyond simplistic analyses of media influence as reflecting “an achieved [social] consensus” and unidirectional understandings of media communication, and as such is particularly relevant for the present thesis (S. Hall, 1982, p. 57). Building on the work of Marxist theorists including Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser and Valentin Vološinov, Hall (1982) has made significant contributions to theorising processes of ideological reproduction and contestation through institutions of mass communication, linking these to the dominance and naturalisation of particular social formations (see also S. Hall, 2019c). Building on and complementing some of the discussion so far on knowledge, power and truth, Hall’s work incorporates features of both a poststructural semiotic analysis (focusing on media discourse) as well as components of Western Marxist critical theory (Grossberg, 1996, p. 153). This section addresses three contributions of Hall’s work most relevant to the present research, namely, his theoretical approaches to ideology, common sense—here brought into conversation with Rifkin’s work on settler common sense—and representation as sites of struggle. Before turning to these specific areas, however, it is worth briefly attending to Hall’s writing on meaning.

As has been discussed across the chapter so far, the present research is interested in how knowledge, power and communication interrelate to normalise and reproduce systems of domination. Hall’s (1982, p. 63, emphasis in original) work has been fundamental to the thesis in this regard, as he emphasises the importance of understanding “meaning [as] a social production, a practice”—the world is not inherently meaningful but is “*made to mean*” through language and signification. This gestures to the fact that there are multiple ways by which things can be made to mean, and therefore multiple possibilities for how phenomena can be interpreted. In his writing on the construction of political deviance in media discourses, Hall (1971, p. 44) delves into the signification of processes and events as deviant in relation to the dominant political consensus, attending to the “ideas, values and attitudes” that inform this

meaning-making. Describing these as the “‘inferential normative structures’ of social life,” Hall (1971, pp. 44–45) identifies that even where frameworks of meaning are widely shared, they are not universally accepted or understood, and their relevance to particular groups is contingent on such groups’ socio-political locations. Nonetheless, these “maps of meaning,” echoing the previous discussion of epistemological features of the racial contract, provide the interpretive resources for individuals to understand and connect events within the broader landscape of “social reality” (S. Hall, 1971, p. 45). Crucially, Hall (1982, p. 65) identifies that “the power to signify is not a neutral force in society,” but rather that signification is always contested. There is a struggle over signification because “it is the means by which collective social understandings are created - and thus the means by which consent for particular outcomes can be effectively mobilised” (S. Hall, 1982, p. 65). This supports the thesis’ core aim in assessing the relationships between knowledge, power and representation, given their influence on the way that members of a given society come to understand and respond to particular phenomena. For Hall, a key aspect of analysing cultural signification involves attending to the ideological dimension of discourse, to which the discussion now turns.

Ideology

Hall’s explanation of the relationship between ideology and meaning-making provides invaluable guidance for the critical interpretation of media texts due to his attention to the systemic nature of ideological reproduction. Ideology is characterised as “a system of coding reality” rather than a “determined set of coded messages,” making it “‘autonomous in relation to the consciousness or intention of its agents’” (Veron, 1971, p. 68, cited in Hall, 1982, p. 67). Hall (1982, p. 65) argues that the emergence of a hegemonic form of signification of specific events, groups or phenomena relies on an “ideological power: the power to signify events in a particular way.” Therefore, the politics of signification are directly related to an ideological struggle over the power to define, a power which allows certain constructions of meaning to achieve the status of common shared understanding in a society. This is not located at the level of the individual but instead is a “social practice,” and Hall (2019a, p. 315) emphasises that “ideologies are not simply the “false understandings” of individuals; nor can the individual subject be conceptualized as the source or author of ideology.” The social aspect of this selective knowledge production is of fundamental importance to the thesis, as it shifts the conversation away from a focus on individual responsibility to look at the structural forces at play in the construction of meaning within a given society. This allows for a more nuanced

assessment of mainstream media representations of and commentary on Indigenous people, and of the different ways that Indigenous speakers locate themselves in relation to the Australian state and polity. Importantly, while it does not deny the possibility of intentional expressions of racism in the media, an ideological analysis locates mainstream media coverage of Indigenous people within a system that is built upon the racial contract, inflecting both knowledge production and subject formation.

Discussing the difference between his approach to critical inquiry and that of Foucault, Hall identifies what he calls “the ideological effect,” that is, “the question of the relative power and distribution of different regimes of truth in the social formation at any one time—which have certain effects for the maintenance of power in the social order” (Grossberg, 1986, p. 49). While Hall has mounted several critiques against Foucault’s attention to a microphysics of power and disavowal of an ideological analysis, in practice both theorists’ approaches to knowledge and power are not wholly incongruous, notwithstanding the structuralist current in Hall’s work (see Fiske, 1996; Grossberg, 1996). Hall’s ideological analysis extends Foucault’s poststructural approach through the identification of both dominant *and* subordinated regimes of truth operating within different epistemes. This has significant implications for the analysis of Indigenous-settler political relations in Australia, allowing settler colonial claims to sovereignty to be characterised as operating as or within a dominant regime of truth, while the expression of Indigenous sovereignties against the state circulate as a subordinated regime of truth (Grossberg, 1986, pp. 48–49). As Hall (2019b, pp. 269–270, emphasis in original) puts it, “there remains a *dominant cultural order*, though it is neither univocal nor uncontested,” and this order is directly related to the mapping of “*dominant or preferred meanings*” which “have the institutional /political/ideological order imprinted in them and have themselves become institutionalized.” Integrating insights from Mills’ discussion about epistemic resistance against the racial contract, this then indicates that while the contract may impose artificial limitations on political possibilities, these are always able to be contested and events and phenomena re-signified in a different way.

To summarise, per Gramsci (as cited in S. Hall, 2019a, p. 320), the work of ideology is “structural and epistemological” in nature. The ideological operation of whiteness as an epistemological *a priori* (Moreton-Robinson, 2004) shapes our ability to interpret and understand history and politics in particular ways. This falls within what Simpson (2020, p. 690) refers to as the “material and semiotic structure and force” formed by the political order

of settler colonialism “to disappear those who cannot be used to the ends of land and capital accumulation.” Indigenous personhood, political capacity and knowledges are “ontologically incommensurate” with the possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty identified by Moreton-Robinson (2020, p. 266), and thus come to be signified as subordinate or relegated to the realm of the un-thought in the settler state.

Common sense

Another key contribution of Hall’s work is the integration of Gramsci’s writing on common sense into an analysis of dominant media representations. This theorising builds on Gramsci’s reference to common sense as an “inventory of traditional ideas” providing us “with the taken-for-granted elements of our practical knowledge” (S. Hall, 1982, p. 69). Hall (1982, pp. 72–73) notes the link between ideological discourses and the notion of common sense, writing that “in referencing, within its system of narration ‘what was already known’, ideological discourses both warranted themselves in and selectively reproduced the common stock of knowledge in society.” This self-referential process facilitates the development of dominant discourses and attaches preferred meanings to particular social phenomena, which acquire, through “repetition, and by the weight and credibility of those who propose or subscribe it, the warrant of ‘common sense’” (S. Hall, 1982, p. 77). Understanding ideology as a grammar allows for a critical analysis of the reproduction of common sense framings of social issues, and more broadly, of the very terms of debate within which such issues are defined. This conceptualisation of common sense is therefore particularly useful for interrogating normative investments in the Australian settler state, as will be discussed in detail later in the chapter.

The operation of whiteness as an epistemological *a priori* underpinning the “dominant cultural order” of the Australian settler state also means that an implied racial hierarchy inflects the development and consolidation of background taken-for-granted or common sense knowledge (S. Hall, 2019b, p. 269). This then bears on the interpretation of phenomena by individuals acculturated within and attuned to this dominant cultural order. Returning to the epistemological aspect of the racial contract, Hall, Massey and Rustin (2015, p. 14) identify that “every social settlement, in order to establish itself, is crucially founded on embedding as common sense a whole bundle of beliefs - ideas beyond question, assumptions so deep that the very fact that they *are* assumptions is only rarely brought to light.” Therefore, the racial hierarchy of the Australian settler state becomes obscured in public discourse, where the

subordination of Indigenous people and the voiding of Indigenous sovereignty becomes normalised as ‘just the way things are’. This is not something that can be challenged within the terms of the contract because, as Hall (2019a, p. 310, emphasis in original) puts it, “you cannot learn, through common sense, *how things are*: you can only discover *where they fit* into the existing scheme of things.” Instead, challenging the epistemological hegemony of the racial contract means that “one has to think *against the grain*” in an active and ongoing process of epistemic resistance (Mills, 1997, p. 119, emphasis in original).

Hall’s exploration of common sense can be brought into productive conversation with another approach to this concept from within the field of settler colonial studies, that of Mark Rifkin on ‘settler common sense’. In his essay ‘Settler common sense’, Rifkin (2013, p. 322) presents an analysis of the way that “settler coloniality comes to be lived as the self-evident conditions of possibility for (settler) being”. He identifies ‘settler common sense’ as “the ways [that] the legal and political structures that enable non-Native access to Indigenous territories come to be lived as given, as simply the unmarked, generic conditions of possibility for occupancy, association, history and personhood” (Rifkin, 2013, pp. 322–323). Rifkin (2014, pp. 9–10) develops this understanding about settler colonialism as the taken-for-granted background to the everyday lives of individual settlers in relation to cultural theorist Raymond Williams’ writing on the notion of “lived hegemony.” Williams, one of Stuart Hall’s interlocutors at the Birmingham Centre, drew on Gramsci to develop an understanding of hegemony that extended beyond theoretical approaches overemphasising its static and totalising nature. Instead, Williams (1977, pp. 112–113) states that “a lived hegemony is always a process,” a manifestation of complex, intersecting forces that “does not just passively exist as a form of dominance” but “is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not all its own.” Rifkin (2014, p. 10) underscores the importance of this processual approach in his writing on settler common sense, drawing on Williams’ work on hegemony to explore how settler governance is reproduced through time in a way that is neither explicit nor programmatic, but instead lived as a background to everyday experience by individual settlers.

The theoretical affinities between Hall’s work on common sense and Rifkin’s on settler common sense are relatively clear, given their shared lineage via the application of Gramsci’s thinking in cultural studies. However, while Hall engages common sense at the level of the ideology and representation with attention to processes of encoding in mass communication, Rifkin approaches common sense at the level of settler embodiment. This involves specific

attention to both the processual reproduction of settler colonialism and to the everyday, affective nature of settler investments in the nation as a white possession. Actors engaged in these processes are not always directly conscious of their reproduction of settler colonial hegemony, but nonetheless articulate themselves in a way that is ideologically grammatical within a normative framing of settler sovereignty and Australian nationhood. Reading these two analyses of common sense in parallel provides some insights into the multiple and interrelated levels at which settler colonialism becomes normalised, with settler sovereignty becoming part of the taken-for-granted background of both media production and settler attachments to Indigenous land. This supports the thesis' investigation of public discourse on Indigenous-settler relations around January 26, particularly when looking at how sentiments expressed by individual settlers about national identity and history are both articulated and positioned within media texts.

Representation

Far from emerging into being as a coherent and pre-constituted entity, the Australian nation is the product of an unstable political consensus which must be continually re-made and discursively legitimised. Hall (2017, p. 143) asserts that nations are in constant processes of formation and transformation and that “modern nation-states have complex histories that are always crosscut by internal differences that come to be unified only by the exercise of cultural power.” The exercise of this power is further complicated in the case of settler colonial states, where the disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty operates as a central but often neglected factor “shaping the terms and conditions of the very making of the nation” (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 101). Therefore, efforts to approach congruence between the political and the cultural require “an ongoing process of representation” (S. Hall, 2017, p. 143). This processual constitution of national identities in general maps onto the operation of settler colonialism as a structure made up of processes, such that both colonisation and the nation are not complete but constantly being transformed and re-made over time, as well as constantly resisted (L. B. Simpson, 2017, p. 46). In the realm of mass communication, this translates into ongoing struggle over meaning and representation.

Along with politicians and “agents or representatives of the agencies of face-to-face control,” Hall (1971, p. 20) identifies the mass media as one of the “agencies for the definition of political reality.” These three agencies have a dominant, collective influence over what Hall (1971, p.

20) describes as “emergent ‘common sense’ definitions” of political deviance, and while not necessarily sharing the same perspective on political deviance, tend to group together by virtue of having shared, vested interests in a political consensus that reflects and ensures their dominance. The power of the media to secure consent to the dominant political consensus lies in the fact that while their interests are “articulated to the production and reproduction of dominant ideologies... their claim to be independent of the direct play of political or economic interests, or of the state, is not wholly fictitious” (S. Hall, 1982, p. 82). However, by framing particular forms of political expression as aberrant, or indeed, outside the realm of what can be considered political activity, the mass media has a role in consolidating the hegemony of the dominant consensus. In the case of Australia, this broadly means the allegiances of political actors, state and non-state agencies, and the media to the racial contract underpinning the settler state. As noted in the previous chapter, there are strong affinities between Australian media platforms and both political and economic interests, and this is heightened through consolidated media ownership which undermines competition and restricts the diversity of media narratives.

Nonetheless, Hall’s writing on the function of media agencies in relation to the prevailing political consensus is useful for the present analysis, particularly in understanding representations of political opposition to the status quo. In his essay ‘External Influences on Broadcasting,’ Hall (2019c, p. 286) lists “balance, impartiality, objectivity, professionalism, and consensus” as “the central concepts which mediate broadcasting’s relationship to the power-ideology complex.” Questions of balance, impartiality and consensus are of specific interest to the thesis, given that the political conflict expressed around January 26 can be considered synecdochical for Indigenous-settler political relations within a nation that largely defines itself as multicultural and egalitarian. On the question of balance, Hall (2019c, p. 287 emphasis in original) identifies that balance is presented “*within a given structure*” such that the prevailing political order is shown to be open to alternative perspectives while at the same time delegitimising the political content of opposing “points of view.” This is closely related to mainstream media approaches to impartiality. Here, the representation of controversy involves the production of a “false symmetry of issues” where while two sides of a situation are presented, they are often presented as equivalent concerns with no deeper consideration of “the quite unequal relative weights of each case for each side in the real world” (S. Hall, 2019c, p. 288). Conflict over the nature of the political consensus is therefore predominantly signified within the boundaries of the current system. Finally, the notion of consensus itself is relevant

to the thesis, given the tendency by media agencies to appeal to ‘public opinion’ to legitimate the status quo. Hall (2019c, pp. 292–293) explains that this occurs in the face of genuine political conflict, where media agencies refer to “changing public feeling on an issue... as an alternative source of legitimacy, an alternative court of appeal, to that of the established sources.” However, both the fluid nature of the consensus in practice and the manoeuvres of political elites to both invoke and pre-structure the political consensus through their privileged role as commentators in public discourse means that appeals to public opinion largely serve to reproduce the consensus, or to only indicate marginal shifts relative to it (S. Hall, 2019c, p. 293).

This section has identified the usefulness of Stuart Hall’s theoretical development of ideology and common sense as they relate to practices of representation in mass communication. It is clear that this work can be brought into productive conversation with theoretical interventions discussed across the chapter so far, including regimes of truth, the epistemological operation of white possession and the racial contract. Hall’s work on common sense is also usefully considered alongside different approaches to this concept that draw from a similar theoretical lineage, in this case the work of Rifkin on settler common sense. Taken together, these analyses of common sense provide the tools to assess the reproduction of the settler state through both the possessive logic of settler institutions and individual settlers’ affective attachments. Understanding the circulation of racialised ‘truths’ in the Australian settler state and how they work to structure dominant media narratives is foundational for the thesis’ investigation of expressions and representations of contested claims to sovereignty on January 26. Looking at the different ways that Indigenous-led protest actions and settler attachments to the nation are signified in mainstream media requires a theoretical approach that is able to provide insights into the ideological features of settler colonialism and the way that political legitimacy is secured and maintained. However, the thesis is interested in Indigenous peoples’ assertions of sovereignty around January 26 both within *and* outside of mainstream media representations as well as how these relate to concerns about the purpose and logic of reproducing the political consensus underpinning Australian settler colonialism. Therefore, the theoretical framework also incorporates approaches that support an analysis of these issues, with particular attention to the colonial politics of recognition and to processes of Indigenous refusal and resurgence.

Against recognition

Colonisation has always been resisted by Indigenous peoples, against and in spite of the logic of possession that orients settler colonial reproduction. Such resistance is expressed discursively and non-discursively, in ordinary and extraordinary ways. Public, organised protests against the Australian settler state on January 26 by Indigenous peoples represent just one instance of overlap between discursive and non-discursive practices of resistance. This thesis primarily focuses on discursive expressions of Indigenous sovereignty on and surrounding these events—for as Smith (2012, p. 222) puts it, “one of the skills that many front-line indigenous activists have in abundance is the ability to communicate.” However, as discussed so far, there is a systemic bias against substantive engagement with political communication that actively challenges the status quo, and this has a bearing on how such communication comes to be represented and understood. This section of the chapter begins by attending to work on the political function of processes of misrepresentation and conflict-avoidance by agencies aligned to the settler colonial consensus. For the thesis’ purposes, this means primarily engaging with the thinking of Glen Coulthard on the colonial politics of recognition, and how it relates to the temporal representation of Indigenous peoples’ political struggles. After this, the section turns to processes of refusal, resistance and resurgence by Indigenous peoples that continue to unsettle ongoing colonialism. While the thesis is primarily interested in questions of normative representation and recognition, attending to counter-hegemonic practices of speaking and knowing against the settler state is integral to the investigation. These theories of Indigenous political activism support the analysis of representations (including self-representations) of Indigenous peoples’ expressions of sovereignty and refusal of settler state legitimacy across mainstream and alternative media spaces.

The colonial politics of recognition

The epistemic operation of white possession has a clear influence on normative understandings of Indigenous peoples’ political sovereignty, and as discussed so far, this encourages the representation of conflict within a defined arena of political possibility. While Hall’s work on ideology and common sense usefully explores the maintenance of hegemony, Coulthard’s (2014) writing on the colonial politics of recognition takes the present analysis further in the settler colonial context, analysing the orienting logic of white possession alongside liberal approaches to difference. As has been explored in Chapter 1, colonial recognition functions as

one of the pernicious processes associated with the reproduction of settler colonialism, promising marginal accommodation under the authority of the settler state. In Coulthard's (2014, p. 6, emphasis in original) analysis of the colonial politics of recognition, he makes an explicit connection between "the expression of Indigenous anticolonial nationalism" and the rise of "a seemingly more conciliatory set of discourses and institutional practices that emphasise our *recognition* and *accommodation*." This echoes the management of diversity in Australia that Hage (1998, p. 132) has referred to as "White multicultural tolerance," which, despite its progressive facade, is predicated on the objectification of the culturally diverse Other. Coulthard's exploration of colonial recognition also resonates with Mills' (1997, p. 125) writing on the expansion of the racial contract into its contemporary multicultural configuration, as noted earlier in the chapter. The ascendancy of the liberal maxim of diversity and inclusion in Australia over the past several decades has served to consolidate a paradigm of incorporation that has deep roots in the national imaginary.

Coulthard's exploration of the relationships between recognition, reconciliation and *ressentiment* form an important complement to the major pillars of the theoretical framework laid out across the first two sections of this chapter. Coulthard (2014, pp. 106–107) identifies three interrelated framings of reconciliation in contemporary Canada which can be productively applied to the Australian context. Briefly, these refer to Indigenous peoples' individual or collective practices of self-recognition, institutional acts or processes of "restoring estranged or damaged social and political relationships" between settlers and Indigenous people, and reconciliation as "rendering things *consistent*" (Coulthard, 2014, pp. 106–107, emphasis in original). This final framing is what Coulthard (2014, p. 107), drawing on the work of Anishinaabe political philosopher Dale Turner, identifies as best characterising Canada's use of the term: "rendering consistent Indigenous assertions of nationhood with the state's unilateral assertion of sovereignty over Native peoples' lands and populations." As explored in the previous chapter's discussion of liberal inclusion and the reconfiguration of Australia's national identity as multicultural, this third framing is of equal explanatory value in assessing the dominant approach to reconciliation in Australia. Watson (2014, pp. 2–3) draws the connection between recognition and sovereignty in the Australian context, noting that "recognition only falls to First Nations at the moment we become dispossessed, by way of transferring our sovereignty to the colonising powers." Therefore, mechanisms of transitional justice and rhetorical recognition that occur without a reconfiguration of the political status quo serve to entrench and further normalise settler colonialism (Coulthard, 2014, p. 108). Rather

than committing to tangible change, “neoliberal states manipulate the processes that maintain settler colonialism to give the appearance that the structure is changing” (L. B. Simpson, 2017, p. 46).

It is useful to consider colonial recognition alongside Tuck and Yang’s (2012, p. 10) work on the metaphorisation of ‘decolonisation’, drawing on Janet Mawhinney’s (1998) theorising of settler “moves to innocence.” Thinking about settler appeals to reconciliation in the absence of structural change gestures towards a desire by both the settler state and nation to avoid dealing with the challenging reality of being beneficiaries of Indigenous dispossession and genocide (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 9). Therefore, Tuck and Yang (2012, p. 35) identify reconciliation as primarily being about “rescuing settler normalcy, about rescuing a settler future.” Liberal idealism and the political imaginary of the social contract present the possibility of a perfect, reconciled future that may be achieved without a fundamental break from the present system of domination. Returning to Hall’s work on the operation of ideology in societies structured in dominance, concerns about the ontological security of settlerhood may be analysed at the level of the individual but should fundamentally be recognised as a systemic phenomenon. Coulthard’s approach to recognition allows for a critical assessment of the ways that conciliatory discourse is mobilised in the face of Indigenous resistance, particularly when this resistance is expressed in explicitly anti-colonial terms. It also supports the analysis of mainstream media representations of the nature of political conflict around January 26, where the political content of Indigenous peoples’ claims to sovereignty against the settler state is frequently diminished. Also important here is the temporal character of recognition and reconciliation, where there is a simultaneous projection of the settler state into the future—a fictional appeal to the ‘historical’ quality of colonial oppression—while positioning Indigenous peoples as pathologically oriented towards the past (Coulthard, 2014, p. 109).

In Coulthard’s writing on reconciliation and recognition, he identifies how Indigenous people who refuse to acquiesce to the terms of a more inclusionary racial contract are located in time relative to the settler state. Here, Coulthard (2014, p. 111) draws on Friedrich Nietzsche’s thinking on *ressentiment*, which is “portrayed as a reactive, backward, and passive orientation to the world,” with sufferers crucially identified as being “irrationally preoccupied with and incapacitated by offences suffered in the past.” Coulthard (2014, pp. 111–112) contends that the Canadian state’s approach to reconciliation is invested in framing Indigenous people as suffering from *ressentiment*, configuring anti-colonial anger as pathological and thereby

disqualifying any consideration of the structural conditions of settler colonialism as the source of Indigenous anger. While recognising that anger and resentment *can* be expressed unhealthily, Coulthard's (2014, pp. 111–112) key intervention here is in identifying the normative signification of particular affective responses to settler colonialism as irrational and therefore *outside of the realm of legitimate political discourse*. Additionally, his critical analysis of *ressentiment* includes a resignification of this phenomenon as “*righteous resentment*: that is, our bitter indignation and persistent anger at being treated unjustly by a colonial state both historically and in the present” (Coulthard, 2014, p. 126, emphasis in original). Rather than indicating a pathological orientation towards the past, expressions of righteous resentment are rooted in Indigenous peoples' critical consciousness and active political analysis of structural oppression (Coulthard, 2014, p. 126). Coulthard's analysis of *ressentiment* and emphasis on righteous resentment is vital for the thesis' engagement with political claims by Indigenous peoples around January 26 that refuse the partial accommodations of the settler state under a framework of reconciliation. This righteous resentment is usefully read in conjunction with theories of Indigenous refusal and resurgence, which centre the political analyses of Indigenous people whose organising against the state is not merely reactive, but instead grounded in sovereign relations and responsibilities.

Refusal and resistance

Against the threat of erasure, the persistent expression of Indigenous knowledges and sovereignties constantly refuse and unsettle the Australian settler state. Echoing Mills' emphasis on the importance of epistemic resistance against the racial contract, Watson (2007, p. 16) identifies that “speaking or telling the black ‘truth’ of Australia's colonial history means challenging white supremacist ‘truths’ of history.” The expression of Indigenous truths beyond the boundaries of colonial recognition involves a struggle over meaning, an interrogation of the relationship between discursive articulations of settler colonial sovereignty and Indigenous pathology and the reality that such discourses “purport to represent” (Grossberg, 1996, p. 158). Also relevant is the role of Indigenous standpoint epistemologies grounded in sovereign responsibility, which present a fundamental challenge to settler colonial regimes of truth by virtue of their capacity to know *otherwise*. As Moreton-Robinson (2004, p. 85) asserts, “Indigenous knowledge of whiteness is more than a denial of dominant assumptions regarding the reality of race and superiority of whites”—it is based on Indigenous peoples' “curiosity, compassion and knowledge of what constitutes humanity.” L. Simpson (2017, p. 49) refers to

this duality as Indigenous resurgence, describing “its simultaneous dismantling of settler colonial meta-manifestations and its reinvigoration of Indigenous systemic alternatives—alternatives that have already produced sustainable, beautiful, principled societies.” Resurgence also centres an understanding of epistemic resistance as a social practice and makes possible the recognition of interventions being made by Indigenous activists through concrete political struggle as inherently theoretical. While the present thesis does not engage in an in-depth analysis of the content or breadth of expressions of Indigenous sovereignty outside of the January 26 context, this section briefly notes some theoretical strands that support a greater appreciation of the relationship between Indigenous sovereign knowledges and resistance.

As discussed in the previous chapter, refusal as a political strategy has particular relevance to aspects of the thesis that attend to motivations for and processes of Indigenous resistance. A. Simpson (2014, p. 11) explicitly describes refusal as a “political alternative to “recognition,” the much sought after and presumed “good” of multicultural politics.” This refusal involves maintaining a critical stance against colonial recognition, and “comes with the requirement of having one’s *political* sovereignty acknowledged and upheld...” (A. Simpson, 2014, p. 11, emphasis in original). L. Simpson (2017) builds on the work of both A. Simpson and Coulthard to speak of a generative politics of refusal in the context of resurgent Indigenous movement building. Importantly, this “radical resurgent organizing” refuses the imposition of settler colonial framings on issues faced by Indigenous peoples, undermining narrow problematization that serves to entrench state power (L. B. Simpson, 2017, p. 178). In a broader sense, Munanjahli and South Sea Islander scholar Chelsea Watego discusses how colonial recognition insidiously functions to structure Indigenous peoples’ affective responses to systemic oppression. Critiquing a reliance on hope as a vague promise of better days ahead, Watego (2021, p. 212) instead asserts the importance of

imagin[ing] a future that is grounded in truth, the truth of our sovereignty as ongoing and, as such, an insistence that must be made every day; a persistence that doesn’t always centre coloniser protagonists, but a living that is grappling with our own selves on our own terms.

Watego makes a claim on the future by refusing the settler state’s attempts to artificially restrict Indigenous peoples’ political imaginations, grounding this orientation in embodied, unceded sovereignty. Refusal as enacted by both L. Simpson and Watego bridges the false Cartesian divide between theoretical critique and embodied resistance by turning away from colonial recognition and towards Indigenous sovereignty as lived and relational knowledge. This

indicates the importance of considering expressions of refusal emerging from Indigenous peoples' political struggle against the settler state as theoretical in their own right.

On the relationship between theory, practice and liberation, bell hooks (1994, p. 61) writes that “when our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to processes of self-recovery, of collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice.” Thinking with this in relation to Indigenous resistance against settler colonial oppression, it is clear that political communication by Indigenous people involved in such liberatory work should be recognised as a site of theory equally useful to the present investigation as theoretical interventions discussed in the chapter thus far. In practical terms, this means that the theoretical approach of the thesis is also crucially informed by the thinking and writing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as expressed *through* media, leading to the inclusion of alternative media sources as both a site of data analysis as well as theoretical texts in their own right. This speaks to the theoretical nature of what Coulthard (2014, p. 13, emphasis in original) describes as “*grounded normativity*... the modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time.” The political analysis conveyed through the interview data, media texts such as speeches given at Invasion Day rallies which connect settler colonialism with ecocide and climate change, or through Indigenous-led radio programming covering the illegitimacy of the settler state are therefore drawn on throughout the analysis chapters to support the interrogation of mainstream media representations. While the positions from which this theorising occurs are often situated outside of the realm of academia, hooks (1994, pp. 63–64) emphasises the arbitrariness of institutional validation when considering the importance of accessible liberatory communication. This approach is further discussed in Chapter 3.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the theoretical framework supporting the thesis' analysis of expressions and representations of contested claims to sovereignty in Australia on January 26. The writings of Foucault form the basis for an interrogation of the relationship between knowledge and power, and racial regimes of truth in the settler state. This is further developed through the work of Moreton-Robinson on white possession, a logic of possession predicated on the white, propertied subject who is constituted as the producer of knowledge about the Indigenous Other.

Moreton-Robinson's (2015) writing on white possession is a theoretical cornerstone of the thesis and is read alongside Mills' (1997) work on the racial contract, a domination contract which founds and provides political legitimacy to racial states. These approaches are productively brought into conversation with Hall's analysis of mass communication and meaning. Hall's work reveals connections between the concepts of ideology, hegemony and common sense, locating them as crucial sites of struggle and informing the thesis' investigation of representation and its relationship to the epistemological basis of settler colonialism. White possession also underpins the formation and maintenance of settler common sense, which according to Rifkin (2014) forms the field of quotidian, taken-for-granted settler experiences of colonial jurisdiction over Indigenous peoples and their stolen lands. Both common sense and settler common sense trace their theoretical lineages back to Gramsci, but where Rifkin's conceptual development focuses on the everyday, affective nature of common sense attachments to Indigenous land, Hall engages primarily with processes of representation and public discourse. Both of these approaches to common sense provide the present investigation with tools to unpack the expression of normalised attachments to Australian settler identity and the state that infuse public discourse in relation to January 26. Finally, this chapter turned to practices of Indigenous resistance and specific attempts at containing this resistance through a colonial politics of recognition. This began with exploring the resonances between Coulthard's (2014) work on colonial recognition and previous discussion of epistemological coercion via Mills and ideology via Hall. In the face of these attempts to reinforce the political consensus, expressions of Indigenous sovereignty through public protest represent important and ongoing struggles over meaning against settler ideological hegemony. This is discussed with reference to theories of refusal and resurgence, drawing on a range of critical Indigenous scholarship and identifying the theoretical nature of political analysis conducted outside of the academy. The theoretical framework outlined in this chapter forms the basis for the analysis of media and political discourses circulating around January 26 in Australia, and their engagement (or failure to engage) with Indigenous peoples' claims to unceded sovereignty through protest.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

Introduction

Choosing an approach for one's research design, according to della Porta and Keating (2008, p. 33), relies upon a prior choice of "whether to start with a theory, a method or a problem". The present inquiry treats sovereignty as a space of problematisation, with the research design developed in this chapter seeking to advance a richer understanding of Indigenous and settler claims to sovereignty in relation to Australia's national day on January 26. The research problem is addressed through critical engagement with media representations of Indigenous survival and resistance on January 26 in 2020 alongside an investigation of how settler claims to sovereignty are simultaneously justified or disrupted in public discourse.

This investigation is underpinned by a broader critique of the Australian settler state's racial contract, which rests on an approach towards Indigenous peoples grounded in Enlightenment thinking. Smith (2012, p. 33) has described the consolidation of views about the 'Other' during the Enlightenment "through science, philosophy and imperialism, into explicit systems of classification and 'regimes of truth'." This process, along with the rise to prominence of "conceptions of the society and of the individual based around the precepts of rationalism, individualism and capitalism" (L. T. Smith, 2012, p. 33) formed the foundations of academic inquiry into the west's 'Others' within a regime of truth that assumed European epistemic supremacy. While such supremacy is rhetorically disavowed by much of contemporary academia, Mignolo (2009) identifies that the notion of a neutral, knowing subject persists as a feature of normative knowledge construction within the academy.

As Strega (2005, p. 202) notes, research that is genuinely oriented towards goals of social justice and therefore societal transformation must problematise Enlightenment epistemology as the foundation of Eurocentric thought. This does not necessarily mean jettisoning European traditions of theoretical inquiry wholesale but rather signals the importance of critically interrogating one's "resistance and allegiance to the hegemony of Eurocentric thought and research traditions" when developing one's research (Strega, 2005, p. 199). The present research is informed by this sentiment and by Mignolo's (2009) approach to epistemic disobedience, which involves renouncing the illusion of objectivity and an orientation towards extractive, colonial knowledge production. Epistemic disobedience puts the tools of critical

social inquiry in service of interrogating the Australian settler colonial project's structure of legitimation through its representations of and responses to Indigenous political activity.

This thesis integrates insights from critical theory and poststructuralist inquiry into a mixed methods research design. Such an approach is supported by Lincoln, Lynham and Guba's (2017, p. 236) identification of methodological commensurability between theoretical lineages which have a shared field of interest in "precisely that subjective and intersubjective, critical social knowledge and the active construction and co-creation of such knowledge by human agents..." The overlapping interests of both critical theory and poststructuralist approaches in the historical contingency of power relations forms the basis for this project's investigation of discourses circulating in relation to Indigenous and settler claims to sovereignty on January 26, 2020. As identified in the previous chapter, integrating Indigenous and decolonial scholarship produced across and beyond these theoretical tendencies provides a powerful explanatory framework to investigate the construction and maintenance of settler epistemic hegemony as well as counter-discourses of Indigenous sovereignty. These concerns are encapsulated in the project's guiding questions:

1. How are Indigenous peoples' claims to sovereignty articulated in relation to January 26?
 - a. How are these claims engaged and represented by Indigenous media sources, mainstream media and key political figures in Australia?
2. How are settler colonial claims to sovereignty normalised or challenged across these same media and political discourses?

The first research question and sub-question focus on the extent to which media and political discourses—across a range of political tendencies—are complicit in the erasure or emphasis of Indigenous sovereignty and Indigenous peoples' political claims expressed on and around January 26. The second question targets common sense investments in Australian state sovereignty, exploring how these attachments emerge in public discourse and how they are engaged either sympathetically or critically by Indigenous and non-Indigenous speakers.

Due to its emphasis on investigating the 'why' and 'how' of social action (Bray, 2008, p. 299), qualitative inquiry is a suitable primary approach for analysing the production and circulation of discourses of sovereignty in this thesis. The combination of participant observation, semi-structured interviewing, and analysis of media data and political statements in the research echoes a frequent commitment within qualitative research to use multiple interpretive practices

within a single study, with the acknowledgement that “each practice makes the world visible in a different way” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017, p. 10). Engaging a qualitative approach to the research questions allows a focus on January 26 as a “striking case” where concerns around Indigenous claims to sovereignty and settler interpretations, responses and counter-claims are more clearly identifiable (della Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 36). Applying multiple qualitative methods to this anniversary in 2020 presents an opportunity to investigate broader “complex social processes” of Indigenous political claim making and its disavowal in the Australian settler state (della Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 29).

The qualitative analysis has also been supplemented with a minor component of quantitative analysis in the form of descriptive statistics applied solely to the media data. The decision to incorporate this quantitative analysis was pragmatic in the sense that it provided a useful overview of key framing issues across a larger number of media items, and because it provided internal validation of some of the key concerns raised by Indigenous speakers as identified through qualitative analysis, such as the over-emphasis of ‘change the date’ as a media framing. As such, the research design falls under the category of “qualitative dominant” mixed methods per Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007, p. 124). In other words, the overarching approach to the thesis analysis is qualitative and in line with the epistemological traditions of critical theory and poststructuralism as outlined in Chapter 2, though limited quantitative analysis is included for the purpose of capturing the scale of the data set and demonstrating simple trends. While not focused directly on collecting information about Indigenous people, the development of this quantitative component is indebted to Maggie Walter and Chris Andersen’s (2013) work on Indigenous statistics, in particular, their cautions regarding the production of knowledge about Indigenous peoples through deficit-based research and their outline of Indigenous approaches to quantitative research methods. These issues informed the choice in this research to develop categories for quantitative analysis on the basis of issues raised by Indigenous activists in interviews and media content produced or presented by Indigenous people. Categories included the aforementioned emphasis on ‘change the date’, as well as whether, where and how Indigenous people’s voices were included in media content produced about January 26.

Before a more in-depth discussion of approaches to data collection and analysis, however, this chapter begins with a brief historical overview and justification for the choice of the two research sites: Meanjin/Brisbane and Naarm/Birraranga/Melbourne. Next, methods of primary

data collection—participant observation and semi-structured interviewing—are described, paired with a sketch of the content analysis used to process this data. The subsequent section covers the use of secondary sources in the form of media data and media statements from relevant State and federal politicians, which formed the bulk of the data obtained for the research. This includes an overview of the process of the data analysis, which was carried out via descriptive statistics, content analysis and selective use of critical discourse analysis. After this, the discussion turns to ethical considerations, addressing concerns about how the current project attempts to navigate the fraught colonial dynamics of academic research on and about Indigenous peoples and attending to researcher positionality. Finally, the chapter touches on limitations of the present research, including impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on research design and data collection.

Research Sites

Engaging in any research that aims to centre Indigenous sovereignty requires considered attention to place. Indigenous lands and waters are the terrain both upon and about which contestations over sovereignty occur, and this research project is itself being conducted on unceded Wurundjeri Country. As such, discourses and counter-discourses circulating about January 26 are integrally connected to the land upon which Indigenous resistance actions are staged and political claims are articulated. Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds (2010, p. 4), writing about settler colonial appropriation and constant reshaping of Indigenous land, note that “unsettling reminders of alternative and Indigenous claims to land [have] remained ever present on the landscape.” The establishment and growth of the Australian colonies over the late 18th and early 19th centuries was a process of matching the imposition of the British Crown’s assumed legal authority over territory with a re-fashioning of the physical environment (Mar & Edmonds, 2010, p. 5). Contemporary settler colonial city spaces remain battlegrounds over which political claims to sovereignty are waged, whether in the form of mass demonstration or through resistance to gentrification. However, the reliance of the settler state on the “discursive production of an absence of Aboriginal peoples” (Mar & Edmonds, 2010, p. 11), one that has been equally physically enforced, has resulted in a normalisation of the notion that cities are not Indigenous spaces. This rests on the denial that settlers across Australia are *always* on Indigenous peoples’ Country. Instead, cities are cemented in the colonial imaginary as “sites where Aboriginal people are continually marked as out of place,

deviant or inauthentic” (L. Porter, 2018, p. 243; see also Fredericks, 2013). Against this backdrop, the visible reclamation of space by Indigenous-led demonstrations provides a reminder of both the violent conditions of colonial cities’ establishment and reproduction through time, and of unceded Indigenous sovereignty.

The two physical sites chosen for this research project were Brisbane and Melbourne, two cities located on Australia’s east coast. These sites were selected due to their historical and contemporary significance as hubs of Indigenous public protest events, particularly through the efforts of the Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance groups organising in each city. It must be noted that while the main portion of the data analysed in this research was from media sources rather than ethnography and interviews, the centrality of land to Indigenous and settler claims to sovereignty necessitates clearly situating the investigation. While ethnographic methods were ultimately not used in Melbourne, this city is the location where the research was formulated, developed and documented.

Meanjin/Brisbane

Brisbane, capital of Australia’s north-eastern state of Queensland, sits on the unceded territory of the Turrbal People (across the current central business district and eastern/coastal region) and Jagera/Yuggera people (to the west, towards the city of Ipswich). The city is also known as Meanjin or Mianjin, the Turrbal name for the spike of land on the north bank of the Brisbane River where the central business district is now located. Brisbane was established as a penal colony in 1824, and settlers progressively spread throughout the area over subsequent decades, pushing inland from the coast and dispossessing and displacing Turrbal and Jagera Peoples. The formal pronouncement of Brisbane as a municipality in 1859 accelerated settlement, with Aboriginal people forced to live on the fringes of the growing city. From the 1890s, the advent of missionisation led to the forced removal of Aboriginal people in the area to reserves. Turrbal People were mostly moved to the Barambah Aboriginal Reserve (later Cherbourg) north-west of Brisbane on Wakka Wakka Country. The *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897* formally heralded the protection era in Queensland, depriving Indigenous peoples of their status as British citizens and converting them into wards of the state (Frankland, 1994, p. 3). This Act and subsequent iterations governed the entire lives of Indigenous peoples in Queensland, aggressively regulating among other things their places of

residence, employment and wages, exemptions, and marriages, an infringement on both political and bodily sovereignty and autonomy. This legacy still infuses contemporary Indigenous-settler relations in the state, with the violent colonisation of the region still inscribed into the city's geography. The retention of markers such as boundary streets, most notably Boundary Street in West End, serve as contemporary reminders of the segregation of Aboriginal people in urban spaces.

Colonial segregation and violence has always been contested, with Brisbane being a longstanding hub of Indigenous political activism in the state, following in the footsteps of Dundalli (Yuggera) and other Aboriginal warriors long past. The iconic Musgrave Park in West End has remained a site of Aboriginal community gathering and later activism for land rights and justice from pre-colonisation until the present day (Kerkhove, 2018). The park served as the base for mass protests against the 1982 Commonwealth Games, also known as Queensland's 'State of Emergency' protests (Kerkhove, 2018; McQuire, 2018b), and in recent years it has been the location of the dawn service for Invasion Day rallies as well as the home of post-rally community gatherings. It is also home to the Brisbane Aboriginal Sovereign Embassy (BASE), founded on the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the original Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra in 1972, which was marked by a transfer of coals from the Canberra embassy to Musgrave Park (Clayton-Dixon, 2013). Musgrave Park is the heart of organising activities for the Brisbane branch of the Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance. Integrally connected to this history of activism is the city's vibrant Indigenous media scene, also centred in West End. From 1982-1985, Murri activist Ross Watson edited the Brisbane-based publication *Black Nation*, which "raised Aboriginal community concerns surrounding planned Bicentenary and Expo celebrations" (Meadows & Molnar, 2002, p. 10). From 1993, Watson was also the "first station manager of Murri Radio 4AAA" (Meadows & Molnar, 2002, p. 10). Murri Radio is now known as Triple A Murri Country (having changed its name back from 98.9FM in December 2021) and is home and contributor to the National Indigenous Radio Service as well as a local base for National Indigenous Television (NITV).

Naarm/Birraranga/Melbourne

Melbourne, also known as Naarm or Birraranga in Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung languages respectively, sits on the sovereign territory of the Wurundjeri and Boon wurrung Peoples of the Kulin Nation. Home to the clans of the Kulin Nation for at least 40,000 years prior, the

region was subject to coastal incursions by sealers and whalers from the early 1800s. Illegal settlement commenced in the 1830s by “entrepreneurial overstraiters from Van Diemen’s Land” on the basis of access to rich pastoral land (Edmonds, 2010, p. 129). In 1835, grazier John Batman signed the first and—despite its highly dubious nature and the fact that it was swiftly voided—only official treaty with a group of Wurundjeri leaders (L. Porter, 2018, pp. 241–242). This heralded the acceleration of brutal displacement of and genocidal violence against Wurundjeri and Boon wurrung peoples, and later Wathawurrung/Wathaurong, Djadjawurrung and Daungwurrung/Taungurung peoples as settlers pushed further inland and outwards along the coastline (Edmonds, 2010, p. 129). The town of Melbourne was formally founded in 1837 by Governor Richard Bourke, and in the same year the first town lots had been delimited and auctioned off (L. Porter, 2018, p. 242). The land on which the city was established had long been a meeting place for the five clans of the Kulin Nation, and this is echoed in the contemporary geography of the city. For example, a particular site of significance is the grounds upon which the Victorian Parliament House was built—prior to colonisation, this had been an important meeting place for political negotiation between the Kulin Nation clans. Meanwhile, many Wurundjeri and Boon wurrung people were driven out north east, and under the leadership of Wurundjeri leaders Simon Wonga and William Barak, fought for the establishment of the Coranderrk Aboriginal Station in 1863 (near present-day Healesville). The *Aborigines Protection Act 1869*, similar to the 1897 Act in Queensland, gave the Victorian state substantial control over the minutiae of Aboriginal peoples’ lives, leading to the imposition of strict governance and policing practices which resonate into the present day.

In the face of this colonial violence, Melbourne has been a focal point for Aboriginal activism in the state since at least the 1930s. The Australian Aborigines’ League (AAL) was established in 1934 by a group of activists including Yorta Yorta men William Cooper and Sir Douglas Nicholls (Foley & Anderson, 2006, p. 85). As mentioned in Chapter 1, the AAL collaborated with Sydney’s Australian Aborigines Progressive Association to demonstrate against the national celebrations of the 150th anniversary of colonisation in 1938, establishing it as a ‘Day of Mourning’ (Foley & Anderson, 2006, p. 85). Nicholls later founded the Victorian Aboriginal Advancement League in the late 1950s. The suburbs of Collingwood and Fitzroy have long been centres for Indigenous activism and community in Melbourne. Home to a wide range of Aboriginal community-controlled health, legal, housing and education services since the 1960s (Foley & Anderson, 2006, p. 89; L. Porter, 2018, p. 241), the area has become increasingly gentrified, pushing many services further north. In the present day, Melbourne sees frequent

Indigenous-led protests ranging from those condemning Aboriginal deaths in custody, solidarity rallies with land rights struggles in other states, and the annual Invasion Day rally organised by Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance (Naarm/Birraranga), which attracts tens of thousands of attendees each year. Local Indigenous activism and media-making overlaps in the form of avowedly political radio programs including ‘Fire First,’ hosted by Krauatungalung man Robbie Thorpe, and ‘The Black Block,’ formerly hosted by Gooniyandi woman Viv Malo on 3CR, a non-Indigenous community radio station where I am now also a broadcaster. Melbourne is also home to Indigenous owned and operated radio station 3KND.

Primary Data

As has been discussed throughout the thesis so far, this research project has a methodological commitment to challenging white possession and racial hierarchy, with consequences for my choice of research methods and approach to analysis. The exploration in Chapter 2 of Indigenous peoples' epistemic resistance against colonial recognition is brought into conversation here with my attempts to assert solidarity with Indigenous activists through politically engaged research. The decision to employ ethnographic research methods and semi-structured interviewing to collect primary data was informed by an understanding that researcher solidarity in the context of decolonial struggle must involve actively attending to the material realities of colonisation and Indigenous resurgence where one is researching and producing knowledge (i.e. the stolen lands and waters that Brisbane and Melbourne now sit on) (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014). To do this is to contest normative processes of knowledge production within the (Australian) colonial academy, and to resist the false primacy given to academic ‘expertise’. Macoun, Parker and Strakosch (2019) have recently critiqued the persistence of a racialised knowledge hierarchy within Australian political studies, noting that the field’s propensity to marginalise Indigenous political analyses and to engage in abstract theorising about political relationships masks its own complicity in undermining the legitimacy of Indigenous knowledge. My approach to troubling this disciplinary orientation is to engage in what non-Indigenous activist and researcher Clare Land (2015, p. 161) has called “acting politically with self-understanding.” In the case of the thesis, this has meant pairing action-oriented and emancipatory approaches to research discussed in this chapter’s introduction with a personal commitment to engage with and allow myself to be informed and transformed by the political organising of the activists who shared time and knowledge with me.

Participant Observation

The choice to engage in participant observation for the Brisbane Invasion Day rally on January 26, 2020 significantly enriched the research process, adding ethnographic depth to the project. The purpose of employing this particular method was to immerse myself in the context of organising spaces and practices leading up to Indigenous organisers' public demonstrations of sovereign resistance on January 26 and to therefore further my understanding of events on the day (per Bray, 2008, p. 302). Participant observation occurred during a research trip to Brisbane from January 21 to February 1, 2020. This method allowed me to build stronger relationships with members of the organising group, explain the purpose of the research and answer questions, and to gauge who might be interested in being interviewed. It also allowed me to contribute to the smooth running of the event itself as I was engaged in a range of volunteer tasks to support preparation for the day, including banner painting, making giant triangular Aboriginal flags, and picking up supplies. In addition to this, I was invited to attend several meetings at the fire at Musgrave Park where members of Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance and Brisbane Aboriginal Sovereign Embassy discussed logistics and planning.

Bray (2008, p. 306) notes that participation in social interactions under investigation allow the researcher to make better sense of them, and this was certainly the case for this period of research, particularly considering the thesis' concern with discrepancies between representations of the rally and its actual purpose and proceedings. I made it known to organisers that as my trip to Brisbane was solely focused on research for the thesis, I was available to support them with preparation whenever required. As Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2017, p. 244, emphasis in original) have importantly identified, “the *way* in which we know is most assuredly tied up with both *what* we know and our *relationships with our research participants*”. Building good relationships and being clear about my intentions and motivation improved interpersonal interactions with organisers who ended up becoming interviewees, and expanded the range of activities I was able to participate in.

While I spent the period before and during the rally and march solely focused on recording notes, I arrived at Jagera Community Hall (located in South Brisbane on the southern edge of Musgrave Park) prior to the January 26 dawn service to assist with last minute preparation for the service, rally and festival, assisted with the transportation of materials and setup at Queen's

Gardens prior to the rally, and helped to pack down equipment after the end of the post-rally festival at Musgrave Park. I kept a journal during the trip to collect hand-written reflections at the end of each day and used this to record my observations during the rally itself. This latter process, per the initial research focus, included recording the number of police present and formation of deployment (in some cases this involved drawing a map of police deployment), observations of police-protestor interactions, noting police equipment, gear, and vehicles (see changes to research in the 'Limitations' section of this chapter). I also noted the use of slogans and chants used by protestors (particularly those endorsed by protest organisers). Prior to January 26, I had developed a checklist of key areas of interest when recording field notes during protests and carried this with me in my field journal to the rally to refer to as required—this is provided in Appendix A.

Semi-Structured Interviewing

Semi-structured interviews were the second form of primary data collection conducted to capture the perspectives of organisers of the Brisbane Invasion Day 2020 rally. Roulston (2013, p. 298) asserts that “researchers working from a decolonizing perspective pay deliberate attention to how the design, conduct and use of interviews contribute to social justice agendas”. Bearing this in mind, I was open about my political alignment in support of the organisers, and flexible in my approach to interviewing. Through interacting with various organisers daily over the first week of fieldwork, I was able to identify which of the Brisbane organisers were interested in being interviewed for the research, and to spend time with each of them to discuss the purpose of the thesis and answer questions. This allowed me to establish a rapport with potential interviewees and to make minor refinements to the initial interview schedule to mitigate against collecting data that did not respond to the analytic focus of the research (Roulston, 2013, p. 307). Based on an awareness of the exploitative history of research conducted on Indigenous peoples by researchers situated within Western academia (L. T. Smith, 2012), I made the decision to compensate participants for their time, obtaining funding through the University of Melbourne’s Faculty of Arts Graduate Research Office at the rate of \$50 per hour-long interview. While not a panacea, compensation can form one strategy in addressing and mediating the power imbalance between researchers and research participants (Head, 2009, p. 337). Advising potential participants that participation would be compensated allowed me to identify up front that I valued their expertise and was willing to pay to hear about it and acted as an incentive for people to participate.

The ‘scoping’ period lasted from the beginning of the research trip until Monday January 27, 2020. By the 27th, I had obtained confirmation from three organisers that they were happy to be interviewed for the thesis. Interviews were conducted between January 28-30, 2020. To be eligible to participate, participants needed to be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individuals who were involved in organising the Invasion Day 2020 rally in Brisbane and who had previously been involved in organising large rally-style protests as part of Indigenous activist collectives. As my primary contact in Brisbane was one of the key organisers of the rally, they made co-organisers aware of the research prior to my fieldwork trip and made introductions once I arrived in the city. There were no specified age-range criteria for eligibility, apart from requiring that participants were over the age of 18. Sampling was purposive (Bryman, 2012, p. 422), in that there was a requirement for participants to have been involved in organising at least one local protest prior to the relevant event analysed in the study. This allowed me to ensure that interviewees had some level of embeddedness within local Aboriginal activist networks, that is, that they had connections to the community and were relatively experienced at engaging in political protest actions. Age, ability, gender, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background may have led to some variation in responses from interview participants. However, considering the exploratory nature of the research, the aim of the interviews was not to obtain a representative sample of Indigenous activists’ views, but rather to reflect the contextual nature of sovereign resistance and identify activists’ collectively-determined political goals and strategies of articulation.

Interviewees were advised that the interview could be conducted at a place they felt comfortable talking about issues of interest to the research, and that interviews would be scheduled at their convenience. As a result, two interviews were conducted at interviewees’ homes, and one at a café near an interviewee’s workplace. I collected information during the interviews via both digital audio recording (recorded with a Zoom H4n hand-held recording device) and handwritten notes taken to capture key statements to return to in more detail. Semi-structured interviewing was determined to be the most appropriate approach due to the flexibility it affords participant responses (as well as the possibility for limited improvisation by the interviewer), while still focusing on a list of core themes relevant to the research (Bryman, 2012, p. 471). The interview schedule developed to guide the key informant interviews is provided at Appendix B. Interviewing Indigenous activists involved in organising

mass rallies allowed me to document firsthand experiences of coordinating public collective expressions of Indigenous sovereignty.

Interview Analysis

The interviews were automatically transcribed and manually corrected using the online transcription program Otter.ai, and transcripts were examined using qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis, sometimes referred to as thematic analysis (Grbich, 2007, p. 32), is a form of systematic, flexible and aggregative data analysis commonly used in social science research (Schreier, 2013). It is systematic in the sense that it involves rigorous examination of the data set, flexible in that there is a variable mixture of concept and data-driven inputs in the development of a coding frame, and aggregative through its reduction of the data set into a set of key themes encapsulating relevant components of each piece of data (Schreier, 2013). Content analysis was well suited to analysing interviews as it facilitated the categorisation of data into key themes speaking to the research questions' focus on sovereignty, resistance and representation (Roulston, 2013, p. 305). The ability to incorporate both concept-driven inputs (derived from the relevant empirical and theoretical literature) and data-driven inputs (derived from a close reading of the transcripts to identify trends) into the coding frame supported the identification of "latent and... context-dependent meaning" from the transcripts (Schreier, 2013, p. 173). During this process, careful attention was paid to the fact that interview data are not just a collection of the unmediated views of participants but are rather co-constructed in the process of conversation with the interviewer (Roulston, 2013, p. 309). Acknowledging this means accounting for the context within which the data was created (Roulston, 2013, p. 309), and making sure to ground the themes generated in an understanding of the relationship between the researcher, the participant and the research questions as articulated through the interview schedule.

The interview transcripts were used in combination with media data to build the foundations of the coding frame for content analysis, in line with the goal of centring Indigenous speakers' analyses of issues with framing in reporting about January 26. As outlined in Chapter 2, this approach to the primary data was informed by a methodological commitment to challenge white/colonial knowledge production. The three transcripts were combined with a selection of transcripts of Indigenous and community radio programs obtained during media data collection which focused on January 26, were presented by Indigenous hosts, and featured almost

exclusively Indigenous guests. This subset of the data was analysed, and themes and sub-categories identified to form the basis of the coding frame. As discussed in the section ‘Content Analysis’ below, a set of further key categories was developed through the analysis of a subset of media data across all mastheads. Content analysis was undertaken with the support of NVivo 12 software (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2018), with the node function used to identify and differentiate codes. Code refinement and consolidation resulted in a set of parent nodes used to identify key themes and child nodes used to identify sub-categories within these themes.

Secondary Data

Media Coverage and Statements by Political Elites

The main type of data analysed in this research came from media sources, supplemented by a set of media releases and speech transcripts issued by State (Victoria and Queensland) and federal politicians. The choice to analyse media sources was informed by an understanding of the media’s role in conveying Indigenous peoples’ political aspirations to Australian public (Thomas et al., 2019, p. 9). Wodak (2009, p. 3) identifies “an almost symbiotic relationship between the worlds of politics and media,” noting the range of political communication that occurs via legacy and social media, with varying levels of curation. While initially intended to be supplementary to participant observation and interview data, media coverage and political statements became the core focus of analysis in the present research due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the original research plan. Changes to the research plan are elaborated on below in ‘Limitations’.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the role of media in representing both Indigenous political struggles (from the bottom-up) and Indigenous affairs (from the top-down, i.e. government or political sources) marks media production as a crucial area of analysis in a study concerned with the circulation of discourses around Indigenous peoples’ claims to sovereignty. This is particularly important considering that one focus of the research is investigating how patterns of normative investment in settler colonial sovereignty are constructed with respect to January 26, that is, on the construction of Australia as an imagined community (Anderson 2006) premised on the values of liberal multiculturalism. As Hodgetts and Chamberlain (2013, p. 381) put it, “news ‘constructs’ events and relationships between groups of people”. When considering the types of relationships constructed between Indigenous peoples and settlers in mainstream Australian

media discourse, narratives frequently deploy a deficit framing of Indigenous peoples (Fforde et al., 2013).

Hall (2019b, p. 260) famously characterised processes of “encoding” and “decoding” in the production, circulation and reception of mass media. This approach situates media producers within a sociocultural and political milieu where the production and interpretation of messages do not occur in isolation but instead develop in relation to broadly circulating frameworks of knowledge and understanding as well as specific institutional knowledges, structures of production and technical infrastructures (S. Hall, 2019b, p. 260). A systemic analysis of media outputs is capable of a more nuanced appreciation of the social visibility and history of the construction of problems and patterns in the realm of public attention (S. Hall, 2019c, p. 277). This draws attention to the importance of meanings made through media production, but simultaneously raises the question of accounting for audience interpretations. Altheide and Schneider (2013, p. 15) address this concern by acknowledging that though meaning emerges through interaction with audience members, it is in “the document process, context, and significance” and “how the document helps define the situation and clarify meaning for the audience member”. In other words, what are the implicit understandings and broader sociocultural referents that imbue these media texts? How do these naturalise certain framings of events or groups of people?

As identified in Chapter 1, there are a range of mainstream and alternative, community or independent media strategies employed when discussing Indigenous affairs. These strategies relate to the overarching political orientation of the media producer, the purpose of the producer (e.g., to generate media by and for Indigenous people speaking to intra-community concerns), the nature of the events being reported, and the incorporation of political and social feedback over time. In this research, the choice was made to engage with two broad categories of media: mainstream and alternative or independent. The decision to locate Indigenous-led media as a sub-category of each of these main categories rather than as independent from both mainstream and alternative/independent media, was influenced by the existence of bodies like *NITV* as part of *SBS*, and of programs produced and presented by Indigenous activists in community radio settings, such as *Fire First* and *The Black Block on 3CR*. The choice to incorporate a focus on Indigenous participatory media and alternative media platforming Indigenous media producers acknowledges the relationship of accountability between Indigenous-led media production and

Indigenous communities (Burrows, 2018), which is profoundly absent in much of the mainstream media landscape.

In their analysis of the *Recognise* campaign, McCallum, Waller and Dreher (2016, p. 33) draw on mediatisation theory, which broadly considers the “impacts of media on society.” The authors identify media outputs as productive for analysis considering an increase in “the activities of political and oppositional actors... carried out within media,” which they contend “is both opening up opportunities for a wider range of voices to be heard within the political process, and at the same time limiting opportunities for engagement” (McCallum et al., 2016, p. 33). They take this approach in line with a specific interest in how the mediatisation of politics reduces the capacity of political institutions to engage with alternative media due to a primary orientation towards mainstream media outputs (McCallum et al., 2016, p. 33; see also Dreher et al., 2016, p. 27). However, Couldry (2008) cautions against a singular focus on mediatisation theory, as this raises the risk of overdetermining the structuring effects of media institutions on political and broader social communication patterns. He identifies a problematic “tendency to claim that [mediatization theory] has identified one single type of media-based logic that supersedes older logics across the whole of social space” (Couldry, 2008, p. 378).

While a mediatisation approach may be better suited to an analysis of impacts of media logics on policymaking, a *mediation* approach may instead be more fruitful in looking at the structures of political communication more generally in media reporting about discrete events, where the aim is not to account for their downstream policy effects. Mediation may also be better for unpacking political communication that is not geared at discrete policy changes, for example constitutional recognition of Indigenous rights, but rather, in the case of this research, broader structural and societal restructuring. Couldry (2008, p. 379) sketches out a definition of mediation as “the overall effect of media institutions existing in contemporary societies, the overall difference that media make by being there in our social world.” This gets away from the problem of trying to assess a determinate and top-down effect of media logics on the world *per se* (or a monolithic understanding of what a media logic might be), and introduces a more nuanced appreciation of the “multidirectionality of how media may be transforming society” (Couldry, 2008, p. 380). Couldry (2008, p. 380) identifies that it is “productive to see mediation as capturing a variety of dynamics within media flows,” which are “flows of production, circulation, interpretation or reception, and recirculation” of media. The broader conceptualisation of mediation supports an analysis of different forms of media production—

in this thesis, different types of media (print, digital, radio, television) and political statements—with respect to their representation of Indigenous sovereignty protests on January 26. The primary focus in this thesis is on production and circulation, though interpretation comes into play when analysing components of the dataset involving audience participation, such as letters to the editor referring to January 26.

Data Collection

I initially scanned the Australian media landscape with a primary focus on print media and news websites, planning to select sources on the basis of a combination of readership metrics from Nielsen Digital Content Ratings (media websites) and Roy Morgan (print media), and location of publication and audience (Brisbane and Melbourne-based and focused, or targeted at a national audience). This gave me a list of four print media and nine online news sources. During and after the fieldwork trip to Brisbane to conduct interviews and participant observation at the Invasion Day 2020 rally, I collected articles from this initial list of sources. However, during this period of data collection, I quickly found that relying on readership metrics alone to populate my source list was insufficient to capture the breadth and depth of media coverage relevant to the thesis. Going by readership also wholly excluded Indigenous media producers, as well as news sources that provided significant coverage of the protests but did not have as high readership levels.

Source selection

I refined the media source selection process to be attuned to four factors:

1. coverage of relevant content during the specified time-period,
2. level of readership,
3. reach of particular key demographics (such as Indigenous people, conservative audiences, progressive or left-leaning audiences), and
4. inclusion of Indigenous people telling their own stories.

A source had to fulfil the first criteria and preferably at least one of 2-4 to be selected as appropriate for data collection. This allowed for the greatest possible diversity of sources across Indigenous and non-Indigenous media producers, resulting in a broader range of media representation and greater diversity of voices than would have been made possible on the basis of readership levels alone. I expanded the range of types of media to include print, online (including video clips from televised media programs), and radio sources. I also chose to

include letters to the editor or similar reader contributions. These were not assessed as a faithful and comprehensive measure of the readership's approach to topics of interest, but to identify a partial picture of audience concerns and to gauge the curatorial approach of mastheads on these themes.

The *Herald Sun* (Melbourne, Victoria), for example, was chosen on the basis of high readership levels, particularly by conservative or right-leaning media consumers as well as coverage of relevant content during the specified time period, despite failing to make much space for Indigenous people to narrate their own experiences of Invasion Day. On the other hand, programming by *98.9FM* (Brisbane, Queensland) was selected because of its specific coverage of Invasion Day content, the fact that it privileged Indigenous standpoints as an Indigenous-led radio station, and due to its established position as a media producer servicing the local Indigenous community. *Sky News* (online) was chosen because of its coverage of content related to January 26 as well as the fact that it reached a specific audience—Australian Parliamentarians and the Prime Minister—through privileged broadcasting on ParlTV (in-house television in Parliament House). Mainstream media sources tended to be chosen on the basis of readership, while Indigenous-led media sources tended to be chosen on the basis of privileging Indigenous perspectives in public discussion around January 26.

Data was collected from the following mainstream media sources for analysis: *The Australian* and the *Weekend Australian*, *Australian Associated Press* (henceforth abbreviated to *AAP*), *ABC News*, *News.com.au*, *Seven Network*, *7News*, *Daily Mail Australia*, *Nine Network*, *Nine.com.au*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Guardian Australia* (including *The Guardian-IndigenousX* partnership), *The Age*, *Yahoo News Australia*, *SBS News* and *National Indigenous Television (NITV)*, *Channel 10*, *Sky News*, *The Courier Mail* and *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane), *4BC*, the *Herald Sun* and *Sunday Herald Sun*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph* (Sydney), and *Nine Radio* stations including *3AW*, *4BC* and *2GB*. Data was also collected from the following alternative media sources: *National Indigenous Times*, *Koori Mail*, *IndigenousX*, *National Indigenous Radio Service*, *98.9FM* (Brisbane), *Indigi-Briz* on *4ZZZ* (Brisbane), *3KND* (Melbourne), and *Fire First*, *Blak'n'Deadly*, *The Black Block*, and dedicated Invasion Day 2020 broadcasts on *3CR* (Melbourne). Other alternative media sources including *Eureka Street*, *Crikey*, *Junkee* and *New Matilda* were also reviewed over the relevant time frame, due to their history of platforming Indigenous writers engaging in political commentary. This

resulted in the inclusion of two articles from *Junkee*, one from *Crikey* and one from *Eureka Street* that fit the search criteria and were by Indigenous authors.

Political statements in the form of media releases or speech transcripts were obtained by manual searches of the official media pages of key political figures between January 12 and February 9, 2020 (inclusive). At the national level, this was conducted for the media outputs of Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Leader of the Opposition Anthony Albanese, and for all cabinet and shadow cabinet ministers (not including outer cabinet or shadow ministers). Manual searches were also conducted for Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk and cabinet, and for Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews and cabinet. Media opinion pieces authored by government or opposition members at the state or federal level were also collected in accordance with the media search terms below.

Media items were considered for collection if published between January 12 and February 9, 2020 (inclusive). For online material, this was conducted via the application of a site-wide keyword searches for the terms: “26 January”, “Australia Day”, “Invasion Day”, “Survival Day”, “Captain Cook”, “protest”, “rally”, “riot”, “Indigenous”, “Aboriginal,” separated with the Boolean operator OR. Print material was manually searched for these keywords, triangulated with a ProQuest search for each print media source. For radio and television broadcast material, the keyword search was used to identify tags associated with audio or video clips, and from there the material was played in full to determine relevance to the research according to the above selection criteria. During and after the fieldwork trip to Brisbane, the keyword search list included the terms “police” and “policing”. These were later removed as the project aims and questions were refined to move away from a focus on policing (see more about changes to the project in the Limitations section).

Identifying the sample

I used a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel to catalogue the full set of data collected in relation to key search criteria (keywords and supplementary investigation). I applied column heading filters to enable filtering for duplicates, connections with January 26 (either explicit or implicit), assessment of relevance at first pass (for my own record-keeping), and to identify subsets for analysis with descriptive statistics, content analysis, and critical discourse analysis. Duplicates were defined as any item reproduced in full with no difference in content, such as

articles or news clips cross-posted over several mastheads under the same ownership. In some cases, it was possible to identify when and where a duplicated media item was first posted and therefore label it as the primary instance of publication; for example, where the *AAP* published an article via their newswire and it was reposted by a masthead the next day. However, simultaneous cross-posting across multiple mastheads under the same ownership was quite common, particularly across News Corp and Nine Entertainment publications. In these cases, the choice of a primary version was arbitrary given identical content.

Connections with January 26 were recorded for all data points during cataloguing, informed by an interest in messaging around both the 26th and the 250th anniversary of colonial possession. This enabled filtering for all data points referring to January 26 to determine their quantity and distribution across the data collection period to provide an insight into the extent of media production related to this occasion. The subset of data produced also necessarily included any items referring to both January 26 and the 250th anniversary, while the remaining data related to the 250th anniversary alone. Data points were flagged if they referred to January 26 explicitly, containing direct reference to the date and its meaning, or implicitly, referring to the significance of the date through other common messaging related to it, such as via the Australian of the Year awards.

Sorting the data out into different subsets for quantitative and qualitative analysis was an iterative process. In practice, this meant that I conducted several passes through the full dataset and many more through subsets thereof to identify and refine parameters of relevance and thresholds for inclusion in various stages of analysis. Data points included for analysis had to fulfil the basic conditions of being identified in the key search criteria and subsequent first-pass assessment, as well as including messaging relevant to January 26 beyond using it solely as a date-marker. This first stage captured the full set of media/political data relevant to the present analysis. Before removing duplicates, the set included 1762 media items and 28 official political statements, out of which 1726 and 24 respectively had some connection with January 26. After excluding duplicates (only relevant for media sources), the set included 1260 media items, out of which 1232 had some connection with January 26.

Descriptive Statistics

After multiple passes through the full dataset, filtering to identify sources which additionally met the requirement of presenting a more concerted focus on January 26 and/or the 250th anniversary resulted in a subset of 895 media items and 25 political statements. This filtering also involved removing all standalone visual sources (referring both to images and videos with no commentary), as while these met the criteria for inclusion in the primary dataset they were ultimately not well-suited to the thesis' focus on textual analysis. Many of the items excluded were coverage of 'Australia Day' awards and citizenship ceremonies being held at the national or local council level. These typically contained a list of award recipients with short accompanying biographies and without substantial discussion of January 26. Another subset of excluded items covered incidents that had occurred on January 26 in relation to (or at least described in relation to) celebrating the date, but which primarily addressed issues of crime, the Australian Open, or, tragically, the substantial coverage of the death of a woman in Hervey Bay who choked on a lamington during an 'Australia Day' eating competition. Four other items excluded at this stage appeared to be directly relevant to the thesis questions but were in languages other than English. All four were SBS Language radio programs which met the search criteria and were considered valid for initial inclusion due to basic English-language descriptions accompanying the radio segments. Political statements were not included in quantitative analysis, as the intent of this stage was to determine how key concerns in the thesis questions mapped onto the media data.

Basic quantitative analysis in the form of descriptive statistics was applied to the narrowed media dataset to determine:

- How many publications were produced per masthead over the data collection period,
- The average daily number of publications per masthead,
- The average daily number of publications per owner, and
- How many of each source type (e.g. news article, opinion piece, entertainment) occurred across the dataset and per masthead.

The following questions were also applied through the development of a media analysis grid (Hodgetts & Chamberlain, 2013, pp. 387–388) which was integrated into the spreadsheet by adding a column for each question.

- What is the primary focus of the item?

- Did the item include a direct reference to January 26, implied reference, or no reference?
- How was the date referred to, e.g. ‘Invasion Day’, ‘Survival Day’, ‘Day of Mourning’, ‘Australia Day’ or something else?
- Was there collocation of different names for the date within individual media items?
- Did items include reference to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples?
- Did items include direct input from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander sources (relevant to thesis topics), e.g. as interviewees, commentators, etc.?
- Did items encourage audience participation, and of what kind (e.g. complete quiz, attend event, host your own event, join rally)?
- Did items include some link between January 26 and the 250th anniversary?
- Were there any direct references to sovereignty/ies, and if so, whose?

Filters were applied to produce frequency counts of responses to the above questions, resulting in a quantitative evidence base to support themes emerging from content analysis.

A combined quantitative/enumerative and qualitative/thematic approach to content analysis proved well-suited due to the size of the data set (Grbich, 2007, pp. 111–112). The questions above supported the extraction of relevant information from the data without subjecting the full set to content analysis, while still focusing on a range of issues supplementary to themes emerging from the coding process. For example, identifying audience participation and being able to disaggregate responses across different types of publication provided further insight into the co-creation of particular meanings about January 26, e.g. encouragement to celebrate Australia Day, or encouragement to attend The Vigil and participate in a night of reflection on January 25.

Content Analysis

A further level of filtering was applied to the descriptive statistics data set to narrow the list of items for content analysis to 392 distinct media items and 15 political statements (full list included in Appendix C). This process was informed by a close reading, viewing of or listening to each item to determine the threshold level of relevance for further analysis. Typically, items were excluded from content analysis if they contained only general reference to January 26 and/or 250 years. This included a number of articles covering the cancellation of ‘Australia

Day' fireworks celebrations due to ongoing bushfires and noting alternative celebrations, but without any more substantial engagement with the meaning of the date. All audiovisual sources, such as news reports and current affairs programs, were excluded from content analysis at this stage. This decision was made due to the thesis' primary focus on textual analysis, though key insights from such sources were captured as part of the quantitative analysis. The effect of this omission is discussed further in the 'Limitations' section.

Grbich (2007, p. 112) identifies that content analysis is well suited to “unobtrusively explore large amounts of textual information in order to ascertain the trends and patterns of words used, their frequency, their relationships and the structures and discourses of communication”. Considering the large amount of data generated through the selection process above, this was a useful and convenient approach for both cataloguing the data and identifying broad trends across the set. While content analysis has been criticised for reducing or abstracting from the specifics of given sections of text, in this case it was beneficial to be able to reduce a large amount of data into a concrete set of themes, and compare findings across the whole set (Grbich, 2007, p. 122; Schreier, 2013, p. 170). Further, Bryman (2012, p. 291) notes that in many studies employing content analysis to look at media and other texts, there is an interest in both what is reported and what is omitted. Omission in particular is important for this research project, considering the focus on contested sovereignties on January 26, where both explicit recognition of competing claims, and the prioritisation of settler sovereignty with no mention of Indigenous political claims, are equally information rich. A summary of key elements of the dataset obtained through content analysis supported me to identify when, where and how these gaps occurred.

The process of content analysis also provided an opportunity to identify terminology of interest. These included words (and stemmed versions thereof) such as “settle”, “controversy” and “debate,” which provide particular insights into the construction and reproduction of nationalist narratives and the colonial politics of recognition around questions of Indigenous rights/justice and sovereignty. Instances of the words “modern” and “civilised” also contained useful information about the self-defined legitimacy of settler colonial occupation, practices of discursively positioning Indigenous peoples in a static past, and the projection of “Australianness” back into a fictional narrative of national progress over time. I have chosen to refer to the presence of these terms rather than to present their prevalence to illustrate their

relevance to dominant discourses around January 26 rather than to provide a definitive frequency count.

As noted previously, a subset of the data identified for content analysis—items from January 25—was reviewed to identify key parent and child nodes present across mainstream media data. These were incorporated into the coding frame first developed via analysis of interview transcripts and a selection of Indigenous-led media items. Adding this subset of mainstream media data was necessary due to the fact that mainstream media included a range of themes and sub-categories entirely distinct to those identified while building the initial coding frame but still relevant to the thesis questions, such as expressions of racism, issues surrounding multiculturalism, and a range of nationalist sentiments.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Building on the insights gained via content analysis, I also engaged in a limited amount of critical discourse analysis. This was applied to several key passages of texts identified as exemplary of a range of intersecting themes emerging from the process of content analysis. Incorporating this additional element of analysis allowed for a level of fine-grained analysis of discursive approaches to sovereignty and resistance that could not have been captured through content analysis alone (Grbich, 2007, p. 122).

Critical discourse analysis is typically defined as a genre of textual analysis that explores the relationship between texts and social practices with a focus on power relations (Fairclough, 1993, pp. 9–10; van Dijk, 2001, p. 352; Wodak, 2001, pp. 1–2). Broadly speaking, critical discourse analysis emerged through the confluence of critical social theory and linguistic analyses in the second half of the 20th century, consolidating as a field in the 1980s and 1990s (Wodak, 2001, p. 4). It is often explicitly engaged in emancipatory research projects that seek to interrogate relations of social inequality, and particularly the way that these are “expressed, signalled, constituted, legitimized and so on” through language (Wodak, 2001, p. 2). ‘Discourse’ is understood to encompass both “processes of producing and interpreting speech and writing, as well as the situational context of language use,” where ‘text’ is just “one dimension of discourse” (Fairclough, 1993, p. 3). Per Foucault in the previous chapter, discourse is understood as not just representing but also constituting social subjects and relations (Fairclough, 1993, pp. 3–4). Carvalho (2008, p. 162) notes that western Marxism,

particularly via the work of Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser and the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, serves as an “important backdrop” for critical discourse analysis.

Three of the most influential approaches to critical discourse analysis are Teun van Dijk’s (2001) socio-cognitive approach, Ruth Wodak’s (2009) socio-historical approach, and Norman Fairclough’s (1993) socio-cultural approach (see La Brooy, 2015, pp. 72–73). van Dijk’s (2001) socio-cognitive approach focuses on analysis that bridges micro-level communicative events with macro-level social relations through specific attention to discourse and control in social cognition. Wodak’s (2009) socio-historical or discourse-historical approach incorporates analysis of features internal to texts or discourses with “socio-diagnostic” or contextual critique and “prognostic” or transformative actions oriented towards discursive change. Finally, Fairclough’s (1993, p. 4) socio-cultural approach integrates linguistic analysis with social theory to look at discourse as “simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice, and an instance of social practice,” contextualising discourses and emphasising the transformative potential of discursive practice. This thesis primarily employs features of Norman Fairclough’s (1993) approach to critical discourse analysis.

Fairclough’s approach to meshing language analysis and social theory follows from the combination of critical theory and poststructural approaches outlined in Chapter 2. Fairclough (1993) draws on the work of Foucault with specific attention to the transformation of Foucault’s approach to discourses across his archaeological and genealogical periods through the incorporation of an explicit analysis of power. However, Fairclough couples this discursive analysis with Gramsci’s theorisation of hegemony. Particularly important for this thesis is Fairclough’s (1993, p. 57) critique of Foucault’s overemphasis on power as dominance, so that while “Foucault certainly insists that power necessarily entails resistance... he gives the impression that resistance is generally contained by power and poses no threat”. This leads to Fairclough’s (1993, p. 65) innovative development of a method of critical discourse analysis which incorporates a reading of discursive practices as “constitutive in both conventional and *creative* ways,” contributing to both reproducing and transforming society. Fairclough’s approach to critical discourse analysis is well suited to the focus of the present research, which interrogates the production and normalisation of investments in Australian settler colonial sovereignty in relation to articulations and representations of Indigenous sovereignties. Emphasising the disruptions and potential transformations of the status quo occasioned by the latter is an important aspect of the anti-colonial orientation of the thesis. An engagement with

moments of change has allowed me to analyse both the Australian settler colonial “regime of truth” (Foucault, 1984, pp. 72–73), as well as the way that expressions of Indigenous sovereignty reveal discourse as both “a site of power struggle, but also a stake in power struggle” (Fairclough, 1993, p. 67).

This approach also aligns with the thesis’ engagement with Hall who, as discussed previously, develops Gramsci’s hegemony and common sense to look at the situated production and effects of media repertoires—both discursive and non-discursive. Hall (2019b, p. 270) asserts that the identification of “dominant meanings” in particular communicative processes must also attend to “the “work” required to enforce, win plausibility for, and command as legitimate a decoding of the event within the dominant definition in which it has been connotatively signified”. This links to both the production and reinforcement of hegemonic discourses as well as Gramscian ‘common sense’ (S. Hall, 1982, p. 69). This has allowed me to draw out not just the power relations fixed in particular instances of discourse, but to identify the ideological grammar of settler colonial sovereignty as manifest through media texts.

Given the thesis’ emphasis on relationships between discourse and power, it is clear that critical discourse analysis via Fairclough provides a robust framework for exploring the articulation and representation of contested sovereignties in Australia. However, per my decision to foreground theorising on race, whiteness and colonisation, it is necessary to clarify that this research primarily employs critical discourse analysis as a *method* rather than an orienting methodological approach. While acknowledging the theoretical lineages of critical discourse analysis and in the particular contributions of Foucault, the discussion in Chapter 2 ultimately provides a justification for the application of close textual analysis guided by a critique of racialised knowledge production and stemming from Indigenous and anti-colonial epistemologies. In practical terms, this has translated into a more fluid use of critical discourse analysis as one among several textual analysis tools engaged to analyse the media data.

Ethical Considerations and Positionality

While the intention of the present research is to interrogate racialised, possessive ways of ‘knowing’ Indigenous people in Australia through media discourses, a critical approach and explicitly political stance do not alone neutralise concerns raised by Indigenous peoples about

the intentions and practices of non-Indigenous academic researchers. Simply being a non-white researcher also does not guarantee that the work that I am engaging in is inherently anti-colonial. Smith (2012) cautions us that academia has caused and continues to cause extensive harm to Indigenous peoples and is deeply implicated in the colonial project. Moreton-Robinson (2004, p. 75), responding to a piece by Irene Watson critiquing anthropologists' imposition of a hierarchy of knowledge onto Aboriginal people, also addresses the way that academia produces "knowledge about Indigenous people but their way of knowing is never thought of by white people as being racialised despite whiteness being exercised epistemologically." Moreton-Robinson (2004, pp. 75–76) problematises this operation of whiteness by attending to its insidious operation in Australian academia with respect to white and Indigenous scholarship in Aboriginal studies. The present research attempts to grapple with Moreton-Robinson's charge through active engagement with the epistemological unsettling of critical Indigenous scholarship, such as that of Moreton-Robinson (2004, 2007, 2015) herself, Watson (2007, 2009, 2014), Coulthard (2014), Simpson (2014, 2017) and others.

Analysing the role of institutional ethics review boards in academic institutions, Tuck and Guishard (2013, p. 7) additionally identify the "reactive and partial" nature of an approach to ethics that treats "the symptoms of abuse and not the causes: abidances to logics of settler colonialism, scientific racism, and White supremacy." I agree with Tuck and Guishard's assessment of the inadequacy of formal academic ethics review processes to fully capture the complexity of human and non-human relations implicated in social science research. Addressing ethics from the basis of concerns around risk management and institutional liability facilitates the smooth reproduction of problematic power dynamics between researchers and their so-called 'subjects'. Undergoing a thorough assessment of one's positionality and then applying this knowledge to further ethical research engagements is therefore a necessary first step in the research process, and something which is only minimally addressed in institutional ethics reviews. This is particularly important when researching with Indigenous communities in settler colonial states, where a key ethical concern is to avoid engaging in research that voyeuristically "document[s] damage" without unsettling the underlying problematic of white supremacy and ongoing colonial violence (Tuck & Guishard, 2013, p. 13).

Feminist and decolonial approaches to social research emphasise the importance of articulating one's position in relation to one's research in order to contextualise knowledge production. This means engaging both inside and outside of the research space with the way that one's

positionality influences research design, from the development of preliminary research questions through to analysis and research translation (Rose, 1997). Acknowledging the ways in which one's identities articulate with and inform one's research priorities can support the development of more transparent and accountable research practices. As a South Indian migrant settler and non-binary trans person living and working on stolen Wurundjeri Country, I am undoubtedly a beneficiary of settler colonialism. However, my motivations for engaging in this research come from a political commitment to stand in solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty through actively supporting resistance against ongoing colonisation. Prior to submitting the thesis proposal, I had been thinking and learning about Indigenous resistance, white supremacy and settler coloniality for several years, attempting to self-educate by reading Indigenous scholarship and attending protest events in solidarity as often as possible.

Throughout the research process, I have had the opportunity to continue learning and practicing solidarity with Indigenous peoples in Naarm/Birraranga and elsewhere. I have developed an understanding that there is nothing inherently emancipatory about purely academic work and have endeavoured to put my political commitments to Indigenous sovereignty into practice through community broadcasting at 3CR while engaged in research. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the thesis also engages the analysis of Indigenous activists involved in resistance movements as theory informed by sovereign relationships to Country and to other Indigenous polities. Finally, to support addressing the concerns outlined above, this research is also informed by methodological frameworks provided by Smith (2012) and Denzin, Lincoln and Smith (2008)- and through alignment with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies' (2012) *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies*. While this research is undoubtedly constrained by the institutional parameters of the university, it is ultimately guided by a personal commitment to epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2009) against ongoing settler colonialism.

Research Limitations and COVID-19 Impacts

As an exploratory qualitative research project, this investigation was subject to limitations related to both research approach and unforeseen circumstances. This section briefly outlines key limitations of the present research, beginning with those associated with data collection

and interpretation. It then covers the range of changes made to the research plan as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Limitations

Due to the small interview cohort and the exploratory nature of the research, there were several limitations to the ethnographic component of the project. My choice to interview three protest organisers with aligned political commitments and to centre their concerns about anti-colonial resistance has resulted in a thesis that emphasises a specific approach to the expression of Indigenous sovereignty. This means that other expressions of Indigenous sovereignty, including as a quotidian lived experience, were marginalised in the effort to unpack representations of a particular style and tone of political communication. A further limitation is the temporal and spatial specificity of data collection. My choice of sites and the timeframe of the research were restricted to the month-long period surrounding January 26, 2020 in Brisbane and Melbourne. I was thus unable to capture a greater diversity of actions, activities and tactics within Indigenous political movements, including how political communication around Invasion Day related to other Indigenous-led resistance actions. Further, lacunae in my data collection will inevitably be present if interviewees have chosen to engage in a politics of refusal while participating in the research, of turning away from certain questions, refusing to have particular knowledges cannibalised and reframed through an academic lens (see A. Simpson, 2014, pp. 105–106).

Limitations have also been identified with respect to the choice of media sources for analysis. The decision to filter out visual sources from the media dataset used for qualitative content analysis, including images and videos, will have had an impact on the distribution of relative emphasis across key themes. This is particularly the case with the removal of videos, many of which were *Sky News* clips. Considering the platform's production of a specific brand of conservative current affairs commentary, this exclusion may have been to the detriment of a richer analysis of discursive techniques employed to disparage opposition to nationalist celebrations, and to shore up legitimacy for the Australian settler state. However, this has been captured to a degree within the textual data, given the inclusion of 3 transcribed radio programs and 5 written opinion pieces by *Sky News* hosts and/or return guest commentators which had significant thematic overlap with their visual media correlates. The analysis of visual techniques used to signal national legitimacy and to frame political resistance against the settler

state in relation to January 26 is a valuable area for further research (see, for example, Caple & Bednarek, 2020).

Relatedly, critical discourse analysis as a method has attracted critique on the basis of a perceived reduction of complex social processes to only that which is expressed through language, neglecting extra-discursive factors. Carvalho (2008) suggests that critical discourse analysis when applied to media texts might be more sensitive with respect to the time-plane of journalistic texts, discursive strategies of social actors, and the social effects of mediated discourses. However, the primary concern of the present research was to conduct an exploratory inquiry into discursive constructions of Indigenous sovereignty in tension with settler common sense (Rifkin, 2013), rather than attempting to account for these constructions holistically. Combining critical discourse analysis with a brief period of participant observation (with this also supplemented by prior participation in similar events) provided extra-discursive context which informed the textual analysis. An in-depth analysis of extra-discursive features of meaning-construction around January 26 was outside the scope of the research, but again warrants further exploration.

COVID-19 Impacts

There were several substantial changes made to the project as originally designed due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This involved re-framing the research to focus on Brisbane, where I had already undertaken fieldwork prior to the lockdown and border closures, and Melbourne, where I am based and where I was initially planning on conducting fieldwork and interviews associated with other Indigenous-led protests. I also adjusted my methods to draw on the first period of fieldwork as a foundation for the analysis of secondary sources in the form of media and political statements, given difficulties in conducting further participant observation and interviews with Melbourne-based activists across 2020 and early 2021. However, by incorporating alternative media sources which expressed an explicit political alignment with the Melbourne organisers, and which includes in some cases sympathetic interviews with them about the rallies, this loss has hopefully been somewhat mitigated.

Conclusion

My interest in exploring political expression and representation around January 26, 2020 resulted the development of a research design that sought to balance methodological rigour with a personal political commitment to Indigenous sovereignty. I embedded this commitment in the research by focusing on the concerns of Indigenous activists about contested sovereignties and settler-controlled narratives of politics and nationhood. Acknowledging the importance of attending to place when researching contested sovereignties on stolen land, this chapter began with a brief overview of the historical and political contexts of Meanjin/Brisbane and Naarm/Birraranga/Melbourne, justifying their selection as research sites. This was followed by an outline of methods used to collect primary and secondary data, which respectively involved participant observation and semi-structured interviewing at Meanjin's Invasion Day 2020 rally and the collection of mainstream and alternative media data and political statements from key State (Queensland and Victoria) and federal government figures. In order to maintain a focus on Indigenous activists' concerns about sovereignty and political expression in the analysis, interview and alternative media items (produced and/or presented by Indigenous people) were included both as data points and to guide the identification of key themes in the broader dataset. Analysis proceeded via the use of a combination of descriptive statistics and qualitative content analysis, supplemented with some critical discourse analysis techniques to provide more detailed insights into normative language use around January 26. The final sections of this chapter turned to a direct consideration of ethics, positionality and limitations of the present research. Having established the methodology and methods used in the thesis, the following five chapters present the research findings.

Chapter 4: Sovereignties

Introduction

Given that the thesis' argument hinges on expressions and representations of sovereignty in public discourse around January 26, this chapter focuses on an investigation of how this concept is engaged by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the data. This involves an exploration of the various ways in which both Indigenous and settler state sovereignty are discursively claimed and represented via mainstream media and political statements as well as independent media items and interview data. These spheres of communication are not brought together for a systematic comparative analysis of representations of sovereignty, but instead to show how Indigenous and settler sovereignties are invoked in different ways across different spaces of articulation. Through exploring these expressions, this chapter begins to address the research questions' focus on how sovereignties are defined and claimed in the data.

The chapter begins with a brief macro-level exploration of the data included for qualitative analysis to investigate where and when 'sovereignty' and stemmed words were used. The rest of the chapter is split into two parts, with the first focusing on understandings and expressions of Indigenous sovereignty, exploring references to sovereignty by Indigenous speakers and writers across the media data and interviews. This part of the chapter is split into three key areas: discussion of the origins of and responsibilities associated with Indigenous sovereignty, claims that sovereignty has not been ceded or extinguished by colonisation, and Indigenous peoples' approaches to asserting sovereignty (acknowledging that the particular focus of the thesis on January 26 means that only a narrow subset of possible approaches will be captured here). The second part of the chapter engages with settler claims to sovereignty, making the argument that while the term is much less frequently used in relation to the Australian settler state, it still has significant explanatory value as a concept anchoring the development of Australia's national identity and narrative. Part two of the chapter is also divided across three areas. This begins with identifying where and how non-Indigenous people and various media platforms locate the origins of their claims to sovereignty and legitimise white possession. After this, settler relationships to land are explored, with a focus on both attachments to land and references to the continent's hostile environment in the data. The third and final area analyses framings of the national narrative as a story in three parts, an approach which

functions to naturalise the political legitimacy of the settler state through framing the national community as inclusive and diverse.

Naming sovereignty

Prior to an in-depth exploration of references to Indigenous and settler sovereignties, I found it useful to identify whether and where the term ‘sovereignty’ was explicitly used in the data. This was determined through a word frequency search of the media data imported into NVivo to identify direct references to sovereignty across this subset of 407 distinct items included for qualitative content analysis (341 mainstream media items, 51 alternative media items and 15 political statements). The search was conducted using the Boolean formula: “sovereign” OR “sovereignty” (including stemmed words). This resulted in a list of references to the terms “sovereign” OR “sovereigns” OR “sovereignty” across 44 distinct items, categorised by publication in Figure 1. Out of these 44 items, 29 were mainstream media items, 14 were alternative media items, and 1 was a published transcript of a speech given by then-Prime Minister Scott Morrison at the national flag raising and citizenship ceremony on January 26. References to sovereignty were therefore disproportionately concentrated across items from independent media sources, particularly independent/alternative radio stations (12 out of 14 items). Additionally, as shown in Figure 2 below, references to sovereignty were largely identified in items published on January 26, which made up 19 of the 44 items including Morrison’s transcript.

Indigenous sovereignties were referenced in 32 out of the 44 identified items, across 14 independent media items and 18 mainstream media items. There were no references to Indigenous sovereignty in official statements from politicians. All 14 independent media items that included one or more instance of the word ‘sovereignty’ or stemmed terms included at least one reference to Indigenous sovereignty. As shown in Figure 1, the term appeared most frequently in items from independent radio sources *98.9FM*, *4ZZZ* and *3CR*, where data from the latter two sources included dedicated Invasion Day programming on January 26 broadcasting speeches from rallies in Meanjin and Naarm/Birraranga respectively.

Non-Indigenous sovereignties were referenced across 17 out of 44 items included for qualitative analysis. References to sovereignty were divided across British (10 mainstream

media items), Australian (5 mainstream and 1 independent media item), general references to sovereignty as a concept (4 mainstream and 1 statement by Morrison), and references to sovereignty where the nature of use was unclear or was included as part of a name (e.g. Brisbane Aboriginal Sovereign Embassy, 3 mainstream and 1 independent).

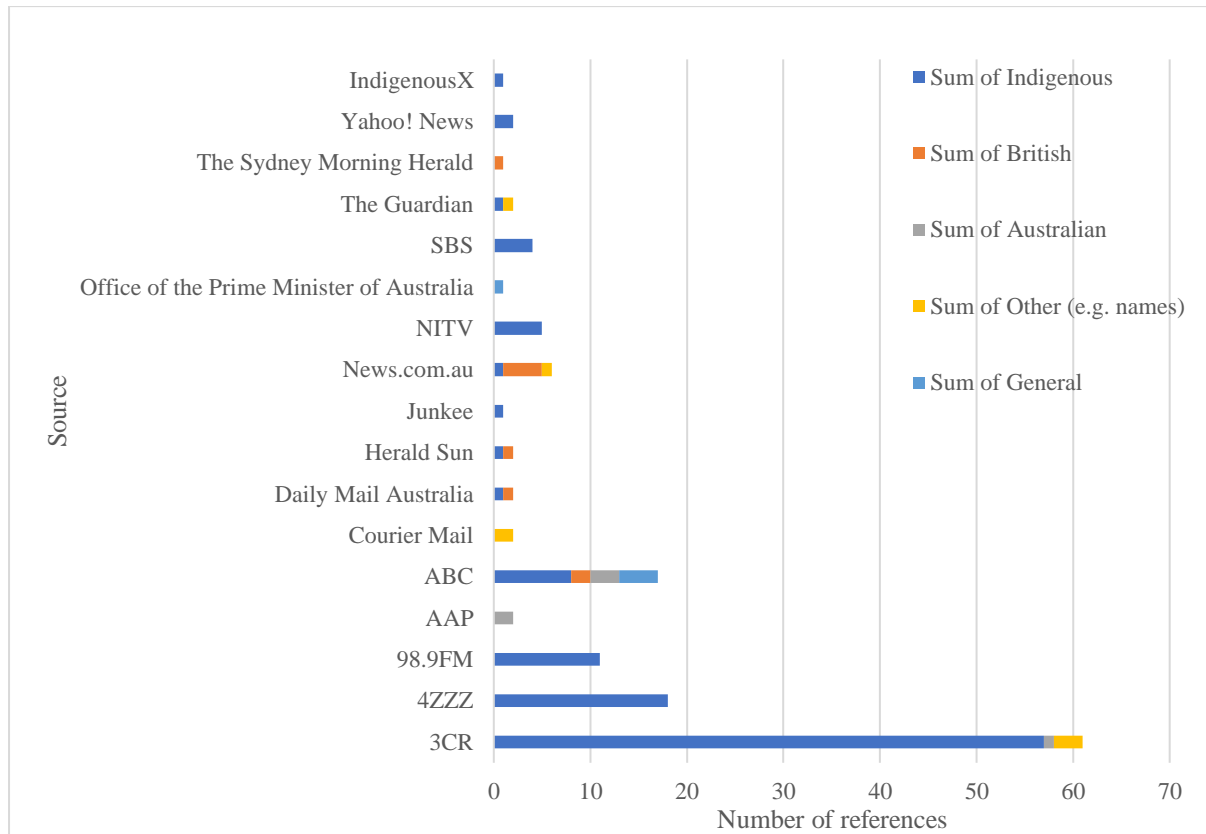


Figure 1 Use of the term 'sovereignty' and stemmed words by publication

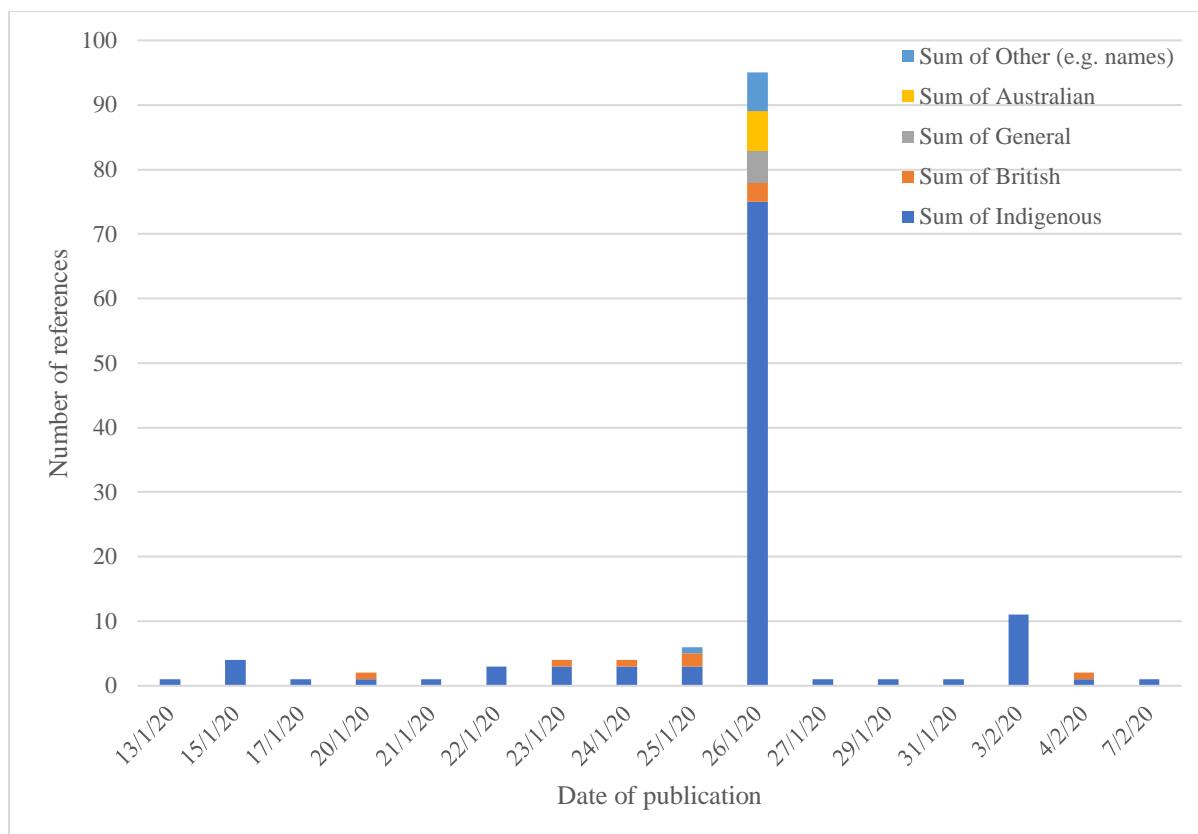


Figure 2 Use of the term 'sovereignty' and stemmed words by date

Basic quantitative analysis of this subset of the media data demonstrated that explicit discussion of sovereignty of any kind was relatively infrequent across mainstream media sources, with the exception of the *ABC*. The term enjoyed much more frequent use in Indigenous-produced media items from alternative media sources, which largely referred to Indigenous sovereignty. These insights from the media data are consistent with the way that Indigenous peoples' political authority is normatively positioned relative to that of the Australian settler state, with overt references to sovereignty by Indigenous people forming part of a strategy of challenging the political consensus established through the racial contract (A. Simpson, 2020, p. 691). As identified in the previous chapter, the approach to data analysis was strongly and intentionally influenced by key concerns identified by the three interviewees, all of whom were Indigenous activists directly involved in anti-colonial organising, and by other Indigenous activists and commentators via Indigenous-led media production. While interviewees were directly asked about the relevance of sovereignty to their political activism, a range of Indigenous speakers and writers in the media data also chose to use the term when discussing the basis for Indigenous resistance against the celebration of colonial anniversaries. However, this does not mean that discussions about Indigenous sovereignty were solely limited to direct use of the term. The first part of Chapter 2 touched on the strategic redefinition of

sovereignty for use in Indigenous peoples' political struggles. As Moreton-Robinson (2020, p. 258) describes, this has resulted in the attachment of multiple meanings to sovereignty by Indigenous peoples, including "refer[ring] to people who have never surrendered their lands, to illegal occupation; to prior, inherent rights in territories; to belonging to a particular Indigenous people; to holding tribal citizenship, to a political and moral claim to inclusion within settler states; to recognition as first peoples and to treating as sovereign nations." This gestures to the presence of a broad range of referents linked to Indigenous sovereignty, as will be explored further below.

The use of sovereignty in relation to settler political authority presented a more complicated picture. There were far fewer direct references to settler than Indigenous sovereignty across sources identified to include at least one variation on the term, and it was more commonly used in reference to British (10 items) than to Australian (4 items) sovereignty. This difference in references to British sovereignty via colonial possession as opposed to the sovereignty of the Australian settler state is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. In regard to the relative infrequency of the term in relation to settler political claims, Simpson (2020, p. 688, emphasis in original) reminds that "in Anglo-liberal democracies, *settler* sovereignty is at work as jurisdiction, maintaining and protecting territory, but it tries to conceal its power and its history in a variety of ways." Rather than being expressed at the foreground of settler political claim-making, assumed sovereignty forms the basis upon which these claims become possible, and against which Indigenous claims to sovereignty are framed as incongruous. This indicates that, as with Indigenous sovereignty, there is a referential system within which settler sovereignty is situated. The thesis overall argues that such a referential system must be explored in order to gain a fuller picture of how the political legitimacy of the Australian settler state is normalised. Therefore, this chapter asserts that despite a lack of widespread use of the term 'sovereignty' with reference to the Australian settler state, the assumed reality of Australia's sovereignty is clearly implied in narratives surrounding Australia's national day on January 26. Discourses of settler sovereignty explored below provide a foundation for the investigation of normative investments in past, present and future possession across subsequent chapters.

Indigenous sovereignty

Indigenous sovereignty was rarely explicitly defined by any of the Indigenous speakers across the interviews or media items, with the term most frequently asserted as a self-evident claim. However, in instances where speakers chose to define the term, these statements provided significant insights into a number of key features associated with Indigenous sovereignty:

“Um... Well I guess to me, uh... You know, it's- and I guess for some people it's the same- it's our birthright. You know, um... it's, you know um, the right to sort of engage in and be a part of the conversations that sort of lead me as an individual, um I guess as a partner, and as a parent as well—it's me having um, you know, yeah, you know, the right and the destiny to pick and choose sort of what I can and can't do.” - Interviewee 1

“...their sovereignty is really really based on, sort of, um, on this Western sort of way of how they look at um, not just ownership of land, but also of people as well, um, and how they- and their sovereignty is based on like commodity, and how much they can make off that, um, and that sort of contradicts our, you know, Aboriginal people, and maybe other Indigenous folks, sort of, their beliefs of what sovereignty is as well, you know, um, um, you know, the sovereignty that we have on this continent, if you wanna use a time-frame, but for like 60,000 years, uh the sovereignty that was based on this land, maintained with country in pristine condition, you know, um, you know, uh the sovereignty that was sort of based in this land before whitefullas were here, meant that no children ever got to be homeless or, you know, never had a parent, or never went feeling hungry.” - Interviewee 1

“And we have come up, this, this policy that we call Pay The Rent was created by Aboriginal people back in the day, Elders who were gonna use Pay The Rent to take care of the basic and fundamental health and welfare needs and had that in the communities. So communities could control and run themselves and empower them, be self-determining. All of the principles of sovereignty. And that's what the, the thing was about.” - Robbie Thorpe (Krauatungalung) (3CR, 2020)

“I just wanna tell you something. Just over there, right, there- there used to be a big ceremony ground that gave you access to this land. That's what sovereignty is on a cultural perspective. The rights to country. The rights to how you treat country. And the rights to allowing who you want in a country and who you don't want. We never ceded that sovereignty. But I've never seen it in action in 2019 and 2020. To me it's just a word. Let's start fightin' for our sovereignty, 'cause our ancestors never gave it to anyone!” - Bill Nicholson (Wurundjeri) (3CR, 2020)

Taken together, the definitions provided above touch on a range of key concepts commonly associated by Indigenous speakers with Indigenous sovereignty across the media data, moving from the individual to the collective level. At the individual level, Interviewee 1 identifies that sovereignty is their “birthright” and is crucially linked to self-determination, “the right and destiny to pick and choose... what [they] can and can't do.” This is fundamentally connected to their right to contribute to collective decision-making, and, as they elaborate in the second quote, it is also inextricable from their responsibilities to community and Country. In this second quote, Interviewee 1 differentiates between Indigenous and settler sovereignties on the basis of their respective commitments to relationality versus possession. Interviewee 1 makes specific note of how personhood and relationships to community and Country are differently configured in Indigenous versus settler conceptions of sovereignty, where the former is couched in an ethos of collective care and sustainability and the latter is primarily concerned with categories of ownership.

The commitments to community outlined by Interviewee 1 are echoed in the quote from Krauatungalung man Robbie Thorpe, speaking in the introductory hour of 3CR's Invasion Day 2020 special broadcast. Thorpe defines sovereignty through the use of a specific example, the Indigenous community-controlled initiative Pay the Rent. Thorpe notes that the principles of community control and empowerment, self-governance, and self-determination are core components of sovereignty, again centring relationality. Additionally, the quote from Wurundjeri man Bill Nicholson elaborates on Interviewee 1's mention of the relationship between sovereignty and Country. Speaking on Wurundjeri Country at Melbourne's 2020 Invasion Day rally, Nicholson explains the relationship between ceremony, territory and the assertion of sovereignty “on a cultural perspective.” Here, the language of rights emerges in relation to Country, with specific reference to land use and access. Together, the above quotes

provide the beginning of a guide to exploring implicit references to sovereignty through Indigenous speakers' discussion of self-determination, relationality, responsibility and land rights.

As identified in the first part of the chapter and demonstrated across the quotes from Interviewee 1, Thorpe and Nicholson, there are a number of ways that Indigenous sovereignty may be indirectly discussed in relation to specific sites of political struggle. Exploring this further involved a close reading of Indigenous-produced media texts and interview transcripts alongside revisiting key texts by Aboriginal scholars such as Moreton-Robinson (2015) and Watson (2014) to assess the relative significance of particular themes when it came to the articulation of sovereignty, such as care for Country and the prior existence, presence and endurance of Indigenous law. Codes were then developed to capture a range of expressions relevant to Indigenous sovereignty—the most significant of which are discussed here—and applied to the broader media data set during the process of content analysis.

The most frequently used codes relating to Indigenous sovereignty have been divided into three main categories: those referring to the origins of and responsibilities associated with Indigenous sovereignty, those referring to the ongoing nature of Indigenous sovereignty, and those referring to the mechanisms through which sovereignty is expressed. However, the distinction between these three categories is primarily analytical, as there are clear relationships between the origins, endurance and expressions of Indigenous sovereignty. This has meant, for example, that references to Indigenous law have been distributed across both themes of origins and responsibility as well as the enduring nature of Indigenous sovereignty on the basis of its precedence and persistence. Further, these categories are necessarily limited in their generalisability due to the fact that they were developed through the analysis of data collected in response to politically-oriented research questions which aimed to engage the concerns of Indigenous activists and commentators in particular. This means that the results emphasised a relatively strong commitment to more overt forms of political action, such as through protest, to achieve Indigenous self-determination and the recognition of sovereignty.

Origins and responsibilities

As identified in the quotes from Interviewee 1 and Bill Nicholson, care for and connection to Country are closely linked to Indigenous sovereignty, with relational and political implications.

Across the media data, at least 8 different Indigenous speakers drew this connection: 7 in 3CR radio transcripts and 1 in an *IndigenousX* article. In her piece for *IndigenousX* on January 20, 2020 Wonnarua woman Shiralee Lawson (2020) states:

First Nations voices have shaped and cared for country for more than 80,000 years. We as Aboriginal people operate from a collectivist perspective. Everything we strive toward is for the betterment of mob. We don't operate in isolation; it's not our way.

Here, Lawson links together collective decision-making with care for community and Country, making reference to the long-term sustainability of Indigenous governance practices. This speaks to a direct relationship between being in good relation with one's community and with the more-than-human environment, and Lawson's assertion that operating in isolation is "not our way" emphasises the importance of this relationality.

Similarly, at Melbourne's 2020 Invasion Day rally, Bundjalung and South Sea Islander woman Millie Telford, then an organiser with Seed Indigenous Youth Climate Network, draws on comments made in a preceding speech by Robbie Thorpe to build on the connections between sovereignty, Country and environmental destruction:

As Uncle Rob said, our land is our law. And it's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that have been looking after Country here for thousands and thousands of years. And yet, within a matter of 250 years of colonisation, look where we are right now. Our country is being dug up and destroyed. (3CR, 2020)

Telford affirms that land and law are conceptually inextricable and connects this to an analysis of colonisation as disruptive of Indigenous governance systems. Environmental harm occurs as a consequence of this disruption. At the end of her speech, Telford leads the crowd in the chant: "hands off our women, hands off our mother, protect Country!" This chant critically engages the "possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty" (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 83), a logic engendering a mode of appropriation coextensive across Indigenous lands and the bodies of (in particular) Indigenous women. Speaking back to this possessive logic, Telford challenges settlers' entitlement to land through articulating a kin relation to Country.

The data also included a range of references to the precedence of Indigenous law, identifying Indigenous sovereignty not just as a prior claim to territory, but as something which bound up multiple generations of relational responsibility with deep pre-colonial roots. These were

distributed across Indigenous and non-Indigenous-produced alternative and mainstream media sources. Across alternative media sources, the precedence of Indigenous law was often discussed in greater depth, rather than through the insertion of a standalone quote. This tended to occur alongside an evaluation of the legitimacy of settler claims to territory, as well as to reinforce statements about the sustainable nature of Indigenous governance. One example is Robbie Thorpe's description of Indigenous law during 3CR's Invasion Day broadcast. This law

started in the beginning. It was the beginning! And our law came at that time. It was a law that was unchanging. Wasn't made by a man or a woman. It's governed by our ancestors' spirits, our law. It's so special. And it's sustainable. It's fair... it's the law of this land. And we're asking everyone that they should acknowledge that law. This is our land and our law! (3CR, 2020)

Thorpe's statements about the origins of Indigenous law, deeply rooted in ancestry and Country, are made in the context of a broader monologue about the illegitimacy of the settler state and the significance of commemorating January 26 as a day of mourning and a temporal marker to anchor Indigenous resistance. The "law of this land" is described as both spiritually governed and fundamentally present in Indigenous peoples' claims to territory. In asking attendees to "acknowledge that law," Thorpe presents an alternative source of land-based sovereign authority that pre-dates the settler state.

Ongoing sovereignty

As outlined across the previous section, Indigenous sovereignty was described in the media data in a variety of ways and in relation to a specific set of responsibilities. Another important feature identified by both interviewees and speakers in the media data was the persistence of Indigenous sovereignty over time, and how this persistence grounded Indigenous peoples' political claims in the present. Interviewee 2 described this in the following terms:

I think Michael Mansell said... something similar, um, when he started talking about the 7th state idea. It was that... you can be a prisoner of war, but you never give up your sovereignty. Never ever... You just don't have the resources to enact it. That is all.

Interviewee 2 refers to Tasmanian Aboriginal lawyer and activist Michael Mansell to explain the principle of unceded Indigenous sovereignty, a description which is clearly at odds with legal frameworks of recognition such as via native title. Contra to the requirement for native

title claimants to have faithfully and meticulously maintained pre-colonial political, cultural, land-based relationships, Interviewee 2 draws on Mansell to note that Indigenous sovereignty persists even if Indigenous peoples are “prisoner[s] of war” within the settler state, with the attendant restrictions on access to land, self-governance and engagement in cultural practice that this imprisonment implies. Interviewee 2’s discussion of unceded sovereignty resonated with statements made by other Indigenous speakers across the media data, and across messaging associated with Indigenous-led events held on January 26. For example, in *The Guardian*’s round-up of Invasion Day 2020 events published on January 25, the Newcastle Invasion Day rally event theme is reported as “still here, still strong, still sovereign” (Wahlquist, 2020). *News.com.au* published a similar round-up on January 26, quoting Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance and Brisbane Aboriginal Sovereign Embassy’s social media event description which included the statement that “Invasion Day is an event where First Nations people mourn, survive and continue to resist against the colonial terrorism organisation that is Australia and defend sovereignty” (Zappavigna & AAP, 2020).

Gunditjmara woman Tabitha Lean (2020) also referred to unceded Indigenous sovereignty in an opinion piece for *Junkee* on January 26, 2020, which presented a list of 20 ways to support Indigenous people at this time. Recommendation 19 read:

Get to know which Aboriginal nation you live, work and study on: acknowledge the custodians of that land, and remember the lands and waters across this country have been stolen. We have never ceded sovereignty.

In this recommendation, Lean juxtaposes the persistence of Indigenous sovereignty against the basis of the Australian settler state’s authority in illegitimate dispossession. The prompt to settler readers to “get to know” the Aboriginal nation whose land they are on also speaks to a responsibility placed on settlers to engage in an acknowledgement of Indigenous sovereignty that is relational rather than rhetorical. This prompt echoes Nicoll’s (Nicoll, 2002, para. 18) characterisation of the “performative assumption of perspective,” where settlers situate ourselves as apart from and above engaging with Indigenous politics instead of grappling with active complicities in dispossession and the shoring up of Australian sovereignty.

Lean’s reminder to settlers to get to know whose land they are on touches on concerns about the settler polity’s ignorance about or denial of Indigenous sovereignty. Goenpul Goori man Dale Ruska elaborated on this issue in his speech at the Brisbane Invasion Day rally, broadcast via the Indigi-Briz program on 4ZZZ (2020):

We were a nation of many nations. The First People, the First Law. A law that many of us still believe on behalf of a people that's never been extinguished. A law and an entitlement that we enjoy as the people, as the sovereign First Nation owners that's never been ceded, regardless of what is imposed upon us through foreign morals and foreign rule.

Ruska refers in the same breath to the persistence of Indigenous sovereignty and law, and the immorality of both the act of dispossession and the forcible imposition of “foreign rule.” Similar to Lean, Ruska refers to Indigenous sovereignty as “a law and an entitlement” in comparison to illegitimate settler colonial authority. Ultimately, Ruska asserts that not only was Indigenous sovereignty already in existence prior to colonisation, but that the legal and political authority that Indigenous peoples should be recognised to possess has not diminished as a result of settler colonialism.

Indigenous speakers in the media data also discussed potential reasons for the lack of formal recognition of Indigenous law and sovereignty at an equivalent status to that of the British Crown. This included the settler state's perception of Indigenous sovereignty as a threat or as untenable based on racist assumptions about Indigenous people and the persistence of what Behrendt (2002, p. 5) describes as a “psychological *terra nullius*”. Behrendt's description gestures to the ideologically enforced racial hierarchy underpinning political relationships in the Australian settler state. As Interviewee 1 puts it, the founding of the nation was “based on a lie, which was *terra nullius*,” setting the stage for “...the sort of relationship that... Australia and Great Britain wanted to have with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.” They note that the nature of this relationship is that of “coloniser and colonised,” and that this persists into the present day: “that's the relationship that it [the Australian state] wants to continue to have.” This is echoed in Dale Ruska's assessment of the consequences of the *Mabo* decision:

Mabo forced the High Court of Australia to recognise *terra nullius* was a lie! [Applause]. But regardless of the High Court's decision and all that was achieved from the great man Mabo, this country still exists in a state of *terra nullius*, where we don't exist as the original First Nations people. (4ZZZ, 2020)

In Ruska's assessment, normative Indigenous-settler relations continue to be structured by a hierarchy that privileges settler possession over Indigenous sovereignty, despite the formal overturning of *terra nullius*. This description of settler denialism resonates with Moreton-Robinson's (2015, p. 30) analysis of the reliance of white sovereignty and Australian nationhood on the disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty. Ruska's earlier reference to “foreign

morals and foreign rule” implicitly distinguishes Indigenous peoples from the settler polity on the basis of their unceded sovereignty, which persists despite the failure of settlers to recognise “the original First Nations people” as such.

Another central issue that Interviewee 1 and Ruska both come back to is the role of truth in the constitution of the Australian state. Here, Behrendt’s (2002, p. 5) “psychological *terra nullius*” may be read alongside Mills’ (1997) writing on the epistemology of ignorance associated with the racial contract. Even though *terra nullius* has been legally overturned, the epistemological conditions of the racial contract underpinning settler colonialism privilege a structural orientation towards not just forgetting about Indigenous sovereignty but erasing the knowledge of such claims altogether. This manifests in the denialism referred to in the quotes above, where the truth of Indigenous sovereignty must not just be repressed but destroyed in order to maintain the ontological security of white possession. However, this also means that a shift in settler consciousness towards recognising the sovereignty of Indigenous people presents a fundamental threat to the Australian settler state. As Bibbulmun man and Director of Dumbartung Aboriginal Corporation Robert Eggington noted in conversation with Robbie Thorpe on a January 24 episode of 3CR’s *Blak n Deadly*,

I think, you know, Aboriginal rights in this country still remains the biggest threat to white Australia and its establishment here... and we’ve got to keep up this, ah, this fight. (Thorpe, 2020b)

The repressed truth of Indigenous peoples’ political claims are described by Eggington as “the biggest threat to white Australia,” positioning the recognition of “Aboriginal rights” as incompatible with the white Australian state’s existence. By framing “white Australia” as mutually exclusive with “Aboriginal rights,” therefore, Eggington gestures towards the scale of the threat posed to settler Australia by Indigenous peoples’ fight for land rights and self-determination. It is implied that the current political consensus cannot survive substantive engagement with Indigenous sovereignty. The persistence of Indigenous sovereignty and the problem it presents to the settler state forms the basis of the next section.

Asserting sovereignty

Expressions of sovereignty in Indigenous peoples’ struggles for self-determination rose to prominence in the 1970s, when, alongside decolonial movements across Asia, Africa and South America, Indigenous peoples across the former British settler colonies began mounting more

systematic appeals to international governance structures such as the United Nations (see Barker, 2005). This section presents some of the ways that Indigenous speakers in the media and interview data discussed invoking their sovereignty in order to make particular political claims in relation to the settler state. It is important to reiterate that there are a wide range of relationships, actions, practices and mechanisms through which sovereignty is expressed by various Indigenous peoples. The intention of this section is not to provide an exhaustive assessment of such expressions. Instead, the expressions of Indigenous sovereignty discussed here by interviewees and speakers in the media data and refracted through the prism of January 26 reflect a selection of strategies for public, collective political claim-making on a date significant to both Indigenous peoples and settler nationalist mythology.

As part of investigating the relationship between sovereignty and political expression, the three interviewees were asked about their thoughts on the relationship between sovereignty and their involvement in organising protest actions. Interviewee 1 noted that “if you’re born Aboriginal, you’re a political statement regardless,” but later elaborated on their assessment of the relationship between sovereignty and voluntaristic political engagement, stating:

I guess one of the reasons community is so fractured is because there’s so little um, that’s sort of left, um, for community to sort of grasp with to survive, so I think, you know, that sort of collective sort of organising around sovereignty is really important, because... with that we’ve been able to determine how we can successfully run protest camps like the G20, and like the Commonwealth Games, and you know hopefully with um our participation in things like you know, um the Captain Cook protest, and also Invasion Days even that we’ve, that we’ve um been involved in since then, I think um... yeah, you know like we’ve sort of had the opportunities to sort of create, uh, those spaces... to protect our mob.

Interviewee 1 here reflects on the significance of resistance organising as a form of community care based in the enactment of Indigenous sovereignty. Their reference to the protective nature of collective organising gestures towards sovereignty as a force that both informs and is reinforced through its performance via public expressions of resistance.

In their response to the same question, Interviewee 2 discussed decolonial relationships between Indigenous nations and the importance of turning towards systems of governance and recognition unmediated by the state:

So, sovereignty... Like obviously the underlying basis is: we are sovereign people, we have a right to protest all this colonial violence and terrorism, but then there's a internal kinda layer within dealing with like- like people like me who don't come from Yuggera or Turrbal Nations traditionally... I have to acknowledge and be responsible for upholding space for the Yuggera Turrbal people, and their sovereignty. So there's multi-layers there. But, y- sovereignty is the basis of protest, and the basis of our fight. It's... one of our fundamental pillars. And then it's also Lore, and respect for other people vis- from visiting from other nations.

Interviewee 2's description of their approach to exercising sovereignty while protesting colonial violence weaves together multiple layers of responsibility towards enacting and recognising Indigenous peoples' political authority outside of the structures of the settler state. This includes a commitment to engage in nation-to-nation relationships with Yuggera and Turrbal people, whose lands they organise on, as well as with people from other First Nations.

The importance of mutual recognition of sovereignty through struggle may also be read through the following statement by Robert Eggington in a speech during the Melbourne Invasion Day 2020 rally (3CR, 2020):

I've for many years wanted to come to Melbourne to be with the Koori nations, to be with the Koori people. To celebrate the fact that, as Aboriginal people, we are in protest to the forced occupation of our lands.

Here, Eggington asserts political solidarity with Victorian Aboriginal nations, given their joint resistance against colonialism. Again, the illegitimacy of colonial occupation is noted while reinforcing the strength and ubiquity of Indigenous resistance through the articulation of a common purpose.

Indigenous speakers also reflected on the consequences of asserting their sovereignty within a system whose existence relied on the disavowal of this political claim. During part of the interview discussing the intelligibility of Indigenous sovereignty to the Australian settler state and the broader non-Indigenous public, Interviewee 3 touched on the state's responses to expressions of Indigenous sovereignty in the following way:

they don't have any concern for us being, like, the sovereigns of the nation, you know? Like... I think the Invasion Day rallies have played a huge part in that, like, because we're seeing so many numbers, and we're being seen as a threat again, um, but, yeah, I don't think they could give a flying fuck [I: Yeah] whether we existed or not, and about our sovereignty [I: Yeah] you know? And when- when we do assert sovereignty and get... you know, make moves towards it, they just implement another law, like native title, you know, like, that was... designed to fracture.

This statement echoes Eggington's comment included at the end of the previous section about Aboriginal rights as a threat to the settler state, but additionally refers to the state's response when these rights are asserted. Interviewee 3 describes native title legislation as a strategic manoeuvre by the state to "fracture" Indigenous movements, particularly when they begin gaining broader traction and public approval. This analysis can be read alongside L. Simpson's (2017, p. 46) characterisation of settler colonialism as a shapeshifting structure made up of various processes which seek to undermine Indigenous sovereignty and reproduce the hegemony of the state. Dale Ruska also refers to native title in this way in his speech at the Brisbane Invasion Day rally, stating that "the Native Title Act was designed on our behalf for us by common law and colonial rule to ensure that the power and privilege of colonialism is maintained."

Interviewee 3 and Ruska's reflections on state responses to Indigenous peoples' expressions of sovereignty reflects both speakers' serious doubt in the ability of the settler colonial system to be a site of positive transformation and meaningful change for Aboriginal people. This sentiment was also echoed by Interviewees 1 and 2, who both noted that they (and their families) choose not to vote in the settler system, as they do not see it as a space where Indigenous peoples' political self-determination can be meaningfully advanced. All three interviewees presented analyses of Indigenous sovereignty as both a motivating factor and sustaining force in resisting colonial violence, but importantly without sovereignty ever being reduced to something purely expressed in reaction to colonialism.

The chapter thus far has focused on how Indigenous speakers across the interview and media data characterised Indigenous sovereignty through implicit and explicit references to the concept itself. This discussion has included a range of perspectives on of the origins of and responsibilities associated with Indigenous sovereignty, engaging with the fact that Indigenous

sovereignty remains unceded. It has also touched on some of the modes of political expression utilised by Indigenous people in defence of sovereignty, as well as the state's responses to these acts of resistance. It must be reiterated that the interviewees and speakers at Invasion Day rallies whose comments have been included in the chapter thus far represent a specific set of perspectives on the pursuit of Indigenous self-determination. These analyses provide a valuable insight into both the theories of change underpinning Indigenous sovereign resistance through protest, and the enduring political claims over which the settler state attempts to establish its own projection of coherent and legitimate sovereignty.

Settler sovereignty

As noted in the first part of the chapter, explicit references to settler sovereignty were much less prevalent in the data than references to Indigenous sovereignty. However, it is argued that this relative absence is directly related to the normalisation of settler claims to sovereignty through a range of discursive techniques that work to legitimise the authority of the Australian state. This section of the chapter unpacks the limited direct references and more numerous indirect references to settler sovereign authority identified in the media data, beginning with a focus on some of the specific mentions of 'sovereignty' in relation to British and Australian political claims. After this, the analysis turns to the origins of colonial possession and the way that settler claims to sovereignty are naturalised through the use of civilizational discourse. Next, settler attachments to land are discussed, looking at how references to the environment are mobilised in relation to Australian nationalism. Finally, this section covers the emergence and uptake of a framing of the national narrative as a story in three parts, popularised by Guugu Yimithirr lawyer Noel Pearson and the movement for constitutional recognition of Indigenous peoples. This framing is analysed with respect to its characterisation of the Australian community's composition and its implications for settler claims to sovereignty.

In the NVivo word-search for 'sovereignty' (across 392 media items and 15 political statements included for qualitative analysis), 15 explicit references to settler sovereignty were identified across 14 distinct files. Nine of these references were to British sovereignty, and 5 were to Australian state sovereignty. References to British sovereignty were divided across 10 distinct items: 5 news articles (4 from *News.com.au*, 1 from *Daily Mail Australia*), 2 opinion pieces (*ABC*, *Herald Sun*), one radio program (*ABC*), and one letter to the editor (*The Sydney Morning*

Herald). All of the news references to British sovereignty were included as factual, historical context for present-day contention around the celebration of January 26. A typical example of this framing is demonstrated in a *News.com.au* article published January 25 titled ‘Debunking the myth of Australia Day’. Author Charis Chang (2020a) writes:

While there’s been a lot of anger about the idea of changing Australia Day, the date hasn’t always been so set in stone.

These days, most people are aware that January 26 commemorates the arrival of the First Fleet. Specifically it was the day commander Captain Arthur Phillip, rowed ashore at Sydney Cove, raised the Union Jack and proclaimed British sovereignty over part of the continent in 1788.

Chang presents the proclamation of British sovereignty as an uncontested background note against which the current issue of interest—the date Australia’s national day—plays out. While briefly noting that “many indigenous Australians refer to [January 26] as Invasion Day” (lower-case ‘I’ in original), no connection is made between the charge of invasion and proclamation of British sovereignty.

In the *Stella Magazine/Herald Sun* opinion piece by Jesinta Franklin (2020) and *The Sydney Morning Herald* letter to the editor by Phil O’Rourke (2020), both authors acknowledged British claims to sovereignty over the continent while also critiquing this act, either by noting the harms of colonisation (Franklin), or questioning the racial hierarchy inherent in the claim (O’Rourke). The reference to British sovereignty in a January 26 episode of *ABC Radio’s* Speaking Out program occurred in the context of a more in-depth critical analysis of settler colonialism and the 250th anniversary of possession (Behrendt, 2020). This program was a replay of a 2019 Sydney Festival panel discussion titled ‘Indigenous Australia and Captain Cook: Setting the agenda for 2020,’ featuring an all-Indigenous panel. Arrernte and Kalkadoon filmmaker Rachel Perkins raises the issue of sovereignty while critiquing Cook’s choice not to seek the consent of the Aboriginal people he encountered, instead asserting British sovereignty as part of an imperialist contest for territorial acquisition. In contrast, Shireen Morris’ (2020) *ABC* opinion piece touches on British sovereignty via an extended quotation of Noel Pearson’s draft declaration for extra-constitutional recognition of Indigenous peoples in Australia’s national story. This passage attempts to discursively reconcile colonisers’ and Indigenous peoples’ perceptions of the advent of colonial occupation and is discussed in greater detail in the section ‘Building a national narrative’ below.

The media data also included a range of descriptive references to Australian sovereignty. These were analytically interesting as while they did not present an overt endorsement of settler sovereignty, the choice to present these claims as uncontested fact provides an insight into the construction and reinforcement of common sense understandings of colonial possession. Several of these noted the formal consolidation of independent Australian state sovereignty, occurring through a final severing of the Crown's legislative power via the *Australia Act 1986*, which came into force on May 3 of that year. Four of the five direct references to Australian sovereignty in the media data made mention of this piece of legislation. However, the event appears to be a fairly niche consideration in comparison to the invocation of British sovereignty, which heavily influences the aesthetics of the nation's origin story.

Australian state sovereignty was referred to in the same way across two January 26 *AAP* articles, where former Labor senator Nova Peris, a descendant of the Gija, Yawuru and Itwatja and Gagudju peoples, suggests May 3 as a possible new date for 'Australia Day' celebrations. Both articles quote Peris describing the national significance of May 3 as part of broader coverage about when the day should be celebrated, and do not include in-depth discussion of the sovereign claim itself (*AAP*, 2020a, 2020b). In a January 26 interview on *ABC Radio Hobart*, non-Indigenous historian Stefan Petrow similarly refers twice to the commencement of the *Australia Act*, noting the desirability of—and his personal support for—celebrating 'Australia Day' on the date that Australia became “a sovereign, independent and federal nation” (Rheinberger, 2020). Taken together, the aforementioned references represent a fairly restricted and descriptive discussion of Australian sovereignty.

The fifth reference to Australian sovereignty in media data, however, was presented as part of a more substantial discussion about Indigenous-settler political relations in the liberal state between *ABC's* The Philosopher's Zone host David Rutledge (2020) and guest, political philosopher Duncan Ivison (neither of whom are Indigenous). However, the reference to unceded Indigenous sovereignty coexisting with the sovereignty of the Crown was made through the inclusion of an audio clip of an unidentified Indigenous speaker paraphrasing part of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. While the conversation between Ivison and Rutledge presents a relatively nuanced consideration of Indigenous rights, liberalism and constitutional recognition, the actual inclusion of Indigenous analyses as part of this works to reinscribe the named progressive white commentator as an expert on Indigenous affairs, while the Indigenous speaker asserting ongoing sovereignty remains nameless.

In contrast to previous mentions of both Australian and British sovereignty, the final reference to Australian sovereignty identified in this subset of the data was made by Robbie Thorpe in a conversation with Arabunna Elder Uncle Kevin Buzzacott during 3CR's 2020 Invasion Day broadcast. While discussing settler land mismanagement and Indigenous law and governance in the context of the bushfires, Thorpe states:

This is the proper law of the land, here... And if they're fair dinkum, they'd acknowledge it. If this country really wants to protect its sovereignty, they should actually recognise it? And they're not doing that? (3CR, 2020)

This statement identifies the Australian state's tenuous claims to sovereignty in comparison to "the proper law of the land," and the conceit of failing to acknowledge this law. In Thorpe's assessment, the non-recognition of Indigenous law and sovereignty and flow-on effects of colonial land mismanagement means that the Australian settler state has, through the logic of elimination, also secured its own destruction by way of its contributions to climate change. Thorpe's statement about the failure of the state to recognise Indigenous law at the expense of its own survival is a powerful indictment of the material effects of white possession. While this critique was an outlier in media references to settler sovereignty across the data selected for qualitative analysis, it aligns with the distinction drawn between Indigenous and settler conceptions of sovereignty by Interviewee 1 earlier in the chapter. In both statements, there is a clear analysis of the property-based and extractive relationship to territory through which settler sovereignty is exercised, differentiated from rightful, relational modes of Indigenous governance.

The references to British versus Australian sovereignty discussed above speak to an interesting dynamic underpinning the implied sovereign legitimacy of the Australian settler state, and its relationship to colonial nostalgia and Australian nationalism. There is a clear affinity between (at least) conservative and centrist Australians and the heyday of colonial possession, where the early Australian colonies strongly identified with their status as British outposts. This phenomenon may potentially influence the comparative ease with which Australian settlers refer to the claim (by James Cook) or proclamation (by Arthur Phillip) of colonial possession, as opposed to contending with the violent consolidation of political and territorial control over the continent. The next section further explores the way that references to colonial possession and the use of civilizational discourse were mobilised to implicitly naturalise settler claims to sovereignty.

Possession, civilisation and modernity

Though direct references to settler sovereignty appeared relatively infrequently, discussion of colonial possession, western civilisation and modernity in the data provided an insight into how the political authority of the Australian state was consolidated in public discourse. Possession was often naturalised via references to the supremacy of western civilisation, though there was also a minor but conceptually significant narrative which positioned Indigenous people as settlers too through use of the term ‘First Discoverers’. Themes of possession and civilizational hierarchy, particularly in the form of endorsements, were most readily apparent across more conservative leaning (largely News Corp publications). However, as will be explored in the next chapter, the possessive and civilizational discourse made explicit here is a fundamental component of more widely distributed narratives of the regretful but inexorable violences associated with “modernity,” as well as norms around political expression in contemporary Australia.

Direct references to colonial possession were identified in 14 out of 392 media items included for qualitative analysis. Despite their limited appearance in the data, however, these references provide a useful insight into some of the underlying assumptions regarding settler entitlements to Indigenous land more broadly. References were divided into four categories—positive settler claims (2 items), neutral or descriptive settler use (3 items), Indigenous critique (5 items) and settler critique (4 items). While they were the least prevalent, sections of text coded under positive settler claims presented the most extensive discussion of colonial land appropriation, and therefore hold particular explanatory value for this part of the analysis. These claims were expressed in excerpts from a January 24 opinion piece on Cook by historian Geoffrey Blainey (2020) published in *The Australian*, and from a January 27 radio interview on 3AW featuring writer Jim Haynes speaking about the expansion of settlements during Australia’s early colonial period in the context of ‘Australia Day’ (McLaren, 2020). Both passages include commentary on colonists’ possession of land, framing this as self-evidently positive. In one part of his piece, Blainey (2020) assesses the justifiability of Cook’s reported lie to the British Admiralty “to prevent the inquisitive French from learning about such a strategic, capacious and easily defended harbour standing at the far end of the world,” finding this quite understandable and agreeable. In contrast to Rachel Perkins’ earlier critique of imperial expansion, Blainey represents Cook’s voyage and actions on behalf of the British Crown as

those of a skilled and intrepid explorer, with little consideration of the fact that the land was already governed by other peoples.

In the 3AW interview, Haynes discusses dates of significance in the early Australian colonies in response to host Michael McLaren's prompt about the contentious nature 'of the "New South Wales-centric date" of 'Australia Day.' Haynes re-hashes the process of early colonial settlement on the south-east coast and gradual expansion inland, including a reflection on Victoria's Separation Day. He discusses at length the difficulties early Victorians faced due to not being "allowed" by the "government in Macquarie Street" to settle further south because of a lack of government resources to effectively assert control and protection at such a distance (McLaren, 2020). While noting that these settlers and "Van Diemonians" were "squatters," there is no mention of the Indigenous peoples whose lands were appropriated and whose lives were brutally taken during this process. Instead, in Haynes' retelling, early colonists were able to move across the continent freely, their pioneer journeys hampered only by natural phenomena or bureaucratic concerns.

Positive assessments of the impact of British colonialism were identified 24 distinct media items. Of the 24 items, 19 were from News Corp publications, with *The Australian* being the greatest contributor (8 items). The other 5 items were news articles in *The Age* and *National Indigenous Times* (which quoted or described other commentators' Anglo-supremacist positions as part of reporting on January 26 events, also the case for three News Corp pieces), an *ABC* opinion piece (Morris' (2020) essay quoting Noel Pearson on the positive influence of the British), and two talk radio segments from 3AW, one featuring host Justin Smith arguing with a right-wing caller and the other featuring Jim Haynes claiming that civilisation came to this continent with the British (McLaren, 2020; J. Smith, 2020). Across the News Corp items, the majority of references were found in letters to the editor (8, with affectations of tone and word choice signalling narrative distance between the author and Indigenous people), though this was closely followed by opinion pieces (7, all by non-Indigenous authors). The one editorial that favourably reflected on the influence of the British was *The Australian's* (2020a) January 25 piece, which did this via reference to the three parts of the nation's story, a theme which will be discussed in further detail later in the chapter.

The following reference, included in an opinion piece authored by Dr Bella d'Abrera (2020), director of the Foundations of Western Civilisation Program at right-wing think-tank the

Institute of Public Affairs, is exemplary of contemporary Anglo-supremacist narrations of Australia's national story:

Modern Australia has been historically successful. It is the home of a diverse nation with a proud history. Australia has an inheritance which extends both into the ancient past through Indigenous Australia and across the world to the United Kingdom from where we draw our political system and to all the other countries from which our people have arrived.

d'Abrera describes the nation as being composed of three parts, asserting pride in Australia's history while glossing over the conditions of its genesis and continued existence. This passage outlines a very specific distribution of contributions to the nation, where the importation a political system from the United Kingdom is presented alongside an Indigenous "inheritance" and more recent migration. In this case, however, there is a much clearer positioning of Indigenous peoples and non-white migrants. The latter are reduced to bodies, "our people," while Indigenous people are incorporated into the national narrative through suturing the longevity of Indigenous presence on the continent to the triumph of "modern" Australia. In this way, the settler state is projected into a fictional past, and Indigenous peoples thus contribute the "ancient" inheritance of the nation which has flourished through the introduction of a "modern" political system. Greater attention is devoted to the use of time and history in undermining Indigenous peoples' political claims in Chapters 5 and 6.

In addition to references to the positive influence of western civilisation, another significant framing that emerged from the data was the description of Indigenous peoples' ancestors as 'First Discoverers'. This framing was comparatively infrequent, appearing in 11 distinct items, but its usage provides some key insights into conservative approaches to idealised national identity, colonial possession and rightful ownership, particularly due to its invocation by the Prime Minister in his January 26 video message to the nation (Morrison, 2020d). *The Australian's* contribution to and promotion of this framing is central, with the first reference over the period of data collection identified in Geoffrey Blainey's January 24 feature about Cook, and with the specific term 'First Discoverers' used in this masthead alone. Blainey (2020) refers to the land bridge theory of population movement to claim that "Aboriginal peoples... or people close to them in kinship, were the first discoverers of Australia." Blainey also uses this theory to build an argument for constructing monuments to honour 'First Discoverers', blaming "Aboriginal leaders [who] have failed to take up suggestions, officially

made as long ago as 1975, that they should erect their own discovery monument, though money could easily be found.”

While not directly using the term ‘First Discoverers’, a similar framing was evident in Shireen Morris’ (2020) February 4 *ABC* opinion piece, included via a quote of Noel Pearson’s draft Declaration for the recognition of Indigenous people which stated: “We recognise and honour the First Nations who discovered Australia as their sovereign possession, the oldest continuing civilisation in the world.” Implied in this statement is the notion that Indigenous peoples’ relationships to land are of the same nature as that of settlers—that is, reducible to property relations. This appears to sideline the unique qualities of Indigenous sovereignty as relational responsibility, instead framing the relationship in a way that is intelligible to a conservative settler audience. Also implied here is that Indigenous sovereignty is of no consequence in relation to white possession, considering that the declaration does not question the legitimacy of settler claims to sovereignty. The reference to a prior, reduced claim resonates with Blainey’s assessment that Aboriginal people (and it must be noted that Blainey shifts several times between using ‘Aboriginal people’ and the pejorative ‘Aborigines’) must feel slighted about a lack of recognition of their prior claim to the continent.

The uptake of the ‘First Discoverers’ framing by then-Prime Minister Scott Morrison in his message to Australia on January 26 provided it with an extra level of authority and a much broader platform for dissemination. Morrison’s (2020d) ‘Australia Day’ video message, which was shared across all News Corp publications, *ABC*, *SBS*, *NITV* and *7News*, included the following statement:

Whether our families came here tens of thousands of years ago, generations ago as mine did on the First Fleet, or those who are taking citizenship for the first time today, we're all together as one and we can all together be proud.

While Morrison avoids directly using the term ‘First Discoverers’, his reference to those whose “families came here tens of thousands of years ago,” is functionally equivalent, folding Indigenous peoples into the broader mischaracterisation of Australia as a ‘nation of immigrants’. In this way, Morrison elevates a fundamental misrepresentation of Australian history and disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty to the level of national public discourse, tying the notion of rightful possession and settler belonging to messaging around ‘Australia Day’.

Civilizational discourse and other white supremacist approaches to the nation's identity did not escape critique, however, with primarily Indigenous commentators analysing these issues. Critiques of the glorification of western civilisation and white supremacy appeared across 16 media items. There was notably minimal overlap between platforms that had published positive versus critical assessments, and none of the critiques were located in News Corp publications. Items were distributed across Indigenous talk-radio programs on *3CR* (3CR, 2020; Thorpe, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d) and *98.9FM* (Spearim, 2020a, 2020c), *IndigenousX* (L. Pearson, 2020b, 2020d), *National Indigenous Times* (Cross, 2020; S. Watson, 2020), *NITV* (Huntriss, 2020), *Koori Mail* (Waters, 2020), *Eureka Street* (Hamilton, 2020, non-Indigenous author), *ABC* (Grant, 2020b) and *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Archibald-Binge & Wyman, 2020). Grouping the radio sources and opinion pieces into a broader category of media items with comparatively minimal editorial interference, it is evident that the majority of critical discussion of the white supremacy and western civilisation fall into this category.

Relationships to land

The question of land was another significant feature in implicit references to settler sovereignty, with the legitimacy of Australian nationhood and national identity frequently linked to non-Indigenous peoples' relationships to the continent. The construction of a national identity around settler relationships to land was evident across references to the colonial appropriation of territory and to a harsh or hostile natural environment 'tamed' through the process of colonisation (imagery which was readily revived in the face of the 2019-2020 bushfire crisis). This section explores the role of land in the Australian national imaginary, looking at two main themes that emerged from the media data: settler attachments to land, and adversarial relationships with the continent's environment.

The data included a range of reflections on settlers' attachments to land, identified across 26 media items and in 3 official statements or transcripts from then-Prime Minister Scott Morrison. The majority of these (16 items) were positive expressions of attachment to the continent, though there were a few Indigenous (4) and non-Indigenous (5) critiques of these relationships. Positive expressions of attachment were generally made in the register of a possessive claim which linked the nation to the land. A selection of these expressions is provided below:

“...I do think more and more as I grow older that *its possible for non-Indigenous Australians to feel part of a history that is 60,000 years old*. And I say that respectfully, because, you know, one doesn’t want to intrude on someone else’s story. But nevertheless, I do feel that, I feel as to the s- the human story of *the land of which I’m a part of* is 60,000 years old, *I feel it around me*.” - Michael Cathcart, ‘The stories we tell about January 26th,’ *ABC Radio*, January 21 (Cathcart, 2020, emphasis added)

“The Wattle Day Association wants the date shifted to the first day of spring. “[It] would recognise *our connection to the beautiful and bountiful land that sustains us*,” association president Suzette Searle says.” - Author unspecified, ‘New dates mooted for Australia Day,’ *AAP*, January 26 (AAP, 2020a, emphasis added)

“Get rid of the chip off your bloody shoulder. *We are here, I was born here, this is my country...* this is Australia Day where people join together.” - Pauline Hanson quoted from 3AW interview, ‘Get rid of your chip off your shoulder’: Pauline Hanson’s Australia Day message to Aboriginal protestors campaigning for a change of date for the national day,’ *Daily Mail Australia*, January 27 (Hanrahan, 2020, emphasis added)

In Michael Cathcart’s comment, made in the context of a conversation with Noonuccal Ngugi director Wesley Enoch and Muruwari playwright Jane Harrison, there is a tentative insertion of his own settler identity into “a history” stretching back into the deep past. This history is configured as singular, and though the implication is that it belongs to Indigenous peoples, this is not directly stated. Cathcart’s attachment is expressed as feeling a part of “the human story of the land,” of being able to “feel it around [him],” though he also expresses concerns about not wanting to “intrude on someone else’s story.” This self-conscious expression of attachment attempts to balance respect for Indigenous peoples with a feeling of connectedness directly enabled by colonial possession. The statement by Searle, on the other hand, refers to an uncomplicated connection with a nurturing environment. This framing relies on the assumption the land is naturally available to settlers, signalling entitlement to the sustenance that it provides. There is no acknowledgement of Indigenous people either in relation to the land discussed or with respect to grievances over celebrating ‘Australia Day’ on January 26. In contrast to both Cathcart and Searle, reactionary conservative politician Pauline Hanson’s

comment represents a more overtly white nationalist attachment and entitlement to land. Her framing is explicitly possessive, referring to “my country,” and disparaging Aboriginal people as having a chip on their shoulder and being divisive when expressing concerns about national celebrations (an issue discussed in greater detail in Chapters 7 and 8).

Partially overlapping with general discussion of settlers’ attachments to land were references in 31 items (28 media, 3 official statements or transcripts from Prime Minister) to Australia’s harsh or hostile environment. Given the devastation of the 2019-2020 Australian bushfire season and the proximity of this disaster to January 26, 2020, this theme and attendant references to national identity and character were particularly prominent during the thesis’ data collection period—20 relevant media items and one transcript from the Prime Minister were published on January 26 alone. References to the hostility of the continent to early colonists (‘The old man and the seafarer,’ January 25, *The Courier Mail*) were repeated in contemporary assessments of Australia’s environmental extremes, with the nation’s responses to flooding and droughts (*The Courier Mail* articles ‘Australia Day in Logan 2020,’ ‘Fare call’ and ‘Spirit shines in the darkest of times’) echoing the pioneer spirit of those British explorers who first reached its shores. Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews was quoted across 9 separate news articles published in *7News*, *AAP* (3), *SBS* (2), *The Age*, *Yahoo! News* and *Herald Sun* over January 26 and 27 stating during Victoria’s official flag raising ceremony that “we have seen the worst of nature and the best of the Australian spirit.”

Two of the media items included references to Australia’s harsh environment by Indigenous writers, with Noongar man and then-Minister for Indigenous Affairs Ken Wyatt (2020) including this via the quotation of several stanzas of Dorothea Mackellar’s patriotic poem ‘My Country’ poem in a January 22 *Herald Sun* opinion piece. The other item was authored by Jake Duke (2020) of *Nine Sports* (at time of data collection) who referred to Indigenous peoples’ ability to thrive on an unforgiving continent and the destruction of this sustainable relationship by colonisation. Unlike the other references mentioned here, Duke’s statement, made in the context of asserting that January 26 is a day of mourning for Indigenous people and that the date of Australia Day should be changed, identifies that both early colonists and contemporary Australians’ narratives of struggle and triumph over the environment are contingent on Indigenous dispossession.

The closing lines of then-Prime Minister Scott Morrison's address on January 26 at the National Flag Raising and Citizenship Ceremony exemplifies much of the romanticism invoked in settler relationships to land across this section of the chapter. Morrison (2020b) concluded his speech by saying:

It is why we are hopeful even during difficult times.

And we are so because of the example of those, as I said, who have come before and those who are there today - who dream big, work hard, and think of others rather than themselves.

And because of them, we have been granted to us this amazing country that we claim today as Australians as our own.

The best place on earth. Happy Australia Day!

Morrison's imputation that "we," referring to Australians, "have been granted... this amazing country that we claim today" can be dissected into at least two key assertions: one, that the country is rightfully thought of as "our" national inheritance as Australians, and two, that all Australians have an equal claim to the nation. As outlined in the first part of the chapter, such claims are contingent on the disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty and the sedimentation of *terra nullius* into nationalist Australian common sense. Morrison's choice to use this language of rightful ownership of the nation through the benefaction of "our" forebears (as an undifferentiated group), glosses over the racial hierarchy central to Britain's acquisition of the continent, the genocidal consolidation of settler colonial control over territory, and the active maintenance of a racial hierarchy within the national community. Instead, the nation is represented as a coherent and collaborative project, something which is also frequently invoked using the description of Australia as a nation formed from three parts.

Building a national narrative: three strands

A particularly important theme emerging from the media and political data selected for qualitative analysis was the characterisation of Australia as a nation made up of three parts, strands, stories or pillars—Indigenous people, British colonisers and multicultural migrant settlers. It is worth discussing the origins and development of this framing prior to analysing its appearance in the data, as its ubiquity is relevant to the overarching discussion of dominant media narratives about Indigenous-settler political relations.

The suggestion to recognise three parts of the national community has its origins in the early days of reconciliation (1990s) but was formalised as a proposal in the report of the Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians in 2012. This report referenced Auspoll research commissioned by Reconciliation Australia which identified that “most people supported changing the preamble [of the constitution] to recognise the importance of all Australians, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, English settlers and other migrants,” and that this was preferable to only recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians, 2012, p. 78). While the Expert Panel ultimately did not make a recommendation on the nature of a statement of recognition, the issue was carried over in recommendations made by the Referendum Council in 2017. One of the two recommendations was to develop an extra-constitutional declaration “bring[ing] together the three parts of our Australian story” to accompany a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice to Parliament (P. Anderson & Leibler, 2017, p. 2). This framing appears to have gained traction in public discourse via media exposure, following its use by Noel Pearson in his address at the 50th anniversary dinner of *The Australian* newspaper. *The Australian* published the full text of Pearson’s anniversary speech the next day, on July 16, 2014. In the concluding paragraphs of his oration, Pearson (2014) stated:

Our nation is in three parts. There is our ancient heritage, written in the continent and the original culture painted on its land and seascapes. There is our British inheritance, the structures of government and society transported from the United Kingdom fixing its foundations in the ancient soil. There is our multicultural achievement: a triumph of immigration that brought together the gifts of peoples and cultures from all over the globe - forming one indissoluble commonwealth.

We stand on the cusp of bringing these three parts of our national story together: our ancient heritage, our British inheritance and our multicultural triumph, with constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australians. This reconciliation will make a more complete commonwealth.

As noted by the Referendum Council, the intention of an extra-constitutional declaration of recognition would be to symbolically unify all Australians (P. Anderson & Leibler, 2017). Pearson’s earlier articulation of the three parts narrative of the nation represents the consolidation of a now-dominant representation of the national community and contributions to the national story made by each part. This framing contains specific characterisations of actors in the national community which have flow-on effects on the intelligibility of political

claim-making within and against the Australian state. The use of ‘heritage’ and ‘inheritance’ also perform specific ideological work, particularly when applied to Indigenous peoples and land. This language implies rightful possession via succession, something which is hardly uncontroversial given the violent dispossession required to establish colonial. Acknowledging this is not to say that Pearson and members of the Referendum Council do not recognise the harms of colonialism in such a framing of the nation, but to identify how modes of redress for these harms are configured within Pearson’s long-standing advocacy for the individual responsabilisation of Indigenous peoples rather than to overturn structures of colonial oppression. In sum, this framing presents a description of the national community that is perfectly amenable to the status quo of Indigenous-settler relations.

In their longitudinal analysis of Indigenous affairs coverage in *The Australian* from 1988-2018, researchers Lisa Waller and Kerry McCallum (2016; see also McCallum et al., 2016) identified Noel Pearson’s significant influence on the Australian’s coverage and framing of Indigenous issues. The present study cautiously suggests the persistence of this narrative influence, at least during the time period under analysis, considering that the three strands framing was identified 34 times across 26 distinct items. These items were published across 13 different mastheads, with all but the *Koori Mail* and *National Indigenous Times* being mainstream media platforms. Use of the three strands framing was also distributed across a range of media types, including news articles (9), opinion pieces (6), letters (4), non-news radio programs (3), editorials (2) and lifestyle articles (2). Usage of the framing can be divided into three categories: references which emphasised the role and claims of Indigenous peoples, references which used the framing to contest an overemphasis on the fruits of white colonisation, and references which presented each of the three strands as relatively harmoniously blended, often also under-emphasising Indigenous peoples’ part in the national narrative.

The following quote from an *NITV* article published on January 17 and covering *NITV*’s dedicated programming in the lead up to January 26 uses the three strands framing to centre the importance of Indigenous peoples in the nation’s story. In reference to an upcoming special episode of *NITV*’s current affairs program ‘The Point’, the article states:

The panel will explore how Australia can better entwine its colonial and migrant stories with the ancient spirit of this land and ask what we can learn from the oldest continuing civilisation on the planet. (Jenkins, 2020)

This excerpt identifies the uniqueness of Indigenous peoples' sustained relationship to Country and its significance to Australia's national narrative. By describing the panel as exploring "how Australia can better entwine its colonial and migrant stories with the ancient spirit of this land," the primary responsibility for engagement, interest and understanding is located with settlers rather than Indigenous people.

Wesley Enoch's statement in *ABC Radio's* January 26 episode of 'Speaking Out' explicitly engages with tensions in the representation of the national narrative by drawing on the three strands framing. Enoch identifies that there is a problem with holding national celebrations that disproportionately privilege Australia's British colonial roots at the expense of other parts of the nation, stating

Noel Pearson talks about the three narratives of this country. He says, the longest continuous culture on Earth, the British colonial project, and the institution's we've inherited, and also the most successful multi ethnic, multicultural nation on Earth. And what the Cook anniversary does, is start to lift one up in favor of the others, and tries to build if you like, a kind of competition, for airtime. And what I think we should be doing is saying all those three things is our lived experience, we look around the room right now. And those three narratives are being formed, are being reenacted, are being exercised. Just us, our lived experience is those three narratives. When we lift the 26th of January up, and that anniversary up and don't want to see the symbolism of that, then I go, ugh, that's really problematic. (Behrendt, 2020)

Referring to celebrations planned for the 250th anniversary, Enoch notes that cultivating a "competition for airtime" is unproductive and exclusionary given the actual diversity of the Australian polity. This is linked to the elevation of January 26 celebrations, where Enoch critiques a failure to "see the symbolism" of celebrating British colonisation rather than attempting to create a balanced and inclusive celebration of the nation that engages with and values all aspects of the national story.

Alternatively, the following passage, excerpted from an editorial published by *The Australian* on January 25, presents a conservative and Eurocentric appraisal of the national community's three strands.

Australia's first peoples, the British settlers who came tens of thousands of years later in 1788 (18 years after Captain Cook), bringing our parliamentary system, and later waves of migrants represent what Aboriginal leader Noel Pearson describes as the three strands of modern Australia. Each strand is intrinsic to our identity. Decade after decade, the strands have blended, mainly harmoniously but sometimes with tensions, into a strong, diverse, unified nation that draws together in hard times. (The Australian Editorial, 2020a)

The possessive language used to refer to Indigenous people (and lack of capitalisation) along with the lack of reference to either Indigenous peoples' or migrants' contributions to the national narrative is juxtaposed against the characterisation of British settlers. They are the group whose "intrinsic" contribution to the national identity is named: "bringing our parliamentary system." This is presented as a self-evident good. While some disharmony between the three groups is acknowledged, there is no indication of its source or character. The dominant narrative presented to the audience is that any such tensions are far outweighed by a shared sense of national unity and duty. Possession is reconciled through the projection of a voluntaristic association between the three parts of the nation that avoids mentioning the genocide and dispossession at the basis of the settler contract.

Across the media data, claims to the nation and contributions to its story often ended up being presented as equivalent, rhetorically settling the political contestations between Indigenous peoples, colonist descendants, and migrant settlers (refugees and asylum seekers, it may be assumed, fall into the latter category as they were not explicitly identified). This framing is fundamentally incorporative, weaving Indigenous peoples into the polity in a predetermined mode of relationship with both settlers and migrants. Therefore, even where the relative emphasis on different strands of the nation is troubled, such as through Enoch's discussion of national celebrations, the issue is boiled down to one of recognition rather than redistribution and substantive societal transformation. While the three strands framing discussed in this section presents the Australian nation as one with a palatable and inclusive (though at times, challenging) national story, it ultimately constructs a narrative of fundamentally unequal 'contributions' to the nation. Indigenous people give their land, migrants give their culture, but ultimately, British settlers bring the most important pillar, that of 'civilised' institutions of law and governance.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that references to Indigenous and settler sovereignties in the data are made both implicitly and explicitly, and that in the latter case, there are specific modes of discussing Indigenous sovereignty and settler possession related to assumptions about their respective political legitimacy. The chapter began by identifying the relative frequency of the term ‘sovereignty’ and stemmed words for both Indigenous peoples’ and settler claims, finding that explicit references to Indigenous sovereignty were both much more frequent and much more likely to be mentioned in independent media produced by Indigenous people. This foregrounded an in-depth analysis of how sovereignty was discussed and referenced in the media data, interviews and political statements included for qualitative analysis. Indigenous sovereignty was commonly discussed by Indigenous speakers and writers with regard to its origins, associated responsibilities to Country and community, persistence over time and relationship to political action in the present. Settler claims to sovereignty, while less frequently explicitly described as such, were also discussed in relation to several key themes. These included references to colonial possession and western civilisation, settler relationships to land, and the consolidation of political legitimacy through framing Australia’s national story as being composed of three parts—Indigenous people, British colonists and multicultural migrant settlers. In the context of the broader thesis investigation, this chapter has argued that there are identifiable but not necessarily rigidly defined referential architectures related to both Indigenous and settler sovereignties. This provides a foundation for subsequent chapters’ exploration of broader appeals to political legitimacy in public discourse that either challenge or reinforce the colonial status quo.

Chapter 5: History and Epistemology

Introduction

History, as served up by the dominant white sector of Australian society is something that is digested with great familiarity (maybe like a meat pie?). People get so used to it, that it is taken for granted. Its enjoyment and relevance becomes embedded in the subconscious, and at times is forgotten. But try taking it away? Or introducing something new to the diet? Then you will quickly discover that a very staple and particular view of the past matters quite a lot. (Birch, 2014b, p. 202)

The Australian settler state's claim to sovereignty is reliant on a mythologised narrative about its origins, centred on the legal fiction of *terra nullius*. The construction and repetition of this narrative over time is closely related to a normative orientation towards history which privileges the legitimacy of the state and provides little room to accommodate alternative perspectives on the past (Maddison, 2019). The opening quote for this chapter is taken from Koori historian and writer Tony Birch's (2014b, p. 202) essay 'The Last Refuge of the 'Un-Australian'', where Birch reflects on the taken-for-grantedness of a dominant narrative of Australian history despite "the Australian public's supposed apathy towards the past." While the national story has been recited and modified across generations, it continues to rest on a contradiction between acknowledging Indigenous peoples and maintaining a system predicated on the assumption of Indigenous peoples' political incapacity. Drawing attention to this contradiction provokes a variety of responses in public discourse, providing insights into the relationship between temporality, nationhood and politics in contemporary Australia.

Tony Birch has referred to Australia's History War—a highly publicised struggle over the 'truth' of Australian history and in particular, of the genocide of Indigenous peoples—as a "phoney war" (2006, p. 21), a "turf war" (2014a, p. 40), and a "white war" (2014a, p. 43). He emphasises the importance of understanding this early 21st century conflict as one between conservative and liberal historians fighting for control over the discipline, and by extension, Australians' approach to the past. Identifying this disciplinary orientation is not to question the intentions of liberal settler historians who spoke out against selective approaches to history on behalf of maligned Indigenous people, but to identify a particular logic underpinning the

dispute—one reminiscent of Hage’s (1998) writing on the (white) management of national space. Birch’s framings of the History War draw attention to the performative, possessive and racialised nature of settler approaches to history in Australia across the political spectrum. By considering Aboriginal people as “nothing more than a carcass of history,” and certainly not capable of contributing to the discussion, white knowers on either side of the History War were largely content for the conflict to be restricted to a fight between conservative revisionism and liberal truth-telling (Birch, 2014a, p. 43). Given the level of media and academic attention to the History War at the time, this resulted in a reification of the white historian as supreme epistemic agent.

Birch (2014b, p. 203) also describes a war being waged by and for Aboriginal people positioned as epistemic agents in their own right “to ensure that the history of colonisation and dispossession is no longer relegated to the status of out-of-sight out-of-mind, as it was in the past.” Elsewhere, Birch (2006) underscores the importance of attending to the epistemological dimension of the History War, and its reliance on a racial hierarchy of knowing to privilege representations of the past which did not conflict with the continued existence of the settler state. The history war being waged by Indigenous people both inside and outside the academy may be read as part of a broader pursuit of epistemic justice in the Australian settler colony, where normative representations of history continue to reinscribe the racial contract. A variety of epistemic strategies have been developed by Indigenous people to counter the supreme injustice of the colony’s denial of the violence enabling its foundation and maintenance. In this part of the thesis, the focus is primarily on the notion of truth-telling, and the way that expressions of the true history of Australia can be positioned both within and outside of settler colonialism’s constriction of the bounds of political possibility.

Moreton-Robinson (2004, p. 76) identifies that “since the Enlightenment, the dominant epistemic position within the Western world has been the white Cartesian male subject.” The conversion of this standpoint epistemology into a universal truth and its spread through empire and colonial institutions has secured its position as the unspoken assumption underlying “the white subject’s knowledge production” (Moreton-Robinson, 2004, p. 78). This is connected both to Hall’s (1982) elaboration on the nature and operation of ideology, and the ideological dimension of the racial contract outlined by Mills (1997). Describing the establishment and reproduction of the racial state, Mills (1997, p. 83) identifies that the coercive operation of the racial state requires a combination of “physical violence and ideological conditioning.” This

indicates the importance of investigating influences on and modes of knowing when attempting to unpack dominant narratives of Australian history.

Here, it is worth reiterating Hall's (1982, p. 84) argument that "ideology is a function of the discourse and of the logic of social processes, rather than the intention of the agent." This underscores the fact that analysing privileged representations of history is not as simple as identifying a discrete selection of bad-faith actors attempting to undermine the political aspirations of Indigenous peoples (though this is not to ignore Australia's abundance of overt racists). Rather, the "structural and epistemological" operation of ideology means that it exerts an unseen influence on individuals' interpretations of history within a given society (S. Hall, 2019a, p. 320). In the realm of mainstream media production, this manifests through the reproduction of particular dominant discourses, "commonsense ideologies [which] are usually a composite reflection of the dominant ideologies" and which work to reinforce the consensus of a liberal status quo where any conflict is regulated (S. Hall, 2019c, p. 292).

In this chapter, considerations of racialised epistemology and ideology are brought together to explore non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples' engagements with history, and how they are represented in Australian media. The analysis presented in this chapter supports the thesis overall by investigating how different engagements with Australian history relate to assertions of both Indigenous and settler sovereignties. The first section unpacks notable statements about Australian history made by Indigenous and non-Indigenous elite figures mapping onto broader understandings of history that emerged through the media data. This is followed by an investigation of the relationship between Australian history and epistemology through attention to the question of settler ignorance versus settler denialism. Finally, the chapter attends to the epistemic labour demanded of Indigenous peoples in the process of settlers confronting the violent truths of colonisation. While incessant demands of right-wing conservatives for evidence of colonial harm represent the most overt example of this process, this part of the analysis also addresses the insidious appetite of liberal recognition for Indigenous trauma. Finally, the chapter ends by exploring how some Indigenous speakers' critiques of demands for proof of the impacts of colonization involved assessments of who should be responsible for truth-telling, and the requirement of corresponding redistributive action.

Knowing history

The question of how to frame the origins of the nation in Australia's national narrative emerged across a range of mainstream media items. Much conservative discussion of the early colonial period tended to skim over the violent details and instead situated colonisation within a teleological narrative of nationhood. Some politicians and elite figures chose to skip any reference this period at all, and instead crafted vague, sanitised and optimistic stories about the nation. Danielle Roche, the chair of the National Australia Day Council, framed Australia's origins in the following terms in a speech at Canberra's 'Australia Day' ceremony, reported in *9News* on January 26:

“On Australia Day we reflect the story of our nation. We reflect on the people who have built our nation from the first peoples to the ways [sic] of migration that built our modern society.”

"We respect their contribution to building a nation on the shared values of democracy, individual freedom, the rule of law and equality." (Smith Lathouris, 2020)

Then-Prime Minister Scott Morrison's address at the ceremony, reported in the same *9News* article, drew on the ongoing 2019-2020 bushfire crisis to fold Indigenous peoples into the national narrative while equating the hardships faced by *all* people on the continent:

In this season, we've been reminded anew that Australia's story has always been one of achievement but also one of pain, effort, prosperity and struggle, and it is the story of a people from ancient times until now, overcoming the many challenges and learning the important lessons that come from living in this great continent. (Smith Lathouris, 2020)

Roche's statement avoids touching on the role of colonisation and the nature of possession altogether. Instead, Roche rhetorically incorporates "the first peoples" into the opening pages of the national narrative, seemingly including British colonial appropriation under the broader and milder term "migration." Morrison also projected the national story into the past by erasing the act of colonial possession. Like Roche, he crafts a fictionalised history of the eternal Australian nation and its hard-fought victory over a hostile but rightfully owned continent. Roche's use of "we" and "our" to describe the nation's people as a fictionally cohesive polity implies collaboration and good will between all those who "built our nation." Similarly, in the biblical language of challenges, lessons and, from earlier in his speech, sacrifice, Morrison collapses the three strands of the nation referred to in Chapter 4 into a homogeneous mass

labelled ‘Australians’. In both these statements, white possession shapes the conditions of possibility for white knowers to view and narrate the past. The nation’s story is presented across these excerpts as one of racially neutral triumph, albeit from the vantage point of the white settler gaze.

Roche’s expression of gratefulness to the nation’s mythic forebears for “building a nation on the shared values of democracy, individual freedom, the rule of law and equality” is a blatant fictionalisation of Australia’s colonial history and present-day Indigenous-settler relations. However, presenting the process of nation-building as a collaborative, harmonious and principled effort based in “shared values” is a rhetorical effort to bridge the gap between the spirit of such values and their shallow, partial and post-hoc application in Australia. The creation of a positive national narrative occurs here not just through the erasure of truth, but through the projection of an historical trajectory directly at odds with the facts of Australian history. As Mills (1997, p. 93) puts it, the underlying racial contract is characterised by an “epistemology of ignorance,” where “evasion and self-deception... become the epistemic norm.” Interestingly, Roche’s statement was also at odds with the National Australia Day Council’s official messaging about the date in 2020, which centred on a multimillion-dollar campaign advertising the diversity of “The Story of Australia” and inviting Australians to “respect, reflect and celebrate” (Chrysanthos & Drevikovsky, 2020a). Both Roche and Morrison’s comments demonstrate tensions between celebrating the nation and grappling with its past and present as a settler colonial state based on racial hierarchy.

In contrast to the first two statements, some elite figures also described the nation’s beginnings in a way that did not shy away from the harms of colonisation. Reference to these harms tended to be conveyed alongside prompts to improve non-Indigenous peoples’ knowledge of history. For instance, in an opinion piece published in the *Sunday Telegraph* on January 26, Wiradjuri woman and then-shadow minister for Social Services Linda Burney (2020) wrote:

On the one hand—right or wrong—is that many Australians are simply unaware of the historical and political context of the date. On the other, if we understand the history of Australia Day we can understand why it is such a painful day for indigenous Australians—this is the notion of “truth-telling”.

In the first sentence, Burney points to the issue of widespread ignorance amongst (non-Indigenous) Australians about the contentious history of January 26. However, she couches this assertion in the moral ambiguity of settler ignorance, though it is unclear whether she is

suggesting that this ignorance is a structural or individual deficit. Burney provides the “unaware” Australian with a pathway to redemption through “understand[ing] the history of Australia Day” from an Indigenous perspective, drawing on the notion of “truth-telling.” Here, contention around January 26 is framed as being about a lack of adequate knowledge about why the day is painful for Indigenous people, positioned as “indigenous Australians,” members of the national community, fellow citizens. Elsewhere in her speech, Burney also refers to the ongoing impacts of colonisation on Indigenous peoples. However, this is embedded within an appeal to non-Indigenous people to commit to engaging with the truth of colonialism *as well as* the success of the nation. This is captured in Burney’s (2020) concluding sentence: “By all means, celebrate Australia Day, but let’s use it as a day of reflection as well.” This alternative attempt to manage the contradictions of settler colonialism may be situated within a framework of liberal recognition, where while the problematic history of colonisation and its ongoing resonances in the lives of Indigenous people are acknowledged, there is still potential to celebrate the fruits of this process if one is appropriately reflective.

On January 26, then-Leader of the Opposition Anthony Albanese was quoted in multiple news outlets (*AAP, 9News, Daily Mail Australia, The Guardian*) framing concerns about the date in much the same way as Burney:

We cannot pretend our history began on this day in 1788... We cannot deny the trauma that accompanied the birth of modern Australia.

These comments by Albanese, made as part of an address emphasising the importance of a constitutionally enshrined Indigenous Voice to Parliament, touch on the denialism inherent in statements such as Roche and Morrison’s. *The Guardian* quoted Albanese’s address more extensively than other publications, also including his acknowledgement of the “desperation, resistance, loss” and “the tragic triumph of brutality” associated with the advent of settlement, and his call for January 26 to become a time to “acknowledge the past, particularly those who suffered as the result of the arrival of the first fleet on this day in 1788” (Karp, 2020). Interestingly, these statements (either by editorial choice or through Albanese’s own omissions) fail to directly name who it is that “suffered.” It is unclear whether these hardships are identified with specific reference to Indigenous people, or whether this concern also extends to early colonists. Further, by suggesting that “we” cannot pretend that “our” history began on January 26, 1788, Albanese echoes Roche and Morrison’s anachronistic projection of “Australia” back into the pre-colonial past through Indigenous prior occupancy.

Through the metaphor of a traumatic birth, Albanese distinguishes “modern Australia” from the pre-colonial past while simultaneously staking a natural claim to that past. The subtext of creation and genesis as well as the differentiation between modern and pre-modern through colonisation both gesture towards the teleological triumph of contemporary Australia. *The Guardian* also included Albanese’s assertion that “a voice and truth-telling would take us farther from that [traumatic birth] and bring us closer together as a nation” (Karp, 2020). Here, Albanese positions himself as attentive to the Indigenous-led movement pushing for Voice, Treaty and Truth, and reiterates his colleague Burney’s sentiment about the significance of “truth-telling.” As does Burney, Albanese connects Indigenous voices, truth-telling and non-Indigenous peoples’ reflections on Australian history with national progress and unity. Truth-telling is thus framed as instrumental in the reproduction of the settler state into the future, with the key issue again identified as settlers’ acquisition of adequate knowledge and sensitivity.

Elsewhere, Wiradjuri woman and chairperson of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council (MLALC) Yvonne Weldon reminded attendees at the WugulOra Morning Ceremony at Barangaroo:

Whether you call this Invasion Day, Survival Day or Australia Day, know this country didn't begin 232 years ago... It was here, we were here before time began. (SBS News, 2020)

Weldon’s statement may also be read as suggesting that the nation’s history began prior to colonisation by virtue of Indigenous peoples’ presence. However, this is asserted alongside an acknowledgement that January 26, 1788, represents a moment of rupture, leading to conflicting assessments of the date’s significance. Weldon speaks to the axiological dimension of Indigenous being and belonging to Country by referring to Indigenous presence extending back “before time began.” The context Weldon speaks these words into adds a layer of conceptual interest. Her speech was given as part of the WugulOra Morning Ceremony, described on the Australia Day Council of New South Wales’ website as “a special moment to begin Australia Day,” and included in the official schedule of festivities in Sydney (NSW Government, 2020). It must be emphasised that providing this context and identifying state support for WugulOra is not intended to position Indigenous peoples involved in the event as “colonial dupes” who are tricked into performing culture to pander to the mores of liberal settler recognition (Teves, 2021, p. 482). As Kanaka Maoli scholar Stephanie Nohelani Teves (2021, p. 483) puts it, Indigenous peoples’ “performance in a commercialised public venue can still be spiritually significant” and deeply attentive to the interplay of performance, subjection and self-

affirmation. Drawing attention to the location of this speech act within a broader re-imagining of approaches to the national day (WugulOra has been running since 2003, including under its previous iteration Woggan-ma-gule) also does not mean that MLALC and performers' association with the event undermines their own sovereignties.⁷

Of interest is how the institutionalisation of the event, the location of Weldon's speech within it, and the aforementioned statement's reproduction in the media (across at least 9 distinct articles over January 25-26 in the *AAP*, News Corp publications, *Daily Mail Australia*, *7 News*, *SBS*, *NITV*, and *Yahoo! News*) sit with regard to the broader relationship between knowledge, ignorance and recognition that structures normative conversations around January 26. When referenced in media coverage of the event, Weldon's statement was frequently presented alongside quotations from the authoritative settler voices of then-Premier of NSW Gladys Berejiklian and NSW Governor Margaret Beazley, who also spoke at the event. This occurred in *AAP* articles on January 25 and 26, and in one January 26 News Corp article, two *Daily Mail Australia* articles, one *NITV* article (only Weldon was quoted while Beazley and Berejiklian were paraphrased), one *SBS* article (Berejiklian and Weldon quoted), and one *Yahoo! News* article. Quotes from all three were generally grouped to refer to normative approaches to the date in opposition to reporting on Sydney's Invasion Day rally. This was observed across all previously-mentioned articles published on January 26, with the exception of the *NITV* article which provided rolling coverage of a wide range of Indigenous-led events on the day and therefore did not position Weldon's opening address in 'comparison' to protests (Latimore & Fryer, 2020a).

In most of the aforementioned articles, grouping the three speakers and reporting their comments in contrast to the protests gave Weldon's comments the flavour of an 'Indigenous perspective' on the date more readily associated with the statements of liberal concern expressed by Berejiklian and Beazley, both of whom framed their speeches around the solemnity of the occasion due to the bushfire crisis. Additionally, a brief statement on 'Australia Day' by Weldon (2020) titled 'A time to reflect and pay respect' was published in the *Sunday Telegraph* on January 19 alongside a piece by Berejiklian (2020) titled 'Sharing in the community spirit.' Weldon's framing of the "impacts and devastation" of colonisation as

⁷ It is perhaps worth noting, however, that Weldon is described as giving Welcome to Country rather than an Acknowledgement of Country as a Wiradjuri person on Gadigal land.

“sacrifices” that First Nations people have made complements Berejiklian’s call for an acknowledgement of “the contribution that everyone makes to our nation, from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have lived here for more than 60,000 years to our newest citizens who have chosen to call Australia home.” Both Weldon and Berejiklian describe the date as one to both “reflect” and “celebrate” in line with the National Australia Day Council’s messaging, and resonant with Burney’s (2020) January 26 opinion piece printed one week later in the same publication.

While the statements by Roche and Morrison quoted above provide clear examples of conservative settler denialism, these are low-hanging fruit in an analysis aiming to uncover some of the subtler mechanisms by which liberal recognition artificially restricts the horizons of political imagination in the Australian settler state. The epistemic strategy of truth-telling deployed by Weldon and Burney and amplified by Albanese around January 26 appears to be limited by virtue of its framing in the register of acknowledgement and recognition. The broad political palatability of articulating truth in this way is further evidenced by its use by Noongar man and then-Minister for Indigenous Australians Ken Wyatt in an opinion piece published across several News Corp mastheads on January 22. Even though he represented an outlier in his party on the matter, truth-telling is discussed in similar terms by Wyatt (2020), who states that he wants

to see all Australians celebrate our indigenous heritage, promote and support truth-telling to acknowledge our shared history, and work together to heal these past wounds so we can walk together towards a brighter, reconciled future.

Though Wyatt’s framing appears to be fairly ambitious in its call to “work together,” it is clear that the difficult subject matter to be worked *on* is relegated to the past, and an assumption of equal contributions to this work by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people despite drastically different experiences. Weldon, Burney and Wyatt’s revelations about Australia’s true history are situated within an officially sanctioned component of the nation’s ‘Australia Day’ activities, with the presentation (by Indigenous people) and reception and digestion (by non-Indigenous people) of this truth implied as a good in itself. The intention here is not to disparage truth-telling as an epistemic strategy, but to identify the ways that the operation of white possession and cognition through a liberal politics of recognition functions to close off possibilities for broader structural transformation once truths have been told. Presenting acknowledgement and reflection alongside celebration as the desired outcomes of truth-telling leaves the racial contract wholly untroubled. This approach also presumes that truth-telling will

not disturb settler claims to sovereignty, even though such truths would at the very least raise questions about the state's political legitimacy.

Ignorance and denialism

As outlined above, several elite figures whose voices were amplified in mainstream media discourses around January 26 either chose to ignore concerns about what the day represented or framed such concerns as primarily requiring action in the form of recognition. This section continues the investigation of approaches to Australian history, exploring the concepts of ignorance and denialism and how they intersect with the epistemic strategy of truth-telling mobilised by Indigenous people. 'Ignorance' suggests a level of innocence or at least a lack of direct culpability by settlers who have simply not engaged substantively with the true history of colonisation, possibly because they have not been provided with the opportunity to do so. Representing the settler ignorance as the problem indicates that the required corrective is one of knowledge acquisition through exposure or education. However, if such knowledge is produced within a system that positions Indigenous people as inherently inferior (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 110), then it cannot provide a corrective to the racial contract's epistemology of ignorance (Mills, 1997, p. 93).⁸ 'Denial' of history, on the other hand, implies an active refusal of historical narratives incompatible with nationalist history (Maddison, 2012). Correcting denialism, then, appears to require a direct challenge to the racial hierarchy of knowledge that vests particular knowers with narrative authority. Critiques of denialism may have a greater potential to open up possibilities for structural transformation, though challenging denialism is far from guaranteed to topple the racial contract. Broad descriptions of ignorance and denial are not intended to present the two as mutually exclusive, but to identify them as relevant concepts in the way that settler relationships to history are framed and navigated. This section of the chapter explores the discussion of concerns about Australian settlers' knowledge of history in the data, analysing this against both moderate and radical critiques of settler denialism. Only a small subset of radical critiques engaged with concerns beyond ignorance and denial, addressing the production of "colonial unknowing" (Vimalassery et al., 2016) through white supremacist epistemology.

⁸ Indeed, research has identified that increased education about Australia's history of colonisation has produced little evidence of sustained transformation in non-Indigenous peoples' attitudes towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Maddison and Stasny, 2016).

References to non-Indigenous peoples' ignorance or lack of knowledge about Australia's history of violence against Indigenous people appeared across 31 items in the qualitative media data set. The majority of these items were news articles (11), though references also appeared across 7 entertainment or programming articles and 7 opinion pieces. There were also six distinct 'explainer' pieces (1 from *NITV*, 2 from *SBS*, 3 from *News Corp* publications), all of which aimed to enlighten the reader about the real history of January 26, or more broadly about colonisation and Indigenous dispossession. Some of the 31 items identified settler ignorance about history as a shameful or concerning issue, often explicitly linking this to a need for greater education about the nation's history. For example, Muruwari playwright Jane Harrison refers to ignorance of history in four separate interviews about her play 'The Visitors', a reimagining of the First Fleet's landing at Warrang or Sydney Cove on January 26, 1788 from the perspective of a group of Aboriginal clan leaders on the shore (Cathcart, 2020; Meacham, 2020; Reid, 2020; Tilley, 2020). In a January 14 interview on *ABC Radio National*, Harrison states:

Well, I think it's um, it's our foundation story, really, as a nation, as a modern Australia, and I think not enough of us know about that story. And if we do know about it, of course, we know about it from the non Indigenous perspective, not from the Aboriginal perspective. (Tilley, 2020)

Harrison notes the epistemic inequality built into the dominant narrative of Australian history—told from the perspective of white settlers—and describes her play as an approach that will hopefully provide Aboriginal people with “some sense of ownership or agency” about the date (Tilley, 2020). Her use of inclusive language suggests that insufficient knowledge of history is not just restricted to settlers: “not enough of *us* know about that story” (emphasis added). Ignorance at the individual level is linked to a systemic bias towards settler narratives of history, though this bias is not discussed in further detail. In a January 15 interview about the play for *The Guardian*, Harrison refers to the significance of widespread settler ignorance, identifying that “this isn't just black history people are forgetting. It's white history, our history” (Meacham, 2020). She reiterates this concern in a January 21 interview on *ABC Radio National* alongside Noonuccal Ngugi theatre director Wesley Enoch, stating that her hope for the play is to “unpack the events of that day so that all Australians can understand the significance” (Cathcart, 2020). Again, the inclusive language of “our,” and “all Australians” presents a lack of knowledge about history as a phenomenon that spans the Indigenous-settler divide, requiring a mutual commitment to listening, learning and imagining differently.

In both the *ABC Radio National* segments, non-Indigenous interviewers Tom Tilley (2020) and Michael Cathcart (2020) make specific reference to the implications of Harrison's play for the national story or conversation around January 26. The intention here is to prompt a change in the way that the day is approached by introducing a perspectival shift, and importantly one described by Harrison as not being about guilt, which

makes you stuck. So... you know, this play is really about imagination, as Wesley said. So let's all sit in that space for a little while and just let the ideas percolate and have that sense of shared participation in a story. I'm really not interested in hitting people over the head. (Cathcart, 2020)

The emphasis is on education through engagement with creative practice and collective re-imagining, but this is clearly differentiated from "hitting people over the head." Instead, Harrison here insinuates that there is a level of civility required in changing people's minds about January 26 and Australian history more broadly. This gestures to a politics of respectability around political activity on January 26 which will be discussed later in this chapter.

There is also a variety of representations of how the main characters in the play are presumed to exercise their agency in relation to the First Fleeters. In *The Guardian* and both *ABC Radio National* interviews, the discussion touches on *whether* the visitors should be welcomed, and the process of deliberation of the clan leaders along the lines of cultural protocols. In *The Australian's* January 16 write-up, however, while protocols are mentioned, journalist Imogen Reid (2020) writes that the play explains "the indigenous [sic] custom that escaped the narrative many Australians think they know" (lower case 'I' in original), quoting Harrison on the "generosity" of Aboriginal people in the encounter and emphasising Harrison's wish to avoid portraying Aboriginal people as merely "victims" of colonisation. While Harrison's intention to confer agency onto the Indigenous protagonists is clearly identified across the other interviews, Reid's choice to emphasise the *generosity* of Indigenous people implies that a genuine, informed welcoming of the visitors took place. This implies an overblown level of agency in the decision-making process when the full magnitude of the impacts of colonisation could not have been known—something Tilley and Cathcart make explicit reference to in their interview questions.

The framing of settler ignorance also made possible the proliferation of 'explainer' articles about the history of January 26 which relied on assumptions about inadequate access to

information or widespread misinformation about the date. Explainer articles in the data set included ‘The many different dates we’ve celebrated Australia Day’ in *SBS* on January 22 (Sargeant, 2020), and *News.com.au* articles ‘Debunking the myth of Australia Day’ published January 25 (Chang, 2020a), ‘10 facts you might not know about Australia Day’ published January 26 (Khalil, 2020), and ‘The real significance of Australia Day’, also published January 26 (Chang, 2020b). In three of these articles, the focus is on the history of national celebrations, taking concerns about changing the date of ‘Australia Day’ as a key premise and leaving the broader political significance of the date for Indigenous people largely unexplored (Chang, 2020a, 2020b; Sargeant, 2020). A core assumption in these articles is that the reader is likely unaware that the national day has not always been on January 26, supporting the argument that moving it now to accommodate Indigenous peoples’ concerns would not be such a jarring shift. A second assumption that these explainers rely on is about what Indigenous people (generally described as a homogeneous group) want to happen on the date, something which will be explored in greater depth in Chapters 7 and 8. For now, it is sufficient to note that representations of January 26 as a contentious date due to concerns about its true history paves the way for a range of responses in the realm of individual cognition, knowledge accumulation and symbolic recognition. While they may represent useful first steps, however, these responses are de-linked from broader structural changes required to substantively engage with Indigenous sovereignty.

Several media items featured direct accusations of conservatives’ denial of history, but did so in a way that positioned such actors as uniquely culpable for colonial denialism. Largely identical editorials published by *The Age* (The Age’s View, 2020) and *The Sydney Morning Herald* (The Herald’s View, 2020) on January 24 both included a critique of conservative denialism via the assertion that

ardent nationalists crank up their outrage machine against anyone who calls for a new date or even mentions the violence that started on January 26, 1788.

The choice to identify a responsible (not-us) demographic indicates that the issue is to be understood as localised rather than systemic. Denial of history is made out to be solely the preserve of “ardent nationalists,” though the editorial teams of both papers later state that “it is hard to know what the public thinks” about January 26 (The Age’s View, 2020; The Herald’s View, 2020). The choice to title both editorials ‘Indigenous history must be at centre of Australia Day,’ signals the papers’ intent to actively position themselves as inclusive, further differentiating them from conservative publications. This inclusionary approach is reinforced

in both papers' statements of support for recognising "our Indigenous heritage" in the constitution and entrenching an Indigenous voice to Parliament as proposed in the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The relationship between knowledge, recognition and acknowledgement is interesting here. If acknowledgement is taken to mean an admission of truth, then "acknowledging Indigenous Australians" in the constitution signals both the truth of Indigenous peoples' status as a distinct group (within the Australian polity), and the implied truth of settler sovereignty to sanction their formal incorporation under the founding document of the state. The use of possessive language in these editorials will be discussed in the following chapter.

There were also a small number of conservative critiques about progressives' denial of or ignorance about history. In much the same register as exhortations by 'white blindfolded' commentators in the History Wars (see Brantlinger, 2004), these generally appeared in the form of references to a lack of knowledge about the positives of Australian history and the boon of western civilisation. Almost all such references were contained in either News Corp publications (1 opinion piece, 1 editorial and two each of news articles and letters to the editor) or *Nine Radio* programs (3 talk radio episodes). The exceptions were a quote from former New South Wales Liberal government minister Pru Goward stating that changing the date would *itself* represent a denial of history in a January 20 *Daily Mail Australia* article (Jackson, 2020), and another quote from an 'Australia Day' Melbourne attendee who, in an *AAP* article published on January 26, recommended that "we should forget the past and just enjoy the future together" (Izquierdo, 2020). One letter to the editor published in *The Australian* on January 24 explicitly used the terminology of the History Wars to argue that "naysayers" who critiqued jingoistic celebrations should "take off the black armband" encouraging them to "read some history and be grateful so much has changed for the better" ('Australia Day Is an Occasion to Celebrate Our Great Achievements', 2020).

The most significant conservative critique regarding Australians' unfamiliarity with history was that which emerged through then-Education Minister Dan Tehan's (2020) opinion piece published in *The Australian* on January 27, accompanied later that day by an editorial promoting Tehan's position titled 'Understanding history to break cycle of ignorance.' Of note here is Tehan's (2020) statement that

We need fewer people telling us what to think. Instead we need more knowledge and information to help us understand our past for ourselves. Knowledge of our history will help us break the cycle of Australia Day antagonism.

Tehan's opinion piece is framed in opposition to antagonists who tell "us what to think" on 'Australia Day,' but these people are not named—it is left up to the reader to infer that Tehan means *Indigenous* people, and possibly their non-Indigenous supporters, who are critical of national celebrations. In Tehan's assessment, individuals will be able to credibly appraise the past once equipped with "more knowledge and information." According to Tehan, this will nullify contention around January 26, since the source of antagonism in Indigenous-settler relations is assumed to be purely or primarily epistemic. As he states in a later paragraph, "reconciliation will not come from ignorance," specifically the "ignorance" of those who seek to amplify alternative narratives of the nation's past and present. Instead, what is required "for all Australians to move forward together" is a robust, though selective, understanding of the past. While the majority of the article is focused on criticising Australian academia for insufficiently prioritising national concerns, the overarching message is that turning towards national history is a desirable approach to strengthen Australian society. This push for a greater knowledge of the nation's history is echoed and amplified by *The Australian's* subsequent editorial referring to Tehan's piece, which ends with the assertion that

As we deepen our understanding of the past, we strengthen the bonds we share and rely on to thrive. (The Australian Editorial, 2020b)

Once again, the unspoken emphasis is on a particular mode of understanding the past, a singular, dominant narrative of history which consolidates the legitimacy of the settler state.

The media data also included several radical critiques of denialism which identified settlers' refusal to engage with the truth of colonial violence and simultaneously noted the limitations of mere acknowledgements of history without further action. These critiques also included challenges to settler systems of knowledge (re)production, often referring to the active production of selective histories and identifying the marginalisation of Indigenous perspectives in status quo Australian historiography as a process of active erasure. In an *NITV* article recapping the latest episode of news and current affairs program 'The Point' on January 22, 2020, panellist Alison Whittaker, Gomeri poet and legal researcher, was paraphrased as follows:

Ms Whittaker said part of Australia's struggle with its national identity is confusion about our own history, and the influencing of how we tell it to suit particular agendas. (Jenkins, 2020)

The episode, which focused on unpacking Australia's "national identity and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people fit into it," included a variety of perspectives on settler Australia's approach to history by the majority Indigenous panellists. Whittaker's assessment of "confusion" does not imply settler innocence, but instead speaks to a cultivated ignorance inherent in planned celebrations of the 250th anniversary of colonial possession. Whittaker states that what "white people" want is "the aesthetics of colonisation, they're really interested in celebrating the arrival of a white presence and that's all that really matters" (Jenkins, 2020). Here, Whittaker gestures towards not just the erasure of Indigenous perspectives from dominant narratives colonisation, but the active production of a triumphalist history of possession. The "aesthetics of colonisation" are only able to be read positively because colonial violence is strategically ignored, an example of "the influencing of how we tell [history] to suit particular agendas."

Whittaker's fellow panellist, Bundjalung human rights activist Vanessa Turnbull-Roberts, also touched on this selective approach to history. Turnbull-Roberts was quoted in the same *NITV* article asserting that "white Australia is still so complacent with facing their own backyard, what they today still benefit off" (Jenkins, 2020). This analysis draws a line between material enrichment of settlers, made possible by Indigenous dispossession and colonial genocide, and settler complacency in facing up to the truths of colonisation. The critiques outlined by Whittaker and Turnbull-Roberts was paralleled in comments by Interviewee 3, who while discussing the 250th anniversary identified the institutional reproduction of this "false history" through the education system, despite the fact that "every Aboriginal person knows the true history." Reading these three appraisals of settler approaches to history together provides insights into the way that a racial hierarchy of knowing influences how history is told and taught, connecting knowledge production to the material interests of both individual settlers and the colony at large.

In a January 25 opinion piece for *IndigenousX*, Gamilaroi man and *IndigenousX* founder Luke Pearson presented an analysis of conservative denialism and misrepresentation of history not just around January 26 and the 250th anniversary, but around Indigenous resistance movements taking action to challenge the celebration of these colonial anniversaries. Focusing on online

trolls targeting social media posts made by Indigenous people speaking up about the truth of colonial violence, Pearson (2020b) identifies that

the desire to paint Aboriginal resistance as ‘anti-white’ and potentially violent is not just among white supremacist trolls... but has long been part of the conservative rhetoric that anti-Australia Day sentiment is anti-white, unAustralian, or ‘divisive’.

This description of conservative rhetoric about Indigenous people around January 26 can be read as a critique of framings such as those published by *The Australian* via Tehan’s (2020) opinion piece and the corresponding editorial (The Australian Editorial, 2020b). The insinuations made by Tehan and *The Australian*’s editorial team are that attention to the truths of settler colonialism are an attack on national coherence. Drawing on Moreton-Robinson’s (2015) work on the construction of the nation as a white possession, Indigenous peoples’ public articulations of truths about racial violence and dispossession are inherently odds with a white supremacist narrative of history, allowing them to be framed as “anti-white.” Pearson’s (2020b) mention of online trolls referring to “Aboriginal resistance” as “potentially violent” further clarifies the extent to which racial hierarchy is embedded in common sense reactionary approaches to history. Not only are Indigenous people described as “divisive” when critiquing nationalist celebrations, but they are also targeted with racist dog-whistling invoking stereotypes of civilisation and savagery (discussed further in Chapter 6).

Towards the end of the piece, Pearson (2020b) also refers to the implications of Indigenous anti-racism and anti-colonialism beyond just “Invasion of Australia Day” and how these movements speak

to the heart of a nation that finds patriotism in colonialism and continues to dismiss and ignore Indigenous peoples [sic] calls for justice in all walks of life.

Pearson’s identification of Australian patriotism as inseparable from the nation’s colonial foundations aligns with the critiques outlined by Whittaker, Turnbull-Roberts and Interviewee 3 above. This quality of Australian patriotism is therefore inextricable from an impetus to “dismiss and ignore Indigenous peoples [sic] calls for justice.” In spite of liberal and reactionary attempts to undermine them, such calls for justice continue to be expressed through ongoing Indigenous resistance against colonisation. The following section turns to the process of articulating these calls for justice—the epistemic labour of Indigenous people—and to various Indigenous speakers’ assessments of the complexities of truth-telling as an epistemic strategy.

Epistemic labour

The ignorance and denial of history by settlers analysed above suggests both that there is some need for basic epistemic correction as an initial step in positively transforming Indigenous-settler relations, but that it must be directly linked to the material recognition of Indigenous sovereignty. This then raises questions about strategies of epistemic resistance and truth-telling, given the structural orientation towards colonial unknowing embedded in Australia's national consciousness. As identified by Interviewee 1, "if Blackfullas ain't doing the hard yards, or... you know allies... then I don't think white people... think they have the time to sort of educate themselves." This avoidant behaviour is enabled by a dominant narrative of history under the paradigms of reconciliation and liberal recognition that constantly place Indigenous people in the role of truth-teller, such that truth is expected to be delivered rather than actively sought out by settlers.

The extraction of epistemic labour from Indigenous people is discussed in the first episode of *NITV*'s 'Take It Blak' podcast hosted by Wiradjuri journalist Rae Johnston and Biripi journalist Jack Latimore. The January 24 episode includes an interview with Arrernte writer and unionist Celeste Liddle, who is asked by Latimore about "the burden of expectations and demands... placed on Black writers by predominantly white media outlets" every year "to produce a January 26 piece" (Latimore & Johnston, 2020). Liddle reflects that she has "essentially been writing the exact same article over and over again" highlighting Indigenous peoples' reasons for protest on the date, to which Latimore responds with a question about whether "anybody [has] actually been listening." Settler entitlement to endless Indigenous testimony may be considered as both the implicit invalidation of epistemic labour as well as a manifestation of epistemic exploitation (Pohlhaus, Jr., 2017, pp. 20–21). On the one hand, the repetitive requirement of Indigenous truth-telling about colonial violence suggests a de-valuing of the labour of testimony, since within a racial hierarchy of knowledge, this truth is always-already insufficient to provoke structural change. On the other, the very de-valuing of this labour is an inherent component of its repetitive extraction in order to "prove" that injustices have occurred, and thus the threshold of credibility remains out of reach and the epistemic hierarchy remains intact. Liddle and Latimore discuss the cost to Indigenous writers and speakers who are forced to continually explain the injustices of colonialism only for colonial violence to continue apace until the next rally, and indeed to increase as a backlash against public protests. Liddle

identifies that this “takes a huge toll” both in terms of the emotional and epistemic labour required to repeatedly justify one’s humanity by producing pieces that are often commissioned “without any form of compensation” (Latimore & Johnston, 2020).

On May 6, 2022, in response to an article about the Victorian Yoo-rrook Justice Commission’s process of testimony-gathering in preparation for the state’s treaty negotiations, Munanjahli, Yugambeh and South Sea Islander scholar-activist Professor Chelsea Watego (2022) tweeted “truth telling is what settlers need to do.” This statement is a powerful corrective to the cyclical and re-traumatising demands for testimony from Indigenous peoples already traumatised by settler colonialism and whose experiences of violence, dehumanisation and dispossession have been amply documented, not least by the colonial state itself. It resonates with critiques of settler denialism by Indigenous speakers and writers in the previous section which gesture towards the settler state and individual settlers’ active cultivation of ignorance about colonial history and the truth of Indigenous sovereignty. Rather than buying into the invalidation of Indigenous truths contained in dominant discourses around history and colonisation, Watego posits an alternative where Indigenous people are empowered to withdraw their epistemic labour from the false economy of liberal recognition.

Returning to the January 22 *NITV* article covering The Point, Turnbull-Roberts presents the following appraisal of *who* should be responsible for truth-telling, drawing a direct connection between truth and justice:

“White Australia today still benefits off the oppression of our people. White Australia has a responsibility to start having these dark conversations and addressing the issues that they’ve caused.

“Why is the onus always on First Nations people to address what we’re going through and our pain and our sorrow?

“When are the conversations and the panels going to be white Australia saying this is what we’re going to do to give back what we’ve benefited off?” (Jenkins, 2020)

Turnbull-Roberts makes several key assertions pertinent to the present analysis of truth-telling as an epistemic strategy under settler colonial conditions. By stating that it is white Australia who should be telling the truth, Turnbull-Roberts questions the extraction of emotional and epistemic labour from Indigenous people, shifting the focus to settler avoidance of the question of redress or redistribution and identifying the circuitous character of a colonial politics of

recognition. Like Watego, she calls into question the value—especially given the trauma of re-telling—of repeating the truth of colonial violence in the face of a public and state that is fundamentally uninterested in transformation. Both Watego and Turnbull-Roberts instead place the responsibility for truth-telling back onto settlers, requiring participatory engagement instead of risking further harm to Indigenous people. Both critiques are crucially action-oriented: truth is not defined as a good in itself, but as part of creating the conditions of possibility for structural change, which must begin with a shift in the burden of responsibility to *be* truthful.

This issue is also engaged by Gunnai and Gunditjmara woman (then-former MP, at the time of writing, Senator) Lidia Thorpe, who in a January 24 *SBS* article covering plans for the 2020 Invasion Day Dawn Service, was quoted on the relationship between truth-telling and reparations. Regarding the planned reading out of information about massacres of Aboriginal people across Victoria at the service, Thorpe notes:

It is real and it is part of truth-telling and it is something that more Australians need to know about, acknowledge and reparate as a result. (*SBS*, 2020)

Calling settlers to engage with the brutal history of colonial massacres in Victoria, Thorpe again connects truth with action. While the reading is conducted by Indigenous people, Thorpe refers to the responsibility of settlers to participate in the ceremony through not merely collective reflection but the return of misappropriated wealth. By requiring settlers to substantively engage with the consequences of colonisation, the implication is that the pain of truth-telling is justified in this instance due to the importance of “paying tribute to Aboriginal men and women... who were killed during the Frontier Wars or colonial massacres” and because of its presentation as an impetus for settlers to act in solidarity (*SBS*, 2020). Describing the service as a healing ceremony, Thorpe is also quoted stating that as a result of participation in these events, settlers will “hopefully change their minds and stand with Indigenous people to fix what we have been calling for for a long time.” Again, transformation here is not just expected to occur as an abstract, cognitive process but as something that requires tangible action by settlers to “stand with Indigenous people.”

Resistance against the repeated extraction of epistemic labour from Indigenous people is summed up in a statement by respected Dja Dja Wurrung community worker Aunty Diana Travis, whose voice was included as part of an *SBS* radio segment that aired on January 27. Travis stated that January 26

is an emotional day because it is now time for action. No more talking, no more of the government avoiding us or dismissing us anymore. It is time for action. And if we want to go on a journey together, people should not be feeling uncomfortable now about the history of Australia. We need to come together and deal with it. (Dinham, 2020)

Travis' statement is articulated not as an appeal for recognition, but as a demand for action. Both individual settlers and state institutions are required to work through their own discomfort about the nation's history in order to take action on colonial injustice. Travis also identifies the stultifying consequences of settler attempts to engage purely on the level of dialogue, with this leading to governments ignoring or repeatedly dismissing Indigenous people. Instead, what is needed to approach a new mode of Indigenous-settler relations is active work on the part of settlers and settler institutions. The action-oriented statements by Indigenous speakers quoted above gesture towards some of the ways that structural change may be approached. However, the analysis thus far has also revealed the perniciousness of settler colonialism's epistemic hierarchy, and the way that white possession operates as an epistemological *a priori* to keep the racial contract intact in the face of Indigenous truth-telling.

Conclusion

Returning to Birch's reflections on the History War, it is clear that narratives of Australian history continue to be re-litigated in public discourse long after the original disciplinary battle. However, since the original conflict, there has been a shift in dominant approaches to engaging with Indigenous peoples' political concerns towards a colonial politics of recognition. This has allowed Indigenous peoples' experiences to be considered and incorporated to a greater degree within the Australian historical narrative, though in a highly selective manner. The media data analysed in this chapter presented an insight into how settler ignorance continues to pervade public discussion about Australia's history. However, mainstream media data also included instances where the epistemic strategy of truth-telling long mobilised by Indigenous people was refracted through the prism of colonial recognition to achieve the most marginal change.

Commentary by Indigenous speakers and writers who directly interrogate settler colonial epistemology reveals the persistence of dynamic processes of Indigenous resistance, refusal and uncompromising calls for action. Despite the demands of colonial recognition, Indigenous people continue to make claims on the settler state that both challenge its authority and affirm

the “resilient existent” nature of Indigenous sovereignties (Moreton-Robinson, 2020, p. 258). Ultimately, however, Birch’s concerns about the epistemological supremacy and nationalist ideals inherent in the history wars persist in many instances of contemporary public discourse about Australian history and nationhood analysed in this chapter. This does not suggest a failure of the epistemic strategy of truth-telling as much as it speaks to the insidious nature of white knowing, particularly as manifested through the colonial politics of recognition. Despite a shift towards the use of more progressive language when discussing history and the rights of Indigenous peoples, tangible action to address the harms of colonial violence is constantly deferred. This issue will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8 with respect to the conversation around changing the date of ‘Australia Day.’

This chapter has also gestured towards the constraints imposed on Indigenous peoples’ political claims by the imposition of a normative settler colonial temporality. The following chapter turns to a more substantive consideration of this issue, investigating the role of time, and specifically dominant settler conceptions of time, as a product of white knowing and a factor influencing settler assessments of Indigenous peoples’ political claim-making. This involves an exploration of how racial hierarchies of knowing and being shape settler imaginaries around colonial harms, Indigenous personhood, and Indigenous-settler relations.

Chapter 6: Temporality and Indigenous-Settler Relations

Introduction

Investigating the relationship between dominant narratives of Australian history and contested claims to sovereignty requires attending to how whiteness works at the level of epistemology to structure settler conceptions of time. Previous chapters began to explore the political function of white settlement imposing a linear narrative of modernity and subsequent effects on constructions of Australian history. This continues in the present chapter, which seeks to further unpack the role of normative settler approaches to time in creating and constricting political possibilities and undermining the recognition of Indigenous sovereignties. As Rifkin (2017, p. 5) identifies, “the representation of Native peoples as either having disappeared or being remnants on the verge of vanishing constitutes one of the principal means of effacing Indigenous sovereignties.” Representations of Indigenous peoples in the contemporary Australian settler state are infused with assumptions about their position in time relative to non-Indigenous people, further enabling Indigenous peoples’ racialised exclusion from the realm of legitimate political claim-making (Rifkin, 2017, p. 5). This chapter engages with the imposition of a normative settler temporality onto Indigenous lands and peoples through the process of colonisation, and its present-day effects on contested claims to sovereignty. As will be discussed below, the nexus between temporality and Indigenous-settler relations is connected to justifications of both colonial possession and the contemporary legitimacy of the settler state.

Australia’s temporal management of Indigenous peoples requires that they are constantly positioned in the past of the settler state. This form of governance is characterised by a demand for both Indigenous (cultural) authenticity *and* (political) disappearance, as configured through the lens of white settler recognition (see Povinelli, 2002). Building on Benedict Anderson’s (2006) theorisation of the relationship between print-nationalism and sovereignty in *Imagined Communities*, Povinelli (2011, p. 23) identifies the importance of “differential narrative structures of belonging within the nation-state,” addressing the fact that “the temporality of social belonging that emerged with democracy, colonialism and capitalism emerged not merely as a dialectic but also as a division.” This division functions in relation to the imposition of linear settler time to normatively structure Indigenous-settler relations around the question of Indigenous priority (as in the condition of being prior-to), and the consequences of this priority

for settler sovereignty. That Povinelli draws on Anderson to discuss the temporality of social belonging also implicates the role of the media and public discourse in circulating and reinforcing the temporal norms of the settler state.

A stratified temporality of social belonging is also constituted and reproduced through dominant framings of Indigenous peoples' political aspirations. This has resulted in a bracketing of acceptable sites for and mechanisms through which Indigenous peoples' political struggles may be waged, significantly inflected by the paradigm of reconciliation. Despite the formal paradigm shift in Australian Indigenous affairs policy from self-determination and reconciliation to neoliberal self-management (see Strakosch, 2015), the rhetoric of reconciliation continues to persist in public discourse about Indigenous peoples. In his analysis of the colonial politics of recognition in Canada, Coulthard (2014, p. 108) notes that the absence of a "clear or formal transition from an authoritarian past to a democratic present—state-sanctioned approaches to reconciliation must ideologically manufacture such a transition by allocating the abuses of settler colonization to the dustbins of history, and/or purposely disentangle processes of reconciliation from questions of settler-coloniality as such." Coulthard (2014, p. 126) also writes on the application of the Nietzschean concept of *ressentiment*, an unhealthy, pathological orientation towards the past, to Indigenous people unsatisfied with the narrow scope of reconciliation. This informs the analysis in the second part of the chapter, which unpacks how temporal normativity relates both to conceptions of Indigeneity and to the development of common sense understandings of political grievances expressed by Indigenous people.

This chapter builds on the exploration in Chapter 5 of Australian history and epistemology, focusing on how a racial hierarchy of knowledge infuses the temporal governance of Indigenous people around January 26. The chapter begins with an analysis of media data representing settler imaginaries about Indigenous people and the relationships between racial hierarchy, temporal governance and discursive possession in the Australian settler state. As identified in the data, Indigenous peoples are placed by settlers either in the past of the settler state or as anachronistic figures in the present (Rifkin, 2017, p. 5). This leads into an investigation of how the role of time in representations of Indigenous people intersects with settler understandings of history more broadly, particularly when grappling with the truth of colonial violence. As will be discussed below, this also results in normative representations of Indigenous peoples' orientations towards history. The chapter concludes with a consideration

of various critiques of settler time expressed by Indigenous speakers and writers in the media data. Many of these critiques emphasise the ongoing violence associated with settler colonialism, troubling approaches to repairing Indigenous-settler relations that neglect a political analysis of systemic racism and dispossession.

Imagining and possessing Indigenous people

The first part of this chapter presents an assessment of the operation of whiteness as an epistemological *a priori* at the level of Indigenous-settler relations, and the temporal norms associated with this Eurocentric mode of knowing. This begins with an investigation of the way that Indigenous people themselves are known and located in time by settlers, looking at how temporal concerns structure settler understandings of Indigeneity through the racist juxtaposition of civilisation and savagery. Drawing on Chapter 5's analysis of the framing of Indigenous people as 'First Discoverers,' this section also covers the temporal politics at play in referring to Indigenous people as 'First Australians,' as well as broader applications of possessive language to Indigenous people.

Civilisation and savagery

The stereotype of Indigenous people as 'savage', noble or otherwise, is a quintessential manifestation of the hierarchy underpinning Australia's racial contract, a characterisation directly linked to Cook's initial claim of possession. Descriptions of Indigenous people as primitive or uncivilised "in opposition to the discourse of white civility" enabled the initial denial of Indigenous sovereignty by white settlers and has continued to underpin Indigenous-settler relations long after the formal revision of overtly racist policies and legislation (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 158). While use of racist tropes in relation to progress and humanity were relatively infrequent in the media data, their continued publication in some sectors of Australian mainstream media raises significant concerns about the extent to which racism continues to be a tolerated feature of contemporary public discourse.

Most identified racist tropes were published in News Corp publications (10 distinct references), with the rest identified across three Nine Radio programs. The latter included a January 26 episode of 'The John and Paul Show' including several references to Indigenous Blackness and blood-quantum (Stanley & Kidd, 2020), a January 27 episode of 'Sunday Night Crews' where Reverend Crews and interviewee Peter FitzSimons banter about Cook's initial

perception of Indigenous people as “barbaric savages” followed by a later reflection on the negative influence of Europeans on these “happy” people who “live in perfect tranquillity with nature” (Crews, 2020), and a January 27 episode of ‘Overnight’ where interviewee Jim Haynes tells host Michael McLaren that Cook was looking to “prove there’s no continent down here that’s got civilization, and riches, and all the things that Europeans had... and he did” (McLaren, 2020). References in News Corp publications mostly appeared in letters from readers (6). Readers tended to be explicit in their derogatory attitudes towards Indigenous peoples, who were variously described as living in the Stone Age (January 24 in *The Australian*, January 26 in *Herald Sun*’s ‘50/50’ section), as hunter-gatherers (again January 24 in *The Australian*, January 26 in *Herald Sun*’s ‘Letters’ section), and as lacking civilisation (January 27 in *The Australian*, January 29 in *The Courier Mail*).

Chapter 4 touched on the settler-triumphalist narratives contained in Geoffrey Blainey’s (2020) opinion piece on Cook published in *The Australian* on January 24 and the long-read article ‘The old man and the seafarer’ published in *The Courier Mail* on January 25. Both of these pieces, but especially the latter, contained descriptions of Indigenous people that positioned them as ‘primitive’ in comparison to the ‘civilised’ James Cook (Michael, 2020). As briefly explored in the introductory chapter, The *Courier Mail* article in particular devoted several lengthy passages to exoticizing and objectifying both the “Little Old Man/Ngamu Yarrbarigu,” a Kuku Yalanji Elder who met with Cook, as well as Guugu Yimithirr interviewees whose voices feature in the piece (Michael, 2020). Mills (1997, p. 87, emphasis in original) explains this objectification as follows: “if in the racial polity nonwhites may be regarded as *inherently* bestial and savage (quite independently of what they happen to be doing at any particular moment), then by extension they can be conceptualized in part as *carrying the state of nature around with them*, incarnating wildness and wilderness in their person.” Article author Peter Michael (2020), who does not identify as Indigenous, describes Waymbuurr clan leader Fred Deeral’s recreation of an “ancient ceremony” which his ancestor Ngamu Yarrbarigu is reported to have performed to welcome Cook, in the following terms:

I find it hard to explain how, whether magic, his intense eyes, or the primal ritualistic act, but it’s true, the gesture does gild the soul.

This description lends Deeral a mythic quality, positioning him in a space of pure alterity where he is able to access and channel healing and protective energies. Michael’s writing also positions himself (and the reader) in the role of attentive non-Indigenous observer “stunned” by the unfolding of a cultural event that appears to be from another time. Michael (2020)

describes Cook's good fortune to have landed on the banks of Waalumbaal Birri (the Endeavour River) through a comparison between noble and violent savagery:

He'd landed in the moral equivalent of Switzerland, a tiny patch of peace and love. Anywhere else and Cook's legacy might have been skewered on the spot.

Indigenous people interviewed throughout the article are presented as either foils for or supporters of Cook, who is ultimately positioned as the protagonist of the narrative and of Australian history.

In an editorial published on January 27, *The Australian* dedicated a paragraph to a disparaging assessment of Bruce Pascoe's 2018 book *Dark Emu*, in which Pascoe interrogates the claim that Indigenous peoples across Australia were primarily hunter-gatherers and makes a case for the prevalence of pre-colonial Indigenous agricultural practices. The critique of Pascoe is positioned between a paragraph reiterating key arguments from Blainey's opinion piece about Cook—with Blainey described as “our most eminent historian”—and an approving assessment of Tehan's January 27 opinion piece, analysed in the previous chapter, where Tehan refers to historical knowledge and “antagonism” around ‘Australia Day’ (The Australian Editorial, 2020b). Thus situated, *The Australian's* editorial team (2020b) describes *Dark Emu* as “an object lesson in historical illiteracy,” stating that Pascoe's

narrative implies that the achievement of the Aborigines has been sold short as a primitive hunter-gatherer society, and evidence of technology, such as fish traps, suppressed.

Situated within the broader context of a conservative campaign against Pascoe's work, this statement evinces concerns about the potential of *Dark Emu* and other explorations of Indigenous pre-colonial agriculture to trouble theories justifying colonisation, such as Locke's labour theory of property. This theory is in turn a key component of both Locke and other theorists' elaboration of the contract underpinning the modern state, which, according to Mills (1997, pp. 81–82), represents the mainstream of the contract tradition and continues to infuse theories of liberal democratic statehood. Mills (1997, p. 13) notes that the framing of non-white people as inhabiting a state of nature *vis a vis* the “white settler state” is a function of the racial contract which positions the former in a “permanently pre political state or, perhaps better, nonpolitical state...” Interrelated hierarchies of personhood, knowledge and political capacity are disturbed by the presentation of alternative histories undermining the basis for claims of *terra nullius*. Thus, *The Australian* directs readers—in particular, “teachers”—towards a 1975 book by Geoffrey Blainey titled *Triumph of the Nomads*, described as a “celebration of

Aboriginal prehistory in all its richness” (The Australian Editorial, 2020b). The use of the term “prehistory” again places Indigenous peoples in the past of the settler state, and indeed characterises indigeneity itself as a prehistoric quality. According to *The Australian’s* editorial team, “prehistory” must be approached in a celebratory manner, valorising white knowledge production about Indigenous peoples but avoiding any attention to the consequences of colonisation or to the voices of actual Indigenous people.

While an exhaustive analysis of Pascoe’s targeting by Australian conservative media and elite figures is outside the scope of the present investigation, this approach appears to have been strategically deployed by News Corp publications in relation to January 26, 2020. This culminated in right-wing commentator and *Herald Sun* columnist Andrew Bolt (2020b) publishing on January 26 what he claimed was direct correspondence with Yolngu Elder and Warramiri Tribal Chief Terry Yumbulul which supposedly disproved Pascoe’s Aboriginality. In an exclusive interview with *NITV* on January 27, Yumbulul rejected authoring the letter published by Bolt (Latimore & Fryer, 2020b). However, despite the letter being falsified, Bolt and *The Australian’s* choice to become involved in the public litigation of Pascoe’s identity speaks to broader currents around the normative positioning of Indigenous people by conservative media, particularly in relation to claims troubling the political legitimacy of the settler state. Pascoe as inauthentic (read: civilised)/politically motivated is pitted against Yumbulul as authentic (read: savage)/apolitical by primarily white media figures (see also Maddison, 2013).

The choice to publish a letter undermining Pascoe’s identity and, by extension, *Dark Emu*, on January 26 is no coincidence. On *98.9FM* Gamilaraay host Boe Spearim and Biripi journalist and guest Jack Latimore discussed the matter on a January 29 episode of ‘Let’s Talk.’ Spearim (2020b) asserts that the targeting of Pascoe, involving attempts to “discredit who he is... and his work as well,” was conveniently orchestrated around January 26. Latimore expands on this by stating that the discredited letter undermining Pascoe’s claim of Aboriginality “appeared on January 26th” and that perhaps

there’s a little bit of a, you know, a wet slapping the face, or an attempted wet slap in the face by... Bolt and News Corp... around, you know, the sorts of events that were happening on that day, put a dampener on it, douse ‘em out. (Spearim, 2020b)

Attempts by News Corp publications to discredit Pascoe's identity and his writing on Indigenous agriculture are thus connected by both Spearim and Latimore to broader questions about Indigenous peoples' positioning in relation to the settler polity and within settler time. The choice by these publications to build up a furore amongst their readership about Indigenous authenticity in the lead up to January 26, coinciding with an annual conversation about Indigenous-settler relations and the legitimacy of colonisation, is not simply an editorial mistake. Instead, these choices appear to be consistent with a reactionary editorial strategy.

Critiques of Pascoe's targeting also received some media attention. These included in a January 24 editorial by *The Sydney Morning Herald* in the context of racism and Indigenous recognition, with authors advocating in support of *Dark Emu's* exploration of the "sophistication of the Indigenous agricultural economy before white settlement" (The Herald's View, 2020), a January 26 opinion piece in *Junkee* by Gunditjmara writer Tabitha Lean (2020) in the context of learning about "First Peoples ingenuity," and a January 29 opinion piece by then-Labor Senator for Victoria Kim Carr (2020) in *The Australian* which presented a counter-argument to Tehan and to the stoking of "culture wars" by "enraged conservatives." The choice by *The Sydney Morning Herald* editorial team to position themselves against News Corp attacks on Pascoe also provides an insight into the way that different dominant media narratives around January 26 hinge on particular claims of conditional allegiance with or actions on behalf of Indigenous peoples. Hall's (2019c, p. 280, emphasis in original) identification of "the pivotal role of media in *defining issues* of national significance on which opinion is divided" is useful here. While Hall (2019c, p. 282) is specifically referring to broadcast media, his analysis of the media's "symbiotic relation to power and the dominant ideologies" become clear in this narrow slice of mainstream media discourse.

Also relevant to the analysis of tropes of civilisation and savagery in mainstream media is the *The Australian* editorial team's (2020b) use of the pejorative term "Aborigines." This was not unique, with the word also used by non-Indigenous readers and journalists in the media data set (outside of the context of quoted historical speech and organisation names, such as the Aborigines Progressive Association). Use of the term occurred across 17 other items—5 collections of letters to News Corp publications, 4 News Corp articles (including Michael's aforementioned *The Courier Mail* long-read about Cook), 2 News Corp opinion pieces, 2 Nine Radio network programs, 2 *Daily Mail Australia* articles, one of which had "Aborigine" in the title (Gibbs, 2020), one letter to *The Sydney Morning Herald* where the author used

“Aborigines” while simultaneously advocating to change the date of ‘Australia Day’ (‘Morrison Just Adding Mirrors to the Smoke, with No Real Action’, 2020), and finally, a second editorial in *The Australian* on January 25 (The Australian Editorial, 2020a). In his opinion piece on Cook, Blainey (2020) alternately referred to “Aborigines” and “Aboriginal people,” presenting them as a footnote to Cook’s achievements. Alongside the previous discussion about ‘savagery’ and civilisation, it is clear that the discursive dehumanisation of Indigenous peoples is far from infrequent in the Australian media landscape. Even though the majority of items including outright racist terminology were largely concentrated under News Corp or Nine Radio ownership, these two companies cover the lion’s share of the Australian media market.

While explicit references to savagery and racial hierarchy outlined above were largely confined to more right-wing media, the power of this hierarchy in structuring public discourse was also evident across items in outlets conventionally understood to present more progressive coverage. Even though the *ABC* has a comprehensive style guide (ABC, 2022) and separate Indigenous Content guidance note (ABC, 2021), this is not in itself enough to ‘correct’ a lifetime of acculturation of settlers whose presence on stolen Indigenous land is fundamentally reliant on racism. As Mills (1997, p. 93) puts it, “whites... will experience genuine cognitive difficulties in recognizing certain behavior patterns *as* racist” by virtue of the racial contract’s prescription “as a condition for membership in the polity [of] an epistemology of ignorance.” Echoing the previous chapter’s discussion of Indigenous sovereignty as a threat to the settler state, the risk of a reversion of any given Indigenous person to a state of nature remains ever present. This is exemplified in *ABC Radio National* presenter Libbi Gorr’s (2020) cautious questioning of Lidia Thorpe about the Invasion Day dawn service and possibilities for transformation in Indigenous-settler relations in a January 25 interview on *This Weekend Life*.

Though Gorr’s (2020) tone is warm and inflected with sincere sympathy for “the anxiety and pain that Aboriginal [sic] feel,” there are several points in the interview where racialised notions of respectability rise to the surface. As Thorpe speaks about the purpose of the dawn service mourning ceremony and the participatory nature of the event, Gorr interrupts to ask: “is it an angry ceremony?” Thorpe responds “no, it’s a peaceful ceremony. It’s about healing.” Gorr appears reassured by Thorpe’s explanation that the event was developed “because of the anxiety and pain that Aboriginal people feel leading up to the 26th of January,” but the choice to question the affective inflection of the day is telling. The subtext of Gorr’s question and

response to Thorpe's explanation indicates that anger would be an inappropriate emotion for Indigenous people to express at such an event. Gorr's (2020) implication of appropriate modes of political participation and action in the face of colonial violence is further developed in the following exchange:

Libbi Gorr: You can't solve today's problems with 250 years ago's solutions, though, can you?

Lidia Thorpe: No, no, I think that, um-

Gorr: You know, you can't. You can't be as uncivilized as white Australia was towards Black Australia, then... now, in either way [Lidia: that's right], in either part of the relationship. The- the resolution has to be far more sophisticated.

Thorpe: Absolutely. And I think that-

Gorr: And the emotions have to be far more sophisticated.

Both the structure and content of this exchange are of interest. While Gorr's question about whether "today's problems" can be solved "with 250 years ago's solutions" is not initially posed as rhetorical, it becomes clear that it is intended this way through her repeated interjections when Thorpe begins to reply. Gorr cuts Thorpe off several times with a definition of the boundaries for appropriate behaviour by Indigenous people when grappling with colonisation. Interestingly, Gorr projects the status of uncivilised onto historical "white Australia," but makes sure to assert that there is *now* a standard of civility that "Black Australia" must adhere to when seeking a "resolution." Not only must such a resolution "be far more sophisticated," but, as hinted previously, "the emotions have to be far more sophisticated." Indigenous people are expected to conform to settler respectability politics in their affective and/or political expressions challenging the colonial status quo, even though they have had to weather the brutality of colonisation with no similar expectation placed on colonisers. Gorr ultimately outlines what is permissible within a liberal politics of recognition premised on a racialised dichotomy between rationality and unsophisticated, uncivilised excess.

As discussed across this section, the racialised objectification of Indigenous peoples can be seen to occur across a spectrum of political affinity, from overt descriptions of "savagery" to polite liberal questioning of Indigenous peoples' approaches to political expression. Such discursive positioning of Indigenous peoples relies on an assumption of inherent settler authority within a linear narrative of national time. This brings insights from Chapter 5 on dominant discourses of national history and the Indigenous 'past' together with

characterisations of Indigenous peoples that reaffirm the legitimacy of their temporal governance by the settler state. However, even in the absence of references to civilisation and savagery, settlers' positioning of Indigenous peoples still occurred across a range of media items in the data set through the use of possessive language. This phenomenon is explored below.

Discursive possession

The objectification that enabled and maintains colonialism continues to infuse Australian public discourse through the use of possessive language to refer to Indigenous peoples. While this has been comprehensively critiqued and repudiated by Indigenous researchers (see Z. Roberts et al., 2021), white possession is deeply embedded in the Australian vernacular. A frequent manifestation of this in the data set occurred through the use of terms of ownership such as 'our' to refer to Indigenous people by speakers or writers who did not explicitly position themselves as Indigenous. Out of the 407 media items and political statements imported into NVivo for qualitative analysis, 340 included some mention of Indigenous people. At least 42 distinct media items and political statements out of this 340 included possessive language to refer to Indigenous people, with 33 of these employing terms such as "our Indigenous people/s," "our First Nations people/s," "our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people/s," "our First People/s," or "our First Australians" (this final term is unpacked in greater detail below). Another six items employed such language in reference to Indigenous history, identity, heritage or past, and a further 3 included the use of possessive language to refer to both Indigenous peoples *and* Indigenous history. Of the 42 items, there were 16 collections of letters to the editor (19 distinct letters), 6 current affairs, talkback or arts radio program segments, 4 opinion pieces, 3 media statements by political elites—2 from Scott Morrison (2020a, 2020b) and 1 from Dan Tehan (2020)—and 2 editorials, both published on January 24 in *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* (*The Age's View*, 2020; *The Herald's View*, 2020). The use of possessive language in news articles almost always occurred via the quotation of commentators rather than through direct usage of the term by journalists themselves, with the exception of a January 25 *Junkee* article (Conaghan, 2020b) and a January 27 *Daily Mail Australia* article (Barron et al., 2020).

As in the case of references to civilisation and savagery, the use of possessive language was also not confined to any particular political tendency. Instead, this language was used by some speakers or writers to express sympathy and affinity with Indigenous peoples and their various

political struggles, while others mobilised it to position Indigenous peoples within a deficit framing. For instance, the term “our First Nations people” was deployed in the preamble to Rachel Conaghan’s (2020b) January 25 round-up of Invasion Day protest events happening around the country for *Junkee*. The context of use, however, was broadly supportive of Indigenous peoples protesting on January 26, with Conaghan (2020b) making reference to the “brutal consequences” of colonisation, “decades of violence, massacres, theft, and discrimination which has left behind a legacy of inequality and trauma.” Support is also indicated through the piece’s publication of a list of times and locations for Invasion Day and Survival Day events around the country for readers’ information, and the encouragement of readers to write in with any events Conaghan had missed. The juxtaposition of possessive language against a sentiment of ostensible solidarity presents an example of the unconscious level at which possession functions to structure public discussion about Indigenous people and January 26, even when dominant meanings are being actively resisted.

On the other hand is a January 27 *Daily Mail Australia* article, the second news article to include possessive language used directly by the article authors, covered then-West Coast Eagles footballer and Tiwi Islander Junior Rioli’s call to “remember our past” alongside celebrating on January 26 (Barron et al., 2020). The authors referred to the date as one of “sorrow and sadness for our Indigenous people, with many believing that celebrating Australia Day on this date creates a divide in our country,” a statement which locates the responsibility for contention on the day in Indigenous peoples’ personal ‘beliefs’ rather than in relation to a system of colonisation (Barron et al., 2020). In addition to this, the authors chose to devote half of the article to scrutinising Rioli based on concerns arising from a routine drug test in 2019. The tabloid reporting style of the article as well as the tone and language used to discuss both Indigenous people in general and Rioli in particular signal a commensurability between the possessive wording used by Barron and the editorial orientation of the outlet.

The appearance of possessive language describing Indigenous people in letters to the editor represents another area of analytic interest with respect to the common-sense operation of white possession. While the editorial process involved in selecting reader contributions for publication is relatively obscure, an assessment of the range of perspectives that make it to print provides an insight into editors’ decisions to approve certain framings of Indigenous people and colonisation. As Hall and colleagues (1978, p. 121, emphasis in original) have identified, though letters columns elevate *some* viewpoints to the level of public discourse, they

“are in no sense an accurate representation of ‘public opinion’, and that is because they are not an unstructured exchange but a *highly structured one*.” Instead of presenting a representative sample of opinions on controversial issues in society, “their principal function is to help the press organise and orchestrate the debate about public questions” (S. Hall et al., 1978, p. 121). This orchestration occurs in relation to publications’ political leanings and is also influenced by the extent to which mastheads draw on the notion of ‘public opinion’ to validate their coverage of particular issues.

In a letter to the *Herald Sun* on January 26, Mornington resident Brett K. Osborn opines on Indigenous people and January 26 while advocating that Australia should become a republic. Osborn’s letter concludes with the statement that

Republic Day would become our new national day - a day all Australians can celebrate, including our indigenous - and the final link with our colonial past broken. (‘Republic Makes Our Day’, 2020)

Osborn chooses to discursively void Indigenous personhood through both the use of “our indigenous” (lower case “I” in original) and the omission of “people/s” altogether. This is consistent with a statement earlier in the letter about the inevitability of colonisation, asserting that “there was no way indigenous hunter-gatherer people could maintain ownership of the land during that period of land grabs.” While Osborn names colonisation, it is presented as a relatively value-neutral and painless phenomenon, with the primary issue being the relationship between colonisation and the establishment of Australia’s political system as a constitutional monarchy. The proposal that Australia becoming a republic will break the link with “our colonial past” signals an understanding of colonisation as an issue primarily between white Australians and the British homeland, and thus a problem that can be solved through the removal of the British monarch as Australia’s head of state. By failing to understand colonisation as a relation between the colonising parties—represented by both the Crown and by settlers such as Osborn himself—and Indigenous peoples, it is presumed that “our indigenous” will finally be satisfied by such a transformation. Osborn’s ‘decolonial’ vision keeps the racial/settler contract wholly intact.

Another manifestation of discursive possession in the data appeared through use of the term ‘First Australians’ to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Analysis of this term (as used by non-Indigenous people) picks up a thread from an earlier discussion of how settler claims to sovereignty are naturalised through the projection of the state’s roots into a

pre-colonial past. However, the use of this language by some Indigenous speakers in the data as well requires a more nuanced analysis than simply glossing all uses of the term as directly possessive. Echoing the analysis in Chapter 5 of Burney and Weldon's statements on the implications of Indigenous peoples' presence prior to that of the settler state, the use of 'First Australians' by some Indigenous speakers suggests that the term may also be employed as part of an epistemic strategy oriented towards inclusion and national belonging. However, while 'First' clearly signals Indigenous peoples' prior occupation, the term sits uneasily beside 'Australians,' with its associated nationalist baggage. As will be discussed below, regardless of intent, the use of 'First Australians' by non-Indigenous speakers also has the potential to discursively fold Indigenous people into the Australian polity at the level of cultural rather than political difference.

While the analysis of 'First Discoverers' in Chapter 4 found that this term was only used in *The Australian*, likely given its explicitly conservative and anti-Indigenous implications, 'First Australians' appeared across a much wider range of publications. Within items included for content analysis, the term appeared across 19 distinct media items and one political statement, a January 25 transcript of remarks given by then-Prime Minister Scott Morrison (2020a) at the Australian of the Year Recipients morning tea event. Distinct media references were split across 8 news items (3 in *The Australian*, 2 in *SBS*, 1 each in *NITV*, *The Age*, and *Junkee*), 5 radio programs (3 Nine Radio programs, 1 each on *NITV* and *ABC*), 3 opinion pieces (in *Junkee*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, and *The Daily Telegraph*), and 3 collections of letters to the editor (in *The Australian*, *The Courier Mail*, and *The Sydney Morning Herald*). 'First Australians' was used by actors seeking to position themselves as allied with Indigenous peoples' struggles for justice as well as by some expressing more overtly conservative or nationalist sentiments.

An exemplary instance of a more liberal use of 'First Australians' appears in an opinion piece by Adam Joseph (2020) for *The Sydney Morning Herald* published on January 25. The piece, titled 'Here's a date that Governor Phillip and Bennelong might call Australia Day,' advocates for moving the national day to September 17, the anniversary of a 1790 "apology" from Phillip to Bennelong for abducting the latter and his companions. In this piece, Joseph (2020) includes a reflection on British colonial navigator Matthew Flinders' reference to Aboriginal men Nanbarry and Bungaree as "fine Australians," stating:

This was the first use of that term, by the man who would give the name to our eventual nation state, Australia. Indeed, these first “Australians” were First Australians.

By situating Flinders’ comment in this way, Joseph positions Nanbarry and Bungaree within a teleological narrative of Australian statehood. Prior to the formal consolidation of Australia as a nation-state, prior even to the establishment of any of the other Australian colonies, Nanbarry and Bungaree are transformed into “Australians,” first as distinct from Europeans in Flinders’ geographic designation, and then as members of the national community through Joseph’s demographic affirmation.

Both then-Prime Minister Morrison and then-Leader of the Opposition Albanese also made use of ‘First Australians,’ couched within their respective parties’ approaches to Indigenous affairs. Albanese used ‘First Australians’ in a January 23 interview with Nine Radio host Chris Smith (2020a) on *2GB*, with the statement including this term later quoted in articles by *The Australian* (Ferguson & Chambers, 2020a), *Junkee* (Conaghan, 2020a) and *SBS* (E. Young, 2020) on January 23 and another news article in *The Australian* on January 24 (Ferguson & Chambers, 2020b). During his response to Smith’s question about whether he was “supportive of Australia Day remaining on January the 26th,” Albanese said:

Yes, modern Australia, is connected with the arrival of migrants, but that had an impact, a terrible impact, a devastating impact, indeed, on First Australians. And one of the things that I’ve found is that when I’ve attended Australia Day ceremonies, that is very much front and centre. It’s been an opportunity to educate people about dispossession and the consequences of it. (C. Smith, 2020a)

Albanese does not mention colonisation directly, instead making an oblique reference to “the arrival of migrants.” Albanese also avoids identifying a clear connection between these “migrants” and the “devastating impact” on “First Australians.” A vague causal link is drawn, but settler violence, imported diseases and dispossession are glossed over through the use of passive voice—there are no identifiable agents who inflict harm on Indigenous people. In this framing, modernity arrives with colonisation, and though Indigenous people are recognised as having been here first, they are placed at the beginning of the current nation state rather than civilizational agents in their own right. Albanese also addresses Smith’s concern about his support for ‘Australia Day,’ identifying that education about the experiences of “First Australians” have been “very much front and centre” of ceremonies on the day and implying

his support for this mode of recognition which attempts to balance settler celebration with solemn (historical) reflection.

Morrison's (2020a) use of 'First Australians' occurred in remarks at the Australian of the Year Award Recipients' morning tea event on January 25 and during an Acknowledgement of Country in a clip of his January 26 speech at the Canberra 'Australia Day' ceremony, played on Nine Radio's 'The Chris Smith Show' (C. Smith, 2020a). Both references are interesting examples of how settler imaginaries about Indigenous people are expressed through the use of possessive language. On January 25, while listing the stories of some of the nominees for Australian of the Year, Morrison (2020a) makes the following statements about renowned Gunditjmarra and Bundjalung musician Archie Roach:

There's Victoria's Archie Roach, known to most Australians, I'm sure, whose music has captivated us for decades with messages of love, reconciliation and healing. He's been a true advocate for our First Australians, our First Nations people.

Firstly, Morrison's characterisation of Roach's music as including messages of "love, reconciliation and healing," while not wholly inaccurate, presents a somewhat selective representation of the work of an activist-musician whose song writing has been deeply influenced by his experiences as a member of the Stolen Generations. Morrison's description glosses over the fact that the pain and hope infusing Roach's music is inextricable from the violence of colonisation and removal. Further, Morrison's use of possessive language in describing Roach as a "true advocate for our First Australians, our First Nations people" is particularly jarring given the paternalism underpinning the systematic removal of Indigenous children from their families and communities (Cunneen & Libesman, 2000). Morrison honours Roach's advocacy but at the same time reinforces the status of Roach and other Indigenous people (with a double "our") as possessions of the settler state.

This framing is repeated in Morrison's (2020b) Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of his January 26 speech at Canberra's 'Australia Day' ceremony, where, after thanking various distinguished guests, he states:

But especially, to you, Aunty Tina and to the Ngunnawal people, I start today by acknowledging you, our first Australians, and pay my respects to Elders past and present, and importantly, emerging, which is the future. And I also acknowledge, on this very important day, all who have served and how are serving our nation today in our defence forces, wherever you are. Our veterans as well, and simply say, on behalf, on behalf of a grateful nation, thank you for your service.

As with his backhanded acknowledgement of Roach's achievements, Morrison's Acknowledgement of Ngunnawal Country and people includes both a statement of recognition and a reiteration of white possession. The integrity of Morrison's Acknowledgement is further undermined by his unusual choice to also include current and past members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) as part of a statement that is ostensibly intended to pay respect to the owners and custodians of the lands upon which the ceremony is taking place. By acknowledging both Ngunnawal people and the ADF, Morrison diminishes the sincerity of his statement to the former at the same time as articulating his support for nationalist militarism. Here, more than most other instances of 'First Australians' in the data set, the relationship between the initial non-consensual claim of possession of the British Crown over Indigenous lands and people and the emptiness of rhetorical recognition stand in stark relief.

Though the vast majority of references were by settler speakers, the term 'First Australians' was used twice by identified Indigenous speakers in the media data selected for content analysis, instances worth discussing in comparison to the preceding analysis of settler statements. On January 20 in an *NITV* radio segment titled 'What is Australia Day - and why is it controversial?,' Dr Andrew Peters, a Wurundjeri and Yorta Yorta man and Senior Lecturer in Indigenous Studies at Swinburne University spoke about the national celebration as follows:

It's simply just acknowledging what came before January 26, 1788- that there were some negative impacts to this arrival, but there are also been a lot of positives that have come out of it, and they're the things that we should be focused on and celebrating and including, you know, in celebrations and in speeches and things- including all people from all cultures, particularly focusing, I guess, on Aboriginal people as the first Australians, and then including, you know, migrant groups, refugee groups and all of those sorts of things that- that now come together to make the Australia that we know and love. (A. Hall, 2020)

Peters' representation of the "arrival" of settlers in 1788 as having positive and negative dimensions alongside the proposal of a conciliatory solution echoes some of the previous chapter's discussion of the intersection between truth-telling and the politics of recognition. In this statement, Peters articulates a vision for adjusting celebrations on January 26 based on an inclusive use of "first Australians." As with some of the more progressive statements discussed above, the 'firstness' of Indigenous people positions them at the beginning of the Australian nation. The proposed solution to division on the date is to make commemorations more inclusive of Indigenous peoples as well as a range of marginalised groups; thus the primary concerns here are with representation and recognition.

Butchulla writer Matthew Barbeler (2020) uses the term 'First Australians' quite differently to Peters in a *Junkee* opinion piece published on January 26:

Every single trauma visited upon the First Australians as a result of European colonisation has a single thread that leads directly back to January 26th, 1788.

The more I read about the history of the first Australians, the more my attitude towards Australia Day changed.

Barbeler's piece, 'Learning About My Heritage Taught Me About The Threads That Bind Australia,' is an exploration of his Butchulla identity through re-connecting with his estranged father. As the title of the piece indicates, Barbeler engages in a personal journey of discovery about the specific violences inflicted on his ancestors in the early colonial period. He connects this to an assessment of January 26 in the final stages of the piece, from which the above quote is drawn. This use of 'First Australians' stands in contrast to most of the examples presented above. Here, Barbeler uses the term to signify Indigenous peoples' distinctiveness rather than to present a case for inclusion through an emphasis on "First" as rightful and prior, and a use of "Australians" that appears to gesture more to geographic location than affinity to the nation state. Barbeler connects his political education about the harms of colonisation to his changed stance on the date, indicating the potential for truth-telling as an epistemic strategy that can result in rupture rather than a marginal shift in the liberal consensus.

The use of possessive language by both non-Indigenous individuals and mainstream media outlets serves to locate Indigenous people both in time and in relation to (white) settlers. As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, the dominant temporality of social belonging in Australia brackets out indigeneity, imposing a division of being-in-time that maps onto the racial hierarchy underpinning settler colonialism. Temporal governance has been identified in

the chapter so far as an embedded feature of common sense settler understandings of Indigenous people, one that is both actively and passively reproduced through media discourses. Indigenous people are discursively positioned through the terminology of ownership, with referents like ‘our’ and ‘First Australians’ both sitting in the overlap of available language shared between settler Australians as a collective, and the Australian settler state as a discrete political entity. This embedded knowledge is intimately connected to dominant discourses in Australian media about the political capacity of Indigenous people on the one hand, and the political legitimacy and inherent good of the settler state on the other. The influence of white possession on common sense understandings of Indigenous people and settler colonialism is further explored in the following section, which turns to an assessment of prevailing approaches to grappling with the violence of colonisation as part of relating to Australian history.

Relating to history

The dominant discourses of Australian history discussed in Chapter 5 and the linguistic operation of white possession are mutually implicated, given their basis in a racial hierarchy of knowledge underpinning the settler state. This hierarchy has repercussions for the epistemic strategy of truth-telling deployed by Indigenous people and persists as within Australia’s colonial politics of recognition. As Coulthard (2014) identifies, this form of recognition seeks to wholly incorporate Indigenous people within the settler polity rather than take seriously any political challenge threatening the foundations of the state. This section expands upon the relationship between colonial recognition, settler time and history, beginning with an assessment of the way that Indigenous and non-Indigenous speakers and writers in the data identified and located (or denied) harms associated with colonisation. This is followed by a discussion of more radical critiques put forward by Indigenous speakers of the choice to relegate colonial harm to the past instead of recognising the violence involved in maintaining and reproducing the settler state. Attention to Indigenous speakers’ epistemic strategy of truth-telling again informs the analysis throughout this section. As will be discussed below, dominant discourses about colonial history and the location of violence *vis a vis* contemporary Australia emerge through a relationship between settlers’ management *of* time and of Indigenous people *in* time.

Recognising wrongs

As identified in Chapter 5, a debate over settlers' ignorance of and denialism about the nation's history continues to hold sway in public discourse within the paradigm of liberal recognition. Building on radical critiques of denialism, this section investigates the production of "colonial unknowing" (Vimalassery et al., 2016) around January 26 with respect to contemporary considerations of whether, when and how colonisation has harmed Indigenous people and the associated issue of settler complicity in such wrongs. The way that colonial violence is described in the media data both speaks to and has implications for normative understandings of the legitimacy of the Australian settler state, the existence of which is conditional on such violence. Therefore, it is not just the phenomenon of denialism but the modes through which this denial is expressed that are of interest here. These expressions occurred in a variety of forms, from the denial of *any* violence or harm associated with colonisation to the relegation of colonial violence to the past, with the structural oppression faced by Indigenous people in the present assessed as a consequence of historical actions rather than as part of the processual maintenance and reproduction of settler colonialism.

While relatively infrequent in the media data, it is worth briefly attending to outright denials of colonial violence. These differed from most expressions of colonial nostalgia, which tended to omit references to the 'unsavoury' aspects of colonisation and instead focus on triumphalism, such as via emphasising the boon of western civilisation as discussed in Chapter 4. Instead, statements under this category deliberately denied or downplayed the violence associated with colonisation, and only ever opined on Indigenous-settler relations during the early years of British settlement. For example, Alan, a caller on the January 26 episode of Nine Radio program 'News Nation with Justin Smith' commented:

Traditional European and Aboriginal society was quite harmonious. And now you've got all these disparate groups [overspeaking] who've been politicised, and romanticised. (J. Smith, 2020)

This statement sits at the extreme of fictionalised representations of colonisation in the data, with Alan claiming that as there were no negative consequences of colonisation whatsoever, Indigenous people have only *recently* become politicised regarding January 26. There were also comments that acknowledged some harms associated with colonisation, but significantly minimised them. This is exemplified by conservative commentator Kevin Donnelly (2020), who in a January 22 opinion piece for *The Daily Telegraph* wrote:

while there is no doubt Aborigines suffered as a result of establishing a penal colony, the claim by Aboriginal activist Michael Mansell that the beginning of European settlement started a process of “ethnic cleansing and genocide” is simply untrue.

Donnelly’s denial of Mansell’s charge of “ethnic cleansing and genocide,” while fairly unique in identifying the *charge* of genocide, represents a more common conservative approach to colonial violence in the data. Employing the racist term “Aborigines” to describe Indigenous people, Donnelly regrettably acknowledges Indigenous peoples’ suffering while failing to identify any agents responsible for perpetrating this harm. While the quotes from Donnelly and Alan were two of the most overtly white supremacist reflections on colonial violence in the data, they belonged to a small but stubborn current of discourse about Australian history akin to and indeed overlapping with the ‘white blindfold’ bloc of the History War. However, given the tendency towards liberal recognition and the adoption of a rhetoric of multiculturalism in the post-Howard era, such perspectives sit at the margin of a much broader tendency in contemporary Australian conservative denialism. While characteristically incoherent, this broader grouping included more ‘politically correct’ articulations of sentiments such as those expressed above, with speakers or writers making concessions to acknowledge some degree of past harm experienced by Indigenous people but continuing to firmly disavow any current settler responsibility.

The majority of assessments of harms associated with colonisation in the media data were framed in terms needing to acknowledge these wrongs while simultaneously locating them in the past. The latter condition meant that when unpleasant aspects of national history were acknowledged, they were positioned as sufficiently distant from the present to deny direct culpability on the part of either the settler author or the contemporary settler state. Statements in this register ranged from vague acknowledgements of non-specific transgressions in the nation’s past that made Australia’s history ‘imperfect’ or ‘conflicted’, to approaches which recognised historical wrongs and identified that there was still some work to be done in the present to achieve ‘reconciliation’ in Indigenous-settler relations. Additionally, these statements largely appeared in media items from mastheads owned by News Corp and Nine Entertainment. When mentioned by Indigenous speakers and writers, calls for the acknowledgement of history often overlapped with references to the epistemic strategy of truth-telling, with prescriptions for pathways forward that were variously complementary or opposed to a liberal politics of recognition.

Non-specific acknowledgements of Australia’s violent history were exemplified in a statement by Karlie Brand, then-chief executive of the National Australia Day Council, who was quoted in a January 23 exclusive for *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* about the Council’s 2020 ‘Australia Day’ advertising campaign (Chrysanthos & Drevikovsky, 2020a, 2020b). As identified in the previous chapter, the campaign promoted the Council’s 2020 slogan “respect, reflect and celebrate.” Brand’s comment indicates some of the conscious discursive shift in messaging about the day to promote Australian nationalism through an inclusive and sympathetic tone.

It's important to acknowledge that the date is difficult. That comes in the 'reflect' and the 'respect'. To borrow a line [from the poem] - we all have our views. It's an opportunity to understand more about our history and why that might be the case for some people. (Chrysanthos & Drevikovsky, 2020a, 2020b)

While Brand notes that “the date is difficult” for “some people,” there is no acknowledgement of who this might refer to. The reader can infer that Brand is speaking about Indigenous people, but the vague encouragement to “reflect” and “respect” the “views” of “some people” both reduces the obligation of history to one of a shift in personal cognition and flattens the issue of colonisation—positioned as part of “our history” instead of as an ongoing phenomenon—as just one of a range of competing and equally legitimate views about Australian nationhood. It also suggests that Indigenous people must respect other peoples’ views as of equivalent importance, even if these views are premised on white-possessive nationalism. The Council’s ultimate goal as expressed by Brand is to reach a consensus on the importance of celebrating the nation, something which they have identified can only be achieved with the inclusion of a reference to concerns about colonial harm.

The vague reference to challenging aspects of Australian history by Brand is echoed in then-Prime Minister Scott Morrison’s (2020c) January 26 opinion piece published in *The Daily Telegraph*. Morrison makes several indirect references to Indigenous people in the piece, such as to the Australian public including “the oldest continuing culture in the world,” and to Australia’s story “span[ning] 60,000 years.” The majority of the piece is devoted to patriotic reflection on the 2019-2020 bushfire season, used as a conduit for nationalist sentiment on ‘Australia Day,’ though there is one reference to the contested nature of January 26 near the conclusion. While discussing the nation’s values, spirit and character, Morrison (2020c) states: “No country is perfect and none have a perfect history. But we have goodwill and generosity,

and strive to help each other out.” Like Brand, Morrison minimises the significance of January 26 to Indigenous people by referring to colonisation as a mere imperfection in the nation’s history. Also similar to Brand’s statement is Morrison’s avoidance of referring directly to what makes Australian history imperfect. There additionally appears to be an implied requirement for background knowledge about Indigenous peoples’ resistance against ‘Australia Day’ celebrations. Morrison and Brand’s statements both illustrate the unspeakability of colonial violence, an aversion to naming the truth of this violence lest it create any form of collective obligation on the part of settlers.

An alternative but still conservative approach to describing colonial violence and ‘Australia Day’ is found in statements from then-Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Noongar man Ken Wyatt, quoted in another exclusive for *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* published on January 24. Journalist Rob Harris (2020a, 2020b) interviewed Wyatt on his approach to balancing ‘truth-telling’ and celebration on January 26:

Mr Wyatt said Australia's "dark beginnings" must be recognised in communities across the country but not overshadow celebrations of the "remarkable" multicultural country it has become.

Variations on Harris’ paraphrasing of Wyatt were reproduced across January 25 articles by the AAP (Osborne, 2020) and *The Guardian* (Australian Associated Press, 2020), as well as a January 29 *Koori Mail* article (AAP, 2020c). Wyatt’s reference to “dark beginnings” also reflects the aversion to directly mentioning colonial violence present in Brand and Morrison’s statements. However, while not referring to the content of these “dark beginnings” directly, Wyatt is quoted later in the article conceding that “the colour of our skin did matter once.” Despite this, Wyatt’s framing of Australian history and Indigenous-settler relations is ultimately consistent with the nationalist teleology articulated by other conservative speakers. By claiming that Australia has achieved successful multicultural relations, positive transformation in Indigenous-settler relations is not merely deferred but identified as having *already happened*. This then works to reinforce Wyatt’s call to recognise Australia’s “dark beginnings” as part of a broader project of colonial recognition that maintains the systemic oppression of Indigenous peoples. While in more progressive and independent media outlets Wyatt’s statements are qualified by mentions of his Liberal party affiliation and thus attendant conservatism, his role as Minister for Indigenous Affairs positions him as an authoritative source on Indigenous peoples’ perspectives about January 26 (often glossed by mainstream media as homogenous).

Closely related to statements about the need to acknowledge (historical) harms associated with colonisation were attempts to balance the ‘positives and negatives’ or ‘good and bad’ aspects of Australian history. Wyatt also makes reference to this in the previously discussed *Age/Herald* article, with author Harris (2020a, 2020b) choosing to include it in the first line of the piece:

Indigenous Affairs Minister Ken Wyatt says Australia Day should remain on January 26 and commemorations around the country instead mark both the "good and the bad" of the nation's history since 1788.

Wyatt’s call to commemorate the “good and the bad” of Australia’s history was also quoted across *The Guardian* on January 25 (Australian Associated Press, 2020) and in the *Koori Mail* on January 29 (AAP, 2020c), and was referenced by radio host Patricia Karvelas (2020) in a January 27 interview with Wyatt on *ABC Radio National*. This ‘good and bad’ framing represents a middle ground between conservative and liberal approaches to history and colonial violence in Australian public discourse, with its focus on recognition and attempt to placate those concerned about insufficient emphasis on national pride. It echoes the National Australia Day Council’s 2020 campaign discussed in the January 23 *Age/Herald* article, which is described as “focusing on the “highs and lows” of Australia’s past” and promising an “emphasis on Indigenous history” (Chrysanthos & Drevikovsky, 2020a, 2020b). Attempts to recognise ‘both sides,’ however, continue to legitimise an equal distribution of weight between Indigenous peoples’ ‘views’ about colonisation and its associated harms and settlers’ nationalist celebration, which is directly facilitated by colonial violence. Further, while there is some minor concession made to acknowledging the ‘bad’ or ‘low’ parts of Australian history, there are normative limits imposed on how far this recognition should go, particularly when it comes to Indigenous peoples’ public expressions of anger and grief on January 26.

Ressentiment

The location of colonial wrongs or harms against Indigenous people in the past serves at least two important functions, impacting the intelligibility of contemporary acts of Indigenous resistance and refusal. First, the idea that any transgressions on the part of the settler polity or state are historical brackets off any consideration of colonisation as an ongoing phenomenon. Second, restricting the temporal scope of legitimate grievances lays a foundation for the assessment of Indigenous resistance grounded in historical analysis as pathologically fixated

on the past. Coulthard's (2014, p. 126) writing on the misrepresentation of "righteous resentment" held by Indigenous peoples as *ressentiment* is critical here, given the frequency of statements in this register in the media data. This section focuses on the way that Indigenous people resisting January 26 celebrations are characterised as experiencing or expressing an unhealthy, irrational orientation towards the past. It should be noted that the majority of direct suggestions that Indigenous people 'move on' from the past or stop attempting to 'change history' appeared in letters to News Corp publications, though such statements were also quoted in a range of news articles from mastheads across the political spectrum. While more liberal speakers, writers and mastheads tended not to directly employ these negative characterisations of Indigenous peoples' acts of resistance, the statements analysed below sit on a continuum of mis/recognition with liberal articulations of hope for reconciliation at minimal cost to the status quo.

Given the discussion thus far of temporal governance and the norms associated with settler time, it is unsurprising that calls for Indigenous people to move on from the past featured across a variety of media items. Suggestions that Indigenous people needed to move on appeared in at least 22 distinct items, including 11 collections of letters to the editor (9 in News Corp publications, 2 in Nine newspapers), quotations in 9 news articles (*Daily Mail Australia* on January 20 and 27, *The Courier Mail* on January 23 and 25, *The Age* on January 24, *AAP* on January 25 and 26, *The Guardian* on January 25, *The Sydney Morning Herald* on January 26, and *Koori Mail* on January 29), 2 opinion pieces (authored by then-Education Minister Dan Tehan in *The Australian* on January 27 and then-Treasurer of NSW Dominic Perrottet in *The Daily Telegraph* on January 28), and one talkback radio exchange (in a January 26 episode of 'Australia Overnight with Luke Grant' on Nine Radio).

In line with the idea that all harm associated with colonisation occurred in the past, most settler demands that Indigenous people move on were expressed alongside claims of present-day racial harmony. This approach is evident in a letter published in *The Daily Telegraph* on January 25 from Bayden Mottee of Greenwich NSW, who included the following opinion:

It is far better and more healthy to let go of grudges and resentments instead of allowing them to ruminate and manifest into something more negative. Nobody is celebrating genocide, nobody is celebrating the oppression against indigenous Australians, we are celebrating the fact that we have moved past that—that we are a multicultural nation that has come together as one people. (‘Letters to the Editor’, 2020b)

Mottee’s statement operates on the assumption that reconciliation has already occurred, and therefore Indigenous people have nothing to complain about. References to “grudges and resentments” held by Indigenous people and the risk of ruminating on history instead of on “the fact that we have moved past” colonial violences puts this letter squarely within the *ressentiment* approach to Indigenous peoples’ grievances described by Coulthard. While Mottee does name genocide and oppression, the wording of the letter makes it unclear whether the author believes that these violences did not occur at all, or that they did occur in the past but have since been resolved. Nonetheless, the suggestion that “nobody is celebrating” such violences is underpinned by the assumption that they are no longer a feature of Australian society. This, along with Mottee’s claim of multicultural unity in the present, positions Indigenous people as unhealthily resentful and stuck in the past.

A different approach to the issue is articulated in a letter from Judy Stocco of Vermont, Victoria, published in *The Age* on January 27 (‘An Advocate of Progress Hamstrung by His Pact’, 2020). Stocco’s letter may be considered as an expression of a crisis in settler identity, where the demands of Indigenous people are located alongside an emotive disavowal of personal responsibility. The letter begins:

Why do we go through this thing on Australia Day—every year—where as non-First Nations people we are made to feel like criminals?

I would like to think that over the years we have made progress in regard to reconciliation, but such positivity seems never to be the focus of conversation around this time of the year. It should be a time of reflection and open-mindedness for all of us. (‘An Advocate of Progress Hamstrung by His Pact’, 2020)

Stocco’s opening question presents a personal, affective response to being confronted with Indigenous peoples’ concerns about colonial violence. The claim that non-Indigenous people are “made to feel like criminals” on January 26 rests on a belief in rightful occupation that is fundamentally threatened by the revelation of the conditions of possibility for settler

occupation. Like Mottee, Stocco also applies a ‘positives and negatives’ assessment of Australian history and suggests that there has been sufficient progress in Indigenous-settler relations for Indigenous people to *finally* stop drawing attention to colonisation. Ultimately, the problem, as identified by both Mottee and Stocco, is the priorities of Indigenous people whose choice to protest on January 26 makes settlers feel bad. Settlers, after all, have been working towards reconciliation, so drawing attention *away* from this “progress” must indicate an irrational fixation on the past.

Six of the 9 news items featured quoted or paraphrased suggestions by Indigenous speakers that Indigenous people should move on or move forward from the past. Four of these were the same quote by Ken Wyatt (originally published in Nine newspapers on January 24 and reproduced by AAP, *The Guardian*, and *Koori Mail*) stating that while Indigenous people “can have anger at the past, the pain and the hurt... at some point we’ve got to give our children a better future” (R. Harris, 2020a, 2020b). As outlined above, Wyatt’s positioning within mainstream media discourse as both an elite political figure and an authority on Indigenous affairs meant that his conservative position was amplified and distributed across a range of sources. The other two quotes of Indigenous speakers relevant here were included in articles published in *The Courier Mail*. The first quote was in a January 23 article titled ‘Why local custodian won’t be celebrating Australia Day,’ where journalist Matt Collins (2020) interviews Gubbi Gubbi/Kabi Kabi woman Brianna Hanson about why she does not celebrate on January 26 and instead views it as a Day of Mourning. When describing Hanson’s approach to the date, Collins (2020) paraphrases her as follows: “she believes the only way forward is to lose the negativity and see the future through rose-coloured glasses.” The second was in the January 25 long-read ‘The old man and the seafarer,’ where Guugu Yimithirr woman Alberta Hornsby is quoted chastising people who seek to “throw rocks at our shared history” in the lead up to the 250th anniversary, and reminding readers that “our legacy is what we’ve all learnt about how to forgive and be at peace. How we can all move forward” (Michael, 2020). While Collins’ paraphrasing of Hanson and Hornsby’s quote used by Michael may initially seem unrelated, these statements converge in terms of the type of narrative work they are called on to do. Regardless of the personal intent of Hanson or Hornsby, their positioning as authoritative Indigenous speakers in these articles serves to legitimise the notion that concerted political action rooted in historical analysis by some *other* Indigenous people is either misguided or unproductive.

The media data also included a range of tautologies by settler writers and speakers noting that history could not be changed, and thus seeking to undermine Indigenous peoples' various expressions of opposition to January 26 celebrations as futile. It must be emphasised, however, that these statements were qualitatively different to several realist assessments of colonial history in the data, such as in a January 21 *NITV* interview with Noonuccal Ngugi man and artistic director of the Sydney Festival Wesley Enoch (Turner, 2020). In this case, Enoch connects the assertion that history cannot be changed to a requirement that the implications of this (colonial) history be confronted as part of a serious engagement with Australia's national identity. In contrast to this approach, however, there were a variety of statements by settlers about the nature of history that were clearly critical of Indigenous resistance. These statements were spread across at least 8 distinct media times, including 5 collections of letters to the editor (News Corp publications on January 18, 24 (2), 29 and February 2), 2 news articles (January 22 in *The Australian* and January 26 in the *AAP*), and one talkback radio exchange (January 26 in 'News Nation with Justin Smith' on Nine Radio).

Statements in the media data referring to the impossibility of changing history tended to present this as a self-evident justification of the absurdity of contemporary Indigenous resistance on January 26. The most triumphalist example of this approach appeared in a letter to the editor from Tony Miles of Chernside, Queensland, published in *The Courier Mail* on January 29:

THE usual mob of protesters were out on Australia Day. Naturally they want to rewrite history, but of course what is done cannot be undone. I am surprised that they still want Australia burned to the ground, as one speaker stated (C-M, Jan 27), and an end to the colonisation of this great country.

Obviously they have never thought this through, for without the British, civilisation would not have been brought to this country.

If they were to stop and think they may come to realise and enjoy the benefits that colonisation has given them. ('Letters', 2020)

Miles' letter represents the consolidation of a range of themes discussed across the analysis chapters so far, positioning a claim about colonisation being irreversible alongside assessments of the inherent good of colonisation and supremacy of western civilisation. Not only does Miles state that the past is fixed, but that Indigenous people should be *grateful* for colonisation having occurred, considering "the [unspecified] benefits" that it has "given them." Again, this occurs without direct reference to Indigenous people, who are reduced to "the usual mob of protesters." By representing Indigenous peoples' historically grounded analyses of and

resistance against colonial violence as an ignorant, simplistic attempt to “rewrite history,” Miles seeks to both undermine the intelligence of the protesters themselves and to vacate the protest of its political content. Thus, an expression of “an angry and vigilant *unwillingness to forgive*” is reconfigured as a pathological orientation towards the past, associated with a failure to appropriately participate in Australian society in the present (Coulthard, 2014, p. 126, emphasis in original).

The prevalence of references to moving on from the past or not being able to change history in letters to the editor relative to other types of source provides some insight into where and how normative understandings of history and colonial violence are given voice in news media. As discussed above, despite some notional expectation to present a balance of opinions, conservative publications such as those owned by News Corp tended to publish collections of letters presenting viewpoints consistent with the majority of reporting, opinion and editorial outputs published in these outlets. Nine newspapers (*The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*), however, tended to be typified by a more centrist approach to contemporary social and political issues. This resulted in a more diverse mix of viewpoints in letters, where statements such as Judy Stocco’s above were situated alongside comments from other readers that expressed support for changing the date of ‘Australia Day’ and recognising its significance for Indigenous people.

Hall and colleagues’ (1978, pp. 120–138) analysis of the relationship between letters to the editor and public opinions about crime supports this section’s investigation into how letters as a genre incorporate and influence perspectives on Indigenous resistance on January 26. As the authors note, “it is the awakening of lay public attitudes, and their crystallising in forms which underpin and support the viewpoints already in circulation, which help to close the consensual circle, providing the lynch-pin of legitimation” (S. Hall et al., 1978, p. 137). Therefore, whether or not critiques of Indigenous peoples’ engagement with the past discussed above align with a given masthead’s explicitly stated ideology, the repeated selection of this type of commentary in the editorial process indicates that it falls within the range of discourses that the masthead is prepared to platform. Returning to the broader question of Indigenous and settler claims to sovereignty as refracted through mainstream media, it appears that letters to the editor present an opportunity for the curated reproduction of prevailing assessments of public political expression by Indigenous peoples. Editorial teams at various mastheads choose to publish news articles, editorials or opinion pieces elevating a selection of discourses around January 26, and

this converges with a self-selection process whereby readers who are particularly invested in issues being covered decide to write in to the publication. As shown across News Corp publications and also to an extent in Nine newspapers, this provides for the amplification and legitimisation of conservative framings of Indigenous peoples' resistance, grounded in a racial hierarchy of knowledge. These framings ultimately work to reinforce white possession in relation to the national day by imposing temporal and behavioural norms on Indigenous people speaking back to the settler state. However, these discourses are neither inexorable nor uncontested. The final section of this chapter turns to a discussion of Indigenous resistance against settler time and claims that colonial violence is confined to the dustbin of history.

Resisting settler time

This chapter has focused on dominant discourses circulating in mainstream media and official statements from political elites about January 26, and how these are inflected with a temporal normativity that bears on representations of Indigenous people and the harms associated with colonisation. This final section turns to critiques and expressions of resistance by Indigenous speakers and writers pushing back against false claims that colonial violence is a past phenomenon, and that an historical analysis of colonisation is pathological. These analyses are understood, per Coulthard (2014, p. 126, emphasis in original), as manifestations of Indigenous peoples' "*righteous resentment*: that is, [their] bitter indignation and persistent anger at being treated unjustly by a colonial state both historically and in the present." Such concerns were clearly expressed in the media data, which featured a number of statements by Indigenous speakers or writers talking about the ongoing harms of colonisation. These can broadly be split into two categories: assertions that active violence on behalf of the settler state and polity occurred in the past but have bled into present-day harms and trauma experienced by Indigenous people, and assertions that agreed with and built on the first category to further identify colonisation as ongoing and actively reproduced through violence. This division should be understood as largely analytic, since it is not possible to clearly assess the extent of a speaker's anti-colonial stance based purely on how they have chosen to express themselves—or how they have been represented—in media. However, for the purpose of the present analysis, it is useful to identify those instances where temporal norms around colonial violence and colonisation itself were explicitly challenged.

The framing of colonisation in terms of past harms causing present-day trauma appeared in statements by some Indigenous speakers and writers expressing concerns about the mainstream celebration of ‘Australia Day’ on January 26. Responding to demands that Indigenous people ‘get over’ the past or ‘move on,’ Nova Peris was quoted as follows in a January 22 *NITV* article:

“When people tell us to get over this 230 years, it’s because it’s an uncomfortable truth,” she said.

“People say ‘oh just get over the past’, no, what you’re actually saying is get over the history that has had a massive impact on the inter-generational lives of Aboriginal people.” (Jenkins, 2020)

This statement by Peris may be productively read alongside the previously analysed letter by Judy Stocco. Peris directly identifies the fragility and discomfort experienced by settlers such as Stocco when faced with the enormity of violence and harm that has occurred through colonial occupation. However, instead of accepting the demand to ‘get over it’ or ‘move on,’ Peris notes exactly what must be ignored—the “massive” and intergenerational impact of colonisation on Indigenous people—in order to rush reconciliation. A similar sentiment was expressed by Gurindji musician Dan Sultan, who was quoted in an article published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on January 26. Sultan asserts:

“People might say, and they do say ‘Get over it, it was 200 years ago,’ but it’s not—it’s now that our kids are killing themselves...” (Fitzsimmons, 2020)

The above quote is prefaced by article author Caitlin Fitzsimmons (2020) paraphrasing Sultan on the fact that his concerns about ‘Australia Day’ do not just relate to its historical implications, but to the “disparities between Aboriginal people and non-Indigenous Australians that persist to this day.” Like Peris, Sultan identifies the massive trauma and intergenerational impacts of colonisation and uses these facts to challenge the absurdity of calls to ‘move on.’ By drawing attention to the deep psychological harm experienced by Indigenous youth in particular, Sultan underscores the inappropriateness of celebrating the nation on January 26.

Still other Indigenous speakers and writers expanded on sentiments expressed in the above claims, arguing that colonisation is an active process maintained by ongoing oppression, and linking this to the purpose of resisting on January 26. For example, Larrakia Elder and Traditional Owner June Mills was quoted in a January 26 *ABC* news article covering Invasion Day protests around the country stating:

You're not sorry when you continue down the line that you've been doing for 230 years. You're not sorry, you're not fooling anybody. ('Invasion Day Protests Held across Nation and in London to Challenge Australia Day Date', 2020)

Mills' assertion here goes beyond contextualising harms experienced by Indigenous people in the present as a result of colonial violence in the past, and instead identifies a through-line of violence across the past 230 years. Her statement, given as part of a speech opening the Darwin January 26 event, is firmly rooted in an analysis of the continuity between colonial possession and the ongoing oppression of Indigenous people.

As Interviewee 1 identifies, Indigenous people continue to be oppressed because there is no interest on the part of the state to disrupt this racial hierarchy and genuinely engage in a re-making of Indigenous-settler relations. While the discussion of *ressentiment* in the previous section associated Indigenous peoples' attention to history with a pathological attachment to the past, the statements explored here identify the settler state and/or polity as the true source of colonial pathology. The speakers here identify, in Moreton-Robinson's (2015, p. 172) words, how "patriarchal white sovereignty pathologizes itself through the tactics and strategies it deploys to maintain subjugation." Despite the force of these truths, however, the critiques discussed in this section are spoken into a milieu of public discourse still largely shaped by the forces of white cognition and possession. This results in a constant tension between strategies of truth-telling employed by Indigenous people seeking to push the boundaries of liberal recognition around January 26, and the way that these truths are apprehended and responded to within a normative frame of white knowing and settler time.

Conclusion

Whiteness as an epistemological *a priori*, the racial hierarchy of being and knowing underpinning the Australian settler state, and the temporal dimension of settler colonialism all intersect to structure mainstream discourses circulating around January 26. Understanding the interplay of these issues in relation to 'Australia Day' is a crucial aspect of assessing how public assertions of sovereignty by Indigenous peoples are received and represented in media narratives and by political elites. This chapter has built on the insights gained across the analysis so far to interrogate the operation of modes of temporal governance through public discourse around January 26, particularly as this relates to dominant framings of Indigenous

personhood and the appraisal of colonial violence. The chapter began by exploring racist representations in the media data of Indigenous people based on and expressed through the logic of white possession. The relationship between representation and possession was further explored through the use of possessive language by non-Indigenous people to refer to Indigenous people. After this, the analysis turned to focus on the normative placement of Indigenous peoples in relation to Australian history, and the way that this emerged in public discourse captured in the media data. In particular, this part of the chapter looked at the way colonial violence was relegated to the past, and how this temporal bracketing influenced understandings of Indigenous peoples' calls for justice in the present. The last part of the chapter briefly touched on instances where Indigenous speakers and writers resisted such bracketing to reinforce the importance of understanding colonisation as an ongoing system of oppression. The next chapter continues to build on the operation of whiteness as an epistemological *a priori* with respect to manifestations of contemporary Australian nationalism on January 26.

Chapter 7: Contemporary Australian Nationalism on January 26

Introduction

Given the thesis' concern with representations of contested claims to sovereignty around January 26, Australia's national day, this chapter delves into how particular expressions of Australian nationalism rely on and reinforce the normative legitimacy of the settler state. This involves synthesising insights from the analysis so far on the discursive operation of white possession, racial hierarchy and temporal governance in Australia as expressed through the media and official political communication. Of particular interest here is the implicit operation of patriarchal white sovereignty, evidenced through nationalist expressions in public discourse by commentators and mastheads across the political spectrum. These expressions are juxtaposed against critiques by a range of Indigenous speakers and writers drawing attention to the role of 'Australia Day' and associated characterisations of the nation and polity in reinforcing and reproducing white possession. The previous chapter began with reference to Povinelli's (2011, p. 23) engagement with Anderson's (2006) *Imagined Communities*, where Povinelli identified the importance of attending to the temporality of social belonging under settler colonialism. This chapter returns to Anderson's (2006, p. 6) core characterisation of the nation as an "imagined political community" which is "both inherently limited and sovereign." The analysis here is therefore focused on the relationship between two key components of Anderson's argument—imagining the nation as sovereign and as a community.

Drawing on Wolfe's (1999) work on settler colonialism as an ongoing phenomenon that manifests through the relationship between invader and invaded, coloniser and colonised, Moran (2002, pp. 1034–1035) describes the growth of an Australian "settler nationalism" that, "while dealing with the indigenous [sic] in a way that reflects some level of respect for indigenous culture and claims... at the same time reflects ongoing settler concerns." Ultimately, for Moran (2002, pp. 1034–1035), this means that "all settler nationalisms negotiate from a position of power: the nation-state is the reality, and indigenous peoples must find ways to voice their claims within it, usually with some tacit acceptance of the *realpolitik* of ultimate nation-state sovereignty." Moran (2002, p. 1036) explores this further through the conceptualisation of "indigenizing settler nationalism," a mode of nationalism that centres Indigenous peoples at the heart of the nation, deploying liberal recognition as a means to legitimise the nation state. Ultimately, Moran is somewhat cautious regarding just how

different indigenising settler nationalism is from older forms of traditionalist, exclusionary settler nationalism, stating that the former is “open to the accusation that it is a form of window-dressing that comforts the non-indigenous with a sense of their own moral good, and of the moral good of their nation.” However, this thesis argues that beyond being a comforting form of window-dressing, the liberal civility inherent in indigenising settler nationalism is a core feature of the current Australian settler colonial project, which continues to rely on the disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty.

A stultifying colonial politics of recognition has become the dominant approach to Indigenous-settler relations, and this form of liberal recognition is closely linked to Australia’s national re-branding as ‘multicultural’ in the post-1970s era. As has been discussed across the thesis so far, Australia was established as a “racial state” (Mills, 1997, p. 83), facilitated on the one hand by the genocidal targeting of Indigenous peoples and on the other by the White Australia policy, introduced shortly after federation to exclude non-white, non-Indigenous Others. Stratton and Ang (1994, p. 142) argue that the nationalist White Australia policy “implied the official racialisation of Australian national identity,” masking “the salience of race... in everyday life.” However, the eventual overturning of the White Australia policy challenged original constructions of national identity, such that “racial homogeneity and cultural homogeneity could no longer be assumed to be one and the same thing” (Stratton & Ang, 1994, p. 145). This required a reconfiguration of Australian national identity, shifting from an emphasis on racial in/exclusion to instead focus on the national culture and “way of life,” and to push for the assimilation of migrants and Indigenous people (Stratton & Ang, 1994, p. 145). The cultivation of a contemporary Australian national identity that is self-consciously inclusionary and diverse (whether or not these ideals are realised) is therefore an important consideration when assessing representations of the national community around January 26.

Through analysing nationalist expressions about and normative framings of January 26, this chapter extends the thesis’ investigation of white possession and the reproduction of common sense investments in settler sovereignty. The first section explores how the Australian polity understands itself by unpacking references to national identity and character in the media data and political statements. This involves interrogating how an overarching national identity is linked to particular approaches to engaging in national life, and how this linkage is reinforced through normative representations of ‘Australianness’. These representations are further explored through their manifestation in appeals to Australia’s multicultural character, with

attention to the significance of multicultural nationalism as a resource that can be used to shore up settler claims to sovereignty by inviting culturally diverse settlers to partake in the dispossession of Indigenous lands. The analysis then turns to public discourse directly focused on January 26, Australia's national day. This begins with an assessment of various names for the date used by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the media data, identifying naming practices as an important component of broader considerations around settler nationalism and the construction of political deviance. Finally, the chapter explores how political contestation on and around January 26 is represented through framing the date as 'controversial' or describing political contention on the date as a matter of public opinion. This framing is closely linked to frequent descriptions of Indigenous peoples' resistance to nationalist celebrations as part of a 'debate' over *when* such a celebration should occur.

This chapter combines quantitative and qualitative analysis to provide a multifaceted insight into the relationship between Australian nationalism and settler colonialism around January 26. Given the relatively high frequency of references to national identity and character and to particular names for January 26 (as compared to other individual nodes obtained through coding) it was possible to present counts of these data points and to broadly group them according to political tendency. This was then coupled with analysis of exemplary statements from each identified tendency. Elsewhere in the chapter, in discussions of multicultural nationalism and representations of contested meaning around January 26, a comparatively smaller number of references meant that a combination of content analysis and critical discourse analysis techniques were more desirable. Rather than identifying the frequency of these themes or terms relative to the rest of the dataset, the analysis of these features focused on interrogating their specific contexts of use in relation to the national day.

I am, you are, we are Australian

This section of the chapter attends to how the Australian polity is defined in public discourse in the context of 'Australia Day,' laying the groundwork for later analysis of Indigenous resistance against settler nationalism. Cultivating a coherent and original sense of national identity presents a persistent challenge for the Australian polity, given the nation's foundation on an exclusionary racial hierarchy which constantly troubles its claims to political legitimacy. The space of national identity construction is thus a fruitful arena for investigating how identification with and pride in a uniquely Australian character requires maintaining a balance

between nationalist sentiment and colonial silencing. This involves assessing references to Australia's national identity and character across media data and political statements, which provide some insight into how the nation sees and represents itself. The nature of these references varied based on individuals' and publications' political leanings, but frequently shared an inherent investment in the legitimacy and goodness—or, importantly, the *potential* goodness—of the polity and the settler state. Similar to the previous chapter's analysis of Australian history and colonial violence, there was a strong affective dimension to these expressions of ownership about 'Australianness'. The data also included references to national identity and character that presented critical assessments of Australian nationalism by several Indigenous speakers and writers. These analyses often pushed beyond the bounds of liberal inclusion and recognition and instead re-situated Australianness as a settler colonial identity formation.

References to Australia's national identity and character appeared across a large number of items in the media data, and also featured prominently in official government statements. During the initial coding process, textual excerpts were assigned as references to national 'identity,' which generally specified the shared qualities or properties of Australians, or to national 'character,' referring to Australians' shared distinguishing features as *against* other groups. This coding was not mutually exclusive, and in practice identity and character were often articulated in the same expression with speakers or writers defining an Australian national identity *through* references to its uniqueness. After merging these codes together, discussion of national identity and character was identified across at least 119 distinct items (from 407 included for content analysis)—107 media items and 12 statements, releases or transcripts issued by political figures. Of interest in these expressions was the way that the national community was differentially defined by groups of speakers and writers, as well as the claims made on and about the settler state.

As shown in Table 1, references to Australia's national identity or character identified within media items and political statements selected for content analysis were categorised across 5 primary tendencies. These will be discussed in turn below, with attention to the variety of approaches used to convey, and at times critique, representations of the national imaginary.

Table 1 National identity and character framing

Primary framing	Number of distinct items	Media outlet/government office
Structural critique	3	NITV (2), Eureka Street (1)
Acknowledging complexity, liberal hope	24	ABC (5), The Age (4), The Sydney Morning Herald (3), NITV (3), Herald Sun (2), The Courier Mail (2), Nine (1), SBS (1), The Guardian (1), The Daily Telegraph (1), National Indigenous Times (1)
Positive only	69 (59 media, 10 political statements)	Herald Sun (10), AAP (8), The Courier Mail (7), The Australian (6), The Daily Telegraph (5), ABC (4), Daily Mail Australia (4), The Age (3), SBS (3), 9 News (2), 7News (2), NITV (1), The Guardian (1), Nine Radio (1), Yahoo! News (1) Office of the Queensland Premier (6), Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (3), Governor-General (1)
Acknowledging complexity, conservative/traditionalist	15 (14 media, 1 political statement)	The Australian (5), Herald Sun (3), The Daily Telegraph (2), The Courier Mail (1), The Age (1), ABC (1), Nine Radio (1) Office of the Minister for Education (1)
Reactionary conservative	8	The Australian (2), The Daily Telegraph (2), Herald Sun (2), Nine Radio (2)
	119	

The vast majority of discussion about Australia’s identity and character in the data presented the national community in a positive light only, using generally inclusive terms and emphasising qualities including the bravery, strength and resilience of Australians. Many of these references connected national identity and character to the 2019-2020 bushfire season, and in particular to how those associated with bushfire response and relief effort and those impacted directly by the fires exemplified the best of Australia. The bushfires were used as a core point to which features of Australian identity and character were tethered, and discussion of the fires was frequently paired with prompts to the audience to make a more concerted effort to reflect on and celebrate the nation on January 26.

This approach was best captured by then-Prime Minister Scott Morrison (2020b) during his speech at Canberra’s national flag raising and citizenship ceremony on January 26. Morrison’s speech primarily focused on the bushfires and on the central role of volunteers in firefighting and relief efforts. The volunteer is presented by Morrison as an Australian par excellence, a beacon of good citizenship, courage, selflessness and community-mindedness, and a source of hope for the nation. The spirit of the volunteer is invoked to reinforce a positive representation of Australianness that is both symbolically connected to the national day and provided with

official sanction by virtue of being recognised by the Prime Minister. The following description of national identity was included near the end of Morrison's (2020b) speech:

Ladies and gentlemen, our national identity which we celebrate today is not a negative or exclusive tribalism.

Rather, it is the positive identity that comes from living a life as a good citizen and who thinks and believes in something greater than their own self.

Morrison's description of Australian identity as "positive" can be interpreted in several ways. Firstly, by defining national identity against "a negative or exclusive tribalism," he positions this identity as endogenous, stemming from a range of internal qualities and values rather than developed through violent colonial relations with Indigenous people and a lingering attachment to British sensibilities. Secondly, by referring to Australianness as a "positive identity that comes from living a life as a good citizen," Morrison constructs Australians as positive moral agents who are involved in actively making the right choices to fulfil their civic duties. These individual actions are then situated within a timeless, ephemeral national community through Morrison's reference to Australians' belief "in something greater than their own self." These two aspects of "positive" national identity can be related back to the construction of historical narratives that privilege consensual and uncomplicated descriptions of colonial possession discussed over the previous two chapters. Further, Morrison's reference to "tribalism" characterises Australian identity as rational and reasonable rather than emotive and exclusionary, and thus superior to other unnamed groups who may be better described by this racially coded language. The Australian polity is thus represented as a coherent (especially united due to the bushfires) and morally righteous collective driven by a set of core values, with Morrison avoiding any explicit mention of parts of the nation's history and present inconsistent with this framing. The quote above was also published in *The Australian* (Ferguson & Ore, 2020) and *The Guardian* (Karp, 2020) on January 26, and the relevant section of Morrison's speech was broadcast on *SBS* radio on the same day (Kwan, 2020).

Descriptions of Australia's national identity and character in editorials published by mainstream media outlets in the lead up to January 26 were also of interest. As the 'voice' of publications, editorials play a unique role in shaping, validating and (re)producing dominant framings circulating in public discourse about the nation and 'Australia Day' (S. Hall et al., 1978, p. 63). One *ABC* editorial published on January 20 drew on the bushfires to signal the particular significance of commemorations of the national day in 2020. Titled 'ABC to focus

on generosity of the Australian spirit this Australia Day’, the piece included the following positive framing from the masthead’s managing director:

The ABC’s Managing Director, David Anderson, said the Australia Day weekend had always given Australians the opportunity to reflect on what makes us who we are, as well as celebrating the things that bring us together as a nation. “That has never been more important than now. As the ABC continues to bring communities the emergency information they rely on, we will also take the opportunity to tell Australians the stories of bravery, determination and resilience that we are seeing in communities across the country in the face of these unprecedented events.” (‘ABC to Focus on Generosity of the Australian Spirit This Australia Day’, 2020)

The quote begins by paraphrasing Anderson on the importance of the national holiday specifically as it relates to national identity and unity. This is a clear expression of the publication’s support for the importance of the national day, though by choosing to refer to both reflection and celebration and refusing to attribute particular characteristics to Australian national identity, the *ABC* leaves room for more inclusive possibilities for interpreting the date, albeit still defined in relation to settler colonial nationalism.

The *ABC* editorial can be compared with another editorial published in *The Australian* on January 25, which presented a positive view of national identity situated within a broader conservative narrative of nationhood. This editorial, titled ‘Optimism, determination at heart of national day’, was one of 15 items identified to include conservative or traditionalist discussion of Australia’s national identity and character, but that also included some concession to the complexity of the national story as part of affirming Australia’s morality in the present (The Australian Editorial, 2020a). Like Morrison, *The Australian*’s editorial team (2020a) and editor-in-chief Christopher Dore claimed that Australia’s identity and character was exemplified by volunteer firefighters on the front lines of the devastating 2019-2020 bushfires:

The volunteer firefighters of Australia, the pride of a grateful nation, are collectively our 2019 Australian of the Year. These men and women, editor-in-chief Christopher Dore said, “represent the spirit of modern Australia, capture our history of bravery, sacrifice and service, and remind us of our unique connection to land held so dear by indigenous Australians”. Firefighters, he said, represent “an optimism that has come to epitomise the Australian character, an air of dogged determination and admirable aspiration that has made us who we are and will continue to define us as a nation in the decades ahead”.

As opposed to Anderson, who does not choose to identify any national heroes but instead describes qualities attributable to “communities across the country” (‘ABC to Focus on Generosity of the Australian Spirit This Australia Day’, 2020), Dore champions Australia’s volunteer firefighters through awarding them the publication’s own version of the national ‘Australian of the Year’ honour (The Australian Editorial, 2020a). Dore therefore makes a direct link between Australian character and the celebration of nationalist rituals on January 26. He valorises qualities attributed to the firefighters as the “spirit of modern Australia,” presenting this heroism as evidence of a broader national character. Dore also engages in discursive possession through claiming settlers’ “unique connection” to Indigenous land and reducing the sovereign relation of Indigenous peoples to their lands to merely holding these territories dear. Finally, Dore projects the settler state into the future by linking aspects of the Australian character displayed by the volunteer firefighters with aspirations for the nation “in the decades ahead.”

The data also included 24 references to national identity that contained some acknowledgement of the nation’s ‘mistakes’ and ‘imperfections’ and linked these to a belief in the polity’s ability to improve and/or cohere (liberal hope). While some of the positive descriptions of Australia’s national identity and character discussed above identified the importance of collective reflection on January 26, references in the category of liberal hope noted that such reflection was important *because* of the moral complexity of the national story. Expressions in this category tended to be cautiously hopeful, acknowledging the harms of colonisation while underpinned by a belief in the latent potential of Australians to work together and achieve progressive transformation, most frequently with respect to Indigenous-settler relations. An example of this type of expression was identified in an edited excerpt from author, political journalist and Wiradjuri man Stan Grant’s book ‘Australia Day,’ which is described as

exploring “identity politics” in the lead up to January 26. Grant (2020a) reflects on feeling “torn between embracing and celebrating all that is great in our nation, living with the all too painful reality that it is not so great for everyone; and that my family, like so many other Indigenous families, has paid a terrible price for the greatness of Australia.” Ultimately, in the excerpt, this comes down to the question of national identity, where a brief consideration of contestation over January 26 leads Grant (2020a) to write:

Shouldn't we first ask: who are we? The debate around our national day tests our democracy: a moral and political claim by a minority that challenges the very legitimacy and morality of the majority. Can we celebrate a day that marks the extraordinary achievements of our nation, when others see it as an insult? Whether the day is moved or not, still we must live together.

Grant argues that before a decision can be made about what to do with the national day, “as a nation we must ask hard questions of ourselves” first. These difficult questions are framed around the moral and political claims of Indigenous people and the way that acknowledging such claims poses a challenge to “the very legitimacy and morality of the majority,” given the contingency of Australia’s “extraordinary achievements” on Indigenous dispossession. Therefore, Grant suggests that a reckoning is required regarding Australia’s national identity, but ultimately this must be one that leads to a consensus rather than further political antagonism. Since the published excerpt ends with the above quote, there is no resolution presented to the reader, though Grant’s writing implies a preferred form of political engagement.

A minority of references (all in News Corp publications or Nine Radio programs) discussed Australian identity and character in the register of reactionary conservatism, lamenting the shift towards embracing cultural diversity and including Indigenous people and away from a sole focus on white British settler heritage in contemporary representations of the polity. For example, conservative commentator Kevin Donnelly (2020) presented the following assessments of the National Australia Day Council’s 2020 campaign in a January 22 opinion piece for *The Daily Telegraph*:

...based on politically correct identity politics, the video celebrates diversity and difference. The message is that being Australian means listening to each other and sharing our different histories, rather than having a shared national identity to form around.

...the central problem is that the video refuses to identify and acknowledge what that story actually is. Instead of stressing what constitutes our shared national identity and what defines us as a nation, the campaign goes all in with the cultural relativism.

Donnelly explicitly defines Australia's national identity *against* multiculturalism, diversity and difference, advocating for the re-centring of "British heritage" and western civilisation as the most important parts of the nation's story. For Donnelly, the intrusion of "politically correct identity politics" has undermined the national community's core features, which are defined in terms of white supremacy. This is at odds with the more vaguely inclusive descriptions of the nation that underpinned the majority of other definitions of national identity, but as noted in Table 1, Donnelly is not alone in advocating such a position.

Finally, a small proportion of the discussion on national identity and character in the dataset featured Indigenous speakers and writers actively questioning or critiquing mainstream claims about the Australian national community. Two of the three relevant media items were published by *NITV*—a January 16 re-publication of an opinion piece by Luke Pearson (2020a), and a January 22 re-cap of a special edition of *NITV*'s 'The Point', analysed in Chapter 5 (Jenkins, 2020)—and one by independent media outlet *Eureka Street*, a January 30 opinion piece by Arrernte feminist, writer and unionist Celeste Liddle (2020). All three pieces included analyses that linked national identity and character to the phenomenon of ongoing colonialism, an approach captured by the following series of questions posed by Pearson (2020a) near the conclusion of his piece 'Invasion Day, Survival Day, or Day of Mourning? All of the above':

Is our national identity best commemorated on the day that NSW became a British colony, or the date that Australians stopped being British subjects? Is it the day that the White Australia Policy was enacted, or is it the day it was repealed? Is it perhaps the day, if it ever comes, that we become a republic? Or is it some future day that we can't even imagine at the moment, some future event that could serve to help 'bring us together to celebrate all that is great about being Australians'?

These questions directly address attempts to either grapple with or avoid attending to the internal contradictions of Australian nationalism and identity in an era of reconciliation and multiculturalism. Pearson's opinion piece reflects on different names used for January 26 by Indigenous people, and the varying significance of describing the date as one of Invasion, Survival and/or Mourning (terminology which is analysed further in the third part of this

chapter). Of interest is Pearson's appraisal of Australia's national identity and day, asking whether there is or could really be a day fit for national celebration that is neither exclusionary nor predicated on assimilation. In contrast to the excerpt from Stan Grant's *Australia Day* discussed above, Pearson's piece identifies the importance of valuing Indigenous resistance, grief *and* celebrations of survival associated with January 26 rather than attempting to find an agreeable national identity to celebrate. Pearson's analysis appears to be less restricted by the bounds of national identity, instead emphasising the need for Indigenous people to support and respect each other despite different approaches to the date.

The first part of this chapter has continued the thesis' investigation into how Australia represents and legitimises itself by unpacking references to Australian identity and character in the data. This has involved looking at the traits assigned to the polity and the way that an overarching national identity is linked to particular approaches to engaging in national life. Such representations provide a useful insight into normative understandings of Australianness, and the circulation of these representations in public discourse around January 26 inform and reflect how political possibility and legitimacy are conceived in the Australian national imaginary. Attempts to define a coherent, positive and inclusive national identity rely on the assumption that the current political consensus is either desirable or in need of marginal transformation, given that contention between Indigenous people and settlers is frequently defined in relation to (but not wholly determined by) the state. However, ongoing settler colonialism is the condition that makes possible the existence of an 'Australian people' as such. The cultivation of positive, possessive investments in an Australian identity and by extension the nation itself is part of an active process of settler colonialism. This may be understood as falling within the ideological dimension of Mills' (1997) racial contract, where racial states are represented as positive, egalitarian and eternal entities despite being built on a racial hierarchy. The following section turns to discuss one of the ways in which this racial hierarchy is obscured in public discourse: through the definition of Australia as a multicultural nation.

The colonial function of multicultural nationalism

Given Australia's increasing self-representation as a multicultural nation, it is necessary to interrogate how cultural diversity is mobilised as a part of contemporary Australian nationalism. This is particularly significant due to the ambiguous position in which non-white

migrant-settlers, and at times refugees and asylum seekers, are often placed relative to both Indigenous people and white settlers (acknowledging shifting boundaries of racial inclusion/exclusion over time). Thus far, the chapter has focused on various definitions and expressions of attachment to the Australian national community, referring to the polity as a whole. This section drills deeper into the positioning of ethnically and culturally diverse settlers and how diversity is mobilised in public discourse around January 26. Attending to settler diversity is a crucial component of the overall analysis because of how multicultural inclusion is pitted—implicitly or explicitly—against the political activity of Indigenous peoples mobilising to assert sovereignty and resist celebrations of the settler state on January 26.

As will be discussed below, media data and political statements referring to cultural diversity in the context of the national day were often closely associated with nationalist claims. This occurred across the political spectrum such that whether conservative or liberal, these statements tended to take the legitimacy of the settler state as a given. As a result, settlers of culturally diverse backgrounds were found to perform particular work in public discourse around January 26, whether in the context of appealing to the already-achieved multicultural success of the nation or articulating aspirations for greater multicultural harmony. The following discussion engages references to the ‘success’ of multiculturalism in Australia and the inclusion of cultural diversity in official ‘Australia Day’ celebrations or independent celebrations hosted by diverse communities. Claims of successful multiculturalism and representations of ethnically and culturally diverse Australians modelling patriotism and assimilation can be understood as a part of the reproduction of settler colonialism and disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty. Migrants are invited to participate in the dispossession of Indigenous lands through normative demands for their allegiance to the settler state and to Australian culture.

Chapter 4 identified the role a three-strands narrative of the Australian community in consolidating settler claims to sovereignty and political legitimacy, a narrative in part contingent on the ‘success’ of multicultural nationalism. References to the ‘success’ of multiculturalism in Australia appeared across at least 53 distinct media items and 1 political statement out of 407 items included for qualitative analysis (54 media items proper, though one of these was a collection of letters to the editor with two writers opining on multicultural success). These were further categorised across four main tendencies, with the majority of references identified as either conservative/traditionalist (23) or liberal/progressive inclusion

(22), along with less frequent references to multicultural success in the register of reactionary conservatism (7) or liberal critique (3).

In a January 24 opinion piece published in the *Herald Sun*, Labor Senator for Victoria Raff Ciccone (2020) wrote about his pride in the success of Australian multiculturalism, referencing his own Italian heritage and identifying as the “proud son of migrants.” Ciccone’s opinion piece, titled ‘Australia Day is a delicious mix of cultures’, emphasised the opportunities provided by Australia to migrants and their subsequent enthusiasm about being a part of the nation. On migrant participation in ‘Australia Day’ celebrations, Ciccone (2020) wrote:

The Australia Day Council highlights the high participation of migrants in Australia Day events, saying that it demonstrates “that we share the common belief that there is much to be proud of as Australians”.

Along with our national ideals of a fair go, opportunity, equality and mateship, part of what we ought to be proud of is our success as a multicultural nation.

This quote exemplifies the inclusionary nationalist approach of Ciccone’s piece, where multiculturalism is identified as a core feature of the contemporary Australian nation. Ciccone’s approach as a whole stresses the positive qualities of Australian nationalism and links these to the story of the grateful migrant who gladly celebrates ‘Australia Day’ because they have been given the chance to contribute meaningfully to the nation. However, while Ciccone states that “we’re a vibrant, inclusive country, where we celebrate the diverse contribution of all migrants, all Australians,” this wholly neglects the prevalence of home-grown racism, particularly as targeted against Indigenous peoples. Diversity and inclusion are thus framed as desirable features augmenting a contemporary Australian national identity founded in white possession.

An example of liberal critique of the extent of Australia’s inclusionary character was identified in a letter to the editor by Mount Eliza resident Jon McMillan published by *The Age* on January 12. McMillan wrote:

Why can't Australia Day as it stands be reconfigured? Beyond being a warranted celebration of this nation's multicultural achievements, January 26 would be enhanced immeasurably through the gravitas of confronting the collective amnesia around the Aboriginal massacres since 1788. (‘Australia Day: Integrate the Diverse Facts of Australia Day’, 2020)

Here, while Australia's "multicultural achievements" are taken as a given, McMillan queries why the date cannot be transformed into, as the title of the letter states, "an authentic and educative coming together." McMillan proposes that this national unity can be achieved through a robust engagement with Australia's brutal history of massacring Aboriginal people since the advent of colonial settlement. However, this proposal (as well as the rest of McMillan's letter) fails to recognise the ongoing nature of settler colonial violence. Attention is rightfully given to direct and documented acts of genocide, but this obscures the broader operation of white possession as a process that is periodically reinvigorated by nationalist celebrations.

Multicultural success was also evaluated in relation to assimilation, where while cultural differences were tolerated and even celebrated, this was contingent on adherence to most of the norms of white settler Australia. This was exemplified in a series of quotes from then-Immigration Minister Alan Tudge in a January 22 article in *The Australian*:

Mr Tudge said more than 27,000 people would become citizens on January 26 at 454 ceremonies across Australia. "Australia Day is an opportunity to celebrate our success as a multicultural nation and reflect on what it means to be an Australian," he said. "A citizenship ceremony is an important event in every new citizens' life and being able to attend one on Australia Day adds extra significance." (Chambers, 2020)

In Tudge's assessment, multicultural success is contingent on migrants making a commitment to the norms of "what it means to be an Australian," which is in part tethered to being granted Australian citizenship. This conservative framing of multicultural nationalism positions cultural diversity as secondary to national unity, with extra gravity afforded to 'Australia Day' citizenship ceremonies. Successful multiculturalism is presented as self-evident but ultimately reliant on a normative, unspoken adherence to Australian national identity, which includes celebrating 'Australia Day'.

On the other hand, some references to Australia's multicultural success were coupled with disparaging remarks about Indigenous people and their supporters who chose to protest instead of celebrate on January 26. For example, P. Leslie of Lennox Head included the following comment in a letter to *The Daily Telegraph* published on January 17:

Yet again Jacinta Nampijinpa Price is a voice of reason about the pointless change-the-date protesters whose voices are so much louder than those of the sensible. Australia Day is a day of unity for our nation of many races who have come together as (almost) one. The do-gooders and those who vilify people about the date should instead be focusing on the real problems Aboriginals have in this country. ('Letters to the Editor', 2020a)

In this letter, Lennox responds to an opinion piece authored earlier in the month by conservative commentator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price (2020) in order to frame opposition to national celebrations as both unproductive and not reflective of the *actual* unity between Australians. While presented as part of a reactionary response to “the do-gooders and those who vilify people about the date,” Lennox’s framing of national unity aligns with Tudge’s previously-discussed characterisation of multicultural success as contingent on migrant patriotism. In this quote, the framing is mobilised to undermine resistance against settler nationalism by using a deficit framing of Indigenous people, using the dehumanising language of “Aboriginals” to refer to protestors’ failure to attend to ‘real problems’ and implying that protests are based in *ressentiment* (as explored in Chapter 6). Lennox therefore positions Price as the ‘good’ Indigenous person inserting a ‘voice of reason’ into the cacophony of ultimately destructive protestors, whose Indigeneity is implied—“(almost) one”—but not named.

A range of media items were also identified in the lead up to and on January 26 which primarily focused on connecting settler cultural diversity with nationalist celebrations. This included four distinct opinion pieces—3 in the *Herald Sun* (Ciccone, 2020; Le Liu, 2020; Reece, 2020) and one in *The Daily Telegraph* (Tran, 2020)—three of which were authored by culturally diverse settlers (including Ciccone’s opinion piece) reflecting on Australians’ cultural diversity. There were also 8 distinct news articles published by *SBS* (Ardha, 2020; Bolger, 2020; Hassan & Rizk, 2020), *The Age* (Webb, 2020), *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Chrysanthos & Drevikovsky, 2020b; Ruseska, 2020), *The Courier Mail* (Bennion, 2020) and *Herald Sun* (Masanauskas, 2020b), that centred on interviewing one or more culturally diverse settlers on their love of, appreciation for and loyalty to Australia. All of these media items framed Australia as diverse and inclusive, firmly positioning culturally diverse settlers in alignment with the settler state.

These media items also commonly deployed the trope of the grateful immigrant or refugee, either presented through direct statements of appreciation by multicultural speakers, or through

assessments about the attachments and motivations of such speakers by white Australian commentators. Editors of *The Daily Telegraph* on January 25 ('Letters to the Editor', 2020c) and February 2 ('Letters to the Editor', 2020d), *The Age* on January 26 ('Acknowledge the Past and Celebrate the Triumphs', 2020) and *Herald Sun* on January 26 ('Republic Makes Our Day', 2020) also chose to publish letters from members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, who face persecution in a number of Islamic countries, expressing their gratitude and patriotism towards Australia. In a January 26 *The Age* article titled 'It's 'throw another kebab on the barbie' on Australia Day in Footscray', author Carolyn Webb (2020) writes about a celebratory gathering planned by a group of Hazaras including Zeynab Mohseni and her family, who came to Australia fleeing from persecution in Afghanistan. While the article includes some brief discussion of group members' experiences both in Afghanistan and trapped in Australia's draconian immigration system, Webb (2020) primarily focuses on their excitement about being able to gain citizenship and to celebrate living in Australia. Webb writes that the group was "determined not just to catch up with friends but to celebrate living in a peaceful, prosperous country."

In contrast to media items and political statements that positioned multiculturalism in the service of Australian nationalism, a January 26 *SBS* article titled 'How these Indigenous Australians want you to view January 26' included a different perspective on immigrant affinities to the mythology of the settler state. Interviewee Ghillar Michael Anderson, Euahlayi Elder and one of the original Aboriginal Tent Embassy protestors was quoted and paraphrased as follows:

Mr Anderson says conversations around Australia's history have changed significantly since his youth, something he partially credits to the country's growing multiculturalism.

"I think they [recent immigrants] were told more about Aboriginal Australians than in Australian schools," he says. "And I think they feel ashamed of the fact that we have a country that is total denial [sic]. (Truu, 2020)

Anderson suggests that recent immigrants have a greater understanding of the oppression of Indigenous people in Australia than people educated in the country, gesturing to the persistence of denialism in the Australian school system. Rather than tying multiculturalism and immigration to Australian patriotism, he identifies that being cognisant of Australia's denialism may cause *shame* for immigrants who may have expected the country to live up to a higher moral standard.

Celeste Liddle also presented a direct challenge to harmonious representations of Australian multiculturalism in a speech broadcast as part of 3CR's special programming on January 26, stating:

We don't celebrate Australia Day in this country because we're apparently a unified multicultural society who have the right to be proud of what we've achieved. We celebrate it because we are content to ignore the declaration of terra nullius and the crimes which have been perpetuated against Indigenous people beyond this point. (3CR, 2020)

This re-framing of the reasons for celebration challenges mainstream approaches to liberal multiculturalism in Australia, which gloss over the political content of contemporary diversity in the Australian polity. Instead, Liddle argues that celebration occurs because there is a lack of will or interest in challenging *terra nullius* and disrupting ongoing colonial violence against Indigenous people. This statement draws a clear link between the celebration of the nation as a multicultural success story and the project of settler colonialism. Bracketing considerations of the latter out of public discourse around January 26 is, according to Liddle, an example of the settler polity's wilful ignorance about the conditions that make Australian nationalism possible.

The majority of the discussion in this section has focused on references to cultural diversity and nationhood made in relation to migrant settlers, though it should be noted that 13 media items included for content analysis made specific mention of refugees and asylum seekers as part of broader claims about Australian nationalism and January 26. The majority of these items (7) presented the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in a very similar way to the discussion of migrants and were distributed across the *Herald Sun* (Masanauskas, 2020b; Staff Writers, 2020), *AAP* (G. Roberts, 2020), *SBS* (Bolger, 2020), *The Age* (Webb, 2020), *The Daily Telegraph* (Morrison, 2020c) and *The Courier Mail* (Treacy, 2020). Refugees and asylum seekers, like migrants, were largely discussed in a positive light and with direct references to their contributions to the nation or to their pride in celebrating 'Australia Day'. Their worth in the national story was determined by their work for the nation, and there was little recognition of their unique experiences relative to migrant-settlers. While 4 items included references to refugees or asylum seekers that briefly mentioned acting in solidarity or co-resistance with Indigenous people, these featured in comparatively less prominent media sources, across two

NITV articles (Nicol, 2020; *NITV News*, 2020), an *ABC* radio program (Gorr, 2020) and *4ZZZ's* (2020) Invasion Day broadcast.

Multiculturalism and the colonial politics of recognition of Indigenous people may be considered complementary if not connected political projects. Their joint emphasis is on a theory of change that relies primarily on inclusion, representation and recognition rather than the redistribution of power and resources appropriated through white possession. The ascendancy of a national narrative that frames the nation as composed of three strands is bolstered by references to Australia's 'successful' multiculturalism. Multicultural nationalism as a nation-building strategy (Moran, 2017, p. 180) continues to rely on the construction of the nation as a white possession (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 24), though the superficial affirmation of diversity further obscures Australia's racial contract.

Representing January 26

The first two sections of this chapter have shown that Australian national identity and character was regularly defined in a positive and culturally inclusive manner across the media data and political statements, and that there has been some effort made to emphasise these features in media coverage around January 26. This window into national self-understanding informs the current section's analysis of representations of January 26 itself, with various interpretations of the nation's identity and inclusivity informing the choice of terminology and framings used to discuss the day. Approaches to naming and framing January 26 are closely related to broader representations of contested meaning on the date, given its significance for both Indigenous people, marking the beginning of colonial occupation, and for settlers, whose relationships to the nation are fundamentally contingent on this initial physical act of dispossession.

The choice of terminology used to refer to January 26 provides further insight into how the relationship between white possession, nationhood and settler state legitimacy manifests through public discourse. Determining the appropriate name/s to use for the anniversary was an important site of meaning construction in the data and was closely linked to approaches to commemorating January 26. Here, the normative and nationalist 'Australia Day' came up against alternative names for the date used by Indigenous people which explicitly emerged out of political struggle against the settler state. These included 'Invasion Day,' 'Survival Day,' and referring to the date as a 'Day of Mourning' per the original January 26, 1938 protest. In

the media data, struggle over meaning about the day in part manifested through speakers and writers either implicitly or explicitly identifying a preference for particular names. In text sources (print and online), this occasionally involved the use of punctuation such as scare quotes or inverted commas around non-preferred terms to signal distance, disapproval or scepticism. Some media items also included speakers or writers actively assessing particular terms used to refer to January 26, as well as identifying (or being conspicuously vague about) groups who chose to use non-preferred names.

The 846 distinct media items included for quantitative analysis contained 659⁹ text items from mainstream media sources that made some reference to January 26. All official statements by political figures included for quantitative analysis and referring to January 26 (21 out of 25) used the term ‘Australia Day’ exclusively. It should also be noted that some media outlets also noted older terms for the date such as ‘Anniversary Day’, ‘Foundation Day’ and ‘Proclamation Day’, but this only occurred across 11 items, almost exclusively for the purpose of providing an historical background to January 26 from a settler perspective.

⁹ Excluding one web page write-up posted alongside the podcast of a Nine Radio program, categorised as a duplicate.

Table 2 Names used for January 26 in mainstream media items

Publication	Number of items (total)	Items using 'Australia Day' only	% of items using 'Australia Day' only	Use of 'Invasion Day'	Use of 'Survival Day'	Use of 'Day of Mourning'
7 News	19	16	84	3	0	0
9 News	15	8	53	5 (1 in inverted commas)	0	1
AAP	37	23	62	11 (1 in scare quotes)	5 (2 in inverted commas)	1
ABC	19	12	63	4 (1 in inverted commas)	2	2
Daily Mail Australia	50	31	62	15 (2 in scare quotes, 8 in inverted commas)	5 (2 in inverted commas)	2 (1 in inverted commas)
News.com.au	21	9	43	11 (3 in scare quotes)	4 (2 in scare quotes)	2 (1 in scare quotes)
NITV	19	3 (1 in scare quotes)	16	9 (1 in inverted commas)	9 (1 in inverted commas)	4
SBS News	36	22	61	11 (2 in scare quotes)	3 (1 in scare quotes)	4
The Age	36	21	58	12 (3 in scare quotes, 1 in inverted commas)	5	1
The Australian	57	41	72	7 (4 in scare quotes)	1	0
The Daily Telegraph	83	77	93	3	1	0
The Courier Mail	96	80	83	13 (3 in scare quotes, 1 in inverted commas)	2	2 (1 in inverted commas)
The Guardian	14	9	64	4	1	1
Herald Sun	116	101	87	10 (5 in scare quotes)	1	4
The Sydney Morning Herald	31	18	58	7 (1 in scare quotes, 1 in inverted commas)	1	0
Yahoo! News	10	4	40	5	6	1
Total	659	475				

As shown in Table 2, there was a clear preference for using ‘Australia Day’ to refer to January 26 across the majority of mainstream media sources, with 475 of 659 relevant sources included for quantitative analysis using this term exclusively. News Corp publications were most likely to use ‘Australia Day’ as the sole referent for the date, and these publications used the term alone for more than 50% of relevant media items (with the exception of News.com.au). The only news outlets which used a combination of names or preferred alternative names for the date over ‘Australia Day’ were *NITV*, *News.com.au* and *Yahoo! News*. While *NITV*’s role as a national broadcaster for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people explains its relatively low use of ‘Australia Day’ alone, this pattern was not as expected for *News.com.au* and *Yahoo! News*. For these latter publications, the lower use of ‘Australia Day’ only appeared to be explained by a proportionally higher number of media items discussing both celebratory events *and* Indigenous-led resistance or other commemorative events. Determining the broader significance of this pattern is beyond the constraints of the present research, though this choice of coverage by two online-only news platforms does indicate a potential area for further investigation.

The way that alternative names for January 26 were positioned within text sources in the media data was also of interest, considering that ‘Invasion Day’, ‘Survival Day’ and ‘Day of Mourning’ were often placed between inverted commas or scare quotes when used in mainstream media. This was most often the case for ‘Invasion Day’, as in a *Herald Sun* piece by non-Indigenous author Mike Colman (2020) opining on former tennis champion and Ngarigo woman Ashleigh Barty’s response to questions about the significance of January 26 during the 2020 Australian Open. Colman (2020) commends Barty for “refus[ing] to use her position as a platform” on “the Australia Day “issue,”” stating that her careful response to reporters about her pride in being Indigenous *and* Australian has successfully thwarted “those with agendas.” Colman’s use of scare quotes around ‘issue’ next to his preferred name for January 26 indicates scepticism about the extent to which the date can really be considered worth challenging. Colman (2020) states that after being asked by commentator Jim Courier about her feelings on playing on January 26 and being awarded Young Australian of the Year, there was an assumption that Barty, as an Indigenous person, “should feel compromised by accepting an award on so-called “Invasion Day”.” Again, the use of ‘so-called’ and scare quotes around ‘Invasion Day’ are included to undermine the legitimacy of alternative assessments of the date. Colman is careful to imply but not directly name that it is other

Indigenous people who are at the forefront of raising concerns about national celebrations on January 26.

An interesting inversion of the use of scare quotes to signal disapproval of certain names for January 26 was identified in an article by Gomeri journalist Madeleine Hayman-Reber for *NITV*. In this piece, only name used for January 26 was ‘Australia Day’ placed between quotation marks:

Ms Price was asked to appear on Studio 10, which is broadcast by Channel Ten, following a segment debating changing the date of “Australia Day” which aired on January 27, 2019. During this segment, presenter Kerri-Anne Kennerley made remarks about remote communities. (Hayman-Reber, 2020)

Hayman-Reber’s use of scare quotes around ‘Australia Day’ suggests a critical reading of the sensationalist style of current affairs program ‘Studio 10’, exemplified by Kennerley’s racist remarks about abuse of women and children in remote Aboriginal communities during the referenced program. During the segment, Kennerley used this example to suggest that January 26 protestors were not focused on the ‘real problems’ in Indigenous communities and thereby discredit resistance against nationalist celebrations. In this context and publication, the choice to use scare quotes around the official name for January 26, as accepted by Kennerley and Price, can be read as an act of resistance against status quo representations of the date through subtly questioning the legitimacy of ‘Australia Day’.

In addition to the use of punctuation to signal dis/approval of particular names for January 26, the media data also included some direct evaluations of their use. At least 40 distinct media items out of 392 included for content analysis contained some reference to the choice of terminology used to refer to January 26, with 34 of these items presenting assessments by non-Indigenous people only (or people not explicitly identified as Indigenous). The majority of these assessments also made some reference to who it was that chose to use alternative names for the date. Looking at how various speakers and writers identified not just what the date was called but who used particular names provides an insight into how dominant framings of January 26 and the Australian nation are positioned in relation to alternative framings, and how different names signal various degrees of separation from the status quo.

In an article published in *The Age* on January 21 reporting on demands from Melbourne Invasion Day protest organisers to ‘Pay the rent’ at the planned January 26 rally, journalist Tom Cowie (2020) described the date as follows:

Also referred to as Survival Day, January 26 is the anniversary of what many in the Indigenous community believe is the beginning of dispossession of their land through genocide.

This excerpt represents a relatively progressive assessment of the use of both ‘Survival Day’ and ‘Invasion Day’ (the latter used in the article’s title and opening sentence), with Cowie presenting the significance of January 26 for Indigenous people as justification for why these names are preferred. However, the choice to frame Indigenous peoples’ concerns about land theft and genocide in the register of ‘belief’ functions to minimise the legitimacy of these issues (whether or not this was intended). In addition to this, Cowie’s wording in the above quote maintains a normative framing of dispossession and genocide as historical phenomena.

In contrast to Cowie’s wording, conservative commentator Corrine Barraclough (2020) made the following statement about January 26 in an opinion piece published on the date in *News.com.au*:

I find it incredibly sad that now, years down the track, debate around our special, national day only seems to grow increasingly negative as time ticks by.
Anyone who calls it “Invasion Day” is looking to promote disunity.
Anyone who calls it “Survival Day” is missing out on the warmth this day offers. There’s even talk about “paying rent” for stolen land.

Barraclough’s piece exemplified reactionary conservative responses to Indigenous-led resistance on January 26 identified in the media data. Importantly, she chooses (in this excerpt and across the piece as a whole) not to identify *who* referred to the date as ‘Invasion Day’ or ‘Survival Day’, voicing her disdain for these unspecified characters without running the risk of directly expressing racist sentiments against Indigenous people. As did Colman, Barraclough uses scare quotes to signal disapproval of alternative names for January 26 and of Melbourne protest organisers’ assertion that settlers should be “paying rent” for stolen land.” By framing critique of ‘Australia Day’ as “increasingly negative,” Barraclough (2020) is able to position increasingly widespread, vocal support for Indigenous-led resistance against January 26 celebrations as problematic and “incredibly sad.”

An opinion piece by Luke Pearson for *NITV* republished on January 16 as part of dedicated programming in the lead up to January 26, 2020, directly critiques the style of reactionary conservatism voiced by Barraclough about the date. Pearson (2020a) writes:

Invasion Day, for me, reflects an honest truth that needs to be expressed. It speaks of the power of protest. It speaks of a history that has never been reconciled, of justice denied. It reminds how one simple word, ‘invasion’, seems to bewilderingly upset those connected to the invaders more than those who descend from the invaded.

The piece, titled ‘Invasion Day, Survival Day, or Day of Mourning? All of the above’ includes Pearson’s reflections on the significance of each of these three names for the date, locating the value of each in their emergence through Indigenous peoples’ resistance against colonial violence over time. The statement above is excerpted from the beginning of Pearson’s consideration of ‘Invasion Day’, centring the importance of epistemic resistance by Indigenous people through telling the “honest truth” about unreconciled history and colonial injustice. As part of this, Pearson makes specific note of the fragility of settlers like Barraclough when confronted with names for the date far removed from the nationalist triumphalism of ‘Australia Day’. This alternative framing reveals the falsehood of appeals to national unity and accusations of divisiveness against Indigenous people calling attention to ongoing invasion.

Barraclough’s excerpt above also includes another issue identified in the media data with respect to January 26, being one of many instances where contention over national celebrations was described as a ‘debate’. Hall’s (2019b, p. 269) discussion of dominant and subordinate or alternative meanings in ‘Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse’ is useful here, for, as he identifies, within a given culture, “there exists a pattern of “preferred readings,” and these mappings both have the institutional/political/ideological order imprinted in them and have themselves become institutionalized.” Despite Hall’s focus in this essay on visual culture and television discourse in particular, there are important lessons to be taken about the construction, transmission and interpretation of meaning through purely textual forms as well. While processes of meaning construction (encoding) and interpretation (decoding) are by their nature imperfect, collective investment in the reproduction of ideological hegemony both produces and makes visible paths of least resistance for such encoding and decoding. The repetitive attachment of certain terms to phenomena may be understood as one part of this coding, and in the case of January 26, this frequently occurred via the use of the term ‘debate’ to describe contention over the date.

Of the media items selected for qualitative analysis, 77 distinct items (74 mainstream media, 3 alternative media) included framings of political contention on January 26 in the terms of a ‘debate’. While 71 media items (all mainstream) described this ‘debate’ as being about whether the nation should be celebrated on January 26 or on another day, 6 items used the term ‘debate’ differently and more expansively in relation to the contentious nature of the day. This included framing conflict over January 26 as a debate over whether to celebrate the nation *on that day* or *at all* via *NITV* on January 16 (L. Pearson, 2020a), *SBS* on January 26 (Truu, 2020), and *98.9FM* on February 5 (Spearim, 2020c); linking contested meaning over January 26 to broader issues of racism and colonisation via *ABC* on January 26 (Behrendt, 2020) and *IndigenousX* on January 29 (L. Pearson, 2020d); and re-situating the debate in relation to long-standing calls by Indigenous activists for broader structural change via *IndigenousX* on January 26 (L. Pearson, 2020c).

In the majority of mainstream media items using the term ‘debate’ in reference to January 26, the framing served to legitimise a ‘both sides’ depiction of political conflict on the date. One function of ‘debate’ in these items was to collapse the various political positions of Indigenous protestors and commentators under the assumption of a shared primary aim—to change the date of the national celebration. Using ‘debate’ to refer to political conflict on January 26 also positioned Indigenous peoples’ various concerns about nationalist celebrations as equal opposites to the conservative, traditionalist position that the date should be maintained as Australia’s national day. The narrow debate framing identified across the above-mentioned 71 mainstream media items therefore served to bracket off consideration of more expansive political possibilities related to conflict on and around January 26. Suggesting that more or less contentious dates for national celebration exist again avoids attending to the political concerns raised about Indigenous sovereignty and the legitimacy of the settler state on January 26 by some Indigenous people.

Framing concerns about January 26 as a debate also had consequences for Indigenous people who were annually summoned to weigh in on the date. This is another example of settler demands for Indigenous peoples’ epistemic labour, as discussed in Chapter 5. In an opinion piece for *NITV* published on January 25 titled ‘The January 26 culture industry demands a toll from Blak bodies’, Jack Latimore (2020) wrote about the complicated nature of yearly requests for Indigenous peoples’ media commentary on the date, stating:

It's a role we've sought, and one we've demanded—Blak voices discussing national issues, with our perspectives as centred as the viewpoints of the status quo. But with this responsibility (for myself and for other Blak writers) comes an annual trauma rehashed again and again.

The function of our hot-takes can feel like we've been press-ganged into the provision of false balance, co-opted to confer a semblance of self-awareness to the overall celebratory spectacle.

The combination of this “annual trauma” and being “press-ganged” and “co-opted” into mainstream media publications’ attempts to strike a “balance” in coverage of January 26 speaks to the direct harms of the ‘debate’ framing to Indigenous commentators whose epistemic labour is repeatedly sought about the date. However, Latimore (2020) also notes the importance of providing this commentary, given the role is one that Indigenous people have “sought” and “demanded” *because* of the status quo marginalisation of “Blak voices on national issues.” Latimore’s piece narrates the complexity of navigating expressions of settler entitlement to Indigenous peoples’ trauma while denying their political agency, and the significance of weighing into the public discourse around January 26 as an Indigenous commentator for the benefit of one’s own community and the possibility that things might one day be different because of this challenging decision to “engag[e] with the spectacle.”

Ultimately, dominant approaches to naming and framing January 26 in the media data and political statements served to normalise settler attachments to the nation as a white possession. While alternative approaches to the date were entertained with some publications choosing to more readily use names for January 26 emerging out of Indigenous struggle, the terms of the conversation were largely pre-determined through framing political contention over the date as a debate about when to celebrate the nation. However, alongside these normative representations of Indigenous peoples’ concerns about January 26 celebrations were alternative framings of the date in both mainstream (primarily Indigenous-produced) and independent media that privileged critical analyses of Australian nationalism, though these exacted a toll on individual Indigenous commentators.

Conclusion

The Australian state and polity are normatively represented as consensual and natural entities in public discourse. However, for this narrative to be true, it requires the simultaneous representation of Indigeneity as a residual, apolitical category. The persistence of settler claims to sovereignty relies in part on the transformation of Australian national identity into a *multicultural* identity with an assimilatory impulse that seeks to incorporate Indigenous people into the Australian polity and thus eliminate political contestation. The transformation of Australian nationalism from explicitly racialised/exclusionary to implicitly racialised/inclusionary can be read as part of the shapeshifting nature of settler colonialism. The incorporation of multiculturalism as part of the Australian national imaginary has paralleled the ascendancy of a colonial politics of recognition with respect to Indigenous people. The latter form of recognition is predicated on and presents an artificially restricted horizon of political possibilities for the transformation of Indigenous-settler relations.

As has been shown over the past few chapters, rather than engage with Indigenous peoples' claims to *sovereignty*, the dominant Australian settler tendency is to instead define and position Indigenous *people*. This constitutes part of a process of settler self-indigenisation involving the non-consensual incorporation of Indigenous peoples into the national narrative in a way that grafts colonial settlement onto the deep roots of pre-colonial Indigenous presence. The development of a national identity that is nominally inclusive does not, however, trouble the coloniality of contemporary Australia. In practice, this has meant the silencing or challenging of alternative readings of the day presented by some Indigenous people, as well as mainstream media framing political contestation as a reduced debate over opinion.

The cultivation of positive, possessive investments in an Australian identity and by extension the nation itself is part of an active process of settler colonialism. This may be understood as falling within the ideological dimension of Mills' (1997) racial contract, where the nation is represented as a positive, egalitarian and eternal entity even as it is built on a racial hierarchy. The way that representations of the national community and of January 26 circulate in public discourse provide some insight into the way that political possibility and legitimacy are conceived in the Australian settler state, and by extension how Indigenous sovereignty continues to be bracketed out of the national conversation.

Chapter 8: Theories of Change

“Change the Date has always been synonymous with Change the Nation, but as social media has brought this 80+ year old debate into the mainstream something seemed to have gotten lost in translation over the past few years, which is why many of us have abandoned the #Changethedate hashtag in favour of #Changethenation – to keep the conversation on track with what it has always been about.” – Luke Pearson (2020c), ‘Toxic patriotism is not the answer, change is’, *IndigenousX*, January 25

Introduction

As identified in Chapter 4, belief in the legitimacy of Australian sovereignty is rarely directly expressed in public discourse. It has been argued that this is because of the way that a racial hierarchy of knowledge, operating at the national level but in relation to global white supremacy, presents this authority as self-evident and unquestionable. Australian settler colonialism relies on and is reproduced through narratives of national history and descriptions of Indigenous people that craft the nation as eternal and Indigeneity as a pre- or apolitical category. Considerations of sovereignty in media and political discourse are therefore pushed to the margins of the Australian state, with Indigenous peoples’ political claims firmly designated as a domestic concern. However, ongoing resistance by Indigenous peoples reveals that contested claims to sovereignty persist within and challenge both the imposed boundaries of the Australian settler state and its political authority.

The analysis presented so far indicates that the reproduction of settler colonialism on the one hand and the pursuit of sovereign Indigenous futures outside its confines on the other rely on fundamentally incompatible theories of change. Writing on theories of change, Unanga scholar Eve Tuck (2018) identifies the importance of interrogating assumptions about how change happens as a core part of grappling with resistance against the confines of colonialism. This thesis’ exploration of white possession and settler colonialism’s epistemology of ignorance in relation to January 26 has emphasised a critique of colonial recognition, based on an understanding that pushes to further include Indigenous people *within* the settler state artificially narrow the horizons of possibility for systemic transformation and decolonial justice. Against these restrictions, analyses such as Pearson’s in this chapter’s opening quote

speak to theories of change—and assumptions about the locus of change—that are radically different to marginal inclusion on Australia’s terms.

This chapter presents a provisional sketch of how the operation of whiteness as an epistemological *a priori* in the Australian settler state functions to restrict the realm of possibilities available for transforming Indigenous-settler political relations, using the example of media coverage of January 26. Acknowledging the limitations imposed by white knowing is not to suggest that radical transformation is not possible, but to reveal how white possession at the levels of epistemology and discourse influences the presentation of particular strategies for change and associated visions of the future as natural and desirable, while others are marginalised or undermined. The sedimentation of Australian settler sovereignty as part of a nationalist ‘common sense’ sees it function as an unnamed background to public discourse around January 26, against which Indigenous-led protest actions are both highly visible and selectively represented. This part of the analysis builds on previous exploration of mainstream media’s operation as an agency involved in “the definition of political reality” (S. Hall, 1971, p. 30) and how this influences dominant discourses about Indigenous-settler relations on January 26.

The chapter begins by exploring how meaning is constructed about Indigenous-led resistance events on Australia’s national day to present a set of preferred readings about the nature of the conflict at hand. This leads into an analysis of how framing Invasion Day protests primarily in terms of whether or not to change the date of ‘Australia Day’ artificially reduces the scope of political claims made by some Indigenous activists and commentators to fit within the bounds of a colonial politics of recognition. It is argued that dominant discourses of conservative traditionalism and liberal inclusion both fit into a framework of recognition that deflects from substantial consideration of the radical challenges posed by a number of Indigenous people through or in relation to Invasion Day protests. As will be discussed in the final section of the chapter, these expressions of Indigenous sovereignty and political authority are articulated in opposition to the current political order, demanding justice and accountability from the Australian settler state and making claims on a future beyond settler colonialism.

Mainstream representations of protest

The representation of Indigenous-led public protest actions on January 26 is of central interest to the thesis, given the frequent disjuncture between the substance of political concerns articulated by many Indigenous organisers and the portrayal of demonstrations in mainstream Australian media. Previous chapters have explored some of the background against which Indigenous-led resistance events become visible and meaningful. This has involved analysing how a racialised hierarchy of knowledge is reproduced in mainstream public discourse, resulting in the presentation of a set of dominant meanings about Indigenous people, Australian history, nationalism and the significance of January 26. Building on these insights, this section turns to the question: in what ways are Indigenous-led protests on January 26 made visible, and to what end/s? Answering this begins with an assessment of explanations provided in mainstream media for the purpose of Indigenous-led protests on January 26. The second part of the section turns to media outlets' estimates of the scale of Invasion Day protests. The context within which attendance estimates are presented provides an insight into attempts by different media platforms to shape audience perceptions of broader public support for Invasion Day protests. Finally, this section attends to the ways that conservative media platforms in particular question or seek to undermine the credibility of Indigenous organisers or of Invasion Day protests overall.

Why protest?

Media outlets' inclusion of explanations as to why Indigenous-led protest actions occur on January 26 form a key part of the thesis' exploration of representations of Indigenous-settler political conflict. Mainstream media plays an important role in defining the significance of current events, particularly those which capture experiences not shared by the majority of their audience. In the case of Indigenous-led protests on January 26, mainstream media outlets for the most part presented a shared understanding of the sentiment underpinning resistance actions, described as a response to Australia's celebration of its national day on a date marking the beginning of colonial violence and dispossession. This is demonstrated across a selection of quotes from different media outlets presented in Table 3. However, a closer reading of these quotes indicates that this shared understanding of sentiment is conveyed to audiences within narrative structures that present a variety of preferred meanings depending on the outlet concerned.

Table 3 Reasons for protest

Date	Publication	Author	Title	Quote
January 25, 2020	The Australian	Richard Ferguson	Councils toe the line on Australia Day citizenship ceremonies	A raft of “Invasion Day” protests will still to be held on Australia Day by indigenous activists who say the day represents colonialism and dispossession of Aboriginal people.
January 26, 2020	ABC News	Author unspecified	Invasion Day protests held across nation and in London to challenge Australia Day date	Rallies have been held across the country to oppose the celebration of Australia Day on January 26, which protesters say should be a day of mourning.
January 26, 2020	The Sydney Morning Herald	Jenny Noyes	Australians old and new celebrate renewal, survival	The reconciliation challenge was taken up by more than 10,000 people who gathered in Hyde Park for the Invasion Day rally, then marched along Broadway to the Yabun festival in Victoria Park—where the celebration was of Aboriginal survival after the arrival of British colonists on January 26, and the trauma that followed.
January 26, 2020	The Age	Matt Dennien	Thousands gather to protest Australia Day in Brisbane	Thousands have gathered in central Brisbane calling for an end to Australia Day and mourning the oppression experienced by Indigenous Australians in the 250 years since the arrival of Captain James Cook.
January 26, 2020	The Guardian	Luke Henriques-Gomes	‘Pay the rent’: Invasion Day rallies around Australia protest against 26 January celebrations	Demonstrators met in all Australian capital cities as part of a protest movement that supporters said shows growing dissatisfaction with the national holiday Australia Day, which marks the beginning of British colonialism through the arrival of the first fleet at Sydney Cove in 1788.
January 26, 2020	SBS News	SBS News	Tens of thousands attend ‘Invasion Day’ rallies across Australia	Invasion Day rallies have focused on injustices that Indigenous people continue to suffer and called for the date to be changed from 26 January, which marks the anniversary of the arrival of the First Fleet of British ships into Port Jackson in 1788.

The Australian’s January 25 article, which primarily focused on federal government directives to local councils regarding the appropriate commemoration of January 26, included a brief description of the Invasion Day rallies to be held around the country the following day. Author Richard Ferguson (2020) uses quotation marks around Invasion Day but not ‘Australia Day,’ signalling his/*The Australian*’s endorsement of the latter name and distance from the former. Ferguson also writes that “indigenous activists”—the “i” in lower case, and “activists”

presented as a coded term indicating unreasonable and/or militant individuals— “say the day represents colonialism and dispossession of Aboriginal people.” This wording makes it clear that it is the “indigenous activists” who hold this understanding about the day, rather than Ferguson or, by extension, *The Australian*. No Indigenous speakers were quoted in the article.

The framing presented in *The Australian*’s article can be compared with the article published in *ABC News* on January 26, which also notes that “protestors say” the date should be a “day of mourning” (‘Invasion Day Protests Held across Nation and in London to Challenge Australia Day Date’, 2020). However, the attribution of this perspective in the *ABC* article is qualitatively different to that in *The Australian*. Read in the context of an article which includes coverage of multiple Invasion Day rallies across Australia and solidarity events in London, “protestors say” can be read as informative rather than disparaging. The *ABC*’s brief description is amply supplemented and substantiated through the article’s inclusion of quotes from 8 different Indigenous people who were either involved in organising or participated in rallies or Survival Day events providing their own reflections on the date. Noting that “protestors say [January 26] should be a day of mourning” also demonstrates engagement not just with what the date represents, but what might be done to acknowledge the solemnity of the occasion.

The articles published by *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* can be productively discussed in parallel, given their shared approach to representing the date with sympathetic but vague language that remained equivocal about the agents of colonial violence. In the case of the former, authored by Jenny Noyes (2020), this equivocation appears in the reference to “Aboriginal survival after the arrival of British colonists on January 26, and the trauma that followed.” The latter article, authored by Matt Dennien (2020), similarly refers to protests as “mourning the oppression experienced by Indigenous Australians in the 250 years since the arrival of Captain James Cook.” Both Noyes and Dennien present the harms inflicted on Indigenous people in passive voice and do not make a clear connection between these harms and the processes of colonisation. Additionally, the authors refer to “trauma” and “oppression” respectively, which, while not inaccurate terms to describe both historical and contemporary experiences of Indigenous people in Australia, serve to convey an image of Indigenous victimhood, suggesting that Indigenous people are only *acted upon*, not agents in their own right. Noyes (2020) also describes protestors’ participation in the Sydney Invasion Day rally as taking up the “reconciliation challenge,” a framing which detracts from the urgent calls made at the rally to stop Black deaths in custody and address climate change by restoring Indigenous

land and water governance, and instead presents the event within the scope of respectable political advocacy.

Both the *Guardian* and *SBS News* articles included more progressive representations of the Invasion Day rallies grounded in references to the historical significance of January 26. Reporter for *The Guardian* Luke Henriques-Gomes directly names colonialism and links this to critiques of ‘Australia Day’ celebrations expressed through protest actions. This includes acknowledgement of at least a perceived increase in public support for the protests over time, with Henriques-Gomes (2020) referring to supporters identifying “growing dissatisfaction with the national holiday” and the protests being part of a “movement.” The quote from the *SBS* article uses even stronger language to describe concerns raised at Invasion Day rallies, identifying a shared focus across protests events in amplifying “injustices that Indigenous people continue to suffer” (SBS News, 2020). However, this acknowledgement of the ongoing violence of colonialism is paired with the erroneous suggestion that protest actions presented a unified position on changing the date.

Gauging support

Attendance estimates for Invasion Day rallies were widely reported across mainstream media platforms before, during and briefly after January 26. Of particular interest here are instances where attendance estimates were used as part of broader representations of levels of public support for Indigenous-led protests on January 26. The media data included a number of notable underestimations of protest sizes, which were largely reported in conservative media outlets such as News Corp publications. These were often bolstered by reference to attendance figures on Facebook events for the rallies, despite the fact that there is often a vast difference between these figures and turnout on the day.

The Australian’s January 25 article included in Table 3, for example, reported that “Melbourne’s Invasion Day protest is set to be attended by 5000 people according to Facebook, down on 6300 who clicked attending last year” (Ferguson, 2020). This claim is situated in the middle of sympathetic coverage of new rules issued by the then-Morrison Coalition government that local councils allowed to hold citizenship ceremonies on January 26 were required to hold them on this date. Ferguson (2020) includes extensive commentary on and quotes from then-Acting Immigration Minister Alan Tudge emphasising the importance of

January 26 as a date to consolidate and celebrate Australian nationalism in all its multicultural diversity. Against this, the few sentences describing the Invasion Day rally (with the sentence quoted above presented directly after the event description quoted in Table 3) indicates to the audience that not only are attendance rates relatively low for these events, but that they are *decreasing* in popularity over time. Further, protests are positioned in opposition to the positive and inclusive character of Australian citizenship ceremonies and national celebrations.

Despite Ferguson's prediction of a turnout of around 5000 people at the Melbourne rally, however, a national wrap by *NITV* on January 26 included an estimate of "tens of thousands" by Gomeroi reporter Madeline Hayman-Reber, who provided live updates from the event (Latimore & Fryer, 2020a). This was corroborated by other news outlets including *ABC News*, which also reported "tens of thousands" attending the Melbourne rally in their national round up on January 26 ('Invasion Day Protests Held across Nation and in London to Challenge Australia Day Date', 2020). The inaccuracy of *The Australian's* use of Facebook attendance rates is further underscored by a January 21 article in *The Age* which stated that the 2019 Melbourne Invasion Day rally "attracted as many as 80,000 people, according to organisers," gesturing towards expectations for a significant turnout (Cowie, 2020). Other News Corp publications included similar underestimations of Brisbane rally attendance, with *The Courier Mail* reporting on January 26 that "an estimated 2000 people gathered in the city to protest January 26" (Morgan, 2020), in contrast with the "thousands" reported by *The Age* on January 26 (Dexter, 2020) and "around 5000" reported by *NITV* (Latimore & Fryer, 2020a).

While at least two articles published in *The Australian* on January 27 did end up acknowledging the presence of "tens of thousands" of attendees at the Melbourne rally, these references were directly bracketed by statements undermining the legitimacy of the protests (Baxendale, 2020; Swanton, 2020). In one article, titled "'Pay the rent' protestors label those who question racist", this was presented in the form of critiques of the credibility and moral authority of protest organisers (Baxendale, 2020). The other article, titled 'Australian Open: Proud of my heritage no matter what day it is insists Ash Barty', pitted Australian identity and values against the protests, lauding tennis superstar and Ngarigo woman Ash Barty for not weighing in (Swanton, 2020). These examples speak to a broader trend in conservative media coverage of Indigenous-led protest events on January 26 identified in the media data, which frequently represented protest actions as illegitimate, anti-social and 'un-Australian'.

Credibility

A number of news items made claims about the nature of support attracted by Invasion Day protests or the intentions of protestors and organisers in order to undermine their credibility. This included statements such as those made by conservative Nine Radio host Neil Mitchell, who referenced the Victorian Greens' publicly stated support for the Melbourne rally when discussing the event in an interview with Lidia Thorpe on January 21. While Mitchell (2020a) acknowledges that the event is "getting a lot of traction on social media, thousands of people say they're going," he follows this with the statement that "the Greens are supporting it, Victorian Greens leader Samantha Ratnam sent an email to supporters urging to turn up." This fits into a broader narrative mobilised by commentators on the Nine Radio network and associated programs on *Sky News* which frequently present the Greens at both state and federal levels as politically illegitimate, irrational and incompetent (for example, Murray, 2020; C. Smith, 2020b). In the context of the interview, which focuses on rally organisers' call to 'Pay The Rent', the connection to the Greens is linked to Mitchell's overarching argument that Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance *also* lack credibility and should not be trusted with fundraising. In Mitchell's framing, the protest is illegitimate because it is endorsed by the Greens, and the Greens in turn are illegitimate because they have used their official channels to promote the event.

Similar to Mitchell's reference to the Greens to discredit Invasion Day organising, other media platforms relied on audiences' shared understanding of and orientation towards Indigenous-led protest actions to undermine their credibility without necessarily making direct assessments of the rallies. This was achieved through a range of approaches, including quoting organisers' descriptions of the purpose of various protest actions, drawing on select passages from speeches made during the events, or describing the text of signs held by rally participants to present the aims of these events as self-evidently absurd. This selective presentation was evident in a January 27 article in *The Courier Mail* reporting on the Brisbane Invasion Day rally titled 'Protesters call for end to marking 'invasion''. Author Thomas Morgan (2020) chose to devote the first 110 words of the 224-word article to describing a brief incident at the rally where a man disrupted proceedings before being apprehended by police. This is followed by a note that Victoria Bridge and several major roads were closed off by police to enable the passage of the rally. The latter half of the article covered several speeches at the rally, including quoting Ruby Wharton's statement: "I want this country burnt down to the ground... I don't want Australia to exist anymore in 40 years [sic] time" (Morgan, 2020).

While Morgan (2020) does not present an explicit critique of Wharton’s statement and calls from other speakers “to reject European ‘colonisation,’ saying changing the date of Australia Day did not go far enough,” there are textual cues as to how these assertions should be interpreted. Coverage of messaging at the rally is bracketed by an extended description of the incident at the beginning and a closing sentence where Morgan notes Queensland Police’s assurance that “there were no arrests or significant issues reported through the day.” The emphasis is skewed towards a consideration of public order rather than focused on the content of the protest, with the police presented as implicitly credible sources to reassure the audience. The use of inverted commas around ‘invasion’ in the article’s title and later ‘colonisation’ indicates—as previously discussed regarding the naming of January 26—the distance between the author and publication’s position and that of the protesters. The overall effect is to present the rally as disruptive but ultimately toothless, with claims made by speakers understood to be inherently unreasonable.

Another example of this type of approach appeared in a January 26 *Herald Sun* article titled ‘Australia Day parade and protest kick off across Melbourne’, which included coverage of the Melbourne Invasion Day rally presented after a positive overview of the city’s ‘Australia Day’ parade. In the section describing the Invasion Day rally, authors Sharon McGowan and Alex White (2020) noted that “protesters at the rally held poster [sic] emblazoned with phrases like “F*** Aussie Pride”, “White Australia has a black history” and “There could never really be justice for stolen land”.” Rather than seeking to interview rally organisers, the authors instead included quotes from an unnamed participant, Victorian Greens leader Samantha Ratnam, and federal Greens member for Melbourne Adam Bandt. The authors’ decision to present this particular selection of signs and voices to a known conservative readership indicates an intent to sensationalise and discredit the protest as a ‘far left’ action that should not be taken seriously.

Negative assessments of the credibility of Invasion Day protest events and the extent to which they enjoyed broader public support were, as outlined above, largely presented by conservative media outlets. However, media outlets across the political spectrum were for the most part united in describing the overall rationale for protests as rooted in concerns raised by many Indigenous people about the offence associated with celebrating the nation on January 26. The following section continues this chapter’s investigation into normative representations of Indigenous-led protests on January 26 by looking at different platforms’ characterisations of

the desired effects of these events. This involves a specific focus on contemporary cross-platform media discussion about ‘changing the date’ of ‘Australia Day’.

Changing the date

Discussion about changing the date of ‘Australia Day’ has gained significant traction in Australian public discourse since its emergence through Indigenous activism the mid-2010s. However, as identified by *IndigenousX* founder Luke Pearson in a 2019 article titled ‘Why I no longer support #changethedate,’ this call has been for the most part divorced from associated political concerns raised by Indigenous activists and commentators including Pearson, who intended the message to function as a potential “catalyst for creating a country worthy of celebration.” Instead, and after seeing the hashtag take off online, Pearson (2019) writes that he has “come to the opinion that there are too many people who seem to think that the problem with Australia Day rests solely on the day we celebrate it, not with what we are celebrating.” Rather than being concretely linked to demands for structural change in pursuit of justice and true equity for Indigenous peoples, the term as it currently circulates in public discourse is primarily used to refer to a hollowed-out proposal to simply move the national day away from January 26.

As noted in Chapter 7, the choice to celebrate Australia’s national day on the anniversary of colonial settlement sits uneasily beside claims about the nation’s egalitarian character. The fundamental quality of Australian nationalism as a *settler colonial* nationalism is underscored by this connection, which bears on the way that challenges to the celebration of the nation are received and represented. Attempts to navigate these issues on January 26 are linked to the epistemological hierarchy inherent in settler colonialism itself, which privileges a linear and racialised understanding of modernity alongside a teleological narrative of nationhood. It is worth reiterating these structural concerns when investigating the palatability of framing political conflict on January 26 as primarily being about the date of celebration, considering that the transformation required to create “a country worthy of celebration” (L. Pearson, 2019) is categorically incompatible with Australia’s racial contract. This is not to claim, however, that positions on the date of ‘Australia Day’ are neatly divided between Indigenous people and settlers, or that commentators are all self-consciously engaging in an analysis of the racial contract when expressing support for particular positions. There are Indigenous people who both support and oppose changing the date for a variety of different reasons, some of whose

perspectives will be discussed below. Instead, and as has been the intent across the analysis so far, this section aims to unpack how settler claims to sovereignty function at the level of common sense to shape public discussion about the intent of Indigenous-led protests on January 26, and responses to them. Therefore, this section is not as concerned with the evaluation of proposals for or against changing Australia's national day as with the prominence of this question in media discourse as the issue par excellence on January 26.

Out of the 783 distinct mainstream media items included for quantitative analysis (all item types excluding images), 266 referred to contention over the date of 'Australia Day' directly and 5 made indirect reference to this issue (that is, they included implied references to critiques of 'Australia Day'). Filtering the dataset further, the 341 mainstream media items selected for qualitative analysis included 194 referring to the date of 'Australia Day' as a contentious issue. Discussion about the date appeared across 28 of the 51 opinion pieces in this subset. Engagement with the issue by the audiences of several media platforms was also identified through references to the date debate in 30 out of the 48 collections of letters to the editor included for qualitative analysis. These letters were published in *The Age* (5), *The Sydney Morning Herald* (6), *The Daily Telegraph* (4), *Herald Sun* (6), *The Courier Mail* (5) and *The Australian* (4). Content analysis revealed a range of major and minor themes across discussion about the date of 'Australia Day'. The majority of references were divided between expressions of support for changing the date and expressions of opposition to such a change. Alongside and sometimes overlapping with these major narrative threads were sub-themes including conservative descriptions of the date as divisive and/or a distraction from 'real issues' facing Indigenous people, discussion about changing commemorations of the date, proposals to create a new date for celebration, and discussion about abolishing 'Australia Day' celebrations entirely. These themes and sub-themes are explored below.

The social media uptake of #changethedate identified by Pearson in 2019 appears to have been mirrored in media coverage of January 26, 2020, as indicated by the prevalence of expressions of support to change the date of 'Australia Day' in the data. Calls for the date to be changed and/or descriptions of protest events as being about changing the date were amplified across media outlets from conservative to centre-left (though it should be noted that conservative outlets placed much greater emphasis on resisting a date change even when multiple perspectives were included). The voices of Indigenous and non-Indigenous speakers/writers advocating for a date change were included across a variety of mainstream media items, with

emphasis on the value of a date change as part of resetting or repairing Indigenous-settler relations. This tendency is exemplified in the following article excerpts, the first of which features quotes from non-Indigenous actor Rachel Griffiths included as part of *The Age*'s January 25 coverage of her appointment as a member of the Order of Australia, while the second, featuring Ngunnawal organiser Justine Brown, is taken from *ABC News*' January 26 piece covering nationwide Indigenous-led protests.

Shifting the date from January 26, she adds, "would make a really clear delineation between the arrival of a quite brutal colonial settlement versus our ambitions for ourselves as a country, and it would acknowledge that for our Indigenous people that date is not in any way a day of celebration." (Quinn, 2020)

Justine Brown from the United Ngunnawal Youth Council addressed the crowd, acknowledging the resilience of Indigenous people.

"This is the year that we come together as Australia's first people and non-Indigenous people, as Australians, as we should be," she said.

"We need a day where we feel safe, where non-Indigenous people feel safe to celebrate a nation that's great." ('Invasion Day Protests Held across Nation and in London to Challenge Australia Day Date', 2020)

The quotes in these excerpts are taken from two very different contexts, with Griffiths reflecting on her career and values in an interview about her 'Australia Day' honour, and Brown speaking to a large crowd at a January 26 rally in Canberra. However, they both present similar concerns about January 26, and why, therefore, the date of the national day should be changed. Griffiths and Brown both gesture towards the importance of being able to celebrate the nation but note that this should happen through a shift of the date of 'Australia Day'. This will signal Australia's progress as a nation and create a national celebration that better reflects the concerns of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, who can then celebrate together. However, while Griffiths' perspective on the date is, by virtue of the article's focus, the only one included on the issue, Brown's quotes are presented as part of national coverage of January 26 protests encompassing a diversity of Indigenous people's perspectives, from abolition of the date to the need for reconciliation.

It should be noted that Griffiths' suggestion that Australia's national ambitions can be clearly separated from the process of "brutal colonial settlement" echoes discussion over the previous

chapters about the prevalence of a linear, sequential and compartmentalised approach to Australian history. This allows settlers to express regret over historical wrongdoing without acknowledging the continuity of colonial violence inflicted on Indigenous people: changing the date is presented as a way to draw a clear line between Australia's flawed past and hopeful future. Griffiths also refers to "our Indigenous people," reproducing possessive language that has also been analysed previously, to position herself and those aligned with her position as the ethical and benevolent recognisers of Indigenous suffering while discursively objectifying Indigenous people (Quinn, 2020). Identifying these features of Griffiths' quote is not intended to suggest that Griffiths herself is consciously reproducing the settler state's racial hierarchy, nor that she agrees with it. Instead, it is to note the normalisation of these framings of Indigenous people and of Australian history in public discourse around the national day, even in arguments recognising the inappropriateness of January 26 celebrations.

Other media items included light-hearted expressions of support for changing the date. These were often framed through an acknowledgement of the impact of January 26 celebrations on Indigenous people, but with greater emphasis placed on the benefits of a date change for *settlers*, enabling their participation in leisure activities without the baggage of colonial guilt. In a January 23 opinion piece for *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Chris Dunstan (2020), research director at the Institute for Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology, Sydney, wrote:

January 26 is offensive not only to Indigenous Australians but to millions who want to celebrate shamelessly on our national day. We should change it, but to what?

Dunstan's flippant comparison between the offensiveness of January 26 for Indigenous people (noting the use of "Indigenous Australians" from the lexicon of settler common sense) and for settlers exemplifies the distance Pearson (2019) identifies between the original date change proposal and its current circulation in public discourse. Here, a date change is presented as a means by which settlers can "celebrate shamelessly," suggesting that retaining January 26 as the national day represents the last vestige of colonial shame. Dunstan (2020) quotes a suggestion by Wiradjuri man Roy Ah-See, former chairman of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, to shift the date to the fourth or last Monday in January to enable Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to "celebrate together." This quote functions as a credible Indigenous perspective on the national day to anchor Dunstan's (2020) evaluation of various dates that 'Australia Day' might be moved to without risking the "sacrilege" of losing "our late January public holiday."

A minority of statements included in media coverage of January 26, made almost exclusively by Indigenous people, situated changing the date within a range of reforms required to address structural oppression. For example, Bibbulmun woman and organiser of Perth's Invasion Day rally Corina Abraham-Howard was quoted and paraphrased in a January 26 article in *The Age* stating that:

January 26 was not a time for celebration and changing the date should [sic] form part of a raft of reforms needed to overturn centuries of injustice.

"If Australians refuse to recognise our past, how will we reconcile our future?" she said. (Myles & Pilat, 2020)

Abraham-Howard's quote emphasises the importance of engaging with the nation's past to transform Indigenous-settler relations in the future, and she is paraphrased by authors Cameron Myles and Lauren Pilat on the need for change far beyond simply moving the date of 'Australia Day'. While this is an important acknowledgement of the more expansive aims of the Perth Invasion Day protest, it is followed by the authors stating that "the push to change the date of Australia Day [has] gathered steam across the country," quoting West Coast Eagles football player Nic Naitanui on how "unity is so much more fun" than division and Western Australia Premier Mark McGowan's statement that the date would not be changed (Myles & Pilat, 2020). Therefore, even though the concerns Abraham-Howard identifies are noted in the article, they are subsumed under a far narrower assessment of January 26. Indeed, almost all expressions of support for changing the date directly referenced or were included within coverage that ultimately emphasised the importance of having a national day of celebration, even if the timing required a re-think. Support from public figures for changing the date was widely reported, including through media coverage of social media posts on the issue by actor Chris Hemsworth (referenced across 6 media items) and, as noted previously, West Coast Eagles ruckman Nic Naitanui (referenced across 7 media items).

Changing the date of local celebrations and/or changing the commemoration of January 26 in solidarity with Indigenous people was also widely discussed across the media data, with 12 distinct articles discussing positions taken on the issue by local councils. As mentioned previously, councils were targeted by the federal government in the lead up to January 26, 2020 with the threat that failure to engage in celebratory activities, including holding citizenship ceremonies on the date, would lead to councils being stripped of their right to hold these ceremonies at all. Coverage referring to local councils' positions on January 26 frequently (12

distinct articles) noted the actions taken by Mayor of Sydney's Inner West Darcy Byrne, quoted below in a January 22 article published in *SBS*' 'The Feed' news stream which featured a round-up of councils that had moved 'Australia Day' celebrations.

"There's nothing to be lost here but there is a better and more sombre, more respectful way to mark the day in the inner west," Inner West Mayor Darcy Byrne told SBS News.

"People across Australia are grappling with how that date can be commemorated in a way that includes Aboriginal people and this is a small step forward." (Winter, 2020)

Byrne's statements here indicate a more nuanced perspective on concerns expressed by a range of Indigenous people about January 26, as well as sensitivity to the shift in the non-Indigenous public's opinions on the date as these concerns are increasingly acknowledged. While Byrne uses the language of inclusion, this is deployed in relation to the commemoration rather than celebration of January 26. Author Velvet Winter (2020) notes that the Inner West Council has moved celebratory activities to other dates in the year, and instead encouraged residents to "attend the Aboriginal Yabun Festival." This is echoed across the article, with Winter noting that at the time of writing, the Victorian councils of Darebin, Yarra, Western Australia councils of Moreland and Fremantle, and Tasmania's Flinders Island and Launceston councils had all "taken a stand and changed the date."

The decision to revoke councils' right to hold citizenship ceremonies if they did not conduct them on January 26 provides an interesting insight into the then-Coalition government's conservative approach to nationalism and history. By expressing sympathy with Indigenous people and acting accordingly, councils were prevented from officially welcoming new members of the non-Indigenous polity. Conservative outcry about the actions of local councils featured across 9 News Corp publications—*The Australian* (Chambers, 2020; Ferguson, 2020; Ferguson & Chambers, 2020a, 2020b), *The Daily Telegraph* (Armstrong, 2020; Credlin, 2020; Masanauskas, 2020c), and the *Herald Sun* (Bolt, 2020a; Masanauskas, 2020a)—and one talk radio program on Nine Radio (Mitchell, 2020b), all of which emphasised that 'Australia Day' celebrations and support for Indigenous peoples' contemporary calls for change were fundamentally mutually exclusive. Even when celebrations were retained, with mourning ceremonies acknowledging Indigenous people were included as just one part of the day, conservative commentators critiqued this changed approach as inappropriate, albeit less so than getting rid of the celebrations altogether (Masanauskas, 2020a). In this way, not only were

Indigenous peoples' expressions of mourning and resistance on January 26 delegitimised in their own right, but councils stood to lose their own legitimacy within the architecture of the settler state by virtue of acknowledging and responding to these concerns.

The Australian and other News Corp publications as well as conservative Nine Radio hosts also used allegations of support for a change in the date of 'Australia Day' to indicate that the Australian Labor Party in particular was out of touch with the concerns of 'real' Australian people and at risk of internal fractures. This played out across a series of articles and radio interviews with then-Leader of the Opposition Anthony Albanese, whose perspectives on 'Australia Day' were sought to confirm that he would not advocate for a date change. In a January 23 article in *The Australian* titled 'Anthony Albanese pledges to keep Australia Day on January 26', authors Richard Ferguson and Geoff Chambers (2020a) were finally able to reassure their readers that "after failing to clarify to *The Australian* he supported the January 26 date, Mr Albanese told Sydney's 2GB radio on Thursday morning that he does back the date." While this approach to coverage of January 26 is quite different to the articles discussed earlier quoting Griffiths and Abraham-Howard, it is argued that the *centrality of the date* of 'Australia Day' is similarly emphasised by conservative journalists. Even though the conversation across much of *The Australian's* reporting around January 26 amplifies opposition to changing the date, the issue is still identified as being about *when* the national day should be held. This was echoed more vociferously in a subset of media coverage which presented protestors and their supporters as misguided and lacking focus on the "real issues" faced by Indigenous people, such as in the *Herald Sun* (NT News, 2020; Price, 2020), *The Daily Telegraph* (Tran, 2020), and several programs broadcast on the Nine Radio network (Fordham, 2020; Levy, 2020; Mitchell, 2020c; J. Smith, 2020).

Finally, 18 of the mainstream media items included for qualitative analysis contained references to abolishing 'Australia Day' altogether. Eight of these items were published by *Daily Mail Australia* (AFP, 2020; Barron, 2020; Kelly, 2020; Latiff, 2020; Zaczek, 2020) and *News.com.au* (R. Smith, 2020; 'West Coast Eagles Star Nic Naitanui Calls for Australia Day Move', 2020), with article authors and quoted commentators presenting proposals to abolish the celebrations as self-evidently absurd. A January 24 article in *The Courier Mail* by Wiradjuri journalist Stan Grant (2020a) framed concern about celebrations as misguided and secondary to a re-think of Australia's national identity. Other references, however, presented these calls by some Indigenous protest organisers as a matter of fact within broader discussion of issues

about the date. These references occurred across news items in *ABC* on January 26 (Forrest, 2020; ‘Invasion Day Protests Held across Nation and in London to Challenge Australia Day Date’, 2020), *The Age* on January 21 and 24 (Cowie, 2020; Lanera, 2020), *The Guardian* on January 25 (Wahlquist, 2020), *The Sydney Morning Herald* on January 24 and 26 (Archibald-Binge & Wyman, 2020; Fitzsimmons, 2020), and *SBS* on January 27 (Dinham, 2020). An opinion piece published by *NITV* on January 21 (Huntriss, 2020) and an *NITV* podcast on January 24 (Latimore & Johnston, 2020) both included discussion by Indigenous commentators of the abolition of ‘Australia Day’ that ultimately included either overt or tacit endorsement of the proposal. The following excerpt is taken from the former, authored by Aboriginal educator Belinda Huntriss (2020):

A few years ago I was advocating for #changethedate. I believe the 26th is a reminder of how much culture has been lost, across many nations and within my own family.

The more I learn, about my family, my culture and our history, the more my views on the date shift.

Now I support the movement to abolish the date; to me it seems sadistic to celebrate any date that glorifies a so-called 'advanced civilisation' colonising the nation at the expense of the First peoples.

Huntriss’ opinion piece ‘From Aussie Aussie oi oi on my birthday, to Always Was Always Will Be’, covers her personal journey of finding out about and connecting with her Aboriginal heritage. Her writing includes reflections on reconnection and developing a greater understanding of herself and her family, as well as of Indigenous-settler relations writ large under a system of ongoing colonialism. This ultimately leads her to opposing any celebration of ‘Australia Day’, describing nationalist celebrations as “sadistic” in light of the fact that they glorify settler colonialism and the racial hierarchy it rests upon. This type of in-depth critique of the structural violence of colonialism was exceedingly rare in mainstream media discourse about January 26, with the majority of quotes from Indigenous organisers or commentators including this deeper analysis presented as a small component of broader coverage of the national day, or, alternatively, presented alongside contrasting viewpoints by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Huntriss’ identification of the shift in her own thinking about ‘Australia Day’ from support for the inclusion of Indigenous people through changing the date to advocating for its abolition represents, therefore, a much more expansive vision for transforming the colonial status quo than is commonly amplified in mainstream media.

The ubiquity of commentary on whether or not to change the date of ‘Australia Day’ in media coverage of January 26, 2020 indicates that this debate has become a widely accepted frame through which to discuss political conflict over the national day. The discussion across this section has intended to demonstrate the extent to which public discourse about January 26 has been colonised by an attenuated framing which positions the date of ‘Australia Day’ as the core issue at play in Indigenous peoples’ opposition to nationalist celebrations. However, as noted across the chapter so far, concerns about the date are only one part of a set of political concerns articulated by Indigenous protest organisers and critical commentators around January 26. The following section turns to this broader set of political claims made at and in relation to Indigenous-led protest events on January 26, which both critique nationalist celebrations *and* use the date to fight for systemic change.

Beyond recognition

During the brief period of fieldwork conducted in early 2020, it was clear that organisers of the Brisbane Invasion Day rally located their work on this particular resistance event within an ongoing, collective political analysis of settler colonialism grounded in Indigenous sovereignty. This analysis included a comprehensive critique of the ways that mainstream media and political actors crafted narratives about Indigenous resistance that served to undermine demands for action and accountability regarding ongoing colonial violence. The physical policing experienced by organisers and protestors on the ground was accompanied by a discursive policing in the media space, with discussion of resistance events in mainstream media restricted by the mores of the racial contract. Commentary on the appropriateness of particular kinds political participation, the purpose of and public support for protest actions, and the prevalence of media items locating the core grievance of protestors on January 26 in concerns about the date were all interrogated and challenged by protest organisers. While largely sidelined from mainstream media discourse (with the exception of several *NITV* items), these critiques were extensively explored in a range of alternative media items created by Indigenous speakers or writers.

This final part of the chapter explores critiques articulated by Indigenous activists and commentators of dominant narratives about Indigenous-led resistance events on January 26, with particular attention to perspectives that frame these events as inextricable from broader

considerations of sovereignty. Critical commentary on representations of Invasion Day rallies in the media is explored first, with a focus on refusals of dominant media narratives around changing the date of ‘Australia Day’. Next, the analysis turns to modes of resistance against colonial recognition via the use of mainstream and alternative Indigenous-owned/operated media channels. The section ends with an exploration of references to Indigenous futurity, including through the acknowledgement of responsibilities to both ancestors and future generations. Taken together, these critiques and claims on the future represent alternatives to processes of recognition that maintain the status quo of the racial contract and ensure the reproduction of the Australian settler state. Expressions of Indigenous refusal, resistance and resurgence, rooted as they are in embodied sovereignty, destabilise the foundations of Australian settler nationalism and make possible ways of existing and relating otherwise.

Critiques of representation

Critiques of mainstream media coverage of January 26 protest events and other forms of Indigenous resistance around the date were raised by a number of Indigenous activists and commentators, though the majority of this discussion occurred outside of mainstream media channels. This limited mainstream media exposure mostly occurred via *NITV*, which published several opinion pieces over the data collection period as part of its dedicated coverage of Indigenous peoples’ perspectives in the lead up to January 26. A number of issues identified by Indigenous speakers and writers across *NITV*, alternative and Indigenous-owned media platforms and as obtained through interviews conducted in Brisbane will be discussed below. These include arguments that the protests are not about changing the date of ‘Australia Day’, concerns about the minimisation of support for these events, the prevalence of racist media coverage and/or backlash against positive media coverage of Indigenous resistance, propagandising by the settler state, and the selective platforming of Indigenous voices to push status quo narratives.

A significant issue by raised by Indigenous commentators in relation to coverage of resistance against nationalist celebrations on January 26 was the prevalence of suggestions in mainstream media that changing the date was the primary goal of these actions. While there *were* Indigenous people both involved in organising rallies and approached for comment who supported changing the date, a key concern identified in the data was that mainstream media platforms emphasised calls to change the date at the expense of calls for broader political

transformation. As Dale Ruska stated during his speech at the Brisbane 2020 Invasion Day Rally,

every time I watch the news the night after, Australians make out, oh, the Blacks are all protesting again because they wanna change the day. They wanna change the date of Australia Day. How can the people of a nation that's been established on the basis of lies celebrate the establishment of that nation? (4ZZZ, 2020)

Ruska's statement directly addresses the inaccuracy of mainstream media reporting on Invasion Day protests and identifies the hypocrisy of celebrating a nation founded "on the basis of lies", immediately hereafter referring to the legal fiction of *terra nullius*. This critique, expressed during an Invasion Day rally and in relation to the lack of faithful media coverage of issues actually raised by protestors, was not included or paraphrased in any of the mainstream media data collected for analysis that mentioned the Brisbane rally. Interviewee 3 later commented that organisers had been quite clear in their messaging, as had speakers at the rally, emphasising that "it's not a change the date rally" but was "radical in the sense of, like, 'Abolish Australia.'" They further noted, laughing, that the messaging "can't really be misconstrued, you know?" This discrepancy between the content of rally speeches and their coverage in mainstream media speaks to the power of status quo framings of political conflict on January 26. While the Brisbane rally was widely reported on, this reporting largely failed to convey radical political claims made by speakers about the illegitimacy of the settler state, except when presenting these claims as irrational (Morgan, 2020). Structural critique was bracketed out of mainstream conceptions of newsworthiness, and though reporting varied based on where different outlets, editors and journalists sat on the political spectrum, it was still constrained by a hegemonic consensus on the nature of political reality in Australia.

Some Indigenous speakers and writers in the media data drew attention to the frequent underreporting of numbers of people attending rallies, primarily by conservative media outlets. This was brought up as a topic of discussion by 98.9FM broadcaster Boe Spearim (2020a, 2020b, 2020c) in at least three separate interviews: on January 28 featuring Ruby Wharton, January 29 featuring Jack Latimore, and on February 5 featuring Wirangu Mirning man and NITV journalist Douglas Smith and Kooma man and *National Indigenous Radio Service* journalist Adam Evans. Smith and Evans made the following comments about underreported numbers during the interview:

Smith: “I’d saw a report from you know, I think it was 7 or 10 or one of 'em [Boe: mm], but um, they said 'oh, around 500 people rocked up,' I was just like, 'get out!' *laughs*”

Evans: “Main- mainstream'll play it down 'cause they don't want people to think there's support.” (Spearim, 2020c)

This analysis of both the existence of and reasoning for underreporting maps onto many of the mainstream media representations of Indigenous-led protests on January 26 discussed earlier in the chapter. Smith and Evans identify the role that mainstream media outlets play in undermining the legitimacy of Invasion Day rallies through misrepresenting the level of public support they attract. This exchange also implicitly refers to the power that mainstream media have in conveying preferred meanings about the rallies to the broader Australian population, given that the majority of the country is still primarily exposed to Indigenous resistance events via media coverage.

Luke Pearson also noted that the choice of media platforms to only amplify a select few Indigenous peoples’ voices presented a distorted image of support for systemic change, with outlets tending to choose particular commentators whose positions aligned with the status quo. In a piece published on *IndigenousX* on January 26, Pearson (2020c) stated:

It is not simply a ‘White Australian vs Indigenous peoples’ issue, firstly because there’s lots of people living here who are neither (and has been for some time now), but also because there are millions of non-Indigenous people who support these calls for change and, to be fair to the other side, at least 4 Indigenous people who apparently want everything to stay how it is – probably more but conservative media only ever seems to bring out the same few for some reason.

The previous chapters have included some examples of the selective platforming of Indigenous people whose positions on the national day were aligned with those more broadly aired in conservative publications. This includes News Corp and Nine publications’ frequent quoting of Ken Wyatt, and the privileged position enjoyed by Jacinta Nampijinpa Price on News Corp platforms in particular. In the above quote, Pearson also identifies a settler media tendency to homogenise Indigenous peoples’ political perspectives, such that a select individual is presented as representing the position of all Indigenous people on a particular topic; in this case, structural transformation of the settler colonial status quo. This reductive representation is then paired with a deliberate lack of attention to the number of non-Indigenous people who also support such a transformation.

Relatedly, Interviewee 3 spoke to the broader context of media coverage of January 26, referring to the government's "marketing strategy" around the national day:

And I think... I think the public opinion on that one is changing. Because the government's also ramping up their- their marketing strategy? You know, like "we're a diverse, unified people", you know, like, "we Australians, we have, you know, parts of our history that are dark, but... you know, all in all, we're one"?

These comments build on Pearson's earlier mention of a shift in public opinion on the political claims expressed by some Indigenous people around January 26 about the need to disrupt the settler colonial status quo. Echoing the discussion in Chapter 1 about the relationship between the growth of public relations in Australia and the construction of 'Australia Day', Interviewee 3 refers to a shift to more inclusive promotion of national celebrations as a "marketing strategy." They identify processes of recognition as constituting part of an intentional government approach to extend minor concessions to Indigenous people in an attempt to nullify sovereign challenges to the political consensus. The extent to which non-Indigenous people were susceptible to this inclusive marketing was also addressed by some Indigenous speakers, who noted the importance of active engagement with Indigenous peoples' political struggles.

Challenging complacency

Several Indigenous speakers identified that settlers needed to become actively involved with the political concerns of Indigenous people, requiring critical engagement with their own investments in the settler state. In a January 25 *IndigenousX* piece authored by Luke Pearson, Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance member Meriki Onus was quoted on the group's call to abolish 'Australia Day' and on the importance of paying the rent as part of a broader strategy for meaningful change. Onus' comment ends with the following statement:

We live by principles that don't reinforce the hate that was brought to this country – this movement is about acknowledging that this land is stolen and all that followed from that – and addressing that is not something we should shy away from. (L. Pearson, 2020b)

This quote was included at the end of an article discussing anti-Indigenous online actors who sought to play up conservative characterisations of Invasion Day rallies as 'divisive' in the lead up to January 26. These anonymous individuals pretended to be Indigenous and posted

inflammatory content falsely claiming to be in line with the wishes of rally organisers, including encouraging people to bring weapons and “prepare for violence” (L. Pearson, 2020b). In response to this, Onus’ comment reminds readers of the relationship between online instances of anti-Indigenous violence and the broader structure of settler colonialism by positioning Indigenous organisers’ values against “the hate that was brought to this country.” The reactionary content discussed in the article is then suggested to be part of particular settlers’ violent backlash against reckoning with the truth of colonial dispossession. Rather than “shy[ing] away from” this truth, Onus underscores the need for settlers to engage with it.

The nature of settler engagement with Indigenous resistance also requires a more nuanced assessment of different characterisations of the reasons for protest actions on January 26. This was identified by Ruby Wharton in an interview with Boe Spearim on *98.9FM* on January 28, where Wharton distinguishes between settler support for abolishing versus changing the date of ‘Australia Day’:

Abolishing the date means that they have to start acknowledging their part in it. And by saying 'change the date' they are... dissolving themselves of any responsibility and accountability. They don't want to face the truth. (Spearim, 2020a)

As Wharton identifies, supporting demands to abolish any celebration of the settler colonial state requires that individual settlers begin engaging with how they benefit from the system of domination within which ‘Australia Day’ is normalised. Merely supporting a change of date amounts to settlers denying “any responsibility and accountability,” as this does not require “fac[ing] the truth” of the systemic nature of colonial violence. Wharton speaks to the personal reckoning that settlers must engage in in order to recognise their complicity in upholding the status quo, and thereby begin to be accountable to Indigenous people.

Another important aspect of settler solidarity noted by some Indigenous speakers was the fact that it needed to extend past support on January 26 and instead become a part of settlers’ everyday lives. Lidia Thorpe, speaking at the Melbourne 2020 Invasion Day Rally, told the crowd:

it's what you do every single day, not every 26th of January. It's what you do every single day. And if it wasn't for the allies that we picked up from the last Dawn Service, we wouldn't be able to have these ceremonies. So it's Black and white coming together to sort this out and make this possible. (3CR, 2020)

In this quote, Thorpe reinforces the need for settlers to stand up against racial violence inflicted on Indigenous peoples by the state in a way that is both consistent and relational. By emphasising that “it's what you do every single day” that matters, Thorpe addresses settlers in the crowd and challenges them to show their commitment to justice for Indigenous people by living their solidarity. In doing this, she identifies that the responsibility for transformation should not be solely left to Indigenous people, but instead that it will take “Black and white coming together to sort this out and make this possible”—both the resistance events on January 26, and broader structural change.

Claiming the future

Ultimately, the fight for justice and recognition of Indigenous sovereignty discussed across this section so far point towards aspirations for a future that is no longer restricted by settler colonialism. In the media data, Indigenous peoples' claims on the future made in relation to sovereign resistance against January 26 were not structured by passive hope, but instead reflected a commitment to working collectively towards change. As Shiralee Lawson (2020) put it in her January 20 article for *IndigenousX*,

Let's be on the right side of history and be active in creating a nation that we can all be proud of. We owe it to our Ancestors. We owe it to our Elders. We owe it to ourselves and those that will come after us.

Lawson's call to “be active in creating a nation we can all be proud of” is an encouragement to other Indigenous people to understand their own agency in not just working towards but shaping structural transformation, even if this may not be fully realised in their own lifetimes. She speaks to a multidirectional relational responsibility to both past and future generations, connecting political struggle in the present to a genealogy of resistance against settler colonialism.

This relational discussion of resistance in pursuit of a better future is similar to that expressed by Gamilaraay writer Natalie Cromb (2020) in the January 15 edition of *Koori Mail*. In her opinion piece, Cromb writes about the lead up to January 26 and the pain and promise that the

date brings. She identifies the joy and beauty of seeing Indigenous children thriving and the community work involved in this, stating:

It tells me that the children that are being raised by the communities and are going to pay it forward, as is our kinship and we are going to have generations of children that are strong in community and culture. That these children will continue the work of our ancestors, elders and current generations so there will be no end to our resistance and then – there is only one answer – white Australia will need to change because our resistance will not. (Cromb, 2020)

Cromb's discussion of relational responsibility and sovereign resistance returns to the discussion at the beginning of Chapter 4. She identifies kinship and community as a source of strength and of political education for young Indigenous people. Like Lawson, Cromb gestures towards a future that is not defined by the oppressive structures that they both face in the present day. Finally, despite the settler state's attempts at thwarting Indigenous peoples' political struggles, Cromb asserts that in this fight, Indigenous people will not be the ones to back down.

Conclusion

This chapter has synthesised insights from across the analysis so far to demonstrate how whiteness operates through knowledge and discourse, coalescing in dominant representations of January 26 that preclude a consideration of Indigenous peoples' political claims to sovereignty as part of their resistance against nationalist celebrations. Contemporary Australian nationalism is associated with self-conscious but limited reflection on the national day underpinned by a colonial amnesia that, while far from irresistible, plays a pervasive role in bracketing the field of legitimate political claim-making in Australia. It is argued that this amnesia, or, perhaps more accurately agnosia, is the product of a racial hierarchy of knowledge that facilitated the original act of British colonial possession as well as the establishment of the Australian settler state. Colonial unknowing is reproduced through representations of Australian history that de-link historical violence against Indigenous people from their current conditions of subordination. Active oppression is thus reconfigured as illiberal exclusion inconsistent with the way that the nation sees itself and projects its ambitions into the future.

Across a broad range of conservative as well as notionally progressive mainstream media coverage, contention over January 26 becomes framed in terms of the inclusion of Indigenous peoples. In the case of conservative media, this inclusion is described as having already

occurred, with contemporary claims about oppression or insufficient attention to (historical) injustices against Indigenous people presented as aberrant and the harms of colonisation instead represented as Indigenous deficit. In more progressive coverage, recognition of Indigenous people is often connected to a desire to more clearly establish the legitimacy of Australian identity and nationhood through the selective ownership of colonial violence. Ultimately, recognition by the settler state and polity are still represented as the primary solution to ongoing political struggle by Indigenous people.

Colonial recognition continues to be directly and comprehensively challenged by many Indigenous people, including a number of Invasion Day protest organisers in the media data who expressed alternative visions for the future and resisted the co-option of a hollowed-out call to change the date. The third part of this chapter explored a current of robust critique and political analysis by Indigenous activists and commentators that was largely sidelined or only briefly noted in mainstream media representations of January 26 protests. This included critical commentary on mainstream media, challenges against settler complacency, and making claims on a future not defined by settler colonial violence. The discussion across this chapter of misrepresentation, colonial recognition and ongoing resistance, the culmination of the thesis' analysis overall, is perhaps best summarised in a quote from Bob Weatherall, who during the Brisbane 2020 Invasion Day Rally stated:

I congratulate you for gathering together today in support of Aboriginal people.
Whether you want a change of the date of Invasion Day, I couldn't give a fuck.
I want to see justice in this country. (4ZZZ, 2020)

Always Was, Always Will Be

January 26, 2022, marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy. While Embassy caretakers had spent months preparing for the date, anniversary events were seriously threatened by a coalition of right-wing extremists and anti-vaccination protestors who attempted to take over the site from late December 2021 as part of series of demonstrations against the federal government's COVID-19 pandemic response. This included protestors setting a fire at the entrance of Old Parliament House which was initially erroneously attributed to activists at the Embassy, leading to the Embassy issuing an official statement to denounce the action. Writing about the events in *IndigenousX* on January 7, Wiradjuri and Badu Island educator and activist Lynda-June Coe clearly distinguished between the fear-based organising of these 'Sovereign Citizen'-aligned protestors and the justice-based work of activists fighting against the oppressive settler state. At the core, Coe (2022) took issue with the fact that "'Sovereign Citizens' [were] weaponizing settler privilege inherited from Indigenous dispossession to propel a non-compliance agenda towards mandatory vaccination," noting that the self-sovereignty of these protestors stemmed from unjust British possession of the continent. She contrasted the Indigenous struggle as one fighting for emancipation "from structures of racial violence" with the coalition of "Sovereign Citizens, neo-nazi and conservative groups alike [who] are about maintaining structures of racial power not dismantling it" (Coe, 2022). Despite their promotion of right-wing conspiracy theories about the pandemic, vaccinations and various government figures, these protestors' grievances fundamentally relied on the same architecture of racial hierarchy and white possession enabling the everyday violences of the settler state. After weeks of Embassy caretakers and supporters both Indigenous and non-Indigenous standing their ground, the Australian Capital Territory police began to evict the opposing camp from January 14, 2022. While a disorganised group of protestors remained in the area, the Embassy's three-day 50th anniversary program was eventually able to proceed as planned.

The Aboriginal Tent Embassy continues to stand on the lawns of Old Parliament House as the world's longest-running protest for Indigenous sovereignty and land rights. Despite the physical structure having been forcibly removed on multiple occasions since its establishment, the protest site persists as a reclamation of both public space and attention against the shapeshifting interventions of settler colonial policy and representation. The Embassy's

existence as a living reminder of unceded Indigenous sovereignty speaks to a range of as-yet unrealised political possibilities sitting outside the boundaries of liberal recognition and right-wing destruction. As a site of active resistance, the Embassy also stands apart from static commemorations associated with Australia's British colonial foundations, such as those discussed in the introductory chapter. It speaks to a different approach to history, one that is premised upon multidirectional responsibility to past and future generations. As discussed towards the end of Chapter 8, a critical aspect of ongoing Indigenous resistance involves staking claims on the future from a place of sovereign responsibility in the present, disrupting hegemonic visions of settler futurity based on continued white possession (see also Maddison, 2020).

This thesis has explored the very real processes of liberal recognition working to nullify the political content of Indigenous resistance but has also identified the inability of Australian state and media entities to ever 'complete' the project of settler colonialism. The investigation has been guided by the following research questions:

1. How are Indigenous peoples' claims to sovereignty publicly articulated in relation to January 26?
 - a. How are these claims engaged and represented by Indigenous and alternative media sources, mainstream media and key political figures in Australia?
2. How are settler colonial claims to sovereignty normalised or challenged across these same media and political sources?

By exploring how contested claims to sovereignty are both expressed and represented in contemporary Australian public discourse around January 26, the research has shown that there is an ongoing struggle over meaning in this arena. This struggle primarily occurs between Indigenous activists and commentators engaged in anti-colonial epistemic resistance, and a broad coalition of political elites and the mainstream Australian commentariat. Framing the latter agents as a 'coalition' gestures towards their collective orientation towards upholding the political consensus, despite falling across a spectrum of political sympathies. As shown throughout the analysis, progressive and conservative platforms alike tended to represent Indigenous-led protests against January 26 celebrations within a range of framings that presumed and reproduced the legitimacy of the settler state. Though reactionary conservatism continues to maintain a stronghold in mainstream Australian media, exacerbated by

consolidated media ownership, the research has shown that the language of liberal inclusion is ubiquitous across mainstream media platforms and can be variously mobilised towards both progressive and conservative visions of settler futurity. While there were areas in the mainstream media data where alternative narratives of Australian history and politics broke through, these were often restricted to opinion pieces contributed by Indigenous authors, or to sections of articles which attempted to maintain a balance of opinions between ‘radical’ and ‘moderate’ perspectives. In order to gain a fuller picture of the range of political concerns raised by Indigenous people around January 26, mainstream media data was supplemented with alternative independent media sources that were either Indigenous-owned and operated, or which included contributions or dedicated programming by Indigenous people. Media items created by Indigenous people in independent sources served as a point of comparison, an indication of broader political visions than those covered in mainstream media, and a source of theory to unpack status quo representations of sovereign resistance.

The first half of the thesis’ analysis sought to examine relationships between sovereignty, history and Australia’s national narrative. This began with Chapter 4’s exploration of the relevance of ‘sovereignty’ as both a term and broader concept in relation to contemporary Indigenous-settler political relations. While the relative frequency of the term differed significantly between Indigenous and settler speakers and writers, public discourse around political legitimacy and nationhood indicated that settler commentators frequently made nationalist claims reliant on the implied operation of settler sovereignty, even in the absence of the word itself. Direct claims to sovereignty made by Indigenous speakers, particularly as expressed in alternative media sources, were articulated in defiance of the perceived illegitimacy of the settler state, given its establishment through land theft and genocide. Through exploring the different origins and characteristics associated with Indigenous and settler claims to sovereignty, this chapter laid the foundations for exploring political conflict across the rest of the analysis. Chapters 5 and 6 built on these foundations by attending to the way that settler claims to sovereignty were expressed through distinct approaches to history, temporality, constructions of Indigeneity. The naturalisation of white possession as a background to the stock of shared knowledge making up contemporary Australian common sense was evident in normative approaches to national history, expressed as either ignorance or denial of the violent truths of colonisation. Representations of Indigenous people and of Indigenous-settler relations in public discourse were reliant on and served to reinforce a racial hierarchy of knowledge and settler ownership. This influenced where and how Indigenous

people were discursively positioned in relation to the settler state, with settlers occupying an assumed position of authority over the national narrative.

The latter part of the analysis drew on connections established between sovereignty, history and nationhood to identify how these concepts came to bear on representations of the nation and of Indigenous resistance on January 26, Australia's national day. Chapter 7 focused on the relationships between representations of Australian identity and common sense investments in the nation as a white possession. The shapeshifting nature of settler colonialism is evident in the transformation of dominant constructions of Australian identity from explicitly racialised and exclusionary to implicitly racialised and inclusionary. Mainstream media sources and political elites regularly emphasised Australia's reinvention as a multicultural success story in relation to January 26. This multicultural nationalism was mobilised in some media sources to shore up the credibility of claims about contemporary Australia's post-racial status, while other references used it as a background against which to identify the nation's failures to sufficiently include Indigenous peoples. Towards the end of Chapter 7, the discussion turned to focus on constructions of meaning about January 26 through a struggle over naming and framing the date. This part of the analysis explored the use of the names 'Australia Day', 'Invasion Day', 'Survival Day' and 'Day of Mourning' and associated characterisations of the date's significance, linking together representations of Australian nationalism and implicit claims to settler sovereignty. This was further explored in Chapter 8, which investigated how competing claims to sovereignty mapped onto competing claims on the future. Chapter 8 began by looking at mainstream representations of Indigenous-led resistance events on January 26, and in particular the misrepresentation of protests as primarily being focused on changing the date of the national celebration. This part of the analysis identified how political claims made by Indigenous protestors and commentators calling for an end to colonial violence and the recognition of sovereignty were reduced in mainstream media and political discourse to calls for inclusion. The chapter ended by turning back to critiques made by Indigenous speakers about the misrepresentation of protest actions and political struggle waged in opposition to the settler colonial status quo. This part of the chapter also engaged with statements about the responsibility to continue resisting the colony, finishing by attending to Indigenous peoples' claims on a future not defined or restricted by settler colonialism.

Ultimately, this thesis has argued that whiteness continues to operate as an epistemological *a priori* in mainstream Australian media and political discourse, resulting in the restriction of

political imagination in normative approaches to Indigenous-settler relations. The bracketing out of Indigenous sovereignties as a condition of possibility for Britain's claim of possession over the continent has never been truly disturbed. Instead, the political subordination of Indigenous peoples under settler state authority has become a normalised, unthought feature of contemporary Australian life. This informs dominant representations of Indigenous peoples' expressions of sovereignty and challenges to the political legitimacy of the state. While misrepresentation may not always be maliciously intended, the thesis has argued that racial constructions of Indigenous peoples' political incapacity are fundamental to understanding the largely reductive framings of Indigenous resistance around January 26 as being about changing the date of national celebrations. Without dismantling the racial contract upon which Australia is built, the most radical transformations in Indigenous-settler relations are still restricted within the bounds of colonial recognition. Ongoing resistance by Indigenous peoples against settler colonialism has required constantly thinking, speaking and acting against the grain of Australian common sense. Settlers must increasingly take up this challenge as well, as over time, the inconsistencies between liberal multiculturalism's promise of inclusivity and the forms of justice and accountability called for by Indigenous activists have become increasingly clear. Failing to seriously engage with the demands of Indigenous sovereignty can only be interpreted as one's consent to the terms of the racial contract and to settler colonialism's logic of elimination.

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Appendix A: Participant Observation Checklist

Policing

Approximately how many police?

- Equipment:
- Riot gear?
- Horses?
- Vehicles?
- Assault rifles?
- Pepper spray?
- Any other miscellaneous equipment?

Deployment pattern/s?

Police engagement with protest organisers?

Police engagement with attendees?

Protest Organisation

Approximately how many in key protest organising party?

Key slogans/chants?

Who spoke? Order of speakers? What was raised?

Moments of silence? Why? For how long?

Approximately how many protestors?

Marshals present?

Type of space occupied for protest? Any significant features?

Protest route?

Media Presence

Approximately how many media persons?

Any behaviours of note by media persons, e.g. antagonising organisers or protestors?

Other

Disruptions to protest unrelated to police?

White nationalist presence?

Disruptions caused by protest? (e.g. in Naarm/Birraranga, Invasion Day protest always aims to block/disrupt Australia Day protest in CBD)

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Guide for one-on-one semi-structured interviews with Indigenous people involved in organising protest events.

Themes	Questions/Prompts
Protests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you remember your first protest? • Does your family have a history of being involved in activism and/or protests? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If no, move to next question. ○ If yes, prompt for further detail on family and kin involvement in protests or activism over time. • How did you get involved in organising these events? • What does it mean to you to be politically engaged? • Do you think conventional types of political engagement, e.g. voting, provide enough space to address your political concerns? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why/why not? • What do you think is the significance of public Indigenous protests? • How do you think [insert state] police understand (or not) what Indigenous protests are trying to do? • How do you think the broader public understand (or not) what Indigenous protests are trying to do?
Sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does sovereignty mean to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you think sovereignty is an appropriate word to use here? • How does your understanding of sovereignty relate to your experience organising and attending protests? • Do you think that [insert state] or federal governments understand sovereignty in the same way as you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why/why not? • Do you think media representations of Indigenous protests you have been involved in organising are sufficient/accurate? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why/why not?

Appendix C: Data Included for Qualitative Analysis

Table C 1 Media items included for qualitative analysis

Date	Published By	Parent Company	Source Type	Owner	Genre	Medium Originally Published	Author/Presenter and Program/Source	Title
12/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	Letters to the Editor	Online	Multiple	Australia Day: Integrate the diverse facts of Australia Day
12/1/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	Opinion Piece	Online	Brandon Jack	From the ashes, a new national day to capture our true grit
13/1/20	3CR	3CR	Audio	The Community Radio Federation Ltd.	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Robbie Thorpe	The Black Block
14/1/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	Entertainment News	Online	NITV Staff Writers	NITV presents Always Was, Always Will Be
14/1/20	ABC Radio	ABC	Audio	Australian Government	Arts and Culture	Radio Broadcast	Tom Tilley, RN Breakfast	New play reimagines first moments between First Fleet and Indigenous elders
14/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Megan Gorrey	Sydney's Australia Day events 'solemn' as nation rises from the ashes
15/1/20	Herald Sun (Townsville Bulletin)	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Elisabeth Silvester	JCU history lecturer sheds new light on Captain Cook's first voyage to discover Australia
15/1/20	3CR	3CR	Audio	The Community Radio Federation Ltd.	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Robbie Thorpe	Fire First
15/1/20	The Guardian	The Guardian	Text	Guardian Media Group	Arts and Culture	Online	Steve Meacham	Is a new play about the arrival of the first fleet Australia's answer to 12 Angry Men?

15/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Online	Jacinta Price	Jacinta Price: Changing the date of Australia Day won't change our reality
15/1/20	Herald Sun (Northern Territory News)	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Unspecified	Jacinta price slams Australia Day date debate
15/1/20	Koori Mail	Koori Mail	Text	Bunjum Co-operative, Buyinbin Inc, Kurrachee Co-operative, Bundjalung Tribal Society, Nungera Co-operative	News Article	Print	Unspecified	Sydney Festival invites people to imagine landscape before invasion
15/1/20	Koori Mail	Koori Mail	Text	Bunjum Co-operative, Buyinbin Inc, Kurrachee Co-operative, Bundjalung Tribal Society, Nungera Co-operative	News Article	Print	Unspecified	Mau Power joins with fellow NITV Indigenous performers as NITV reflects on our past
15/1/20	Koori Mail	Koori Mail	Text	Bunjum Co-operative, Buyinbin Inc, Kurrachee Co-operative, Bundjalung Tribal Society, Nungera Co-operative	News Article	Print	Nick Paton	The Original 100 countdown prepares to change the record on January 26
15/1/20	Koori Mail	Koori Mail	Text	Bunjum Co-operative, Buyinbin Inc, Kurrachee Co-operative, Bundjalung Tribal Society, Nungera Co-operative	Arts and Culture	Print	Nick Paton	Proud young rap artist makes his music count

15/1/20	Koori Mail	Koori Mail	Text	Bunjum Co-operative, Buyinbin Inc, Kurrachee Co-operative, Bundjalung Tribal Society, Nungera Co-operative	Opinion Piece	Print	Natalie Cromb	Be inspired by our survival
15/1/20	Koori Mail	Koori Mail	Text	Bunjum Co-operative, Buyinbin Inc, Kurrachee Co-operative, Bundjalung Tribal Society, Nungera Co-operative	Arts and Culture	Print	Unspecified	Unpacking Cook's legacy
16/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	Letters to the Editor	Online	Multiple	My Jewish father found sanctuary in that town
16/1/20	2GB	Nine Radio	Audio	Nine Entertainment	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Mark Levy, The Ray Hadley Morning Show	Jacinta price slams Australia Day date debate ('Bigger issues facing indigenous people than Australia Day debate: Jacinta Price' - web page title)
16/1/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	Opinion Piece	Online	Luke Pearson	OPINION: Invasion Day, Survival Day, or Day of Mourning? All of the above
16/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Arts and Culture	Online	Imogen Reid	Theatrical bridge to a revised view of Australia Day history
17/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	Entertainment News	Online	Chloe-Lee Longhetti	It's offensive': Studio 10's Narelda Jacobs makes an emotional plea to change the date of Australia Day... after Kerri-Anne Kennerley was cleared of any wrongdoing after racist allegations
17/1/20	3CR	3CR	Audio	The Community Radio Federation Ltd.	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Robbie Thorpe	Blak n Deadly

17/1/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	Entertainment News	Online	NITV Staff Writer	Always Was, Always Will Be': powerful documentaries and movie favourites on NITV
17/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	Letters
17/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	Hot Topic
17/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	Letters to the Editor
18/1/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	Letters to the Editor	Online	Nick Roche (Northbridge)	History not on Hockey's side
18/1/20	Weekend Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Editorial	Print	Editor	In grief and crisis, signs of hope and unity emerge
18/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	*Unspecified
18/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	Letters to the Editor
19/1/20	The Sunday Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	Emma Blake	In love and on duty
19/1/20	Sunday Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	Emma Blake	Crisis put into focus
19/1/20	Sunday Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Print	Yvonne Weldon Chairperson MLALC	A time to reflect and pay respect
19/1/20	Sunday Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Print	Gladys Berejiklian	Sharing in the community spirit
19/1/20	Sunday Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	Ava Benny-Morrison, Emma Blake	Time for a nation to say thanks to heroes
19/1/20	Sunday Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Lifestyle News	Print	Patrick Tadros	Sydney spectacular
20/1/20	The Courier Mail (Townsville Bulletin)	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Madura McCormack, Clare Armstrong	Teddi's Barber Gavin Short to peacefully protest Australia Day, one of few to disagree poll shows
20/1/20	Herald Sun (Leader)	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Staff writers	Australia Day 2020: Melburnians from different backgrounds share their perspectives

20/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Charlie Moore	It's not even a debate': Scott Morrison shuts down Sam Armytage over Australia Day question
20/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Candice Jackson	Taking these steps is really important in reparations': Drag queen Courtney Act campaigns to change the date of Australia Day
20/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Rhylea Millar	Calls for date to change for Australia Day
20/1/20	Yahoo! News	Yahoo! News	Text	Apollo Global Management, Verizon Communications	News Article	Online	Olivia Lambert, AAP	Not even a debate': PM shuts down Sunrise host's Australia Day question
20/1/20	ABC News	ABC	Text	Australian Government	Editorial	Online	Unspecified	ABC to focus on generosity of the Australian spirit this Australia Day
20/1/20	IndigenousX	Indigenous X	Text	IndigenousX	Opinion Piece	Online	Shiralee Lawson	Why we need to #ChangeTheNation
20/1/20	NITV Radio	NITV	Audio	Australian Government	News Radio	Radio Broadcast	Bertrand Tungandame	What is Australia Day - and why is it controversial?
20/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Merryl Symons (Hamilton, QLD)	Letters to the Editor
20/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	Clare Armstrong	Australia Day date support
20/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	Clare Armstrong	Support still strong to save the date
20/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Print	Bella d'Abbrera	Celebrate a day of unity
21/1/20	3AW	Nine Radio	Audio	Nine Entertainment	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Neil Mitchell, Mornings with Neil Mitchell	Australia Day protestors urged to bring cash and cards to 'pay the rent' to Aboriginal Australians
21/1/20	3AW	Nine Radio	Audio	Nine Entertainment	Radio Program	Online	Neil Mitchell, Mornings with Neil Mitchell	Australia Day protestors urged to bring cash and cards to 'pay the rent' to Aboriginal Australians
21/1/20	ABC Radio	ABC	Audio	Australian Government	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Michael Cathcart, The Stage Show	The stories we tell about January 26th

21/1/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	Explainer	Online	Luke Pearson, Sophie Verass	10 things you should know about January 26
21/1/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Emily Nicol	What goes into organising a rally?
21/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Zoe Zaczek	Protestors are told to bring cash and cards to give money to Aboriginal groups when they march to protest against Australia Day this weekend
21/1/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	Entertainment News	Online	Ross Turner	We've got to get on!: Wesley Enoch takes stock in 2020
21/1/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	Opinion Piece	Online	Belinda Huntriss	From Aussie Aussie oi oi on my birthday, to Always Was Always Will be
21/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Tom Cowie	Pay the rent!: Invasion Day protestors urged to hand over cash at march
21/1/20	Eureka Street	Eureka Street	Text	Australian Jesuits	Opinion Piece	Online	Andrew Hamilton	Australia Day as a day for humility
21/1/20	ABC News	ABC	Text	Australian Government	Editorial	Online	Unspecified	Australia Day 2020 focuses on generosity of Australian spirit
21/1/20	Yahoo! News	Yahoo! News	Text	Apollo Global Management, Verizon Communications	News Article	Online	Carly Williams, Huffpost Australia	Six Things Indigenous People Want You To Know This Survival Day
21/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Print	Mike O'Connor	My plan to improve IQ of Australia and New Zealand
21/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	Letters to the Editor
22/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Online	Ken Wyatt	Ken Wyatt: Australia Day matters more than ever
22/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Geoff Chambers	Councils warned over Australia Day ceremony snubs

22/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Jackson Barron	Australia Day 2020: New poll reveals only 11 per cent want to change the date - and a HUGE majority say the country has become too PC
22/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Analysis	Online	Chloe Sargeant	The many different dates we've celebrated Australia Day
22/1/20	News.com.au	News.com.au	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Rohan Smith	Organisers of Melbourne Invasion Day Rally want protestors to #paytherent
22/1/20	3CR	3CR	Audio	The Community Radio Federation Ltd.	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Robbie Thorpe	Fire First
22/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Analysis	Online	Sharon Verghis	What if Australia had not been colonised by the British?
22/1/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Keira Jenkins	This country is confused': The Point asks who are we?
22/1/20	National Indigenous Times	National Indigenous Times	Text	Wayne Bergmann and Clinton Wolf	News Article	Online	Rachael Knowles	Cooee Festival to celebrate culture and unity on Jan 26
22/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Velvet Winter	Here's a running list of the councils that have moved Australia Day
22/1/20	Yahoo! News	Yahoo! News	Text	Apollo Global Management, Verizon Communications	News Article	Online	Alicia Vrajlal	Studio 10 Host Narelda Jacobs Asked To Change The Date, But There's More To Her January 26 Story
22/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	Hot Topic
22/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Donald Maclean (Fig Tree Pocket)	Letters
22/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Print	Kevin Donnelly	So woke they are a joke

23/1/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	Letters to the Editor	Online	Multiple	Morrison just adding mirrors to the smoke, with no real action
23/1/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	Opinion Piece	Online	Travis Akbar	Patriotism gets a refresh: First Nations go first Australia Day Parade Adelaide
23/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Richard Ferguson, Geoff Chambers	Anthony Albanese pledges to keep Australia Day on January 26
23/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	Current Affairs	Online	Kylie Walters	Indigenous Studio 10 host Narelda Jacobs felt her 'hands were tied' politically as a news anchor when it came to discussing the Australia Day debate
23/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Matt Collins	Why local custodian won't be celebrating Australia Day
23/1/20	3CR	3CR	Audio	The Community Radio Federation Ltd.	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Robbie Thorpe	AltarNative
23/1/20	The Guardian	The Guardian	Text	Guardian Media Group	Opinion Piece	Online	Boe Spearim	This Invasion Day, I have your playlist sorted
23/1/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	Opinion Piece	Online	Jack Wilkie-Jans	Face masks and flames: What to make of our nation this Australia Day?
23/1/20	The Guardian	The Guardian	Text	Guardian Media Group	News Article	Online	Amy Corderoy	Sydney council refuses to impose Coalition's 'dress code' for Australia Day ceremonies
23/1/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	Lifestyle News	Online	Catriona Stirrat	Australia Day: What's on in Sydney in 2020
23/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Sports News	Online	Unspecified	Star ruckman Nic Natanui calls on WA government to change the date of Australia Day
23/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Nick Baker	Fashion police!: Mayor slams government for citizenship ceremonies dress code

23/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Unspecified	Anthony Albanese says Australia Day should stay on 26 January
23/1/20	ABC News	ABC	Text	Australian Government	Lifestyle News	Online	Unspecified	Australia Day/Invasion Day 2020 events guide for Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Hobart and Darwin
23/1/20	Yahoo! News	Yahoo! News	Text	Apollo Global Management, Verizon Communications	Entertainment News	Online	Gillian Wolski	It's insensitive': Australia Day debate breaks out on I'm A Celebrity
23/1/20	Junkee	Junkee	Text	Junkee Media	News Article	Online	Rachael Conaghan	Anthony Albanese Thinks Australia Day Should Stay On January 26
23/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	Letters to the Editor
23/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Unspecified	Victoria's mixed Australia Day emotions
23/1/20	2GB	Nine Radio	Audio	Nine Entertainment	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Chris Smith	Albo backs Australia Day, calling for Aussies to unite
23/1/20	3KND	3KND	Audio	First Australians Media Enterprises Aboriginal Corporation	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Samantha Alexis, Balit Dhumba	"How do we come back from this?"- Sue-Anne Hunter
23/1/20	3KND	3KND	Text	First Australians Media Enterprises Aboriginal Corporation	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Samantha Alexis, Balit Dhumba	"How do we come back from this?"- Sue-Anne Hunter
23/1/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	Opinion Piece	Online	Chris Dunstan	Why we should change Australia Day... to the fourth Friday in January

23/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Natassia Chrysanthos, Janek Drevikovsky	What are we celebrating?: New Australia Day campaign highlights 'raw' and 'painful' past
24/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Online	Doug Hurst (Chapman, ACT), Thomas Carrie (Summer Hill, NSW)	Australia Day is an occasion to celebrate our great achievements
24/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Online	Raff Ciccone (ALP Senator, VIC)	Raff Ciccone: Australia Day is a delicious mix of cultures
24/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Simon Orchard	Voyage to revisit James Cook's arrival
24/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Online	Angela Shanahan	No welcome mat laid out for early European arrivals
24/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	John Masanauskas	Big bill for 'mourning'
24/1/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	Letters to the Editor	Online	Multiple	Unsustainable arguments of deniers beyond belief
24/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Adam McCleery	A dark day for indigenous Australians': AFL superstar Nic Naitanui throws his support behind changing the date of Australia Day with a heartfelt message
24/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Online	Matt Collins	Australia Day: A reminder of how ignorant we are
24/1/20	98.9FM	98.9FM	Audio	Brisbane Indigenous Media Association, Inc	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Dan Rennie, Jamie Dunn, The Breakfast Show	Invasion Day
24/1/20	3AW	Nine Radio	Audio	Nine Entertainment	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Neil Mitchell, Mornings with Neil Mitchell	Cr Dick Gross defends the mourning ceremonies held on Australia Day
24/1/20	3AW	Nine Radio	Text	Nine Entertainment	Radio Program	Online	Neil Mitchell, Mornings with Neil Mitchell	City of Port Phillip holds mourning day ceremony on Australia Day

24/1/20	3CR	3CR	Audio	The Community Radio Federation Ltd.	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Robbie Thorpe	Long discussion with Robert and Selina Eggington about 26th January, sovereignty, significance of 2020, 250 years
24/1/20	7News	7News	Text	Seven West Media	News Article	Online	Abi Moustafa	Double Demerits roll out over Australia Day weekend: Here's what you need to know.
24/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	Opinion Piece	Online	Dr Peter Catt	We need to talk about a better National Day for Australia
24/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Charlie Coë	Inner-city council to spends \$20,000 of ratepayers' money on one-hour 'mourning ceremony' on Australia Day
24/1/20	4BC	Nine Radio	Audio	Nine Entertainment	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Ben Fordham, Ben Fordham Live	Australia Day debate: Jake Duke
24/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Lifestyle News	Online	Shoba Rao	Lamington hot cross buns, chips, muffins and milkshakes: What's popular this Australia Day
24/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	Entertainment News	Online	Demeter Stamell	I'm A Celebrity stars clash over the ongoing debate around changing the date of Australia Day - as Miguel Maestre insists he 'doesn't understand the problem'
24/1/20	News.com.au	News.com.au	Text	News Corp Australia	Sports News	Online	Unspecified	West Coast Eagles star Nic Naitanui calls for Australia Day move
24/1/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Ella Archibald-Binge, Rhett Wyman	Struggle and survival: Three Aboriginal perspectives on Australia Day
24/1/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	Editorial	Online	The Herald Editorial Team	Indigenous history must be at centre of Australia Day
24/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	Editorial	Online	The Age Editorial Team	Indigenous history must be at centre of Australia Day

24/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	Lifestyle News	Online	Emilio Lanera	Australia Day 2020: What's open, what's closed and what's on in Melbourne
24/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	John Masanauskas	Migrants happy to fly the flag
24/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Rob Harris	Not when, it's how: Ken Wyatt says Australia Day about truth-telling
24/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Online	Geoffrey Blainey	An epic Endeavour, a vexed debate about Captain Cook voyage
24/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Arts and Culture	Online	Stan Grant	Stan Grant's book Australia Day explores identity politics
24/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Miki Perkins	Mourning Australia Day on the banks of Lake 'Go Away'
24/1/20	Sky News	Sky News	Audio	News Corp Australia	Opinion Program	Online	Chris Smith	Inside the News - Sky News
24/1/20	SBS News Language	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Unspecified	Lidia Thorpe announces Invasion Day 2020 under the banner of 'Pay the Rent'
24/1/20	SBS News Language	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Ruchika Talwar	This family supported me during my worst times,' says Australian Punjabi adopted by an Aboriginal family
24/1/20	SBS News Language	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Unspecified	To mark Australia Day, this chef 'messed with' a Lebanese classic to magnificent effect
24/1/20	SBS News Language	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Mosiqi Acharya	Scott Morrison calls Australia-India relationship a 'gehri dosti' as both countries celebrate their National Day
24/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Analysis	Online	Unspecified	Captain Cook never circumnavigated Australia, but in 1802 this Indigenous Australian did.
24/1/20	National Indigenous Times	National Indigenous Times	Text	Wayne Bergmann and Clinton Wolf	Opinion Piece	Online	Sharnae Watson	OPINION: If we want to unify as a country, we will have to change the date

24/1/20	National Indigenous Times	National Indigenous Times	Text	Wayne Bergmann and Clinton Wolf	News Article	Online	Rachael Knowles	Yabun Festival looks toward Australia's future
24/1/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Ella Archibald-Binge, Rhett Wyman	Mourning in Moree: Why one community can't celebrate on Australia Day
24/1/20	Yahoo! News	Yahoo! News	Text	Apollo Global Management, Verizon Communications	Lifestyle News	Online	Carly Williams, Huffpost Australia	Here's Where To Buy Indigenous This Survival Day
24/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Neil Hunter (Morley, WA)	Last Post, January 24
24/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	Richard Ferguson, Geoff Chambers	Albanese supports Australia Day date
24/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Richard K. Tiainen (Holland Park West)	Letters
24/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	Unspecified	Change the date, says Nic Nat
24/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Print	Nicholas Reece	Weekend will show Australia at its very best
24/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	John Masanauskas	Mourning has spoken
24/1/20	NITV Podcast	NITV	Audio	Australian Government	Podcast	Online	Jack Latimore, Rae Johnston, Take It Blak	Take It Blak podcast - EPISODE 1 January 26
24/1/20	3AW	Nine Radio	Audio	Nine Entertainment	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Neil Mitchell, Mornings with Neil Mitchell	Indigenous woman Felicia Morgan's lengthy discussion with Neil Mitchell
24/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Online	Multiple	Letters: Australia Day celebrations meant to be shared
25/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Online	Brian Sanaghan (West Preston, Vic), Claire Jolliffe (Buderim, Qld)	A chance to be free and to socialise with family, friends and neighbours
25/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Online	Bo Wharton (Fannie Bay, NT)	Last Post, January 25

25/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Editorial	Online	The Australian Editorial	Optimism, determination at heart of national day
25/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Online	Unspecified	A day to reflect on the heroism and heartbreak of bushfires
25/1/20	Weekend Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	Paige Taylor, Richard Ferguson	Push for statues of 'first discoverers'
25/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Colin Brinsden	Keep Aust Day date, tell the truth: Wyatt
25/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Unspecified	Parade to mark Australia Day in Adelaide
25/1/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	Opinion Piece	Online	Adam Joseph	Here's a date that Governor Phillip and Bennelong might call Australia Day
25/1/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	Letters to the Editor	Online	Multiple	Pair did what polities would not
25/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	Advice Column	Online	Danny Katz	I haven't perfected 'I Still Call Australia Home' on the piano after three decades. Should I quit?
25/1/20	9News	9News	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	AAP	Patriotism not about feeling superior: MP
25/1/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	Opinion Piece	Online	Jack Latimore	The January 26 culture industry demands a toll from Blak bodies
25/1/20	ABC News	ABC	Text	Australian Government	News Analysis	Online	Isabella Higgins, Sarah Collard	Australia Day: January 26 marks a massacre in NSW. Will a cement plaque really help?

25/1/20	The Guardian	The Guardian	Text	Guardian Media Group	Lifestyle News	Online	Calla Wahlquist	Invasion Day 2020: where you can find this year's marches and rallies
25/1/20	ABC Radio	ABC	Audio	Australian Government	News Radio	Radio Broadcast	Libbi Gorr, This Weekend Life	This Australia Day dawn ceremonies helping Australia come together
25/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Entertainment News	Online	Kimberley Allsopp	Gumnut Babies, Gallipoli and reconsidering racism: Essential Aussie reading for 2020
25/1/20	ABC Radio	ABC	Audio	Australian Government	News Radio	Radio Broadcast	Isabella Higgins, AM	Town divided over January 26 massacre
25/1/20	News.com.au	News.com.au	Text	News Corp Australia	Explainer	Online	Charis Chang	Debunking the myth of Australia Day
25/1/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	Entertainment News	Online	Emily Nicol	Mau Power on culture and survival
25/1/20	The Guardian	The Guardian	Text	Guardian Media Group	News Article	Online	Australian Associated Press	Ken Wyatt says Australia Day should stay on 26 January
25/1/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Douglas Smith	Sam Watson the fifth to march for his grandfather this Jan 26th
25/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Richard Ferguson	Councils toe the line on Australia Day citizenship ceremonies
25/1/20	Herald Sun (Stellar Magazine)	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Online	Jesinta Franklin	Jesinta Franklin: 'Why I won't celebrate Australia Day'
25/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	Entertainment News	Online	Karl Quinn	A great debt to my nation': Rachel Griffiths receives Australia Day honour
25/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Tom Place	Labor MP Tanya Plibersek is slammed by her own supporters for saying schoolkids should pledge loyalty to Australia
25/1/20	ABC News	ABC	Text	Australian Government	News Analysis	Online	Matt Bamford	Sydney's Yabun Festival celebrates Aboriginal survival and resilience on a difficult day
25/1/20	IndigenousX	Indigenous X	Text	IndigenousX	Opinion Piece	Online	Luke Pearson	More racists pretending to be Aboriginal online

25/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	SBS News	Tanya Plibersek calls for Australian children to take pledge of allegiance
25/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Rosemary Bolger	Migrants embrace Australia Day celebrations in their new home
25/1/20	Junkee	Junkee	Text	Junkee Media	Lifestyle News	Online	Rachael Conaghan	All The Invasion Day Protests Happening Around Australia
25/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Editorial	Print	Natalie Gregg	Editor's note
25/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	News Analysis	Print	Peter Michael	The old man and the seafarer
25/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Claire Jolliffe (Buderim)	Letter of the Day
25/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Editorial	Print	Unspecified	We're all in it, together
25/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Editorial	Print	Unspecified	Celebrate our diverse nation
25/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Print	Philip Le Liu	Time to be twice as happy
25/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	Nothing to be ashamed of
25/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	Hot topic
25/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Steve (Lakes Entrance), Dan (Glen Iris)	Text talk
25/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Print	Joanne Tran	Young people don't know what they're missing on Australia Day
25/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	Letters to the Editor
25/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Unspecified	Australia Day a time for unity: Morrison

25/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Dominica Sanda	Aust Day comes at 'difficult time' for NSW
25/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Greg Roberts	Top End ute convoy, fun runs for Aust Day
25/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Paul Osborne	Australia Day focus on fires, indigenous
26/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Victoria Laurie	Most don't want new Australia Day date, says Ken Wyatt
26/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Richard Ferguson, Adeshola Ore	Australia Day: Fireys symbolise what makes us great
26/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Greg Brown, Victoria Laurie	Tanya Plibersek's patriot pledge sparks anger
26/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Rebecca Urban	Research grants to 'break the cycle of Australia Day antagonism': Dan Tehan
26/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Nicholas McElroy	Thousands turn out to Qld Invasion Day
26/1/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Caitlin Fitzsimmons	People are listening a lot more': why Dan Sultan likes to work on Australia Day

26/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	Opinion Piece	Online	Scott Morrison	Celebrate Australia's strong and open heart
26/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	Opinion Piece	Online	Jane Caro	In praise of noisy Australians
26/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	Letters to the Editor	Online	Multiple	Acknowledge the past and celebrate the triumphs
26/1/20	4BC	Nine Radio	Audio	Nine Entertainment	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Luke Grant	Australia Overnight
26/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	Editorial	Online	The Age Editorial Team	A day to reflect on blessings and duties
26/1/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	Editorial	Online	The Herald Editorial Team	A day to reflect on blessings and duties
26/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	Opinion Piece	Online	Anthony Albanese	Adversity brings out the best in us
26/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Australian Associated Press	Enshrine indigenous 'voice': Albanese
26/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Online	Andrew Bolt	Australia Day: have we had peak anti-Australia?
26/1/20	The Courier Mail (Quest Newspapers)	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Judith Kerr	We asked four different Aussies what Australia Day means to them
26/1/20	The Guardian	The Guardian	Text	Guardian Media Group	Opinion Piece	Online	Paul Daley	Australia is despairing this Invasion Day - fire and carbon are what we should be reflecting on
26/1/20	The Guardian	The Guardian	Text	Guardian Media Group	Opinion Piece	Online	Greg Jericho	If you love Australia, climate change should scare the hell out of you
26/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Online	Andrew Bolt	Australia Day: Have we been burned enough for the haters
26/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Stephen Gibbs	Why the road to reconciliation is so tortured: How Captain Cook SHOT an Aborigine from a boat before he'd even set foot on Australian soil - and it's not even taught in schools
26/1/20	News.com.au	News.com.au	Text	News Corp Australia	Explainer	Online	Charis Chang	The real significance of Australia Day

26/1/20	News.com.au	News.com.au	Text	News Corp Australia	Lifestyle News	Online	Shireen Khalil	10 facts you might not know about Australia Day
26/1/20	Daily Telegraph (The Sunday Telegraph)	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Online	Scott Morrison	Scott Morrison pays tribute to volunteer fireys on Australia Day
26/1/20	News.com.au	News.com.au	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Online	Gary Nunn	Why some still find 'Happy Australia Day' offensive
26/1/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Jack Latimore, Brooke Fryer	January 26: National wrap
26/1/20	9News	9News	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	9News	Australia Day celebrations divide public
26/1/20	Herald Sun (Geelong Advertiser)	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Harrison Tippet	Geelong traditional owners decline invitation to participate in Australia Day citizenship ceremony
26/1/20	7News	7News	Text	Seven West Media	News Article	Online	Lucy Mae Beers	Australia Day 2020 celebrations start across the country
26/1/20	2GB, 4BC	Nine Radio	Audio	Nine Entertainment	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Chris Smith	The Chris Smith Show
26/1/20	3CR	3CR	Audio	The Community Radio Federation Ltd.	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Multiple	Invasion Day 2020
26/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Australian Associated Press	Hundreds of activists gather at dawn to hold 'Invasion Day' rallies in protest of Australia Day - while calling for the date to be changed
26/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Nic White	Royal Family wishes Australians a happy Australia Day while paying tribute to the 'strength and resilience' of the country amid the devastating bushfire crisis
26/1/20	ABC Radio	ABC	Audio	Australian Government	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Joel Rheinberger, Sundays with Joel Rheinberger	The many dates of Australia Day

26/1/20	The Guardian	The Guardian	Text	Guardian Media Group	Arts and Culture	Online	Steve Dow	A Bungul, a procession, an overnight vigil: Sydney finds new rituals to mark day of mourning
26/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	Celebrity News	Online	Caleb Taylor	I have seen my husband well up': Heavily pregnant AFL WAG Jesinta Campbell throws her support behind changing the date of Australia Day... a she reveals why she refuses to celebrate
26/1/20	Herald Sun (news.com.au)	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Celebrity News	Online	Alex Turner-Cohen	Harry and Meghan describe 'the strength and spirit' of Australians this bushfire season
26/1/20	News.com.au	News.com.au	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Online	Corrine Barraclough	Why I'm looking forward to celebrating Australia Day
26/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Matt Dennien	Thousands gather to protest Australia Day in Brisbane
26/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Nic White, AAP	Thousands take to the streets during 'Invasion Day' protests calling for the date of Australia Day to be changed out of respect for Indigenous people - as chaos erupts when a man rushes the stage
26/1/20	7News	7News	Text	Seven West Media	News Article	Online	AAP	Victoria has Invasion Day dawn service on Australia Day
26/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Daily Mail Australia	How 'Happy Australia Day' became an offensive term: Aboriginal advocates claim 'ignorant gesture' should be BANNED
26/1/20	Herald Sun (News Corp Australia Network)	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Celebrity News	Online	Staff reporter	Australia Day 2020: Prince Harry, Prince William post moving tributes on Instagram
26/1/20	4ZZZ	4ZZZ	Audio	Creative Broadcasters Ltd	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Kristy Lee, Michelle, Tab	Indigi-Briz

26/1/20	2GB, 4BC	Nine Radio	Audio	Nine Entertainment	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	John Stanley, Paul B Kidd	The John and Paul Show
26/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Nic White	Thousands escape to the beach to mark Australia Day in bikinis and board shorts while basking in 31C heat - as controversy swirls around them with protests and outrage over award winners
26/1/20	The Guardian	The Guardian	Text	Guardian Media Group	News Article	Online	Paul Karp	Morrison offers medal to firefighters as Albanese warns against 'business as usual' after fires
26/1/20	Herald Sun (Mercury)	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	James Kitto	Hundreds turn out to 'Invasion Day' rally as parliamentarians urge State Government to lead the country in date change
26/1/20	News.com.au	News.com.au	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Adrianna Zappavigna, AAP	Invasion Day 2020: thousands protest on behalf of indigenous peoples
26/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Lidia Kelly, Reuters	Tragedy of bushfires cloud Australia Day celebrations
26/1/20	The Guardian	The Guardian	Text	Guardian Media Group	News Article	Online	Luke Henriques-Gomes	Pay the rent': Invasion Day rallies around Australia protest against 26 January celebrations
26/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Rachael Dexter	Thousands pay tribute to fireys at Australia Day parade
26/1/20	7News	7News	Text	Seven West Media	News Article	Online	AAP	Australia Day 2020: Firefighters honoured, cities celebrate and Invasion Day marked
26/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Sharon McGowan, Alex White	Australia Day parade and protest kick off across Melbourne
26/1/20	ABC Radio	ABC	Audio	Australian Government	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	David Rutledge, The Philosopher's Zone	Uluru and the heart of the liberal state

26/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	AFP	Thousands rally across Australia for 'Invasion Day' protests
26/1/20	The Courier Mail (South-East Advertiser)	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Brian Bennion	Mosque celebrates Australia Day with patriotic Aussie barbecue
26/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Jenny Noyes	Australians old and new celebrate renewal, survival
26/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Kylie Stevens, Nic White	Bizarre moment police arrest a naked protester as tensions boil over at 'Invasion Day' demonstration in the heart of Sydney
26/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Cameron Myles, Lauren Pilat	Skyshow, citizenship ceremonies, a CBD rally: Australia Day in WA
26/1/20	9News	9News	Text	Nine Entertainment	Opinion Piece	Online	Jake Duke	What today's 'Change the date' march means to a young Aboriginal man
26/1/20	The Courier Mail (Townsville Bulletin)	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Elisabeth Silvester	Australia Day Honours List recognises Townsville solicitor William Mitchell with OAM
26/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Eliza McPhee	Prince Harry and Meghan Markle pay tribute to 'the strength of spirit and generosity of community Down Under' as they share a message of support for bushfire-hit communities on Australia Day
26/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Carolyn Webb	It's 'throw another kebab on the barbie' on Australia Day in Footscray
26/1/20	9News	9News	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Olivana Smith Lathouris	Bushfires and Indigenous recognition take centre stage during Australia Day 2020

26/1/20	2GB, 4BC	Nine Radio	Audio	Nine Entertainment	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Reverend Bill Crews	Sunday Night Crews with Bill Crews, Full Show – 26 January
26/1/20	The Courier Mail (South-East Advertiser)	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Unspecified	Humble hero gets top honour at Lord Mayor's Australia Day Awards
26/1/20	ABC Radio	ABC	Audio	Australian Government	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Larissa Behrendt, Speaking Out	Indigenous Australia and Captain Cook: Setting the Agenda for 2020
26/1/20	3AW	Nine Radio	Audio	Nine Entertainment	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Justin Smith	News Nation with Justin Smith, 26th January
26/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Thomas Morgan	Invasion Day rally in Brisbane erupts into chaos as protestor rushes stage
26/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Karen Ruiz	Locals vent their fury as Australian flag is removed from a rural town on January 26 and replaced with an Aboriginal one instead
26/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Rozanna Latiff, Reuters	Tennis-Barty says proud of indigenous heritage after Australia Day win
26/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	Sports News	Online	Anthony Colangelo	It's not for me to decide the date of Australia Day': Barty
26/1/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Deanna Ruseska	I like the freedom': Indian immigrants embrace Australia Day
26/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Finbar O'Mallon	New citizens forgo party for fire donation

26/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Caroline Schelle	Victoria's mixed Australia Day emotions
26/1/20	ABC News	ABC	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Tom Forrest	Indigenous youth in remote Australia share their ideas on #changethedate
26/1/20	ABC News	ABC	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Unspecified	Invasion Day protests held across nation and in London to challenge Australia Day date
26/1/20	ABC News	ABC	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Unspecified	Mallacoota fireys deeply honoured to lead parade as Australia Day celebrated nationwide
26/1/20	ABC News	ABC	Text	Australian Government	Opinion Piece	Online	Stan Grant	On Australia Day, is there a song of our divided nation?
26/1/20	IndigenousX	Indigenous X	Text	IndigenousX	Opinion Piece	Online	Luke Pearson	Toxic patriotism is not the answer, change is
26/1/20	Junkee	Junkee	Text	Junkee Media	Opinion Piece	Online	Matthew Barbeler	Learning About My Heritage Taught Me About The Threads That Bind Australia
26/1/20	Junkee	Junkee	Text	Junkee Media	Opinion Piece	Online	Tabitha Lean	20 Ways You Can Support Indigenous People
26/1/20	9Now	9News	Text	Nine Entertainment	Celebrity News	Online	Today	Ash Barty's message to her young fans: 'Be yourself and live your own dreams'
26/1/20	9 Wide World of Sports	9News	Text	Nine Entertainment	Sports News	Online	Marc Churches	Ash Barty responds to Australia day debate, expresses pride in Indigenous heritage
26/1/20	9Honey	9News	Text	Nine Entertainment	Celebrity News	Online	Claire Knight	Chris Hemsworth speaks out about Australia Day: 'Change the date'
26/1/20	SBS News Language	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Bertrand Tungandame	"2020 Invasion Day Dawn Service marks 250 years of warfare against Aboriginal people." - Lidia Thorpe

26/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Unspecified	Huge honour': firefighters front and centre for Melbourne's Australia Day commemorations
26/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Rosemary Bolger	A night of reflection before sunrise on the day that everything changed
26/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	SBS News	Australia Day a time for unity, amid challenging times: Scott Morrison
26/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Cassandra Bain	Bushfire-hit NSW towns use Australia Day to thank local heroes
26/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Maani Truu	How these Indigenous Australians want you to view 26 January
26/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Nick Baker	Linda Burney says Australia must recognise the historical 'truth' of 26 January
26/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	SBS News	Tens of thousands attend 'Invasion Day' rallies across Australia
26/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	Explainer	Online	Nick Baker	Why 26 January is the most controversial date on the Australian calendar
26/1/20	Yahoo! News	Yahoo! News	Text	Apollo Global Management, Verizon Communications	News Article	Online	Australian Associated Press	Mixed emotions as thousands of protestors take to the streets on Australia Day
26/1/20	Yahoo! News	Yahoo! News	Text	Apollo Global Management, Verizon Communications	News Article	Online	Carly Williams, Huffpost Australia	Invasion Day: Tens Of Thousands Gather Across Australia For Survival Day Marches
26/1/20	NITV	NITV	Audio	Australian Government	Entertainment News	Radio Broadcast	Janice Petersen	My Australia: Wesley Enoch
26/1/20	The Sunday Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Print	Matt Preston	Fare call for Aussies
26/1/20	The Sunday Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	Elise Williams	More calling Oz home
26/1/20	The Sunday Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Editorial	Print	Unspecified	Spirit shines brightest in darkest times

26/1/20	Sunday Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Quiz	Print	Unspecified	GREAT AUSTRALIA DAY QUIZ
26/1/20	Sunday Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Print	David Penberthy	Date with discord will backfire
26/1/20	Sunday Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	50/50
26/1/20	Sunday Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	Republic makes our day
26/1/20	Sunday Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Nudgee (Bundoora), George (Ballan)	Text Talk
26/1/20	Sunday Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Editorial	Print	Herald Sun Editorial Team?	Our great, generous land
26/1/20	Sunday Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Print	Peta Credlin	So much to celebrate
26/1/20	Sunday Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	Letters to the Editor
26/1/20	Sunday Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Print	Linda Burney	A time to both debate and celebrate
26/1/20	Sunday Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Sports News	Print	Jocelyn Airth	Williams calls for Matildas' indigenous inspiration
26/1/20	Sunday Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Lifestyle News	Print	Unspecified	The celebration starts in Sydney
26/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Unspecified	New research grants for Australian history
26/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Dominica Sanda, Ash Witoslawski	NSW's Aust Day 'difficult' following fires

26/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Unspecified	Bushfires front of mind on Australia Day
26/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Michael Ramsey	No consensus for Aust Day date: WA premier
26/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Unspecified	New dates mooted for Australia Day
26/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Ulises Izquierdo	Two takes on a big Aussie day
26/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Dominica Sanda	Aust Day comes at 'difficult time' for NSW
26/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Caroline Schelle	Victoria's mixed Australia Day emotions

26/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Nicholas McElroy	Qld marks Australia Day, Invasion Day
26/1/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Greg Roberts	Two-year-old NT dancers steal the show
27/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Online	Brian Barker (East Brisbane, VIC), Ian Kent (Renmark, SA)	Last Post, January 27
27/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Online	Multiple	Monuments to the First Australians are worth building
27/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Online	Dan Tehan	We need to turn our research eyes toward home much more often
27/1/20	Herald Sun (The Courier Mail)	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Sports News	Online	Mike Colman	Ashleigh Barty evades Australia Day question and political statement
27/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Editorial	Online	The Australian Editorial	Understanding history to break the cycle of ignorance
27/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	Rachel Baxendale	Pay the rent' protesters label those who question racist - AUSTRALIA DAY
27/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	Letters to the Editor	Online	Multiple	An advocate of progress hamstrung by his pact
27/1/20	3AW, 2GB, 4BC	Nine Radio	Audio	Nine Entertainment	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Michael McLaren, Overnight with Michael McLaren	Jim Haynes on Australia Day

27/1/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	Letters to the Editor	Online	Multiple	Celebrate the achievements, recognise the suffering
27/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	Celebrity News	Online	Marta Jary	Why celebrate on a day that marks such pain, sorrow and deep loss?' Chris Hemsworth calls for Australia Day to be moved to a different date
27/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Kylie Stevens	Tennis superstar and 'proud Indigenous woman' Ash Barty joins debate over which date Australia Day should be celebrated
27/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Staff writer	Research grants to 'break the cycle of Australia Day antagonism': Dan Tehan
27/1/20	News.com.au	News.com.au	Text	News Corp Australia	Sports News	Online	Tyson Otto	Ash Barty issues a classy response to 'awkward' Australia Day comment
27/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Sports News	Online	Will Swanton	Australian Open: Proud of my heritage no matter what day it is insists Ash Barty
27/1/20	SBS News	SBS News	Audio	Australian Government	News Radio	Radio Broadcast	Abby Dinham, Evan Young	Indigenous activists protest against 26 January celebrations
27/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Jackson Barron, Kylie Stevens, Adam McCleery	Scandal-hit AFL star accused of using an energy drink to tamper with this urine sample weighs in on the Australia Day debate
27/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Josh Hanrahan	Get rid of your chip off your shoulder': Pauline Hanson's Australia Day message to Aboriginal protestors campaigning for a change of date for the national day
27/1/20	News.com.au	News.com.au	Text	News Corp Australia	Celebrity News	Online	Phoebe Loomes, AFP	Stand together': Chris Hemsworth speaks out on Australia Day

27/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Sports News	Online	Herald Sun	Ash Barty says there was no awkwardness during an interview in which she was asked about Australia Day
27/1/20	NITV	NITV	Audio	Australian Government	News Radio	Radio Broadcast	Biwa Kwan	Australia Day parade celebrates firefighters
27/1/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	Opinion Piece	Online	Travis Akbar	First Nation Elders set the tone for Kaurna Adelaide Aust Day Ceremonies
27/1/20	The Courier Mail (Quest Newspapers)	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Alex Treacy	Media must play a role in promoting Aboriginal faces, pioneering model says
27/1/20	ABC Radio	ABC	Audio	Australian Government	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Patricia Karvelas, RN Drive	Minister for Indigenous Australians reflects on Australia Day
27/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Online	Multiple	Letters: Australia Day opponents promote disunity
27/1/20	SBS News Language	SBS News	Text	Australian Government	News Article	Online	Tia Ardha	Australia Day: More than just sausage sizzle and holiday
27/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Mr T	Letters to the Editor
27/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Editorial	Print	Unspecified	Celebration honours our true-blue spirit
27/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	Danielle O'Neal	SPECIAL DAY IN PARADISE
27/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	Thomas Morgan	Protesters call for end to marking 'invasion'
27/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	Sharon McGowan	AUSTRALIANS FLAG SUPPORT FOR DAY
27/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Print	Tim Blair	Reckless patriot trashes holy Hate Day rituals
27/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Editorial	Print	Unspecified	Most Australian of days
27/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	Mitchell Van Homrigh	Bushfires and date debate cloud celebrations
27/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Print	Jessica McSweeney	HOW IS THAT FOR A SALUTE

28/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Online	Multiple	Most quiet Australians want to keep the national flag
28/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	Letters to the Editor	Online	Multiple	Bettina Arndt's gong is a slap in the face to women
28/1/20	98.9FM	98.9FM	Audio	Brisbane Indigenous Media Association, Inc	Talk Radio	Radio Broadcast	Boe Spearim	Let's Talk
28/1/20	Daily Mail Australia	Daily Mail Australia	Text	Daily Mail and General Trust	News Article	Online	Alana Mazzoni	Accounting firm stirs the pot with post saying workers are forced to fund Australia Day protesters' welfare cheques
28/1/20	News.com.au	News.com.au	Text	News Corp Australia	News Article	Online	Phoebe Loomes, AAP	Nude woman arrested at Australia Day protest in Sydney
28/1/20	National Indigenous Times	National Indigenous Times	Text	Wayne Bergmann and Clinton Wolf	News Article	Online	Hannah Cross	Morrison to commemorate Cook voyage with jumble of white history
28/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Print	Dominic Perrottet	The day they love to hate
28/1/20	Daily Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	Letters to the Editor
29/1/20	The Australian	The Australian	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Online	Kim Carr	Dictating history is not in nation's best interests
29/1/20	98.9FM	98.9FM	Audio	Brisbane Indigenous Media Association, Inc	Talk Radio	Radio Broadcast	Boe Spearim	Let's Talk
29/1/20	3CR	3CR	Audio	The Community Radio Federation Ltd.	Talk Radio	Radio Broadcast	Robbie Thorpe	Fire First
29/1/20	The Age	The Age	Text	Nine Entertainment	News Article	Online	Tom Cowie	Olympian and ex-senator Nova Peris sues Jacinta Price over Studio 10 debate
29/1/20	IndigenousX	Indigenous X	Text	IndigenousX	Opinion Piece	Online	Luke Pearson	How should media outlets handle racist comments?

29/1/20	Koori Mail	Koori Mail	Text	Bunjum Co-operative, Buyinbin Inc, Kurrachee Co- operative, Bundjalung Tribal Society, Nungera Co-operative	News Article	Print	AAP	Mark good and bad, says Wyatt
29/1/20	Koori Mail	Koori Mail	Text	Bunjum Co-operative, Buyinbin Inc, Kurrachee Co- operative, Bundjalung Tribal Society, Nungera Co-operative	News Article	Print	AAP	Stolen artefacts to be welcomed home
29/1/20	Koori Mail	Koori Mail	Text	Bunjum Co-operative, Buyinbin Inc, Kurrachee Co- operative, Bundjalung Tribal Society, Nungera Co-operative	Editorial	Print	Unspecified	Too many kids being locked up
29/1/20	Koori Mail	Koori Mail	Text	Bunjum Co-operative, Buyinbin Inc, Kurrachee Co- operative, Bundjalung Tribal Society, Nungera Co-operative	Opinion Column	Print	Woolombi Waters	It's that time of the year again
29/1/20	Koori Mail	Koori Mail	Text	Bunjum Co-operative, Buyinbin Inc, Kurrachee Co- operative, Bundjalung Tribal Society, Nungera Co-operative	Opinion Piece	Print	Murray George	Time to stand with us against unlawful racial discrimination

29/1/20	Koori Mail	Koori Mail	Text	Bunjum Co-operative, Buyinbin Inc, Kurrachee Co- operative, Bundjalung Tribal Society, Nungera Co-operative	News Article	Print	Nick Paton	Celebration of our cultural resilience
29/1/20	Koori Mail	Koori Mail	Text	Bunjum Co-operative, Buyinbin Inc, Kurrachee Co- operative, Bundjalung Tribal Society, Nungera Co-operative	News Article	Print	Jillian Mundy	No time to celebrate
29/1/20	Koori Mail	Koori Mail	Text	Bunjum Co-operative, Buyinbin Inc, Kurrachee Co- operative, Bundjalung Tribal Society, Nungera Co-operative	News Article	Print	Darren Coyne	Thousands join rally
29/1/20	Koori Mail	Koori Mail	Text	Bunjum Co-operative, Buyinbin Inc, Kurrachee Co- operative, Bundjalung Tribal Society, Nungera Co-operative	News Article	Print	Alf Wilson	Spirits high as rain falls
29/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	Letters
29/1/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Katrina (Ocean Grove), Tik (Wangaratta)	50/50
30/1/20	98.9FM	98.9FM	Audio	Brisbane Indigenous Media Association, Inc	Talk Radio	Radio Broadcast	Boe Spearim	Let's Talk

30/1/20	7News (The Daily Edition)	7News	Text	Seven West Media	Celebrity News	Online	Sarah Carson, Jenny Ky	Samantha Harris admits she still faces racism in the modelling industry
30/1/20	Eureka Street	Eureka Street	Text	Australian Jesuits	Opinion Piece	Online	Celeste Liddle	Why the media downplays Invasion Day
30/1/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Mike Patterson (Malanda)	Letters
31/1/20	3CR	3CR	Audio	The Community Radio Federation Ltd.	Talk Radio	Radio Broadcast	Robbie Thorpe	Blak n Deadly
31/1/20	98.9FM	98.9FM	Audio	Brisbane Indigenous Media Association, Inc	Radio Program	Radio Broadcast	Dr Chelsea Bond, Angelina Hurley	Wild Black Women
2/2/20	The Sydney Morning Herald	The Sydney Morning Herald	Text	Nine Entertainment	Letters to the Editor	Online	Multiple	PM said it all, with what he omitted
2/2/20	Sunday Telegraph	Daily Telegraph	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Multiple	Letters to the Editor
3/2/20	98.9FM	98.9FM	Audio	Brisbane Indigenous Media Association, Inc	Talk Radio	Radio Broadcast	Boe Spearim	Let's Talk
4/2/20	ABC News	ABC	Text	Australian Government	Opinion Piece	Online	Shireen Morris	Opinion Pallid pledge or patriotic poetry? Why Australia needs a unifying national declaration
5/2/20	98.9FM	98.9FM	Audio	Brisbane Indigenous Media Association, Inc	Talk Radio	Radio Broadcast	Boe Spearim	Let's Talk
5/2/20	3CR	3CR	Audio	The Community Radio Federation Ltd.	Talk Radio	Radio Broadcast	Robbie Thorpe	Fire First
5/2/20	AAP	AAP	Text	Nine Entertainment, News Corp Australia, Seven West Media, Australian Community Media	News Article	Online	Ben McKay	Ardern gives Maori platform on Waitangi

6/2/20	3CR	3CR	Audio	The Community Radio Federation Ltd.	Talk Radio	Radio Broadcast	Robbie Thorpe	AltarNative
6/2/20	NITV	NITV	Text	Australian Government	Arts and Culture	Online	Keira Jenkins	Cooked' animation recieves Screen Australia funding
6/2/20	The Guardian	The Guardian	Text	Guardian Media Group	Opinion Piece	Online	Paul Daley	Flinders (and his cat) get statues - so why not the Aboriginal man who sailed with them?
6/2/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Opinion Piece	Print	Ed Gannon	Australia Day ad was more bull than lamb
7/2/20	3CR	3CR	Audio	The Community Radio Federation Ltd.	Talk Radio	Radio Broadcast	Robbie Thorpe	Blak n Deadly
8/2/20	The Courier Mail	The Courier Mail	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Pip Berry (Mount Gravatt East), Les Morisset (Labrador), Susan McLochlan (Caboolture South)	Feedback
8/2/20	Herald Sun	Herald Sun	Text	News Corp Australia	Letters to the Editor	Print	Marion Kuhle (Castlemaine)	50/50

Table C 2 Political statements included for qualitative analysis

Date	Level of Government	Jurisdiction	Issued By	Source Type	Title
20/1/20	Federal	Commonwealth	Office of the Prime Minister of Australia	Interview Transcript	Interview with David Koch and Sam Armytage, Sunrise
21/1/20	State	Queensland	Office of the Premier	Media Release	Bundaberg community to celebrate Australia Day 2020
21/1/20	State	Queensland	Office of the Premier	Media Release	Far North communities to celebrate Australia Day 2020
21/1/20	State	Queensland	Office of the Premier	Media Release	North Queensland communities to celebrate Australia Day 2020
21/1/20	State	Queensland	Office of the Premier	Media Release	Rockhampton community encouraged to celebrate Australia Day 2020
21/1/20	State	Queensland	Office of the Premier	Media Release	Southern Downs communities to celebrate Australia Day 2020
21/1/20	State	Queensland	Office of the Premier	Media Release	Winton communities encouraged to celebrate Australia Day 2020
25/1/20	Federal	Commonwealth	Office of the Prime Minister of Australia	Media Release	Remarks, Australian of the Year Recipients Morning Tea
25/1/20	Federal	Commonwealth	Office of the Prime Minister of Australia	Transcript	Remarks, Traditional Water Blessing Ceremony
25/1/20	Federal	Commonwealth	Office of the Prime Minister of Australia	Speech	Australian of the Year Awards

26/1/20	Federal	Commonwealth	Office of the Prime Minister of Australia	Transcript	Address, National Flag Raising and Citizenship Ceremony
26/1/20	Federal	Commonwealth	Office of the Prime Minister of Australia	Media Release	Morrison Medal to recognise bushfire emergency responders
26/1/20	Federal	Commonwealth	The Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia	Speech	Australia Day 2020 National Address
27/1/20	Federal	Commonwealth	Department of Education, Skills and Employment	Media Release	Research funding for Australian society, history and culture
30/1/20	Federal	Commonwealth	Office of the Treasury	Speech	Address to the Australia India Chamber- Australia Day/India Republic Day 2020 Celebration, Melbourne

