PLATFORMED RACISM: THE ADAM GOODES WAR DANCE AND BOOING CONTROVERSY ON TWITTER, YOUTUBE, AND FACEBOOK

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Abstract

This research interrogates the material politics of social media platforms, and their role in online racism. Platforms have altered how people search, find, and share information, and how social interactions take place online. This new era of user practices, micro-communication cultures, and an increasing algorithmic shaping of sociability, opens up new research endeavours to understand communication as a cultural practice.

While platforms are reluctant to acknowledge that they work as media companies, and present themselves as being 'neutral', they intervene in public discourse through their design, policies, and corporate decisions. This intervention is increasingly under public scrutiny at a time when racist and sexist speech is thriving online.

The entanglement between user practices and platforms in the reinforcement of racism is the focus of my research. Specifically, I argue that this entanglement triggers a new form of social media-articulated racism; I call this 'platformed racism'. Platformed racism is a product of the libertarian ideology that has dominated the development of the internet since its early beginnings (Streeter, 2011), and has a dual meaning: It (1) identifies platforms as tools for amplifying and manufacturing racist discourse, both by means of user appropriations of their affordances, and through their design and algorithmic shaping of sociability; and (2) is enacted by a mode of governance that reproduces inequalities, which is embodied in vague platform policies, their moderation of content, and their often arbitrary enforcement of rules.

The national and medium specificity of platformed racism requires nuanced investigation. As a first step, I examine platformed racism through an Australian race-based controversy: the booing of the Australian Football League Indigenous star Adam Goodes, as mediated by Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Second, by using the multiplatform issue mapping method (Burgess & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016), I focus on popular media practices to understand national 'debates' around race and racism in Australia, and examine how a race-based controversy fuelled the popular culture of the internet.

Making sense of the uses of the Goodes controversy across platforms was only possible by situating these uses within broader literature in the fields of Australian Cultural Studies, and Internet Culture. I found that the entanglement of mischievous user practices and technology, enacted platformed racism. Common social media practices, such as the humorous transformation of media to cloak racism, are a challenge for platform governance (that is, for the different mechanisms and practices that platforms institute to moderate content). However, platformed racism is also enacted by well-intentioned practices, such as 'white solidarity', that have unintended consequences for the inadvertent amplification of racism. Such un-reflexive media practices can be problematic from the perspective of Critical Race and Whiteness Studies since they perpetuate power hierarchies based on race.

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Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this study has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the study contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature: QUT Verified Signature

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> Certainly there are very real differences between us of race, age, and sex. But it is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences, and to examine the distortions which result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behavior and expectation. Audre Lorde, 1984, p. 115

1.1 OVERVIEW

This study aims to critically analyse the shifting dynamics of race and racism when mediated by social media platforms, in the specific Australia context. It also investigates the role of platform business models, infrastructure, and governance in this process of mediation.

When I began thinking about this study in 2015, European politics was experiencing a resurgence of the far right, which pushed anti-immigration, nationalistic, and racist rhetoric from the fringes to the mainstream. In the United States, the victory of Donald Trump in 2016 was fuelled by the so-called ‘alt-right’ – a reactionary movement with strong ties to White supremacy that tactically uses the internet to antagonise opponents and promote its agenda (Marwick & Lewis, 2017; Phillips, 2016).

I come from the Autonomous Community of Catalonia, a northeast region of Spain, with its own Statute of Autonomy and culture. Catalonia’s desire to be recognised as a nation, and its demands for more self-governance have historically been in conflict with Spanish nationalism, which clings to an idea of Spain as a unified nation. The Spanish-Catalan dispute has informed my interest in nationalism, the radicalisation of the political right, the thriving of racism online, and in the imposition of a dominant culture over underrepresented groups.

Since enrolling in a master’s degree in New Media and Digital Culture at the University of Amsterdam in 2013, I have been following various extreme right groups and political parties on different social media platforms, and have personally witnessed the rise of hate speech in these spaces. My MA study examines the Spanish extreme right political parties on Facebook, and analyses the way in which the entanglement of user practices and Facebook’s infrastructure prompts covert discrimination. Drawing from this experience, when I came to Australia to undertake my doctoral studies, I

wished to continue to investigate how hate speech and discriminatory practices manifest online. In 2015, the time when I was determining my study proposal, Indigenous Australian Football League (AFL) star Adam Goodes celebrated a goal against Carlton by performing a war dance. The dance included him mimicking the gesture of throwing a spear in the general direction of the crowd. Although the action was performed during Indigenous Round, an annual celebration of the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in AFL, some perceived it as threatening and offensive. Goodes' war dance triggered a national debate about race and racism, and illustrated the link of whiteness to national identity in Australia; the management of the national space; and the control of racial minorities (Hage, 1998; Moreton-Robinson, 2015). This controversy also brought together many of the issues I was interested in: discriminatory practices; and online hate speech.

As well as a public backlash from Australian conservative media personalities and AFL fans who booed Goodes until he retired, a booing campaign was also orchestrated online and across social media platforms. Delving into this controversy, I became increasingly interested in the idea of whiteness, how it worked in Australia in relation to the Goodes case, and how it manifested on different social media platforms. At the same time, I began to speculate that platforms might actually help to sustain white privilege through their culture, design, and processes. The pervasiveness of whiteness – which intersects with other socio-cultural inflections such as gender, class, sexuality and ability – and its role in online communication, requires unpacking (Brock, 2011; Daniels, 2013). For my part, furthermore, it prompts some necessary self-reflection.

As a first step to the development of this study, I needed to explore how I understand race and racism. I borrowed from Critical Race Theory the idea that racism is not simply bigotry; rather, it is defined as social and institutional power plus race prejudice (Bonilla-Silva, 2009; Feagin, 2006). Combating racism involves a critical analysis of the workings of whiteness as a racial category that still organises much of our social interactions and institutions, and the main purpose of which (intended or unintended) is to secure white privilege (Lipsitz, 2006). Today, racism is built into spaces that go beyond our more traditional institutions (Eddo-Lodge, 2017).

Given the rapid rise of social media as the main coordinators of online sociability and creativity, and their part in a broader networked ecosystem that is shaped by social,

structural, institutional, technical, historical, and cultural factors (van Dijck, 2013), scholars argue that the future of Whiteness Studies "must pay serious attention" to what is happening in these spaces (Daniels, 2013; Nakayama, 2017, p. 69). This study is an answer to this call. The growing accessibility of digital technologies, combined with their widespread use by ordinary people, has centred debates around the extent to which these technologies have a democratic potential, or whether they foster antagonistic practices (Rheingold, 2002). I explore how new institutions (that is, social media platforms), and the everyday practices they mediate, contribute to the production and reproduction of racism.

Platform design and processes, which largely respond to corporate interests, shape user interactions (Bucher & Helmond, 2018; Gerlitz & Helmond, 2013). However, user practices also transform the workings of technologies (Bucher & Helmond, 2018). Accordingly, users' everyday social media practices and their impact on platform features, such as algorithms, are material to the dynamics of race and racism on these spaces. For example, users are increasingly participating on social media through the iterative transformation of visual media – images, animated Graphics Interchange Format images (GIFs), emoji[1] and videos (Highfield & Leaver, 2016; Russmann & Svensson, 2017). Jokes and play around memetic visual media – that is, texts that are continuously remixed and transformed – can work for antagonistic and exclusionary practices (Milner, 2016; Phillips, 2015). Yet users' memetic engagements with visual content for well-intended purposes, such as white performances of solidary, can also indirectly contribute to sustaining racism on social media by perpetuating old racial hierarchies (Engles, 2016). These practices on digital platforms influence how algorithms organise information (Rieder, 2017); this, in turn, can have an impact on the amplification of racism (Noble, 2018). The visual turn, therefore, is an opportunity to understand how race and racism are shifting online (Nakamura, 2008a), a phenomenon to which this study pays particular attention.

In addition, user practices that produce and reproduce racism on social media should be situated within broader national contexts, with their cultural particularities. Based on this premise, I explore the dynamics of race and racism on social media in relation to the Australian race-based Goodes controversy. There are inevitable

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[1] Emoji are small digital images used in online communication.

limitations on my interpretation of the analysis of the dynamics of race and racism on social media in relation to the Goodes case study. This is a result of my own white privilege and/or lack of lived experience of being a member of a community that is subject to white racism. Also, as a European white woman, I inherently benefit from a system of advantage based on race. This race limitation, however, is partially balanced by my outsider position with respect to Australian culture – a position which has allowed me to examine the Goodes controversy from an outsider's perspective.

Despite these limitations, I believe that white researchers should be involved in countering the structural and ordinary nature of racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) by critically interrogating the institutions and everyday practices that contribute to its production and reproduction. In my case, I examine the entanglement of user practices and platforms in the co-creation of racism within the Australian context.

Scope and context

Critical Race Theory, as it developed in the US, focused on how racial hierarchies have been historically constructed to justify exploitative labour relations and slavery. In Australia, these hierarchies have their roots in Indigenous dispossession and land rights (Moreton-Robinson, 2015); however, the roots of racism in white supremacy are common to both countries. In order to investigate the dynamics of racism in Australia, I needed to understand how whiteness has historically manifested in this specific region of the world. Moreton-Robinson (2015) argues that the fact that Australia was settled under the legal fiction of *terra nullius* (no one's land) has heavily influenced the articulation of whiteness within Australian society, which has strong links to hegemonic masculinity and the control of the national space.

In Australia, racism is often seen as a thing of the past, and the nation is popularly imagined as multicultural and diverse (Jayasuriya, Gothard, & Walker, 2003). Yet the racist experiences of Indigenous Australians, racial minorities, and immigrants are mundane and everyday (Bodkin-Andrews & Carlson, 2013; Paradies & Cunningham, 2009). Common racialised stereotypes of Aboriginal people focus on myths of genetic and cultural inferiority, welfare dependency, alcoholism, dysfunctional families, and the traditional 'full-blood' noble savage trope (Dodson, 1994; Mellor, 2003).

The media has traditionally played a crucial role in mediating and reinforcing racism in Australia, and there is a well-established body of research that documents this role (for example, Green & Jacka, 2003; Jakubowicz et al., 1994). However, some of the scholars interested in the topic within the Australian context have recently shifted their focus to the internet, and (specifically) to social media platforms, as sites of political struggle over racial meaning and racism (Jakubowicz et al., 2017). Platforms are entangled in our everyday lives, and bring together interpersonal communication, self-expression, creativity, politics, and the activity of mainstream media (Burgess & Banks, 2014).

Recent Australian race-based controversies exemplify the salient role of platforms as sites of racialised discourse against Indigenous Australians. This case study – the Goodes war dance and its unfolding booing campaign – is an example of this role. People vilified Goodes on Twitter, Facebook, and Wikipedia – to name a few platforms that received mainstream media attention (Quinn & Tran, 2015; Ralph, 2015; Wu, 2015). Some of this abuse was cloaked in humour and play, which are typical features of emergent participatory cultural practices on social media – for example, meme culture (Burgess, 2008; Milner, 2016; Shifman, 2014) – that complicate decisions on where to draw the line on what constitutes acceptable speech on these spaces.

Social media, however, also offers an open window to Indigenous counterpublics who creatively counter Australian racism through their engagements with media (Carlson & Frazer, 2018). For example, in 2016, conservative editorial cartoonist for *The Australian* newspaper Bill Leak published a racist cartoon stereotypically representing Indigenous men as drunk and uncaring towards their children. The cartoon went viral on social media as a result of its perceived racist nature. This was despite the fact that the media, and even the Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, denied any intended racism (Hutchens, 2016). In response to these events, Indigenous Australians organised a social media campaign around the hashtag #IndigenousDads, where they posted pictures of their children showing their pride in Aboriginal fatherhood, and debunked the "discourse of pathology" commonly articulated against Indigenous Australians (Moreton-Robison, 2015, p. 162).

The increasingly important role of social media in mediating racism places platforms under public scrutiny, centred particularly round the inconsistencies in the

application of their policies with respect to cultural difference and hate speech. In April 2015, Facebook banned the trailer for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) comedy show *8MMM* (that attempted to confront white frames on Aboriginality with humour) because it contained an image of two bare-chested women taking part in a traditional ceremony. The platform labelled the video "offensive" and in breach of its nudity policy (Aubusson, 2015). In response, Indigenous activist and writer Celeste Liddle – who has a strong voice and a significant following on social media – posted the video in her Facebook page, with a written message denouncing Facebook's standards. What she did not anticipate was that "malicious people" would repeatedly flag her post until she was (temporarily) locked out of Facebook, and the video removed (Liddle, 2016).

One year later, Liddle gave a keynote address discussing issues of colonialism and Indigenous feminism. The Australian independent online media outlet *New Matilda* published her speech with a similar accompanying image of two Aboriginal women with painted bare chests. After sharing this link in her Facebook page, Liddle received a temporary ban from Facebook for publishing an image of a "sexually explicit nature" in breach of its guidelines (Liddle, 2016). Only when the media reported on the case did Facebook issue a public statement defending its nudity restrictions because some audiences "may be culturally offended" by this type of content, and suggested that users share Liddle's speech without the accompanying image (Ford, 2016).

The incident illustrates the frictions and contradictions that emerge from platform governance when set against competing community norms and cultures. Facebook's removal of the photograph of the two Aboriginal women signalled the platform's lack of understanding of Aboriginal cultural expression, and its tendency to favour liberal (or even libertarian) Western ideals of free speech over the prevention of harmful speech. In other words, platform governance – understood as the policies, affordances, and processes that platforms put in place to moderate content – can be inequitable, unfair, and discriminatory (Gillespie, 2018a). This is sometimes related to vague platform policies (Venturini et al., 2016), and their insufficient, opaque, and inconsistent content moderation mechanisms and processes (Gillespie, 2018a; Roberts, 2016; Suzor, Geelen, & West, 2018; Witt, 2017).

This study deploys an original conceptual and methodological framework to study race and racism on social media platforms. I propose the concept of ‘platformed racism’ as a new form of racism that emerges from the design, technical affordances, business models, governance, and cultures of use of digital media platforms. Platformed racism has a dual meaning. First, it identifies platforms as amplifiers and manufacturers of racist discourse. Second, it describes the modes of platform governance that reproduce (but can also address) social inequalities. Platformed racism is both structural – maintained by the platforms’ technological infrastructures, policies and processes – and ordinary; that is, it is enacted both by mischievous and well-intended practices.

The national and medium specificity of platformed racism requires nuanced investigation. As a first step, to move beyond the US-centric focus on literature around race and racism online (Brock, 2009; Everett, 2009; McIlwain, 2016; Nakamura, 2002; Nakamura & Chow-White, 2012; Noble & Tynes, 2016), I studied platformed racism in relation to the Australian race-based Goodes controversy, as mediated by Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. I chose to examine these major social media platforms (see Table 1) as I was interested in instances of everyday racism, and their manifestations in popular media cultures. This approach complements studies of online racism that often focus on niche digitally mediated spaces: either white supremacy sites (Daniels, 2009); image boards such as 4chan and Reddit (Massanari, 2015; Milner, 2013); or the accounts of far-right groups on major platforms (Ben-David & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016; Puschmann, Ausserhofer, Maan, & Hametner, 2016). I was interested in how race and racism manifested from everyday social media communication on mainstream platforms.

In the last few years, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have modified their policies, implemented more features to moderate abuse, and hired more moderators (Gillespie, 2018a). Nevertheless, they are increasingly under public scrutiny for not doing enough to tackle the rise of hate, harassment, and violence on their platforms (Gillespie, 2018a; Suzor, Geelen & West, 2018).

Table 1: Social media platforms chosen for examination

Platform	Main purpose	Founded	Reported active accounts
Twitter	News and social networking	2006	330 million in 2017
Facebook	Social networking	2004	2 billion monthly active users in June 2017
YouTube	Video sharing	2005	1.5 logged-in monthly users in 2017

As well as applying a conceptual framework to study race and racism on social media platforms, based on the original concept of 'platformed racism' (as discussed above), this study makes a further contribution by developing new digital methods for tracing users' overlapping engagements with media content across platforms (Driscoll & Thorson, 2015). Memetic culture is shaped differently on each platform (Burgess, 2008), and requires nuanced investigation to understand how platformed racism articulates across platforms.

I used the multiplatform issue mapping method (Burgess & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016) to study how the Goodes controversy played out on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook (this is further discussed in Chapter 3). Multiplatform issue mapping, which is informed by controversy analysis and uses digital methods, focuses on digital media objects and the practices around them, as a way to understand how publics are called into being on social media. I tracked digital media objects (posts, images, videos, and ancillary texts) that were shared on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook around the Goodes controversy, and analysed the communicative and social practices associated with them. The aim was to describe in detail the platform-specificity of race and racism in social media contexts, and its implications for platform governance.

This focus on practices around media objects responds to the necessity to acknowledge the role of popular culture – such as images, GIFs, and memes – in the discussion of relevant societal issues such as racism in online communication. In this regard, this research moved beyond the study of news discussions on Twitter (Bruns & Burgess, 2012) and the text-based analysis of racist discourse (Chaudhry, 2015;

Hughey & Daniels, 2013), and focused on platform cultures of use around the creation, circulation, and transformation of media objects. More specifically, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do race and racism manifest through memetic participation on different social media platforms?
2. How do the affordances, policies, and practices of social media platforms play a role in racist dynamics?
3. How did platformed racism unfold on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube in their mediation of the Goodes controversy?
4. What are the implications for better platform governance in relation to platformed racism?

The study's findings show that racialised discourse can be amplified and normalised by the processes and culture of various platforms. At the same time, in this case study, social media provided a window to the creative expression of Indigenous Australians that countered dominant narratives on race. These Indigenous counter-narratives have been crucial to my analysis of the workings of whiteness as an unmarked norm (Dyer, 1997; hooks, 1992) in relation to the Goodes controversy.

1.2 STUDY OUTLINE

In its examination of the Goodes controversy on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook, this study builds a case for the concept of platformed racism. I draw from the areas of Digital Media and Communication and Science and Technology Studies to understand social media user practices and platforms as technologies. I also apply concepts from Critical Race and Whiteness Studies, and Cultural Studies to examine race and racism, and their material implications in everyday digitally mediated interactions. These multiple disciplines provide a set of theoretical concepts useful for understanding the mutually shaping dynamics between people and social media platforms in relation to the articulation of racism; however, my empirical methodology is grounded in Digital Media and Communication Studies.

The following chapters show how platformed racism unfolded on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook as a combination of user practices, platform affordances, and

curation of content. Chapter 2 explains platformed racism as a useful concept for the study of racism within the specific context of social media. It traces scholarship that uses race as a critical lens to study technology, and highlights the need to focus on racism as a structural problem perpetuated and reinforced by digitally mediated spaces. Drawing on literature that uses Critical Race Theory and Whiteness Studies to think about media and the internet, I argue that racism on social media is influenced by a platform's cultural values – which are dependent on platform specific cultures of use such as user practices, their appropriation of platform affordances, and amplification and curation of these platform interactions – and normalised by platform governance processes.

Chapter 3 describes and situates the Goodes case study into the broader historical and cultural context of race and racism in Australia. The chapter also outlines the method used to study platformed racism across platforms, and the multiplatform issue mapping method (Burgess & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016). It also provides further details about the data collection and analysis on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook.

Chapter 4 focuses on the manifestation of race and racism through Twitter uses of the Goodes controversy. It focuses on users' memetic participation on Twitter through the creation, circulation, and reappropriation of visual objects such as images and GIFs. The chapter not only looks at how Twitter data reflects how 'debates' around race and racism manifest in Australia, but also shows how a race-based controversy fuelled the popular culture of the internet, and its implications for platformed racism.

In Chapter 5, I examine users' engagements with the Goodes controversy on YouTube. Users performed racist discourse by engaging in long-running YouTube memes, creating their own videoblog-style videos (vlogs), and appropriating mainstream broadcast media. I focus on how platform-specific cultures – the presence of a well-organised alt-right and white supremacist communities on YouTube – intersected with the articulation of racism in relation to the Goodes controversy on this platform. The difficulty in identifying an Indigenous YouTube 'community' of content creators also influenced the resonance of white frames around this controversy on YouTube.

In Chapter 6, I examine Facebook's specific cultures of use around the Goodes controversy with a special focus on the creation of public Facebook pages as a response to a race-based controversy. The chapter also describes the impact of news sharing,

solidarity, and call-out culture on this platform in relation to the manifestation of racism.

Chapter 7 then harnesses the concept of platformed racism to examine how Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook's social norms, governance mechanisms, and affordances rewarded certain actors and practices, and constrained the participation of others. Platform-specific cultures of use and memetic participation were amplified by platform affordances, which gave further circulation to racist discourse and practices. In turn, memetic participation on social media challenged platform governance processes, which are insufficient to tackle the complex nature of racism online.

Chapter 8 (Conclusion) synthesises the study's findings to discuss those aspects of platformed racism that were shared across platforms, and those that were specific to Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube respectively. Racism across platforms was salient through different modes of memetic participation on social media: the mobilization of the popular culture of the internet; news sharing and public commentary; call-out culture; and solidarity. Based on the findings, the chapter also suggests what 'platformed antiracism' might look like, while also exploring the broader applications of the platformed racism framework.

Chapter 2: Platformed Racism

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The impact of the Internet on racialised identities and practices has been the subject of a complex and ongoing sub-field of research. Early work on race and the Internet points to unequal levels of access as a source of racial inequalities on the web (Hoffman & Novak, 1998). Later, this line of study also emphasises an inbalance in digital literacies and skills (Hargittai, 2011) and algorithmic visibility (Introna & Nissenbaum, 2000) as important factors in digital inequality. From a discursive perspective, the Internet is both an opportunity to perform racial identity (Nakamura, 2002), and a forum to reproduce power relations and hierarchies (Kendall, 1998; McIlwain, 2016) or amplify racism (Daniels, 2009).

Social media platforms, as mediators of the majority of online sociability and creativity (van Dijck, 2013), can be used for both prosocial and antisocial purposes. For example, the movement organised around the hashtag #sosblakaustralia – created in 2015 by Indigenous activists to protest and prevent the closure of Aboriginal remote communities – has found on Twitter and Facebook a space for advocating for the rights of Black people in Australia. However, hate speech and harassment thrive on Twitter, too (Shepherd, Harvey, Jordan, Srauy, & Miltner, 2015), and include racist and sexist abuse (Hardaker & McGlashan, 2016; Sharma, 2013).

In this chapter, I build on the history of scholarship at the intersections of race, culture, and the internet, to propose the concept of 'platformed racism'. Platformed racism is a new type of racism resulting from the libertarian ideology of Silicon Valley-based platforms and the specific cultures of use associated with them. From Critical Race Theory, I borrow the notion that racism is ordinary and structural (Bonilla-Silva, 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Feagin, 2006), and from Science and Technology Studies, the idea that platforms are not neutral but have a "politics" (Gillespie, 2010). Racism online is built into new institutions – platforms with their own norms, logics, and governance (Gillespie, 2018a; van Dijck, 2013), – and enacted through a combination of old and new practices that are platform- and nation-specific.

Scholars interested in race and racism online are increasingly calling for analyses that look at race and racism as the result of user practices and technological mediation (Ben-David & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016; Brook, 2009; Daniels, 2013; McIlwain, 2016; Nakamura & Chow-White, 2012; Noble & Tynes, 2016; Sharma, 2013). This study responds to these calls by focusing on racism on social media, and by proposing the new concept of platformed racism to account for the different agencies involved in its enactment and reinforcement across platforms. Platformed racism is a product of the libertarian ideology that has dominated the development of the Internet since its early beginnings (Streeter, 2011), and has a dual meaning: it (1) identifies platforms as tools for amplifying and manufacturing racist discourse both by means of user appropriation of their affordances and their design and algorithmic shaping of sociability; and (2) it is enacted by a mode of governance that might be harmful for some communities – governance that is embodied in vague platform policies, their moderation of content, and their often arbitrary enforcement of rules.

Platformed racism is important as a cultural construct because race and racism are dynamic categories that shift throughout time and are specific to each geographical place. On social media, ordinary users are increasingly participating by tactically using platform affordances, and engaging with participatory practices once deemed specific to the fringe Internet (Leaver, 2013); for example, the transformation of visual material, which complicates our understanding of racist discourse. In addition, the technological architecture of platforms brings into light new actors, such as algorithms and bots that contribute to the dynamics of racism.

Platformed racism, however, is not only enacted by 'bad' users that appropriate media and technology for racist purposes, it also manifests through everyday social media practices that reinforce whiteness as a "position of structural advantage" (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 1). Platformed racism cannot be understood without critically examining how whiteness is produced and reproduced on social media as a result of platform cultures and user practices. Platforms, even though they are private entities, resemble public institutions in that they play a fundamental role in organising public discourse and people's lives. Although platforms often allege that users have always the option to opt out and leave the service, scholars have argued that the way social media is entangled within everyday life (for example, their use for business purposes and the maintenance of family ties for migrants) makes it difficult for users to manage

without them (Baumer, Ames, Brubaker, Burrell, & Dourish, 2014). Thus, their enactment and reproduction of racism is a matter of public concern rather than a market problem to be solved. Racism, therefore, is built into spaces (social media platforms) that go beyond our more traditional institutions (for example, the state, the school, the media).

The structural, ordinary, and novel nature of racism that platformed racism attempts to describe requires nuanced investigation. I elaborate on the concept by following a "platform-sensitive approach" (Bucher & Helmond, 2018) that gives equal weight to the material characteristics of platforms: how they work and what they afford to users; and the culture of users and what they afford to platforms. I outline the rationale for studying the dynamics of platformed racism through an Australian race-based Goodes controversy, and argue that both the national and the platform specificity of racism require scholarly attention.

In the following sections of Chapter 2, I discuss how a libertarian ideology influences platforms and their approach to racial difference. I then describe how platformed racism is enacted by amplification processes derived from the entanglement between user practices and technology, and by a mode of governance that normalises racism. The chapter finishes with a discussion of the importance of platformed racism as a useful theoretical framework within which to study race and racism on social media.

2.2 PLATFORMS AND RACE

Scholars of the History of Technology and Science and Technology persistently argue that technology is not neutral; rather, it has a 'politics'. That is, technological developments are informed by human knowledge, respond to human interests, and thereby encode cultural values (Winner, 1980). De la Peña (2010) argues that whiteness is made, sustained, and protected in part through "technological production and consumption" (p. 923). For her, a key question researchers should ask is: What does technology do, and for whom? (p. 925).

Platforms rhetorically insist on their neutrality (Gillespie, 2010); for example, Facebook represents itself as a social networking site (D'Onfro, 2016); Twitter represents itself as a "service" for people to communicate (Frier, Gillette, & Stone,

2016); and YouTube sees itself as a “distribution platform” ("YouTube Help, Video distribution settings," 2018). Nevertheless, they “intervene” in public discourse by their algorithmic shaping of sociability, and their moderation of content (Gillespie, 2017).

Platforms also often contribute, as has happened with other technologies, to sustaining whiteness (De la Peña, 2010) through their design (Angwin & Parris Jr., 2016) and governing processes (Liddle, 2016). Since the early Web of the 1990s, which afforded mostly text-based communication under conditions of anonymity or pseudonymity, techno-utopians presented the new medium as a post-racial space that would fix endemic social problems (Barlow, 1996). While this utopian rhetoric was reproduced by the advertisements of the time (Chun, 2008), it is debunked by research that claims that, although conceptions of race linked to embodiment could be more easily abstracted on the web, racism still prevails online (Nakamura, 2008b). Web 2.0 – a term coined by Tim O’Reilly (2007) to describe an internet in which user-generated content had a central role – embraced and amplified post-racial narratives. The rhetoric around Web 2.0 – or ‘the social web’ – shifted to stress that everyone would be given a voice and be able to participate equally online (Nakamura, 2008b). This rhetoric did not warn about how platforms’ attention economy would make it hard for certain communities to be heard, even if participation was largely taken as a given.

In America, a libertarian ideology shaped personal computers, networked communication, and the Internet around skewed ideas of individuality, freedom, and technological mastery (Streeter, 2011). This libertarian notion of individuality is “systematically blind to the collective and historical conditions underlying new ideas, new technologies, and new wealth” (Streeter, 2011, p. 12). While women were actively involved in the development of computing, computer culture had a masculine ethos (Turner, 2006) and was entangled with an idea of capitalism as the means to guarantee freedom of action. This notion helped to popularise the rights-based free market under a rhetoric of openness (Streeter, 2011). Within this libertarian framework, computer culture and capitalism were not only imagined as “liberating” and “inherently masculine”, but also as “fun” (Streeter, 2011, pp. 11–44). The libertarian ideal of success was that of a creative entrepreneur who develops innovative ideas within a free market that would not only make companies rich, but also solve world problems (Streeter, 2011). These cultural forces, which tend to be blind to identity politics and

labour inequalities (Borsook, 1997), are the object of study of the "Values in design" approach to technology, which contends that pre-existing societal bias influences technological progress (Nissenbaum, 2005)

Technologies, as human designed objects, can embody cultural assumptions with regard to race (Brock, 2011;McPherson, 2012) and gender (Bivens, 2015). For example, the emoji set in Unicode 7.0 was criticised for its lack of Black emoji; for the stereotyping of other cultures (Broderick, 2013); and for constraining participation by the exclusion of some national icons such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag (Verass, 2016). This racial homogeneity did not respond to explicit racism, but to the "aversion" of the Unicode Consortium[2] to recognise the politics of technical systems and that the monotone of emoji reproduced privilege in the first place (Miltner, 2015). Nonetheless, when the Unicode Consortium updated the emoji set to introduce different skin tones, this materialisation of diversity was criticised for continuing to impose white frames on racialised others (Li & Sokol, 2015). As Li & Sokol (2015) put it, the change raised the question of "who gets to represent marginalized peoples *and* who gets to decide when that representation is enough".

Problematic politics of representation online have a long history already documented in Internet avatars (Nakamura, 2008a) and online video games (Williams, Martins, Consalvo, & Ivory, 2009). White frames on racialised others are also salient in meme-generating platforms, some of which have established meme templates that trade with racist stereotypes (Milner, 2016, p. 148) However, unintentional though these inequitable representations can be, they exemplify De la Peña's (2010) description of technological epistemologies, which protect whiteness and imagine the ideal subject as white (pp. 923–924). Along similar lines, Brock (2011) argues that "white, masculine, bourgeois, heterosexual and Christian culture" informs the internet as a social structure in terms of its design and associated user and third party practices (p. 1088).

The libertarian forces that see technology as "abstracted from history, from social differences, and from bodies" (Streeter, 2011, pp. 11–12) have not only influenced the development of the internet, but have also influenced platforms as technologies. The underlying infrastructure and user interfaces of platforms largely

[2] The Unicode Consortium is the US body responsible for the emoji set.

respond to their economic interests (Gerlitz & Helmond, 2013; Helmond, 2015). The business orientation of their technical functionality, however, sometimes overlooks its potentiality to be discriminatory. For example, by tracking user activity – for instance, pages liked and posts that people engage with – Facebook has built a category called "ethnic affinity", which marketers can choose or exclude to sell products to users. The ability of housing marketers to exclude users with an African American or Hispanic "ethnic affinity" violate US federal housing and employment laws, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of someone's race and gender (Angwin & Parris Jr., 2016). Facebook announced that it would fix the problem and implement a self-certification screen by which advertisers would "self-certify" that their ads comply with US anti-discrimination laws (Angwin, Tobin, & Varner, 2017). However, in 2017 it was still possible for housing advertisers to exclude users by race (Angwin, Tobin, & Varner, 2017). As Sharma (2013) notes: "Online identities are being transformed by a ubiquitous informatic-capitalist social media and whether new racial ordering and segregations are emerging has become a compelling issue" (p. 63).

Similar debates surround platforms' advocacy for anonymity and pseudonymity, which facilitate abuse (Barak, 2005). Although a degree of anonymity is desirable to avoid racial or sexist bias, platforms could improve by requiring more information about users in their sign up processes, while still allowing them to maintain a false identity online (Lanier, 2010). Other cultural assumptions embodied in the design of platforms are more subtle. Although Facebook is a popular platform among the Aboriginal community in Australia (Carlson, 2013), Indigenous people have shown concern around how to delete a deceased friend or relative's profile for cultural reasons (Rennie, Hogan, & Holocombe-James, 2016). Facebook's architecture and procedures for permanently deleting someone's account are complex, and can take up to 90 days (Curtis, 2017), a period during which some information may still be visible to others. This could be problematic for Aboriginal people as, in many areas of Indigenous Australia, the reproduction of names and images of recently deceased persons is restricted during a period of mourning (CBAA, 2018).

While acknowledging and accounting for one's own privilege when designing (or critiquing) technology can be a difficult task, the capacity to recognise and mitigate any resultant biases is the first step toward fighting discrimination. Nextdoor, a social network that allows users to post messages to neighbours that have joined the site,

reacted effectively to racial profiling practices in its platform when it introduced a design change that reduced posts containing racial profiling by 75%. Before users can post a crime and safety message, the site displays a banner that reads: “Ask yourself – is what I saw actually suspicious, especially if I take race or ethnicity out of the equation?” (Hill, 2016). The way Nextdoor fought discriminatory practices on its platform contrasts with Facebook’s management of the “ethnic affinity” ad category controversy, which failed to end racial discrimination (Angwin, Tobin & Varner, 2017). As Daniels (2013) observes: “Assumptions about the whiteness embedded in the infrastructure and design [of technologies] get spoken when there are ruptures in that sameness” (p. 696).

Cultural values and the “purpose” of platforms (Rieder, 2017) influence what social media offer to users. For instance, Nakamura (2014) argues that platform promotion of shareability encourages users to circulate racist visual content in a decontextualized fashion. Social media buttons matter, and they both relate and differ across platforms (Bucher & Helmond, 2018). While on Facebook and Twitter it is not possible to “dislike” content, YouTube offers the possibility of giving a “thumbs down” to a video. In 2016, however, Facebook diversified its “Like” button to five emoji reactions to respond to posts: “Love”, “Haha”, “Wow”, “Sad”, and “Angry” (Krug, 2016). However, the design of Facebook Reactions, which is constrained to these five fixed emotional categories, reduces the options to show disagreement to the clicking of the “Angry” reaction. Facebook is reluctant to afford a “dislike” button, and has privileged emotion-centred engagement. However, being angry at something is not the same as disliking content. Researcher Jonathan Albright suggests that Facebook could have opted to implement "trust emoji" or “respect-based emoji” (Manjoo & Roose, 2017) if the platform really wanted to improve the negative emotion and viral outrage that thrives there (Larsson, 2017).

Overall, ‘platformed racism’ aligns with the body of literature that critically interrogates social media sites as actors that not only host public communication, but also coordinate knowledge through their technological affordances, logics, and rules (Gerlitz & Helmond, 2013; Gillespie, 2010; Langlois & Elmer, 2013; Puschmann & Burgess, 2014; van Dijck, 2013). At the same time, social media encompasses a new era of user practices, digital convergence between media formats and genres (Jenkins, 2006), micro-communication cultures, and an increasing “algorithmization” of the

social Web (Helmond, 2013). These developments complicate definitions of race and racism online. Thus, the design and cultures of use associated with different platforms, and their role in the amplification and normalisation of racism, require scholarly attention.

2.3 PLATFORMS AS AMPLIFIERS AND MANUFACTURERS OF RACIST DISCOURSE

The specific cultures of use associated with particular platforms, or what Gibbs, Meese, Arnold, Nansen, & Carter (2015) call their "platform vernaculars", play a significant role in the enactment of platformed racism in its dual platform and national specificity.

Historically, hate groups have used the technological affordances of the web – such as anonymity, interconnectivity, and easy access – to advance their racist agendas (Whine, 1999). During the early stages of the Internet, hate groups used computer bulletin board systems to circulate their anti-Semitic and racist articles against Jewish and Black people (Berlet, 2001). The open web also facilitated new practices, such as the creation of cloaked websites to spread white supremacist propaganda (Daniels, 2009), and opportunities to disguise hate through "links, downloads, news threats, conspiracy theories, politics and even pop culture" (Klein, 2012, p. 428).

On social media, abusive users can use platform affordances to harass their victims, either by means of creating and circulating hateful content or by hijacking the technical infrastructure of social media sites for their benefit (Phillips, 2015). For example, users have used Twitter's promoted tweets to insert abuse towards transgender people (Kokalitcheva, 2015). On Twitter also, organised harassment campaigns such as Gamergate have used platform-specific affordances such as the creation of bots accounts to boost their agenda (Burgess & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016; Mortensen, 2016).

On Facebook, cloaked public pages are used to disseminate political propaganda (Schou & Farkas, 2016), and extremist actors use YouTube to spread hate and create community. This is enabled by YouTube's architecture; for example, its anonymity, networks of channel subscriptions, and its system of content discovery through the 'related videos' algorithm (Sureka, Kumaraguru, Goyal, & Chhabra, 2010). Users can

also purposely manipulate algorithms, as exemplified by Microsoft's Tay chatbot fiasco. Within hours, users turned Tay into a misogynistic and racist bot, and Microsoft was criticised for not having anticipated this outcome (Vincent, 2016).

Algorithms, as significant actors within platform dynamics, are outcomes of complex sociotechnical processes (Rieder, 2017). Rieder invites Social Science researchers to think about these processes as "algorithmic techniques" – for example, "selected units and features, training and feedback setup, and decision modalities" (p. 109) – and to pay attention to the "moments of choice" in the formalisation of these techniques (p. 115). The question of how to make platforms more accountable for the performativity of their algorithms is at the centre of debate in recent scholarly work (Crawford, 2015; Gillespie, 2013; Pasquale, 2015). Most recommender systems are often biased toward popular content and personal interests (Helberger, Karppinen, & D'Acunto, 2017). This design responds to an economic interest in maximising attention and optimising profits (McNamee, 2018). As Rieder and Sire (2014) argue, money and power shape the visibility of content on platforms since they primarily respond to their advertisers. However, research shows that it is possible to code these algorithms to recommend and increase the visibility of more diverse content (Munson, Zhou, & Resnick, 2009).

Other types of algorithms, such as trends, also choose the most popular content to generate short descriptions of what users are most engaging with on each platform. The visibility of race on Twitter triggered controversy since some topics relevant to the Black community in America rarely reach the necessary thresholds to be recognised as "trending topics" (Gillespie, 2016). Algorithmic visibility, in this sense, can be a potential source of racial inequality (Introna & Nissenbaum, 2000; Noble, 2018). Although some biases are encoded in the design of algorithms, "emergent" new biases result from "contexts of use" (Friedman & Nissenbaum, 1996, p. 335).

What people do online matters, and has an impact on the technological protocols of platforms. On the open web, for example, research shows how patterns of segregated site navigation influence the way that search engines advantageously position non-racial sites in search ranking (McIlwain, 2016). Another example is Noble's (2018) study of Google ranking that found that half of the results for the query "black girls" returned images of hypersexualised Black women's bodies. With regards to results that GIF platforms (such as Giphy) return when searching for "black lady

gif" (Jackson, 2014), similar critiques are documented. Jackson (2014) notes that Giphy offers several additional suggestions for that search; for example, "Sassy Black Lady", "Angry Black Lady", and "Black Fat Lady".

On social media platforms, contexts of use have also generated problematic algorithmic recommendations based on political beliefs and gender. In 2016, Facebook had to fix its sticker search algorithm since it was showing the vomit sticker as the only result for the queries "liberals" and "feminism" (Yeung, 2016). The fact that the algorithm matched the vomit sticker to represent "liberals" and "feminism" illustrates cultures of use around emoji, and exemplifies how algorithmic outcomes further reinforce old biases (Yeung, 2016).

Emergent new algorithmic biases are not only the result of general contexts of use, but are also influenced by certain platform-specific cultures, such as the prevalence of an alt-right community on YouTube that often thrives on controversies (Rieder, Matamoros-Fernández, & Coromina, 2018), or 'toxic masculinity' on Reddit (Massanari, 2015). These examples show that the way users interact and engage with social media influences the way in which algorithms organise and recommend information, and can contribute to amplifying existing and new racist dynamics.

Other popular cultural practices associated with social media can also be problematic for the amplification of racism on platforms. Increasingly, users participate on social media through the transformative reappropriation of media texts for topical discussions (Burgess, 2008; Milner, 2016; Highfield, 2016; Shifman, 2014). Users create, appropriate, and circulate memetic media; that is, media texts (from images and videos, to screenshots and GIFs) that are continuously remixed and transformed by users in their everyday engagements with social media. These memetic media, in turn, are given a boost by the economic, social, and cultural logics of the various platforms. Shifman (2014) argues that memetic media work well within the Internet's attention economy, which rewards short, visual, emotional, playful, and simple communication; the same is true of social media platforms.

When this memetic participation does exclusionary work, these practices are equally rewarded by platform attention economy and logics. For example, irony, humour, and play have a crucial role in the resonance of memetic media (Milner, 2016, p. 31). Identity antagonism through humour and play is nothing new to the Internet and, as Roberts (2016) argues, American popular culture has a long tradition of

"capitalizing on media content that degrades and dehumanizes" (p. 51). However, the folkloric ambivalence of humour is pushed into "hyperdrive" by the affordances of digital media (Phillips & Milner, 2017, p. 46). Within Internet subcultures, humour, irony, and play, are typically used to whitewash exclusion, and silence countering perspectives (Milner, 2016, p. 149). Trolls often justify their aggressive behaviour online by arguing that they do it *just for fun* (Beer & Burrows, 2013; Milner, 2013; Phillips, 2011).

Internet tropes once deemed specific to the fringe Internet, such as LoLing (Laughing out Loud) at your adversaries and the mobilisation of sarcasm to cloak discrimination (Milner, 2013; Phillips, 2011), are increasingly being mobilised by ordinary users in their memetic engagements on social media (Leaver, 2013). For example, Burroughs (2013) and Everett (2012) examine the impact of viral media – such as YouTube videos – and political memes in eroding Obama's public support during the 2008 American Presidential. This visual media often played with humour to "distance Obama from being a true American and 'one of us' through othering and dehumanisation, oftentimes with racialised overtones" (Burroughs, 2013, p. 271).

Users can deliberately use memetic media to have fun at the expense of, or to directly antagonise, racialised others. Platformed racism is enacted by mischievous appropriations of memetic media. Yet it is also enacted by well-intentioned memetic social media practices that have unintended consequences for the inadvertent amplification of racism. Such un-reflexive uses of media can be problematic from the perspective of Critical Race and Whiteness Studies. Jackson (2017), for instance, explains how white people's overuse of reaction GIFs with images of black people constitutes "digital blackface".

'Black face' is a theatrical tradition with its roots in the early 19th century when white buffoons painted their faces black and dressed in costumes to act as black caricatures (Saxton, 1975). Jackson (2017) especially focuses on the white practice of using black reaction GIFs for the most exaggerated emotions: "Extreme joy, annoyance, anger and occasions for drama and gossip are a magnet for images of black people, especially black femmes" (Jackson, 2017). As she notes, the propensity of seeing black people as "walking hyperbole" is nothing new to the Internet, and is historically represented in films and TV shows. However, the widespread use of black reaction GIFs by white people "means pirouetting on over 150 years of American

blackface tradition" (Jackson, 2017). Digital blackface also works to make whiteness visible as a set of everyday practices.

Other un-reflective uses of media objects on social media similarly contribute to the reinforcement of pre-existing racial formulas, such as white allies speaking over people of colour in matters of anti-racism. Engles (2016) argues that social media "inherently self-declarative" performances of white antiracism are ineffective since they work to re-centre whiteness rather than achieving an anti-racist agenda (p. 92). Overall, problematic amplification processes on social media not only derive from users' mischievous reappropriation of technology and media for racist purposes; new un-reflexive uses of media objects also contribute to reproducing and perpetuating white privilege.

2.4 THE ROLE OF PLATFORM GOVERNANCE

Although platforms prefer to represent themselves as neutral intermediaries, they actively engage in the kinds of editorial work associated with media organisations, including both the curation and censorship of user-contributed content (Gillespie, 2018a). These editorial practices are complex, and largely distributed. They involve platform interventions and rules (for example, policies, filter algorithms and features, and take downs), and interactions with user content moderation practices (for example, the use of affordances such as the flag mechanism, and the development of various strategies to keep these spaces 'safe').

Content regulation also involves the labour of often outsourced workers who live in different parts of the world away from the headquarters of the media platform. These moderators follow platform content moderation guidelines which, despite having been written in an effort to avoid social harm, tend to principally protect a platform's profit seeking (Roberts, 2016). In most cases, due to their protection under the "safe harbour" provision of Section 230 of the US Communication Decency Act (CDA), platforms are not liable for users' posts (Gillespie, 2018a). However, in some cases, this freedom from liability is predicated on their having "no actual knowledge" of hosting illicit material (Gillespie, 2018a, p. 258). For example, in the United States this provision covers copyright laws, by which platforms are not liable for illicit material if they respond promptly to requests for takedown. Similarly, most European nations also

offer platforms with this "conditional liability", by which they have to quickly and effectively respond to a country's request for takedowns (Gillespie, 2018a, p. 258). CDA 230 also allows platforms to moderate content by means of their terms and services contracts and policies without attracting any increased liability. Platforms are mostly not liable for what users post, but they are increasingly being called to account as sovereign institutions of public discourse (Gillespie, 2018a).

In general terms, platforms delegate the moderation of content to teams of moderators, users, and/or non-human actors such as algorithms (Crawford & Gillespie, 2014). Recently, public and policy concerns around the proliferation of pornography, abuse, and extremist political activity on social media are pushing platforms to be more active in their moderation of content, despite their safe harbours (Gillespie, 2018a). This increasing intervention by platforms has revealed inconsistencies in how they enforce their rules, and this often has uneven consequences for different communities (Gillespie, 2017; Oboler, 2013).

Content moderation is one of the greatest challenges that platforms face. Gillespie (2018a) argues that content moderation will never be "complete or consistent" due to the scale of the content that platforms have to manage, and the inevitable cultural and technical biases involved in these processes (p. 270). Subjectivity is unavoidable in content moderation, and some decisions can be attributed to the cultural background of platform moderators (Buni & Chemaly, 2016). However, there is room for platforms to improve their governance to ensure that basic human rights and cultural diversity are respected, and for users to become more aware of how their practices affect the health of online sociability (Gillespie, 2018a; Helberger, Pierson, & Poell, 2017; Venturini et al., 2017; Suzor, Van Geelen & West, 2018).

The manifestation of platformed racism in platform governance is the outcome of various factors: ambivalent platform rules with regard to hate speech, humour, and content removal; the chain of liability in the moderation of content from platforms to other actors (human end-users, moderators, and non-human algorithms); and the often arbitrary enforcement of rules. In turn, the manifestation of platformed racism in platform governance can also derive from users' well-intended initiatives to moderate content – initiatives that can have unintended consequences for the amplification of racism.

Unclear rules

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg (2009) said that Facebook's terms of service would be "the governing document that we'll all live by", a document that embodies a constitutive power over sociability, and implicitly implies a sense of equality to all users (Suzor, 2010). This is problematic, however, since platform terms and services are outlined in often ambiguous and unclear terms, and subject to change depending on a platform's needs (Venturini et al., 2017). Platforms' Terms of Service regulate, among others, anonymity and real name policies; humorous commentary; and hate speech. These policies reflect the platforms' core or apparent purpose: not to be editorial companies, but rather, to be multi-sided markets that serve the needs of, and are responsible to different actors (Gillespie, 2010; Rieder & Sire, 2014).

Most of the major platforms prohibit content that expresses hate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religious affiliation, age, ability, or disease. However, there are varying safeguards associated with these policies; one of the most salient for this study is the protected status of humour. Within the context of the open web, hatemongers have historically taken advantage of the fact that online expression is significantly protected by the First Amendment (Levin, 2002). On social media, the protection of humour as a guarantor of freedom of expression is problematic for receivers of abuse, as the use of satire and irony as a defence to disguise racist and sexist commentary is a common practice online (Milner, 2013) – a practice that fosters discrimination and harm (Ford & Ferguson, 2004).

Twitter does not tolerate "behaviour that crosses the line into abuse" ("Twitter Rules 'Abusive Behavior'", 2018), but acknowledges the role of parody and humour in its parody account policy. In its hateful conduct policy, the company states:

> Freedom of expression means little if voices are silenced because people are afraid to speak up. We do not tolerate behavior that harasses, intimidates, or uses fear to silence another person's voice. ("Twitter Rules 'Hateful conduct'", 2018)

The policy then stresses that "context matters" in an understanding of abuse, and outlines possible consequences for violating the rules: "We may ask someone to remove the offending tweet before they can tweet again. For other cases, we may suspend an account" ("Twitter Rules 'Hateful conduct'", 2018). This policy was introduced on 30 December 2015. Unlike many other social media platforms, Twitter

did not mention hate speech until late 2015. An archived version of Twitter rules from 27 December 2015 (as captured[3] by the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine)[4] shows how, before that date, abusive behaviour was part of the 'abuse and spam section' of the Twitter rules. A few months after this policy change, Twitter announced the formation of its first Trust & Safety Council, which is responsible for ensuring that users feel safe on Twitter. The council partnered with grassroots advocacy organisations such as the Anti-Defamation League and the National Network to End Domestic Violence (Cartes, 2016). In October 2017, Twitter implemented new rules around "sexual advancements, non-consensual nudity, hate symbols, violent groups, and tweets that glorify violence" (Statt, 2017). However, for a long time, abusive behaviour on the platform, and the potential harm of this abuse for marginalised communities, was not a priority reflected in Twitter's policy.

YouTube's Hate Speech Policy defends users' right to express "unpopular points of view", and adds that there is "a fine line" between what is and what is not considered to be hate speech:

> It is generally okay to criticize a nation-state, but if the primary purpose of the content is to incite hatred against a group of people solely based on their ethnicity [...] it violates our policy. ("YouTube Policies 'Hate Speech Policy'", 2018)

In an earlier version of this policy[5], according to the archival data collected by the Wayback Machine, YouTube used more informal language to say that posting "malicious hateful comments" about a group of people based on their ethnicity was "not okay" (that is, rather than clearly stating that it violated the platform's policy). In a blog entry from 2016, YouTube stated that terrorist and hate speech violations accounted for only 1 percent of the videos removed in 2015. In 2017, its advertisers found that their platform ads were being shown next to white supremacist content (Spangler, 2017). This finding sparked an advertiser exodus from YouTube and forced the company to act.

In an updated version of YouTube's advertiser-friendly content guidelines in March 2017, the platform added three categories of content that would not be

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[3] https://web.archive.org/web/20151227170915/https://support.twitter.com/articles/18311, accessed in 2018

[4] For a detailed analysis of access tools such as the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine see Ben-David and Huurdeman (2014).

[5] https://web.archive.org/web/20170113084800/https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2801939?hl=en, accessed in 2018

advertiser-friendly: hateful content, inappropriate use of family entertainment characters, and incendiary and demeaning content ("YouTube Partner Program Policies & Security 'Advertiser-friendly content guidelines'", 2018). In this policy, the definition of 'hate speech' is more elaborate than the general hate speech policy, and specifically prohibits content that promotes discrimination on the basis of "other characteristic associated with systematic discrimination or marginalization". It also outlaws content "that depicts family entertainment characters engaged in violent, sexual, vile, or otherwise inappropriate behavior, even if done for comedic or satirical purposes", and "that uses gratuitously disrespectful language that shames or insults an individual or group". Before this change, YouTube's general rule had been to be largely permissive of humorous content that traded with negative racist and gay stereotypes (Roberts, 2016).

As Roberts suggests, monetary reasons often guide decisions for what stays up and what comes down in terms of content moderation practices. The latest changes related to hateful conduct in YouTube's advertiser-friendly policy do not apply to its general policy on hate speech, which is more open for interpretation (Merrick, 2017). Accordingly, content creators who are not preoccupied with making a living from YouTube enjoy more carte blanche with regards to humorous disrespectful speech that shames or insults an individual or group. On Facebook, in contrast, humour is linked directly to its hate speech policy:

> We (…) allow clear attempts at humor or satire that might otherwise be considered a possible threat or attack. This includes content that many people may find to be in bad taste (example: jokes, stand-up comedy, popular song lyrics, etc.). ("Facebook Help 'What does Facebook consider to be hate speech?'", 2018)

The limits of humorous speech generally remain vague for all major platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, which usually apply country-specific blocking systems. Ambivalent humour is at the core of racialised practices online. It takes refuge under the umbrella of freedom of expression, but works at the expense of other fundamental rights, such as the right of being free from discrimination. People use humour to play with meaning, and some platforms encourage the performance of irreverent communication through some of their affordances (for example, Twitter parody accounts). The idea that humour and play can be tools for "pluralistic clash and counterpublic recuperation, as much as they can be tools for exclusionary hegemony" (Milner, 2016, p. 142) is a resonant one.

The limits of humour on social media remain an unresolved issue and a challenge for platform governance which, in turn, has consequences for platformed racism. Phillips and Milner (2017) point out that humour associated with

> community formation, cultural exchange, and generally having fun and funny time – presumably good things, pro-social things – can simultaneously serve to police community boundaries, encourage cultural myopia, and generally make outsiders miserable. (pp. 97-98)

Common strategies to antagonize with humour, such as the transformation of media to further old-age racist stereotypes and the denigration of individuals by turning their concerns into caricatures (Milner, 2016), are significant challenges for platform governance. As (Hill, 2008) argues, humour and satire should not be hiding places for ignorance and bigotry, and platform responses to racism cloaked in humour often fail to protect those affected by this type of abuse.

Facebook's Hate Speech Policy also states that Page owners should "associate their name and Facebook Profile with any content that is particularly cruel or insensitive" ("Facebook Community Standards 'Hate Speech'", 2018, Paragraph 4), even if that content does not violate their policies. Facebook's approach to keeping the platform safe for advertisers is different from YouTube's approach largely because of how their business models work. While YouTube advertisers are monetising User Generated Content (UGC), Facebook advertisers are introducing new content into timelines; hence, they are not seen to be endorsing third party opinions. In this sense, since their reputation does not depend on it, advertisers will be unlikely to pressure Facebook to do more about racist content.

Critical Race theorist and legal scholar Derrick Bell (1980) coined the term "interest convergence" to explain how whites in policy making positions will support initiatives to improve racial justice only when the change suits their interests. This principle of Critical Race Theory is useful in the analysis, explanation, and conceptualisation of platform approaches to content moderation issues. Platforms' improvements of their hate speech policies and enforcement of rules have been largely responsive to the demands of their advertisers, or to the threat of users leaving their services. In these moments of change, the interests of platforms *converge* with the interests of the advocacy groups that are fighting racial discrimination on social media. When these interests do not converge, it is difficult for platforms to find incentives to proactively fight racism on their spaces.

The chain of liability in content moderation processes

While platforms actively intervene in content moderation issues, as a general norm, they delegate this task to users, moderators, and automatic detection tools such as algorithms. On practically every platform, users have at their disposal different technological mechanisms to manage and report controversial content; mechanisms such as filters and blocking features, and the possibility of reporting platform content that they deem to be inappropriate. These mechanisms, however, are insufficient to tackle the shifting dynamics of racism online. For example, platform filters and blocking systems are not designed to moderate racial attacks embedded in images and other visual content. Rather, they are mostly oriented to managing and reporting text-based content, while users are increasingly engaging on social media through the visual (Highfield & Leaver, 2016; Nooney & Portwood-Stacer, 2014). While it is possible to create blacklists of words, links, and users to minimise the reception of abuse (Geiger, 2016), there are not yet filters that prevent certain images from appearing in users' feeds. As Gillespie (2018a) explains:

> Automatic filters, at this point, are generally only useful for identifying spam (based on its formats and origins), child pornography (based on comparison to a collected database of examples), and profanity (based on simple language identification). Such tools have not yet been successfully extended to pornography, hate speech, or harassment such that they could be used to automatically remove content. (p. 274)

In addition, platforms often underestimate the potentially harmful misuses of apparently benign visual digital objects such as emoji and stickers. For example, Facebook users can proactively moderate comments on their pages by blocking words and turning on the profanity filter. They can also deactivate the ability of others to post images, memes, and GIFs on their pages. However, it is not possible to disable emoji or stickers from appearing in the comments of posts published in public pages (Autran, 2016). When cultures of use associated with emoji are used to discriminate – for example, the weaponising of the pig emoji to attack Muslims – the lack of this functionality contributes to platformed racism as a form of governance that further marginalises ethnic and religious minorities.

Users can also mischievously exploit content moderation mechanisms to disguise racist speech. Twitter, for instance, enables users to apply a "sensitive media" filter to the content they post. This is meant to let users know prior to viewing that the media objects shared might be "sensitive" (for example, containing sexually explicit material). However, some users find this filter a useful tool to cloak hate speech or

avoid being flagged (Allure, 2016). Unlike Twitter, YouTube does not allow content creators to apply filters to warn the audience that the content they are going to watch might be sensitive. However, the platform can apply a warning filter to some controversial videos that do not violate their policies but might be offensive for some communities or age groups. Instagram does the same with tags that it has identified as being linked to controversial content, such as #anorexia (Suzor, 2016). While the sensitive media filter misuse is difficult to predict, Facebook could easily allow users to disable emoji and stickers in comments to minimise hate mobilised through apparently benign visual digital objects. However, the option to disable this functionality would decrease Facebook's capacity to quantify users' emotional engagement through emoji – crucial data points that the platform uses to build user profiles to be sold to third parties (Stark & Crawford, 2015).

If the blocking and filtering mechanisms are not enough, users can flag content that they find inappropriate. These mechanisms are *per se* limited, since they leave little room for transparent and public discussion about why something is considered offensive (Crawford & Gillespie, 2014; Matias et al., 2015). The flagging mechanism also raises the question about who flags content. Its misuse, for example, serves to silence minority voices. Early research on YouTube documents the fact that part of the YouTube community were misusing the flagging system to censor gay users or to ban videos containing gay content (Kampman, 2008); this worked to deter LGBTQ people from participating on the platform. The misuse of the flagging system was also visible on Facebook in the Celeste Liddle case (outlined in the introduction of this study), where users collectively flagged her content to have her temporarily banned from the platform.

While Facebook and Twitter flagging mechanisms consist of drop down menus that note pre-established ways in which content might be hateful or violent, YouTube provides a complementary text box in which users can provide some context around their flags. Even though Twitter and Facebook state in their hate policies that context is fundamental to understanding which content crosses the line of acceptable speech, users are not allowed to contextualise their reason/s for reporting content for hate speech. This contradiction can be easily explained in terms of cost-effectiveness for platforms. More complex flagging mechanisms would involve moderators in spending more time than the average few seconds to review each flag for controversial content

(Roberts, 2018). However, without the due context, the ambivalence of online expression (Phillips & Milner, 2017) makes it difficult for moderators to succeed in managing controversial content, especially in cases where racism is cloaked in humour, and mediated through visual content.

The ability to explain why content is controversial in certain national contexts is fundamental to an understanding of how racism articulates in different cultures, and to the remediation of platformed racism as an effect of platform governance. Furthermore, platforms generally accept limited forms of evidence of hate speech. On Twitter, while links are accepted as proof of hate speech, screenshots are not; this allows harassment tactics such as 'tweet and delete' to operate with impunity on the platform (Matias et al., 2015).

The work of moderators in managing racist discourse has a fundamental role in the enactment of platformed racism as an effect of platform governance. Although platforms tend to blame moderators when errors in content moderation are made public (Roberts, 2018; Tobin, Varner & Angwin, 2017), the fact that racism regularly remains unchallenged on platforms should not be the moderators' burden. Platform content moderators – who can include outsourced and globally dispersed labour as well as workers directly employed by platforms – screen content after it is published in search of potential infringements, and are responsible for reviewing content that has been flagged by users (Roberts, 2016). To decide whether that content infringes platform policies, these moderators follow the platform's content moderation guidelines – documents that are not available to the general public[6]. Leaks of these guidelines to the press have shown their already embedded racist biases (The Guardian, 2017).

Research documents how platform rules are mostly written to protect the economic interests and brand of the platforms, rather than to ensure racial justice (Roberts, 2016). Roberts' (2016) work on the opaque processes of platform content moderators shows that internal platform policy regarding the moderation of racially charged content is not only driven by concern over "the likelihood of it causing offense and brand damage", but is also often "counterbalanced by a profit motif" (pp. 152–

[6] At the time of writing, Facebook was rapidly revising various aspects of its governance in response to the Cambridge Analytica scandal, such as the disclosure of its content moderation internal guidelines. However, these changes are out of scope for this thesis' case study, the Adam Goodes controversy.

157). She cites as examples the cases of the YouTube memes Bed Intruder ("Antoine Dodson/Bed Intruder", 2018) and Sweet Brown ("Sweet Brown/Ain't Nobody Got Time for That", 2018) to explain how content that triggers endless memetic appropriations that trade on racialised others is likely to stay on the platform (p. 153).

As an explanation for platforms' loose response to the reality that racism and sexism thrive on social media, other scholars also argue that racist content sells (Shepherd et al., 2015). I agree with these scholars, and add that platformed racism, as a result of platform governance, is not only the result of platform decisions to maintain racist content if it is popular; it is equally the result of users contributing to the amplification of racism on social media by un-reflexively engaging with memes that trade with racialised others.

Platforms not only delegate the moderation of content to their users and to teams of moderators, but also use Artificial Intelligence to identify forms of hatred and abuse. However, when it comes to regulating abusive, pornographic, and hateful content, automatic flagging has proved to be problematic. YouTube and Instagram have been criticised for algorithmically flagging inoffensive content simply because it was tagged with keywords related to the LGBTQ community, such as "gay" or "lesbian" (Drewe, 2016; Romano, 2018). Instagram's automated banning of content tagged with keywords related to the depiction of women's bodies has also failed to guarantee formal equality (Witt, 2017).

There is a small amount of scholarly work that systematically examines the inconsistencies in platforms automated content moderation practices at the level of tags and hashtags (Suzor, 2016; Witt, 2017). Over time, such work can identify patterns of the effects of automation for content moderation processes, and can collect robust evidence about the collectives that are mostly affected by these bans. Yet platforms have demonstrated that they can tweak their algorithms to minimise racist and sexist biases (Noble, 2018), and code them to counter hateful and extremist content (Brown, 2017; Glenday, 2017).

Opaque content moderation processes and arbitrary enforcement of rules

When platforms act upon content, they can take down posts; ask users to delete content; temporarily bloc, shadow, or ban user accounts or pages; or permanently

delete them. We know little about how platforms enforce their rules, and the information they make public in terms of content moderation processes is insufficient (Gillespie, 2018a; Suzor, Van Geelen & West, 2018).

For the past several years, platforms have encountered a storm of criticism for their loose approach to abusive content: Twitter has been criticised for allowing harassment and hate speech (Hern, 2015), and for verifying the accounts of neo-Nazis (Marcin, 2017), and some argue that it might be too late for it to solve this issue (Glaser & Oremus, 2017); the UN has accused Facebook of spreading hatred of Rohingya in Myanmar (Baynes, 2017); and YouTube has been accused of being a platform where conspiracy theories and abuse thrive (Albright, 2018). Activists have long offered technical and culturally specific suggestions on how to make platforms safer places, most of which have been ignored (Harper, 2016; Oboler, 2013). However, as platforms are faced with the issue that pornography and graphic violence might deter advertisers, and that users could leave the service due to abuse, they are taking steps to improve their governance (Gillespie, 2018a).

Platform governance – vague policies, insufficient content moderation tools, inconsistencies in moderating racist content, and lack of transparency – work to enact platformed racism. Furthermore, these inconsistencies tend to marginalise the already underrepresented in society (Gillespie, 2018a). Unless a public controversy related to content moderation is revealed and triggers a public outcry, platform governance processes go largely unnoticed. Ananny & Gillespie (2016) call this phenomenon "shocks and platform exceptions" (p. 1), which they define as:

> public moments that interrupt the functioning and governance of these ostensibly private platforms, by suddenly highlighting a platform's infrastructural qualities and call it to account for its public implications. These shocks sometimes give rise to a cycle of public indignation and regulatory pushback that produces critical—but often unsatisfying and insufficient—exceptions made by the platform. (pp. 3–4)

An example of these unsatisfying exceptions is Facebook's promise to tackle race discrimination on its ad platform when *ProPublica* published an investigative article about the issue. However, it did not really implement the change (Angwin, Tobin & Varner, 2017). Other exceptions are instances where a platform censors racially charged content in high profile hate speech controversies – for example, Twitter's decision to delete content that compared American actress Leslie Jones to a primate (Weaver, 2016) – yet has an unwritten general norm of allowing this racist trope of everyday abuse of ordinary people (Oboler, 2013). As Ananny and Gillespie

(2016) put it, this "soft governance" is "often voluntary, typically unfunded, and usually without clear consequences" (p. 11). I argue that this type of governance is a clear sign of privilege that normalizes racism as an ordinary and structural socio-technical construct – one that is only addressed when the self-interest of the platforms converges with the interests of marginalized communities.

2.5 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I proposed and elaborated on the concept of platformed racism to engage with the material politics of platforms, and to account for the specificities of racialised discourse across them. Platformed racism is a new form of racism derived from the technological infrastructure, business models, governance, and specific cultures of use of social media platforms. It is ordinary and structural, and encompasses explicit, colour-blind, and covert racist practices.

Antagonism can be "platformed", and can be the product of "socio-technical and discursive practices" (Farkas, Schou, & Neumayer, 2018, p. 1). "Platformed antagonism" (Farkas, Schou, & Neumayer, 2018) is part of platformed racism. However, the particular usefulness of platformed racism as a concept lies in its potential to explain racism on social media as a shared problem of good and bad actors. It also helps to expose racism as a problem that is normalised by platform governance, and that materially affects the already marginalised in different parts of the world; for example, The Rohingya in Myanmar (Baynes, 2017), Indigenous people in Australia (Oboler, 2013), and Muslims in Europe (Farkas, Schou, & Neumayer, 2018).

The body of research that contends that platforms are not neutral but have "politics" (Gillespie, 2010), informs platformed racism as a cultural construct. The US libertarian attitude to technology has influenced the development of the Internet (Streeter, 2011), including social media platforms. These cultural forces become visible when biases in the design and governance of platforms are unveiled (Bivens, 2015; Angwin & Parris, 2016; Oboler, 2013). Platformed racism conceptualises platforms as amplifiers and manufactures of racist discourse. These amplification processes and new racist biases emerge in a context of use where user practices and technological processes are intertwined. This complex context has an effect on the creation of meaning (Bucher & Helmond, 2018). While users can appropriate

technology for abusive purposes, platformed racism is also the result of inadvertent amplification processes through well-meaning practices. It is also enacted through modes of governance that reproduce inequalities such as vague hate speech; unsatisfactory content removal policies; a chain of liability in content moderation processes; and the arbitrary and opaque enforcement of rules.

The challenge to remediate platformed racism is the shared responsibility of users and platforms. While there is room for platforms to improve their design and governance, users should also be more aware of how their un-reflexive uses of media can potentially discriminate. Platformed racism is not only about hate speech and how to detect it, but about understanding platform-specific cultures and platform processes that produce and reproduce racism.

In the next chapter, I describe the methodological steps and the case study used to investigate platformed racism. As already stated, the case study is the Australian race-based controversy surrounding the AFL's Indigenous star Adam Goodes and its unfolding booing campaign. Using the multiplatform issue mapping method (Burgess & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016), I map the different agencies and practices involved in the enactment of racism on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube in relation to this controversy.

Chapter 3: Research design and method

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces my overall methodological approach to my primary case study, the Goodes war dance and the unfolding booing campaign controversy. It provides an overview of, and background to the case study, and examines its connection to broader debates around race and racism in Australia. It then describes the method I followed to study this controversy across platforms: the multiplatform issue mapping (Burgess & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016), and other methods used to identify and examine popular media practices around key digital media objects within this controversy. Finally, the chapter outlines the ethical and methodological challenges I encountered along the way.

Scholars interested in the entrenched relationship between race and technology, have called for new methodological approaches that facilitate intervention in the operation of race relations on the Internet (Noble & Tynes, 2016, p. 5). Online traces of everyday interactions are useful data sources to understand how race and racism manifest on social media, and how platforms mediate these interactions. By following digital traces, it is possible to start to unveil how racial ideology is produced and reproduced across platforms as a combination of user practices and platform interventions. In doing so, it is important to acknowledge and take account of the fact that vernacular Internet culture is marked by politically ambivalent forms of expression and performativity (Phillips & Milner, 2017); therefore, textual traces do not necessarily reflect users' authentic views on an issue. The aim of this research, however, was not to determine whether or not particular users were racist, but rather, to document the extent to which social media participation around a race-based controversy reflects and reinforces platformed racism.

In terms of the analysis, my ontological stance is that of constructionism, according to which I view race and racism as socio-technical constructs contingent on a particular time and place, and in constant transformation (Bryman, 2016). In other words, I am studying the shifting dynamics of race and racism when mediated by social media platforms, and in relation to how they have been historically constructed in Australia. I acknowledge my role as a White European researcher in the co-creation of knowledge, in the selection and reading of my data, and in relation to the literature I draw on to make

sense of it. In other words, my reading of the dynamics of race and racism is inevitably limited as a result of my own privilege and my lack of lived experience with racism.

I follow a digital methods approach to Internet research as a lens through which to understand the extent to which the unfolding of an Australian race-based controversy on Twitter, YouTube and Facebook enacted platformed racism. While traditional social science research on the Internet has historically relied on surveys, interviews, and focus groups as methods of extracting data on user practices, a digital methods approach focuses on exploring the Internet, following the "methods of the medium" (Rogers, 2013, p. 5). That is, by using platforms' own structures and tools to study the social interactions that take place on these spaces, my aim is to understand their mediation of race and racism. I use digital media tools to extract social media data (posts, images, videos, and ancillary texts), and follow platform traces – such as algorithmic suggestions, ranking, and content moderation processes – to examine how Twitter, YouTube and Facebook shape racist discourse in relation to the Goodes case study.

In my qualitative analysis, I examine social media data that was created, transformed, and shared around the Goodes case study on these three platforms, as evidence of broader 'debates' around race and racism in Australia. Yet the analysis of this controversy across platforms also serves to gain an understanding of how a race-based controversy fuelled the popular culture of the Internet. Social media users saw the Goodes case as an excuse to perform their rituals of repeated and patterned media interactions; for example, rants on YouTube, and racist humour through meme culture on Facebook. The analysis of this particular Australian race-based controversy across platforms serves to build a case for platformed racism as a useful framework within which to study race and racism on social media.

3.2 THE GOODES CASE STUDY

Australia is a postcolonial settler society with an unreconciled history of Indigenous dispossession and oppression, and Australian race relations are complex. The dynamics of race and whiteness are particularly visible in Australian sport, an arena of intense national pride and Australian cultural politics. While racism prevails in this arena, Indigenous athletes have found it a platform on which to perform their identities and to counter prevailing (white) nationalistic discourses (Hallinan & Judd, 2009).

The controversy surrounding Goodes is a recent example of these cultural tensions. Goodes is an Andyamathanha and Norungga man[7] who played for the Sydney Swans from 1999 to 2015. He is widely recognised as an anti-racism advocate, and one of the game's best players. He is a dual winner of the Brownlow medal, which is awarded to the "best and fairest" player in AFL each year. Recognised as a leading citizen and role model, he was named Australian of the Year in 2014. However, Goodes was also involved in racial controversies. In 2013, starring for Sydney against Collingwood, he pointed out a person in the crowd who had called him an "ape". This heckler turned out to be a young girl, who was subsequently removed. In a press conference after the incident, Goodes declared he was "shattered" by it, but added that he did not blame the girl. "Unfortunately, it is what she hears, the environment she has grown up in that has made her think it is OK to call people names", he said (Le Grand, 2015). The girl was never charged with any offence, and the incident was resolved in a phone call with Goodes, in which she apologised.

While there was substantial public support for Goodes, and for addressing racism in the AFL and Australian sporting culture, the supporters of rival clubs would regularly boo Goodes when their teams played against the Sydney Swans. Collingwood president Eddie McGuire fuelled the tension when, during a radio talk show, he joked about the fact that Goodes should promote a new stage show of the musical King Kong, thus invoking the historic racist metaphorical comparison between black men and apes (Heenan, 2013). Online, abuse and criticism of Goodes also thrived. Faulkner & Bliuc (2016) studied online discussions around this controversy by looking at the online comments on the websites of Australian newspapers. They found that people undermined the racism involved in calling Goodes an "ape" through different rhetorical strategies: by reframing the harmful action to appear moral; minimizing the perpetrators' role in causing harm; reframing the victim as deserving the harm; and denigrating his public persona (p. 2552).

Goodes is also an anti-racism advocate in Australia, a political aspect of his public persona that contributed to his being named the 2014 Australian of the Year. His acceptance speech, however, offended some Australians, who labelled his words "divisive" (MediaWatch, 2015). The problem is, however, that Goodes did not say anything divisive during his acceptance speech (Australian of the Year Awards, 2014). Rather, in his

[7] Goodes identifies himself as an Indigenous man pertaining to the nations Andyamathanha and Norungga (Australian of the Year Awards, 2014)

appearance on *Channel Nine* to talk about the award, in a reference to Australian Day, celebrated annually on 26 January to commemorate the 1788 arrival of the First Fleet in New South Wells, Goodes said:

> I'm so proud to be Australian. This award is such a huge honour and on Australia Day for me, it is. It is Invasion day, it is Survival Day, it's all of those things to Aboriginal people and I think people need to understand for Aboriginal people, today is a day of sorrow, of hurt. But for me, in the last 5 years, I've tried to turn around it. It is about survival, it is about celebrating our 40,000 year history, our culture that is still surviving. (MediaWatch, 2015)

Conservative Newscorp columnists Rita Panahi and Andrew Bolt de-contextualised these (Channel Nine) comments, wrongly attributed them to his Australian of the Year acceptance speech, and labelled them as "divisive and troublesome" (MediaWatch, 2015).

In 2015, during the AFL season's Indigenous Round, an annual celebration of the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in AFL, Goodes celebrated a goal against Carlton by performing a war dance; this included him mimicking the action of throwing a spear in the general direction of the crowd. In itself, this was an act of celebration of Indigenous culture; however, it served to reignite debate about race and racism in Australia, because the dance and spear-throwing were perceived by some to be antagonistic and, hence, offensive. In Goodes' words, the war dance was a personal act to show his pride in Aboriginal culture:

> It's Indigenous Round. What are we saying to those other Indigenous boys who are going to run out over the next two or three days, if they had something planned? (…) Are they going to be out there and represent and be proud? I hope so. But if people are going to get their back up against a wall… maybe they're not going to come out their shell. I want people to be proud and represent because we have so many different cultures in this country. (Dick, 2015)

Coupled with the already turbulent relationship between opposition supporters and Goodes, this Indigenous cultural dance clashed head-on with the expectations of Hage's (1998) "white nation fantasy": the association of whiteness in Australia with notions of space and empowerment, and the perception of the "others" as mere objects whose place is determined by the will of the dominant culture (pp. 18–23). It also reflected what DiAngelo (2011) calls "white fragility" – a concept developed to explain the anxiety experienced by white people when they are confronted with their own racism, or exposed to performances of identity politics. Within the US context, DiAngelo explains that the fact that white people live in insulated social environments "protects whites as a group" through institutions, cultural representations, media, school textbooks, movies, advertising, and dominant discourses (p. 55). This insulation, which also features in Australia, lowers white people's ability to "tolerate racial stress" (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 55).

On the Internet, the controversy played out along similar lines. Opponents used Twitter to ridicule Goodes (Wu, 2015), Facebook pages were created solely to vilify him (Online Hate Prevention Institute, 2015), and his Wikipedia page was vandalised by the substitution of pictures of him with chimpanzees (Quinn & Tran, 2015). Since the performance of the war dance, the increasing intensity of the booing every time Goodes played, and the harassment campaign on social media, forced him to take time off. He quietly retired in September 2015, and deleted his Twitter account in June 2016 (The Age, 2016). AFL CEO Gillon McLachlan and AFL Commission chairman Mike Fitzpatrick were criticised for their reluctance to condemn the booing as racist (Klugman & Osmond, 2015). It took the intervention of AFL Sydney Swans Indigenous player Lewis Jetta, who performed a war dance to celebrate a goal in support of Goodes in July 2015, to spark the AFL's public action in condemning the booing.

The Goodes war dance and his calling out of racism in 2013 followed similar race-based incidents within the AFL. In 1993, at the conclusion of a match between St Kilda and Collingwood, Indigenous AFL player Nicky Winmar, after having been racially vilified during the game, celebrated St Kilda's victory by lifting his jumper and, facing the crowd, pointing to his dark skin. In a discussion about Winmar's gesture on TV, the Collingwood president Allan McAlister declared that he did not have an issue with Indigenous Australians "as long as they conduct themselves like white people" (as cited in Klugman & Osmond, 2013a, p. 161). When he was asked to clarify his claim, he added: "As long as they conduct themselves like human beings, they will be all right. That's the key" (as cited in Klugman & Osmond, 2013a, p. 161). This declaration reinforced the racist trope of considering Aboriginal people less than human, a trope which has its roots in biological conceptions of race (Morris, 1997). McAlister also claimed that on-field taunts about colour and heritage were not racist but "tactics" (as cited in Klugman & Osmond, 2013a, p. 179), an argument that was reproduced by the AFL fans that justified the booing of Goodes (Dalton, 2015). Denial is a common trope of modern racism (Nelson, 2013) that has been historically mobilised to justify racial vilification within the AFL (Klugman & Osmond, 2013a).

Both Winmar and Goodes' gestures facilitated a national discussion about racism, and demonstrated the relevance of targeting sports to draw attention to it. Unfortunately, these cases are not isolated, and racial controversies within the AFL continue to arise. In 2017, the *Special Broadcasting Service* (Australia's multicultural and multilingual

broadcaster SBS) documentary *Fair Game* told the history of former AFL player Héritier Lumumba and his experiences with racial abuse by his teammates, who nicknamed him "chimp" (Bond, 2017). The comparison of black people with monkeys is also a common racist trope against Indigenous athletes in Australia, a trope which invokes racialised stereotypes of Aboriginal people focused on falsehoods of genetic and cultural inferiority (Coram, 2007). The racism that Winmar, Goodes, and Lumumba experienced within the AFL is deeply connected to how whiteness works in Australia. The contextualisation of the Goodes controversy within broader race dynamics in Australia is crucial to understanding platformed racism, especially since this national specificity can potentially be at odds with platform governance and the US-culture that informs it.

Whiteness in Australia and the Goodes controversy

Race and space are essentially co-constitutive (Lipsitz, 2006). In Australia, the way the territory was settled has shaped the national dynamics of race (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). Moreton-Robinson argues that Australia as a nation is ruled under a "patriarchal white sovereignty" that constantly disavows Indigenous people (pp. xi–xix). These "white possessive logics," she contends (p. xii), have their origins in the British settlers' self-proclamation that Australia was an un-owned territory under the concept of *terra nullius*[8]. The legal fiction of *terra nullius* ignored the fact that First Nations had lived there for at least 40,000 years, and has had deeply uneven material consequences for whites and non-whites in Australia (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). These "white possessive logics" are similar to what Hage (1998) called the "White nation fantasy" (p. 23), a self-constructed fantasy of national space in which only white Australians are empowered to decide who is welcome (pp. 25–104).

This white self-entitlement to control the national space and non-white 'others', becomes visible when race-based controversies arise. In December 2015, a crowd of mostly Anglo-Australian young men congregated at Sydney's Cronulla beach and surroundings, attacking anyone of 'Middle Eastern Appearance'. This event became known as the Cronulla Riots (Noble, 2009). A week earlier, off-duty lifeguards were involved in a fight

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[8] The Mabo decision in 1992 rejected *terra nullius* and recognised native titles. The legislation that followed this decision was the Native Title Act (1993), although the eligibility criteria were high and few claimants satisfied the application requirements.

with a group of Lebanese men over the use of the space on the beach, the last in a series of tensions between Australian-Lebanese and Anglo-Australians (Noble, 2009). In their study of the Cronulla Riots, Hartley and Green (2006) observe how ultra-national groups in Australia see treasured leisure domains such as the beach, football grounds, and memorial events such as Anzac Day[9] “as their territory” (p. 344). They note that the assault on these lifeguards “challenged the ‘white’ way of using the beach”, which is considered an Australian icon and tradition (p. 352). Similarly, Goodes’ war dance and his calling out of racism in 2013 challenged the ‘white’ way of experiencing AFL games. Like the riots in Cronulla, the booing campaign was a white act of reclamation of the space.

In his appearance on *ABC Radio National* on 30 June 2015 to talk about the Goodes controversy, journalist Waleed Aly made a reference to the acoustic ambivalence of the booing:

> Anyone listening to those boos who is familiar with the dynamics of racism can hear it in the boos. There's a certain quality to them. There's something about it that sounds markedly different from the other boos that players get. (as cited in De Souza, 2015)

Indigenous journalist Stan Grant also referred to the sonority of the booing, and its signifying effect:

> To Adam’s ears, the ears of so many Indigenous people, these boos are a howl of humiliation. A howl that echoes across two centuries of invasion, dispossession and suffering. Others can parse their words and look for other explanations, but we see race and only race. How can we see anything else when race is what we have clung to even as it has been used as a reason to reject us. (Grant, 2015)

De Souza (2015) speaks of “the acoustic violence of racism”, which is audible by some sections of the population only. In her analysis of the Goodes boos, De Souza argues that “those who are subject to systemic forms of racism are *attuned* precisely to those qualities that – to the untrained ear – are otherwise rendered silent”.

The Goodes case and the Cronulla Riots were not only about who had the right to manage national space in Australia, but also about identity and culture. In the case of the Cronulla Riots, Hartley and Green (2006) argue that the reasons behind the fight involved a particular idea of “the use of the beach” and of “the right way to ‘be’ Australian” (p. 352). Similarly, Goodes’ performance of Indigeneity was stigmatised as being antagonistic. This stigmatisation follows discourses of race in Australia in which non-Anglo Celtic cultures are perceived as a threat to the Australian way of life (Hartley & Green, 2006). Relatedly,

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[9] Anzac Day is a day of remembrance celebrated on 25 April each year in Australia and New Zealand to commemorate those who fought during the First World War.

Australia has a long history in policing Indigenous behaviour, and this also has its roots in colonisation.

To justify Indigenous dispossession, a race hierarchy was essential for the colonial project. This ideology of race, with roots in Social Darwinism, allowed settlers to classify people according to genetic and physical characteristics. It has been maintained in contemporary Australia by a "discourse of pathology" around Indigenous people that is often mobilised by politicians and the media (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, pp. 159–172). The Goodes case illustrates how whiteness is sustained through projecting "incivility" onto 'non-white others', as opposed to a white Australian of morally good character (Noble, 2005, p. 110). This projection tacitly entitles white people to "civilise" and "police" Indigenous behaviour (McGregor, 1998; Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

The Goodes controversy has also been affected by the institutionalisation of whiteness in Australia. With Federation in 1901, when the colonies became the states of the Commonwealth of Australia, various public policies perpetuated racial discrimination. The perceived inferiority of Aboriginal Australians translated into unequal administrative practices and legislation that targeted them (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). Indigenous Australians' rights were ignored in the Commonwealth Constitution, and Aboriginal families were confined to segregated reserves (Attwood, 1994; Haebich, 2000). Keeping Australia white was also enforced by systematic and widespread Aboriginal child removals from 1900 until well into the 1970s (Haebich, 2000). 'Full blood' Indigenous children, and children of mixed Aboriginal and European parentage, were placed in orphanages or foster care (Haebich, 2000). This practice allowed some Indigenous children to 'pass' as members of the European community based on their physical appearance. This racist practice has been mobilised against Aboriginal Australians with pale skin as a trope to cast their Aboriginality in doubt. This trope was used against Goodes (whose father is white and whose mother is Aboriginal) by conservative media figures such as Andrew Bolt.

Whiteness, as Frankenberg (1993) defines it, "is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege"; however, it is also "a set of cultural practices" that manifest through everyday interactions and discourse – and digital technologies are increasingly the mediators of these everyday experiences (van Dijck, 2013). Platforms, therefore, have a crucial role in the coordination and amplification of racist practices and discourses. This case study (Goodes' performance of the war dance and the unfolding booing campaign) is an example of the critical role of platforms in contemporary processes of production and

reproduction of racism. Not only did the Goodes controversy trigger a national debate within mainstream media around racism in Australia, it also fuelled user memetic participation across platforms, and enacted platformed racism. Ten years earlier, text messaging was the medium used to mobilise the mob that converged on Cronulla (Noble, 2009). These text messages urged "Aussies" to go to the beach "to support Leb and Wog bashing day"[10] and "show them" that Cronulla was 'their' beach (Strike Force Neil, 2006). In the Goodes case, platforms were used to direct racist attacks against Goodes, and to spread negative stereotypes of Indigenous people.

In both cases, however, digital technologies were also used to counter and unveil racism and whiteness. In the Cronulla Riots, anti-racism campaigners also used SMS to promote a more positive message about racial diversity (Frew & Jackson, 2005). In the Goodes case, Indigenous Australians used social media for anti-racism purposes, and a general support campaign was organised around the hashtag #istandwithadam (Gough, 2015). Digital technologies, therefore, were both an opportunity and a site of struggle in the mitigation, amplification, and regulation of white racist logics. Researchers and Indigenous organisations argue that social media is a good place to start listening to Indigenous voices and to learn about the issues that are important for the community (Dreher, McCallum, & Waller, 2016; Kennedy, 2018; Waller, Dreher, & McCallum, 2015).

In other national contexts, whiteness as a default category in users' online interactions (Brock, 2011; Kendall, 1998; Sharma, 2013) has been ruptured by anti-racist social movements such as #BlackLivesMatter's[11] activity on social media (Carney, 2016; Freelon, McIlwain, & Clark, 2016; Gallagher, Reagan, Danforth, & Dodds, 2016; Jackson & Welles, 2016). Sharma (2013) argues that platform affordances such as Blacktags on Twitter have the potential "to interrupt the whiteness of the Twitter network" (p. 48). In Canada, the Indigenous political protest on Twitter around the hashtag #IdleNoMore served to make visible the culture and struggles of First Nations people, as well as to advocate for changes in policy areas (Raynauld, Richez, & Boudreau Morris, 2017).

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[10] 'Leb' is an Australian slang term to refer to Lebanese people, and 'Wog' is a more generic racial slur used in particular since the mid-20th century to refer to Southern European people.

[11] Black Lives Matter is an international activist movement that originated in the African-American community and on social media around the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. The movement's aim is to denounce systemic racism and violence towards black people in the United States and beyond (Matthews & Noor, 2017).

In Australia, Indigenous people use social media more than non-Indigenous people (Carlson, 2017). Carlson's (2013) work on Indigenous use of social media is crucial to an understanding of the formation of counterpublics on these platforms. Twitter and Facebook have become key resources for Indigenous Australians in circulating information and mobilizing political action in recent years (Carlson & Frazer, 2016; Carlson, Farrelly, Frazer, & Borthwick, 2015). For example, key platform affordances such as the shared Twitter account @IndigenousX and public Facebook pages, have facilitated the mobilization of Indigenous Australians around various political and cultural goals. Indigenous Australians' activity on social media has the potential to enable a shift in media power – as in the case of #sosblakaustralia (Dreher, McCallum & Waller, 2016) – and serves to expand the "virtual we" of Indigenous solidarity (Petray, 2013).

Scholars have studied Indigenous use of social media as a medium to practise culture, produce new forms of vernacular creativity (Kral, 2011), perform identity (Carlson, 2013; Lumby, 2010), and maintain family connections (Carlson, 2013). Indigenous engagement with specific social media practices, such as memetics and humour, is also an opportunity to deconstruct colonialist narratives and challenge white privilege (Frazer & Carlson, 2017; Petray & Collin, 2017). Listening to Indigenous Australians on social media, therefore, can illuminate ways to counter platformed racism in the specific context of Australia. Accordingly, this study pays particular attention to Indigenous counterpublics in relation to the Goodes case study, and to their cultural practices across social media platforms.

3.3 MULTIPLATFORM ISSUE MAPPING

People participate on social media by sharing and consuming news, creating and circulating personal media, transforming existing media, and talking about things that matter to them. In this way, they form and participate in publics. People participated in the discursive and expressive activity that constituted the Goodes controversy through precisely these practices, and therefore enacted different issue publics that had a role in platformed racism.

Issue publics on social media – those that are called into being through their discursive and affective involvement with mediated issues (Papacharissi, 2015; Warner, 2002) – "leave behind plentiful traces as rich, multimedia social media data" (Burgess & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016, p. 81). This opens up "powerful new opportunities for digital

media research”, and presents “significant challenges to both theories of publics and empirical orthodoxies for studying them” (Burgess & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016, p. 81). Publics on social media go beyond the Habermansian idea of a public as direct rational discursive interactions and involve aspects such as emotion, algorithms, features, and popular media practices (Bruns & Burgess, 2015; Burgess & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016; Gillespie, 2013; Massanari, 2015; van Dijck & Poell, 2013). Warner (2002) describes publics as “the social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse” constituted by the “concatenation of texts through time” (p. 62).

The technical specificities of platforms amplify the scope of public discourse, and facilitate new practices that change the morphology of the imagined collective of a public (boyd, 2010). Platforms transform the creation of publics, and increase the persistence, replicability, scalability, and searchability of communication in comparison to the information flows in broadcast media (boyd, 2010, p. 49). One example is Facebook, which recentralises data from the open web through its external social plugins (Gerlitz & Helmond, 2013), thereby facilitating the creation of communities beyond the limits of the platform. Another example is Twitter's hashtag feature, which facilitates the creation of “ad hoc publics” around topical discussions within and beyond the platform (Bruns & Burgess, 2015). Algorithms also have a crucial role in the personalisation of publics on social media – what Gillespie (2103) calls “calculated publics”. However, the performativity of algorithms goes beyond personalisation and popularity and is influenced by user practices and platform vernaculars (Burgess & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016; Rieder et al., 2018).

Issue publics on social media are animated by acute controversies. In my research, I used the Goodes controversy to study the broader issue of manifestations of race and racism on social media. Controversies are an interesting locus of research because they are generative of unforeseen connections among actors, themes, and objects in public ‘debates’ (Callon, Lascoumes, & Barthe, 2011). This idea of controversies as distinct sites of uncertainty, creativity, and disagreement around a particular issue (Callon, Lascoumes, & Barthe, 2001) draws from Controversy Analysis, a classical sociological methodology for examining polemic debates around issues that was developed within the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS). Controversies, too, are generative of “acute events” in the life of issues (Burgess & Crawford, 2011), and enrich our understanding of how both publics and issues emerge, engage, and overlap (Burgess & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016).

In order to examine the different cultural uses of the Goodes controversy on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, I started by mapping the actors, objects, and themes involved in this controversy across these platforms. To do so, I used the multiplatform issue mapping method (Burgess & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016). Issue mapping is a set of methods for the detection, study, and visualisation of a matter of concern. It usually uses digital methods, and is informed by mapping theories such as Latour's (2005) Actor Network Theory (Rogers, Kil, Sánchez-Querubín, & Sanchez, 2014). Digital methods as a lens for Internet research does not make significant distinctions between social and technical systems (Latour, 2005). That is, the technical mediation of social and cultural practices is taken as a given, and the aim is to follow "platform traces" as data for understanding the mutually shaping dynamics between users and technology (Rieder, 2016).

Issue mapping is largely used to understand networks of associations on the open web among stakeholders, arguments, and objects around important scientific issues such as climate change and aging (Rogers & Marres, 2000; Venturini, 2010). This work is primarily focused on hyperlinks as pathways to discover the connections among the different actors, themes, and objects involved in an uncertain topic. Recently, scholars have applied issue mapping to social media in order to acknowledge the role of platform bias – for example, bots – in the enactment and sustainment of publics on social media (Marres & Moats, 2015).

Building on Marres and Moats' (2015) work on mapping controversies with social media, and their claim to examine platform specific dynamics in order to identify issue activity, Burgess and Matamoros-Fernández (2016) tailor the issue mapping method to focus on the role of popular media practices in the enactment of sociocultural controversies across platforms. Although we acknowledge the role of platforms in giving rise to, and coordinating communication within issue publics, we argue that

> popular and everyday modes of communication (from selfies to memes) are fundamental to the cultural dynamics of social media platforms and play a significant role in the ways that certain kinds of controversies emerge, evolve, and impact matters of public concern. (p. 82)

Rather than considering users as passive audiences, this attention to what users do, and to how they engage with media draws from scholarship on media practices (Couldry, 2012); users' personal use of, and everyday practices on social media (Baym, 2010; boyd, 2014); and memetic culture (Burgess, 2008; Milner, 2016; Shifman, 2014). Couldry (2012) argues that with the advent of new media, "new grids of habit are forming" that are important to an understanding of society (p. 17). We post ultrasound images on social media

as a ritual to announce pregnancy (Lupton, 2013), set up private Facebook groups to get organised with peers, and watch bootlegged TV shows on YouTube.

What we *do* with media – both the institutions and infrastructures that organise content, and the content itself – matters (Couldry, 2012, p. 2). Some practices, Couldry argues, have become ritualized, where rituals are understood as "formalized, patterned actions relating to media that enact a particular way of organizing the world" (p. 72). While the idea of media practices relates to individualised and formal acts with media (for example, setting up Facebook pages as a response to news events), terminology such as 'rituals' and 'cultures of use' involve the mobilisation of collective social norms in the way we use media, such as snark on Twitter or identity antagonism in 4chan. Scholars of meme culture (Burgess, 2008; Shifman, 2014; Milner, 2016) adopt this more collective definition of media practices to describe memetic participation, which is characterized by the iterative repurposing of collective texts by different users.

Burgess and Matamoros-Fernández (2016) argue the importance of studying the role of popular media practices in the enactment of controversies by focusing on media objects (photographs, videos, hashtags) as mediators of issue publics. For example, in my examination of the Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube activity around the Goodes controversy, I paid particular attention to the sharing of visual objects, and to the specific cultural aspects associated with the creation and transformation of these texts, such as humour, intertextuality, and play. Increasingly, people participate on social media through visual content (Highfield & Leaver, 2016; Russmann & Svensson, 2018). Sharing practices of visual content are part of our "material participation" across platforms (Marres, 2012) and, although platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are not primarily visual, their users often create, circulate, and transform visual media.

The embedding of visual culture in people's lives is nothing new, however, and photographs have historically been used to document intimate moments of living experiences and to safeguard memories (Rose, 2010). Visual commentary – for example, press cartoons and street graffiti – has also been historically essential to public life, often remixing political arguments, humour, satire, and irony (Milner, 2016, p. 51). On social media, photographs are not only used to capture and store moments of our lives, but are also mobilised as tools of identity formation and communication (van Dijck, 2008). The Internet and the rapid development of technology have facilitated the widespread use and sharing of visual content online, and ritualised practices around subgenres such as selfies,

animated GIFs, and emoji have attracted scholarly interest (Senft & Baym, 2015). Users engage with social media increasingly via their smartphones, and this also makes it easier to instantly take a picture and post in on social media (Reading, 2011).

In 2013, Twitter added a function to embed images into tweets; users can now post any image from the web as an expanded image, rather than having to click on a link (Cooper, 2013). Since then, research has shown that adding pictures or videos to tweets fosters more engagement (Rogers, 2014). Other visual objects such as GIFs, emoji, and stickers are also embedded in our everyday social media communication (Azuma & Ebner, 2008; Miltner & Highfield, 2017), and platforms such as Twitter and Facebook recently added these digital objects to their list of features (Mchugh, 2015).

In my focus on media objects, I also paid attention to Internet memes: “multimodal texts created, circulated and transformed by countless cultural participants” that “allow creative play based on established phrasal, image, video and performative tropes” (Milner, 2016, p. 215). Scholars such as Jean Burgess, Limor Shifman, and Ryan Milner challenge early conceptions of memes as cultural artefacts transmitted across time via passive individuals by recognizing the individual agency involved in the social spread of Internet memes (Dawkins, 1976). Internet memes, according to these scholars, are a set of collective practices, rather than individual texts or genres – what Milner (2016) calls ‘memetic media’. In this study, memetic media are media texts (images, videos, screenshots, and GIFs) that are created and appropriated by users who, through their repurposing of these media in new contexts, give them new meanings.

Memetic media are unique for their multimodality, reappropriation, resonance, collectivism, and spread (Milner, 2016, p. 5). ‘Multimodality’ refers to the intense integration of word, image, audio, video, and hypertext in media texts, and their various modes of communication (p. 218). The multimodal dimension facilitates people’s reappropriation of existing media texts to create something new. In this process, intertextuality – the relationship among texts – has a crucial role. The novel and creative ways in which users recombine texts and intertexts are informed by their cultural background and common cultural references, as well as by global cultural references. The study of individual memetic expressions situated in collective contexts can give insights into their resonance with broader social and cultural dynamics.

Memetic media are important in understanding the dynamics of racism on social media because of the way they spread and resonate within different collectives. 'Spread' in this context should not be thought of as the capacity of memes to go viral – a specific type of accelerated information circulation – but rather as the process of iterative transformative reappropriation (Milner, 2016, p. 37). As Milner notes: "A consistently shared, innovatively applied inside joke between two friends could be a *meme* – their meme – even if the spread stops there" (p. 39). He borrows from Burgess' (2007) concept of "vernacular creativity" in new media contexts to elaborate on the creative play involved in the continuous transformation of memetic media.

Overall, by focusing on media objects as key mediators of issue publics in this study, I not only analysed media texts, but also appreciated the connections among them in terms of what people do with them. I further explored how their circulation is influenced by platform architecture and processes and how, in turn, this enacts platformed racism.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

To apply the multiplatform issue mapping approach to the Goodes case study I began by gathering relevant tweets. As well as gathering relevant original posts, the Twitter data set generated a rich repository of external links (Thelwall et al., 2015) that work as pathways to a variety of digital media objects: images, gifs, news articles, Facebook pages, YouTube videos, and so on. Twitter is also a platform where different groups of people, from ordinary people to organisations and governments, come together to discuss topical issues, such as the Goodes controversy.

For the data collection, I used the Tracking Infrastructure for Social Media Analysis (TrISMA), which utilises the Twitter Application Programming Interface to capture tweets of 2.8m Australian users on a continuing basis (Bruns et al., 2016). At the time of the data gathering, the TrISMA data collection contained nearly 1 billion tweets posted between 2006 and 2015 by users identified as 'Australian' by the technical infrastructure, and whose accounts were created before 2013. For each account, TrISMA gathered the last 3200 tweets

from users that joined Twitter before 2013. The data collection did not have tweets from any users who joined the platform after 2013[12].

Although I could have searched the platforms separately (Driscoll & Thorson, 2015), I chose the TrISMA dataset as a starting data source to guarantee a certain level of accuracy in the examination of media objects posted by Australian users; this is crucial to an understanding of the national specificity of platformed racism. Using the TrISMA dataset, I queried all tweets that matched the keyword "Goodes" between the time of Goodes' war dance and his retirement (29 May–16 September 2015)[13]. I cleaned the data[14] and ended up with a dataset of 121 226 tweets for that period.

After processing the dataset and performing the first round of coding, I realised that I could have also gathered tweets containing Goodes' Twitter handle (@adamroy37), as some of the tweets in my own dataset mentioned Goodes' account directly. While, in retrospect, this would have increased the amount of data I was able to collect, the intensive labour and multiple dependent phases involved in the data processing made it difficult to introduce a new keyword (for example,@adamroy37) once data processing was well underway. However, I acknowledge the importance of looking at the mentions of key actors' accounts and, therefore, note the omission of "adamroy37" as a keyword as a limitation of this study.

The multiplatform issue mapping method, as described by Burgess and Matamoros-Fernández (2016), involves multiple steps: building an issue inventory; mapping the issue networks; and identifying the key mediators (p. 80). To build the issue inventory, I ran scripts to extract hashtags, tweet types,[15] and URLs from the tweets collected, and processed the dataset in the visualization software Tableau. For the purpose of this study, I focused on the URLs shared on Twitter as pathways to discover relevant media objects, and the role of other platforms within public Twitter discussions. To account for the role of

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[12] This is a limitation of the study since tweets about the controversy posted by recently created accounts were not captured. TrISMA was updated in 2016 to include new accounts created after 2013. However, this project had already collected the data, and started the qualitative analysis by this time.

[13] The exact data extraction period was 28 May–27 September 2015 (AEST).

[14] I removed tweets that did not have the date when the account was created ('A Created At'), and also removed duplicate 'Tweet Ids' and tweets in a language that was not English. I also only kept tweets with one URL, based on the assumption that tweets with multiple URLs are either from Public Relations accounts or bots.

[15] The tweet type category allows the categorization of tweets according to whether they are original tweets, or tweets with @mentions or retweets.

visual culture on Twitter, I filtered the dataset by tweets with images; that is, tweets that contained a URL[16] to a photo posted directly on Twitter (these URLs also included GIFs). Of the tweets posted during the period studied, 9456 contained a URL link to a photo (8% of the total). From this subset of tweets, I selected original tweets and mentions[17] (no retweets) as I was interested in original memetic media created and appropriated by ordinary users. I ended up coding a dataset of 2174 tweets with images.

To investigate the role of other platforms within the public discussion around Goodes on Twitter, I also filtered the URLs shared on Twitter by domains. The most shared domains within my dataset were Twitter itself, followed by various media sources such as *The Guardian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)*, and *The Age*. The finding aligns with common news sharing patterns on Twitter within the Australian context (Bruns, Highfield, & Harrington, 2013). The first platform that emerged from the data as relevant in terms of the number of URLs shared on Twitter, was YouTube (926 tweets contained a URL to a YouTube video). This was followed by Facebook (539 tweets contained a URL of a Facebook link) (see Table 2). To maintain a coherent sampling of my data, I focused on original tweets and mentions (no retweets) that contained URLs to YouTube and Facebook. Overall, I open coded 2174 tweets with images, 405 tweets with Facebook links, and 529 tweets with YouTube links (see Table 2).

The first coding iteration helped me to become familiar with my dataset. I looked at the tweet text in relation to the media object shared (for example, the tweet text in relation to an image, a YouTube video, or a link to a Facebook public page), and focused on identifying common themes and actors around the controversy on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. I used Excel to iteratively code the media objects (tweets with images, Facebook posts and pages, and YouTube videos), and wrote coding notes for each platform and iteration.

In the second reading of the individual texts, I focused on memetic participation – that is, on what people were doing with these media objects on each platform. For this purpose, with regard to the tweets containing YouTube and Facebook links, I followed these links to make sense of these media objects on their platforms of origin (for example,

[16] Tweets containing URLs with this format:
https://twitter.com/BobMurphy02/status/626151550964994049/photo/1.
[17] @mention tweets are those that begin with mentioning another twitter account before the tweet text and the URL. For example, this hypothetical tweet: ".@firstdogonmoon always nails it."

the user practices on YouTube around the videos shared on Twitter, and the activity on Facebook regarding the public pages shared on Twitter). Memetic participation around these objects (Twitter images, YouTube videos, Facebook posts, and public pages) involved the creation, sharing, and transformation of personal and external media to: (1) use the Goodes controversy as fuel for the mobilisation of the popular culture of the Internet; (2) comment on news and the different aspects of the Goodes controversy; (3) perform acts of solidarity and support; and (4) call out racist discourse on these platforms and beyond. The prevalence of these practices, and the media objects that were mobilised to engage with them, varied across platforms. This issue is further explored in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Table 2. Number of tweets containing images, Facebook links, and YouTube links

	Total	Original	Mentions	Retweets	Coded tweets (only original and @mention tweets)
Tweets with images	9456	1983	191	7282	2174
Tweets with Facebook links	539	394	11	134	405
Tweets with YouTube links	926	496	33	397	429

To explore how the Goodes controversy played out on Facebook and YouTube, I used a number of additional methods specific to each of these platforms to gather extra data. My aim was to enrich my sample of individual texts (YouTube videos and Facebook public pages) to better understand the platform-specificity of platformed racism. These extra methods are further explained in Chapters 5 and 6. For example, to extract data from YouTube, I used the YouTube Data Tools (YTDT) (Rieder, 2015). On Facebook, I used

the Netvizz tool (Rieder, 2013). These tools, such as TrISMA, extract data from the platforms via their application programming interfaces (API).

User media practices

For my analysis of the Goodes controversy across platforms, I focused on the role of common cultural aspects associated with memetic participation on social media, such as humour, ambivalence, intertextuality, and play, in the enactment of racist and anti-racist discourse. These cultural aspects were useful to an understanding of platformed racism as a new form of racism amplified by platforms and their cultures of use. For this purpose, I drew on existing critical work on meme culture (Burgess, 2008; Milner, 2013; Miltner, 2014; Shifman, 2014), and expanded the contribution of those authors that incorporate race as a lens to interrogate participatory culture on social media (Nakamura, 2014; Frazer & Carlson, 2017). As Nakamura (2014) notes that:

> Because memes are often defined by their humor and whimsical nature — indeed, they circulate because of these very traits — they are seldom analyzed from the perspective of racial and gender critique. (p. 260)

For the reading of individual texts and practices across platforms, I took inspiration from Hall's (2008) work on the "politics of signification" of discourse. I studied how the intended messages encoded in objects and practices are transformed when put into circulation (p. 235). I also took into account the socio-cultural underpinnings of the various agencies involved in these processes of meaning making. Making sense of the uses of the Goodes controversy was only possible by situating these uses within broader literature in the fields of Critical Race Theory and Whiteness Studies, Australian Cultural Studies, and Internet Culture. As Milner (2016) notes, memetic conversations depend on encoding and decoding processes, and assessing these conversations requires assessing the social systems of understanding at their core, or what he calls their "grammar" (pp. 49–50).

For this coding-decoding process of media objects and practices, I also took inspiration from Shifman's (2014) proposition of how memetic texts can be analysed. She proposes focusing on their "content" (what they are about), "form" (their aesthetics), and "stance" (how the creators of the text position themselves in relation to it) (p. 40). While content and form were quite straightforward parameters, stance required more nuanced interrogation. Shifman (2014) proposes looking at stance from its "participation structures" (who participates and how), "keying" (the tone and style it adopts), and its "communicative

function" (that is, whether the utterance plays with emotion, humour, etc.) (pp. 40–44). However, many memetic practices carry ambivalent appropriation. As Phillips and Milner (2017) argue, online expression and performativity is ambivalent, and digital media affordances amplify the already ambivalent folkloric expression. While this ambivalence makes it difficult to understand meaning and intention in digitally mediated spaces, it is also an invitation to critically examine the extent to which memetic practices (independent of users' intention) reinforce or counter prevalent racial structures and dynamics in various contexts.

To analyse user practices with media from a racial critique perspective, I focused on three common styles of racist discourse: overt, colour-blind, and covert. Overt racist discourse has its roots in biological understandings of race, and works to position non-whites as less than human. This is illustrated by racist tropes such as the comparison of black people with monkeys, and the use of racist slurs such as the n-word. I also used Bonilla-Silva's (2002, 2009) conceptualisation of colour-blind racism to decode many of the arguments around the Goodes controversy that were used to justify the booing.

Bonilla-Silva (2009) defines 'colour-blind racism' as the central white racial ideology of the post-civil rights era that is "produced and reproduced in communicative interaction", and works to maintain white privilege (p. 11). Colour-blind racism is characterised by "slipperiness, apparent nonracialism and ambivalence" (Bonilla-Silva, 2002, p. 41). He contends that white people in America "have developed powerful explanations—which have ultimately become justifications— for contemporary racial inequality that exculpate them from any responsibility for the status of people of color" (p. 2). These stylistic components of colour-blind racism are: the avoidance of overt racial language; the use of various semantic moves to express racial views without "sounding racist"; the projection of racism to non-whites; and the use of diminutives (p. 41).

I combined these features of colour-blind racism with other common tropes of modern racism documented by various scholars, such as racism denial, victim blaming, and reverse racism (Bobo, Kluegel, & Smith, 1997; Bobo et al., 1997; Brooks, 2009; Chang, 1995; Feagin & Vera, 1995; Ryan, 1971; van Dijk, 1992). Importantly, these common tropes and styles of modern racism were examined in relation to their historic manifestations within the specific Australian context. In this regard, I drew on the work of Ghassan Hage (1998) and Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2015) to examine how racism and

whiteness in Australia are strongly linked to nationalism, patriarchy, and Indigenous dispossession.

To examine how racist discourse was cloaked in humour and play, I focused on media and communication literature that documents the practice of weaponising irony on social media; that is, the use of irony as an attack on a collective or individual for identity antagonism purposes (Milner, 2016; Phillips, 2015; Phillips & Milner, 2017). Day (2017) notes that irony "is often sloppily invoked as a blanket defense of potentially offensive humour" (p. 114). Although irony is a very powerful tool "to point out contradictions and hypocrisies, not cynically to withdraw from caring, but often to assert passionately that we deserve better", when jokes trade with racism or sexism "without any coherent judgement about these things" they are "likely not ironic at all", she adds (p. 114). I also used Hill's (2008) work on "mock Spanish" to complement the theoretical analysis of how humour, by itself, can work as a racist discourse (Hill, 2008). Last, I looked at common features of whiteness to understand certain uses around the Goodes controversy, such as DiAngelo's (2011) "white Fragility" concept, and literature that documents the problematic involved in common white performances of solidarity (Ahmed, 2004; Engles, 2016; S. Sullivan, 2014).

Ethical challenges and decisions

This research received QUT ethical clearance (number 1600000308) for collecting, analysing, and visualising data from social media platforms, and was considered a low risk project. In each of my methodological steps, there were ethical considerations and decisions to be made. Digital methods require substantial time and critical interrogation to produce solid results. Decisions surrounded: which media objects to take into account; how to create a sample collection; how to analyse and interpret it; and how to make findings (Rieder, 2016). Rieder describes four layers of technical mediation that researchers should take into account when using digital methods: the platform itself, the API, the extraction software, and the analytical techniques. It is also important to acknowledge the epistemological limitations that come by default with digital methods. For example, the data extracted from APIs already represents a particular view of social media data (Puschmann & Burgess, 2014). Platforms do not allow researchers to extract all the data generated during a certain period of time, and there is no clear explanation from these companies about how this data is sampled. Some ethical decisions are also already built into the software tools used to extract the data. For example, while TrISMA and the YouTube Data Tools provide the

name of Twitter handles and YouTube channels, Netvizz provides the anonymized data of Facebook users.

Due to the controversial nature of my topic, only publicly available information (in the form of social media posts) was used for my research. I excluded any social media site that was 'private' (such as Facebook profiles or walls, or content posted by locked Twitter accounts). Because it was impractical (and arguably intrusive) to obtain consent from the authors of the hundreds of thousands of posts that I collected for analysis, I was granted a waiver of consent that was balanced against the strict anonymity of private users. The aim was to undertake a deep cultural analysis of the extent to which social media practices, and platform mediation of these practices enacted platformed racism, rather than to judge whether users were racist. Therefore, the analysis focused on the media objects shared by users, such as images, videos, and gifs; it was not concerned with studying user behaviour, or mapping the social network relationships among people. The identities of content contributors, unless they were widely known public figures, are not disclosed in this study or related publications. Paraphrasing and description were used to guarantee the anonymity of ordinary users.

There remained a risk that potentially disturbing openly racist content identified in this research, and some sensitive issues disclosed, could possibly impact on the groups being targeted (that is, on Indigenous Australians). As scholars note (Milner, 2016; Phillips, 2015), reproducing racist discourses, even to critique them, can amplify their harms. I minimised this risk by describing, rather than graphically showing, most of the overtly racist posts encountered. In this regard, I tried to balance both the need to document the instances of platformed racism that were the topic of my study, and the risk of amplifying them. My intent was not to ventriloquise racist arguments, but to critically examine the structural cultural dynamics that underpin them, in order to outline possible solutions to platformed racism.

I have described how whiteness and racism in relation to the Goodes controversy manifested as an entanglement between user practices and their platform mediation. My purpose was to challenge whiteness as an unmarked category; otherwise, "it becomes distributed throughout social spaces and eventually functions as a 'universal insider'" (Jackson, Shin, & Wilson, 2000, p. 72).

There is significant social benefit in understanding both the content and the flow of communications regarding potentially racist activities over social media. This research

discloses creative online initiatives that contest racist practices. It shifts hierarchies of attention which produce unequal opportunities for speaking and being heard on social media (Dreher, 2009) by amplifying Indigenous voices within the Goodes public discussion. In order to limit the inevitable limitation of my own speaking position as a white person (and especially as a researcher), I tried as much as possible to amplify Indigenous responses and counter-narratives, rather than speak for Aboriginal people from a white 'saviour' or 'expert' position.

3.5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has described the method used to study platformed racism – the multiplatform issue mapping (Burgess & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016) – in relation to users' engagements with an Australian race-based controversy, the booing of Indigenous AFL player Adam Goodes on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook. It explained that I extracted a corpus of individual media objects that were shared on Twitter (images, YouTube videos, and Facebook posts and public pages), the object being to then identify common practices around these objects, and to examine the extent to which these practices and their platform mediation enacted platformed racism.

In order to make sense of how racism and whiteness manifested in relation to the Goodes controversy, I situated this case study within the broader literature around race and racism in Australia. The cultural dynamics of race and racism in Australia are crucial to an understanding of platformed racism, especially since non-US cultural specificities are often at odds with a libertarian platform approach to the governing of public discourse.

In addition, user engagement with media objects in relation to this Australian race-based controversy needed to be contextualised in broader practices within Internet culture. Users increasingly engage in public conversation on social media through memetic participation; that is, through the creation, circulation, and transformation of memetic media, largely visual media. The ambivalence of memetic participation complicates notions of race and racism, and is a challenge for platform governance.

The results presented in the following chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) assess how racist and anti-racist discourse were articulated on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook through the sharing, transformation, and creation of memetic media in relation to the Goodes case study. In Chapter 7, I then focus on how platformed racism was enacted across

the platforms as a combination of user practices, platform architecture, and platform governance. The cultural analysis of the uses of the Goodes controversy on these platforms, and their platform mediation, builds a case for the concept of platformed racism.

Chapter 4: Racialised visual media practices on Twitter

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores how racist and anti-racist discourse was articulated on Twitter through the sharing, transformation, and creation of visual media objects in relation to the Goodes case study. On Twitter, users engaged with various visual media practices in relation to the Goodes controversy: the repurposing of image memes to participate in the controversy; the sharing and appropriation of mainstream and personal media to engage with the news; and performances of solidarity and anti-racism call-out culture. 'Call-out culture' is a term used to define a shared public condemnation on Twitter in relation to a particular topic. It usually encompasses the shaming of someone, and positions those who engage in the call- out as "better" than those shamed (Highfield, 2016, p. 25).

Previous research has explored the role of audiovisual content on Twitter as a response to particular events (Bruns & Hanusch, 2017), and as everyday talk on this platform (Thelwall et al., 2015). In this chapter, I expand on this literature by looking at how users' memetic engagements with visual objects (images and animated GIFs) on Twitter can both serve as evidence of the politics of race discourse in Australia, and help us understand how race and racism articulate in its specific context.

Most of the literature on race and racism and Twitter focuses on text-based tweets and racialised hashtags to examine race and racist talk on the platform (Cisneros & Nakayama, 2015; Sharma, 2013; Sharma & Brooker, 2016). I further this research by considering users' engagements with visual memetic media as political acts, rather than simply as playful social media performances (Highfield, 2016; Miltner & Highfield, 2017). As a consequence, I consider them to have a crucial role in contemporary articulations of racism.

The chapter is structured as follows. After describing the collection, processing, and data analysis of tweets with images, I first examine the use of image memes to both denigrate/criticise and support Goodes. Second, I look at the user practices around the sharing and appropriation of mainstream media objects (for example, pictures and screenshots of news) and personal media objects (for example, screenshots of self-written

text) to participate in the controversy. Finally, I explore Twitter-specific practices that had unintended consequences for the reinforcement and amplification of racism: white solidarity, and Twitter's anti-racism call-out culture.

Data collection, processing, and analysis

The sample of individual visual media objects examined in this chapter is part of the collection of tweets extracted from TrISMA. I filtered the TrISMA dataset of 121 226 tweets that matched the keyword "Goodes" to retain only those tweets containing images. This yielded 9456 tweets (7.8% of the total). From this subset of tweets with images, I selected original and @mention tweets (no retweets[18]); this reduced my sample to a final body of 2174 tweets with images. I decided to focus on original and @mention tweets because I was interested in the range of people's activity with media objects in terms of transformative reappropriations, rather than the virality of the most popular tweets. The decision to focus only on original and @mention tweets with images was a first sampling strategy; this was to follow with an examination of the way in which this content resonated on Twitter, and its impact on the articulation of racism on this platform.

I thematically coded the 2174 tweets with images in order to identify common practices in users' reappropriation of these objects for racist and anti-racist discourse. Research results stress that images on social media should be studied in combination with their accompanying posts (Bourlai & Herring, 2014). Since I was interested in understanding people's practices in relation to visual objects, I paid attention to the themes and actors conveyed in the images in relation to their ancillary texts (that is, the tweet texts and hashtags accompanying the images). My ultimate aim was to understand how platformed racism was enacted on Twitter through the creation, sharing, and repurposing of visual material. Tweets that had been originally collected but had been either deleted or

[18] Original tweets are tweets originally posted by an individual user on Twitter. @mention tweets are those tweets directed to someone by mentioning their account in the tweet (for example, this hypothetical tweet: "@andairamf look at what this Facebook page says about Adam Goodes [link of the page]". Retweets are tweets that contain the content posted by other users on Twitter. People can quote retweets by adding their own commentary to the tweets they are further amplifying on the platform.

were no longer available at the time of data analysis, were labelled as "broken links", and false positives[19] were coded as "not relevant".

Through this coding and process, I identified some common practices in the use of media objects on Twitter that were related to this controversy: (1) users' memetic engagements with image memes (for example, image macros, animated GIFs, and photoshops[20]); (2) the appropriation of mainstream media through the circulation of screenshots and pictures of online and printed news, and political cartoons; and (3) the creation of personal media (for example, screenshots of self-written comments and personal drawings) for personal commentary on the issue (I analyse these in detail in the following sections of this chapter). I also identified platform-specific practices with unintended consequences for the amplification and reinforcement of racism: white performances of solidarity (for example, the sharing of selfies to support Goodes); and an active visual call-out culture (for example, the circulation of screenshots containing hate speech posted on other digitally mediated spaces).

The findings suggest that anti- and pro-Goodes users engaged in the same practices to participate in racist and antiracist discourse. This finding points to the need to carefully understand the cultures of use around these practices – for example, the use of humour and intertexts – to make sense of the way in which race and racism manifested in relation to this case study. This required the contextualisation of user visual practices around the Goodes controversy within broader digital cultural tropes and racialised discourse. To this end, I made sense of these practices by engaging in literature on meme culture (Burgess, 2008; Highfield, 2016; Milner, 2016; Phillips, 2015; Shifman, 2014) and racialised discourse and practices (Bonilla-Silva, 2002; Hill, 2008; DiAngelo, 2011). I also drew on scholarship on Australian Cultural Studies to contextualise user visual practices around the Goodes case study within historical manifestations of race and racism in this particular national context (Hage, 1998; Hartley & Green, 2006; Moreton-Robinson, 2015). This cultural analysis of user practices around the Goodes case study was repeated on each platform under examination in this study: Twitter, Facebook (Chapter 5), and YouTube (Chapter 6).

[19] False positives are tweets collected that matched the keyword "Goodes" but that were not about Adam Goodes. For example, tweets @mentioning users that had "goodes" in their Twitter handles (for example, this hypothetical user: @keeygoodes)

[20] Photoshops is an internet vernacular term for digitally altered photographs. The term comes from the name of the popular image-editing software application Adobe Photoshop.

Ultimately, the Goodes case study served as an example of more general and universal practices of platformed racism.

Users' visual engagement with the controversy on Twitter connected to past controversies involving Goodes, historical events, contemporary news stories, and age-old discussions. It also employed intertextual references to mass media artifacts and personalities, Internet cultural practices and aesthetics, as well as to cinema, literature, and music. With regards to the politics of race reflected in this memetic participation, Twitter users engaged with overt racist tropes (for example, the dehumanising meme of comparing black people with primates); covert racism (for example, use of homophobia as a backdoor cultural identity attack to avoid overt racism); and colour-blind racism (for example, racism denial, victim blaming, and reverse racism discourse). Common Twitter practices (meme culture), in combination with platform-specific cultures of use (for example, the display of white solidarity) informed the platform-mediated specificity of racism.

4.2 USES OF VISUAL MEMES FOR RACIST AND ANTI-RACIST DISCOURSE

Users participated in the war dance and the booing campaign discussion on Twitter through the creation, transformation, and circulation of different visual memes (for example, image macros, photoshops, and GIFs), and by repurposing and remixing found and personal media. Image macros, for example, were commonly used on Twitter to participate in the Goodes controversy.

The image macro form typically consists of a photographic image with a black border, with a humorous caption overlaid in white letters. Stock character macros such as LOLcats – also known as 'cat macros'– are a subgenre of image macro and have their own vernaculars (for a forensic analysis of this subgenre see Miltner, 2014). Users engaged with the Goodes controversy by making their own macros, and by transforming popular stock macros to create new contexts and meanings. Although some macros traded with the dehumanising meme of comparing Goodes with a monkey, the anti-Goodes variants of user-made macros largely reflected tropes of modern racism, such as racism denial and victim blaming tropes (Nelson, 2013; Ryan, 1971).

A recurrent argument mobilised in these type of macros was the claim that the booing could not be racist because other Aboriginal athletes did not get booed, only Goodes. One

example of this racist trope was an image macro depicting different Indigenous AFL and National Rugby League (NRL) players and Goodes. The white text overlaid in the picture read: "So let me get it straight… If I cheer these Men… And Boo this Man… I'm a Racist? Really?" This claim illustrates the "anything but race" verbal strategy of colour-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2002), which white people use to dismiss the fact that race affects any of their acts towards minorities.

Another common argument to justify the booing was the claim that taunts during games were part of the AFL culture. Users created various image macros to back up this claim. One image macro shared showed AFL umpires with an overlaid text that read: "Getting booed for 158 years. One player gets booed for a few weeks and everyone loses their mind". Bonilla-Silva (2002) observes that another linguistic style of colour-blind racism is the use of diminutives to minimise racism. In the text of this macro, the word "few" undermined the longevity of the booing campaign against Goodes, which started in May 2015, and finished in September 2015 when Goodes announced his retirement.

A sketch from *The Simpsons* also became a popular in-joke among Goodes' opponents to disguise the racist nature of the booing. Users made image macros from a scene from Episode 18 in Season 6 of *The Simpsons*, in which Mr Burns presented a movie in the Springfield Film festival featuring himself as the star. In this episode, when the movie ends, the audience starts to boo and Mr. Smithers (Mr. Burns' personal assistant), in order to comfort Mr Burns, tells him that the public is saying "Buurns", not "booo". In this scene, the old character of Hans Moleman follows the joke and says: "I was saying boo-urns"; this has the alleged intent of sounding ambivalent. In some of the reappropriations of this sketch, to make fun of the booing, users changed the "boo-urns" caption to, "I was saying Goodesss".

The harm that the booing was doing to Goodes, who publically expressed its negative impact on him, was mobilised as a site of ridicule. The booing campaign was a white act of reclamation of the space that Twitter users transformed into multiple jokes and remixes to portray Goodes as not being man enough to cope with the taunts. In addition, white Australians framed the booing as their right to express disagreement on the field, and did not connect the act of booing with previous racist incidents in Australian sport.

The booing was also frequently justified by mobilising the argument that people booed Goodes because they did not like him, not because of his Aboriginality. Victim

blaming strategies (Ryan, 1971) claimed that he was being booed because "he staged for free kicks", he was not a fair player, and he played the "race card". Users also commonly referred to Goodes as a "sook" – an Australian slang to define someone that is soft and easily upset (a gendered slur) – and a "flog", an Australian slur used as a somewhat more acceptable way to call someone a 'wanker' (Di Stefano, 2015). Users also accused Goodes of "seeing racism everywhere". For example, one image macro showed a cartoon of a ghost saying "boo", and Goodes appearing at the bottom of the macro responding "racist!!!" All these claims are familiar arguments commonly mobilised among white people to deny that race informs their everyday practices.

Victim blaming tactics also served to distract the debate from what really happened; that is, that Goodes performed an Indigenous war dance to celebrate a goal, an action that clashed head-on with white expectations of 'good' ways of using Australian icons and traditions such as the AFL. This resonates with previous literature that documents how white people in Australia feel entitled to reclaim ownership of the national territory and treasured national leisure domains such as the beach, football grounds, and Anzac Day (Hage, 1998; Hartley & Green, 2006; Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

Sexism and homophobia recurrently intersected with racism in memetic participation around the Goodes controversy on Twitter. Historically, subordinated masculinities include gay and effeminate men (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1985; Jackson, 2015). For instance, users on Twitter circulated movie posters from *Footloose* and *Billy Elliot* – both films featuring heroic male leads who dance to express their frustration – to suggest that the AFL star could have had a "cameo" in them. People also circulated an image of a man vaguely resembling Goodes who was wearing tight shorts – normally a garment associated with young girls' clothing – and overlaid it with the following text: "Goodes in his new footy shorts". On the sports field, while overt racism has been replaced by covert and institutional discrimination, hostility and overt prejudice towards gay athletes is commonplace (Anderson, 2002). On Twitter, homophobia, as a backdoor cultural identity attack to avoid overt racism, was also commonplace.

Users also appropriated and topically remixed popular stock macros and known Internet memes to adapt them to the controversy. As Shifman (2014) points out, longevity is key to popular memetics, since successful memes are those that originate from individuals, spread to the broader society, and survive over time (pp. 13–18). An example of user appropriation of a well-known Internet meme for the Goodes controversy was a new

remix of the widely applied macro: One Does Not Simply Walk into Mordor, a popular quote from the 2001 film *Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* ("One Does Not Simply Walk into Mordor", 2018). The reappropriation of this meme maintained the original image of the fictional character Boromir, but overlaid the following text: "One does not simply touch a Selwood's head without consequences".

When Goodes returned to the field (at the beginning of August 2015) after taking some time off due to the booing, the Sydney Swans played Geelong. Goodes' return overshadowed Geelong's captain Joel Selwood's 200th AFL game, and some Geelong supporters went online to complain that their skipper's milestone was not going to be properly recognised (ABC News, 2015). The image macro illustrated the Geelong supporters' outrage, and implied that they would continue to boo Goodes. Such hegemonic masculinity, as a salient feature of whiteness (Dyer, 1997), dominated the anti- Goodes discourse. First, the act of booing was perceived as an act of masculinity as part of AFL and, as such, a normal and desirable behaviour on the field. Users bragged about the aggressive reactions of football fans when rival teams "provoked" them, as the remix of this popular meme illustrates.

Anti-racism discourse in relation to the Goodes controversy also made use of user-made and popular macros to make a point. For example, Indigenous co-host of *SBS*'s National Indigenous Television (NITV) entertainment sports series League Nation Live, Nathan Appo, tweeted an image macro that depicted different Indigenous athletes showing Indigenous pride: Goodes performing the war dance, and its recreation by Indigenous teammate Lewis Jetta; NRL Indigenous footballer Greg Inglis performing his goanna crawl celebration; and Indigenous NRL player Jonathon Thurston wearing an Indigenous mouthguard (used to protect players from shock during contact sport). The overlaid text in this image was the hashtag #DeadlyOutbreak. The term 'deadly' is used by Indigenous Australians to suggest something really good. While the use of the word suggests Appo's labelling of Indigenous performances as "great", if we read the literal sense of 'deadly', the adding of the term "outbreak" seems to ridicule those offended by these gestures; that is, something causing death. The hypertext #DeadlyOutbreak, at the same time, connects the tweet to an Indigenous audience that is aware of the significance of 'deadly' in Indigenous culture. As Brock (2012) notes in his analysis of Black Twitter, these intentional practices use and help construct "Black cultural commonplaces" in platforms such as Twitter (p. 533).

Pro-Goodes users also appropriated well-known memes to make fun of what DiAngelo (2011) terms "white fragility", the racial stress white people feel when they are called out for being racist, or when they are exposed to identity politics and racial performances. For instance, one user, self-identified[21] as Aboriginal, remixed the First World Problems image macro template – which is normally used to comment on trivial complaints from privileged individuals ("First World Problems", 2018) – to laugh about those offended by the war dance. The macro consists of a white woman crying and, in its remix to engage with the Goodes controversy, the meme caption read: "Sticks and stones may break my bones. But invisible spears hurt me". The sentence "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me", is an intertextual reference to a common childhood chant meaning hurtful words cannot cause any physical harm, and should thus be ignored ("Sticks and Stones", 2018). However, the second part of this English rhyme was changed and substituted by the text: "But invisible spears hurt me"; this works to make fun of white people being stressed by an imaginary spear. Another stock macro used to make fun of white privilege was the meme Privilege Denying Dude ("Privilege Denying Dude", 2018), often used to satirize white male's patronizing views on different politically sensitive issues such as racism, homosexuality, and feminism. As Frazer and Carlson (2017) note, Indigenous people's engagement with memes is an opportunity "to trouble the political hegemony that remains either insensitive or indifferent to past colonial violence and its contemporary presence" (pp. 7–8).

The practice of creating and circulating photoshops (an Internet vernacular term for digitally altered photographs) about Goodes was also salient on Twitter among pro- and anti-Goodes users. The majority of photoshops created and circulated in relation to this controversy portrayed Goodes as taking advantage of kids, an intertextual reference to his (2013) pointing out of a fan that called him an "ape". (She was subsequently removed, and it was later revealed that she was a young white girl). The use of photoshops to undermine Goodes' public persona adds a different dimension to Jenkins' (2006) claim that in participatory culture, people "photoshop for democracy". For example, users transformed the meme 'I Want You' Poster that was used in American war propaganda to recruit soldiers ("Uncle Sam's "I Want You' Poster", 2018) to parody Goodes' gesture of pointing at the girl. The image of Uncle Sam pointing his finger at the reader was photoshopped with the

[21] Users commonly self-identify as Indigenous Australians on Twitter by writing the name of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's groups, such as Koori or Murri.

image of Goodes as Sam's face, and the caption read: " Goodes WANTS YOU!!... to be the next 'Face of Racism'!! If you are 13 years old or under, call footballer silly and childish, misconstructed names and preferably are a Collingwood supporter – APPLY NOW!"

Twitter users' play around the 2013 event also involved the addition of the memetic character of Hulk Hogan, either as the girl who abused Goodes, or as an ordinary AFL fan contributing to the booing. In July 2015, following the Gawker Sex Tape and Lawsuit controversy involving Hogan in 2012 – in which the website Gawker leaked a video tape of Hulk Hogan having sex with a woman – some tabloids published excerpts of the transcripts of that tape in which the wrestler made racist comments ("Hulk Hogan", 2018). This incident coincided with the climax of the booing campaign against Goodes, and participants played with both controversies to make fun of those that argued that the booing was racist. As Highfield (2016) argues, photoshop-based forms "use juxtaposition and incongruity, mixing together contexts that are otherwise unrelated", and "play with the media literacy of their audience, in the creation and understanding of the meme form, and also the comprehension of its social media context" (p. 56). These examples illustrate this point since they inter-relate controversies and meanings by mixing them for further reinterpretation.

The use of memetic media to portray Goodes as an abuser of kids was further evolved in users' appropriation of a popular Internet meme in Australia, the Gosford Anglican Church signs, which are famous for making pro-refugee, pro-marriage equality, and pro-Islam statements (Braithwaite, 2016). In this transformation, Goodes was photoshopped next to a Gosford Anglican Church sign[22] that read: "Take a stand! Pick on little kids". This in-joke in the Twitter anti-Goodes discourse is particularly problematic due to the long Australian tradition of portraying Indigenous people as having a dysfunctional character (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). In these cases, irony and play are used to hide deep racist practices and ideologies in Australia – practices and ideologies that are difficult to grasp without previous knowledge of the dynamics of race and racism within this particular national context.

[22] In fact, the Gosford Anglican Church made a sign in support of Goodes that people widely circulated on Twitter. The sign read: "Boo the bigots. We stand with Adam Goodes."

Pro-Goodes' users also created photoshops to defend the AFL and criticise the booers. However, the messages reflected in some of these photoshops worked to reinforce racism rather than counter it. For example, users circulated a photoshop of the Minions, single-celled yellow organisms from the *Despicable Me* movie franchise – an American computer-animated comedy film saga produced by Illumination Entertainment– that need their "masters" to function. In the photoshop that circulated to defend Goodes, one yellow Minion appeared, saying "Boo!!" Another, photoshopped as having black skin, answered: "Only bogans boo". 'Bogan' is an Australian term – similar to 'chav' in the UK and 'redneck' or 'white trash' in the US – used to denigrate those considered uneducated and uncultured (Gibson, 2013). Within the American context, Sullivan (2014) argues that claiming that the poor, white uneducated are the racists, is a "middle-class white" racist trope that works to exonerate their white privilege. The photoshop reflects the intersection of racism and class in relation to the Goodes controversy, and illustrates how 'good whites' point at 'bogans' as the source of racism in Australia. Blaming 'bogans' for the racism that Goodes experienced worked to exonerate white privilege, rather than to effectively counter racism on Twitter.

The use of animated GIFs to engage with the Goodes controversy was also a common practice on Twitter. As a resonant genre of memetic media (Milner, 2016), GIFs act as "digital slang" in online conversations (Eppink, 2014, p. 301), and their use for political commentary is an everyday occurrence on social media (Highfield & Milner, 2017). Animated GIFs were mainly used among pro-Goodes users, who shared them to show various emotional reactions to the various events and comments that surrounded the controversy. A common reaction among white users was to show disdain for the racism Goodes was experiencing. Expressions of this disdain included a GIF showing American actor Steve Carell shouting "noooooooooo" every time someone on Facebook denied the racist nature of the booing; and, for every racist tweet targeted at Goodes, a LOLcat macro showing a surprised-looking cat with the caption, "Fuck me. Didn't see that comin". The use of GIFs in this case was not meant to introduce new ideas to the debate; rather, for the most part, people engaged with them to differentiate themselves from 'bad white' users that spread hate online.

Some uses of GIFs were especially problematic from a Critical Race Theory perspective. In an attempt to express opposition to the racism Goodes was experiencing, some people used GIFs with images of black people to express feelings of frustration. One

of these GIFs showed an irritated black man with the caption: “People are particularly stupid today. I can’t talk to any more of them”. This was accompanied by a tweet text in which the user argued that the GIF reflected his feelings about Goodes. Another GIF that circulated showed a black woman with a visibly annoyed face and the caption: “This is some white nonsense”. The GIF was accompanied by text that claimed that people were being “really terrible” about Adam Goodes. Both GIFs reflect body language and facial expressions that convey exasperation and a touch of cynicism.

Jackson (2017) exposes the challenges associated with white people’s tendency to over-rely on Black reaction GIFs to express excessive or intense emotion; she calls this phenomenon “digital blackface”. Blackface, originating in the 19th century, is a theatrical tradition in which white buffoons appropriate and mock Black culture on vaudeville stages (Saxton, 1975). Blackface reinforces stereotypes about Black people being more emotional and physically expressive (and hence, less rational and white). Therefore, in her article about “digital blackface”, Jackson (2017) notes that white people’s overuse of GIFs featuring black people for the purpose of expressing extreme amusement or anger, is a continuation of the practice of reducing Black identity to emotion and performance. Jackson notes that her criticism of such GIFs is not meant to stop white people from using them for playful purposes (except when this play is mobilised to antagonise); rather, it is an invitation to think about how certain uses in particular contexts reproduce long-running negative stereotypes of Black people and culture.

Users also appropriated personal media such as photographs and found visual media objects (for example, comic strips and old posters) and connected them to the Goodes controversy through surrounding references, such as hashtags and users comments. While the media shared was not transformed, it was made relevant to the Goodes controversy by adding – for instance, #adamgoodes – as a hashtag in the accompanying tweet. For example, one tweet contained what seemed to be an already repurposed comic strip of the *Peanuts.* This strip featured the African American character Franklin saying: “I like being Black”, to which Charlie Brown answered: “That’s nice. I like being white”. Franklin then answered: “Racist”. The tweet text accompanying this meme was used to express a feeling of being “so over” the controversy, and included the hashtags #AdamGoodes and #auspol[23].

[23] #auspol is a popular hashtag in Australia to discuss Australian politics.

AFL fans often claimed that by being asked to stop the booing, they were being silenced. This is an appropriation of the main reason why they were booing: the fact that white people do not generally like it when minorities speak up. Their reaction to accusations of racism was to invoke unfair politics of voice, and to accuse those who defended "politically correct" discourses. To make this point, users also shared an image of a woman gagged, with the accompanying tweet saying that Goodes just wanted to "enjoy the last 5 games of the season" so that everyone had to "#shhhhh" (be silent) and "#B #O #O" (boo Adam Goodes)". The tweet victimises white people as being silenced, while at the same time encourages people to continue booing Adam Goodes. Another example of playful appropriation of media (without altering the media itself) was a tweet containing an image of a shop called "Hey Boo", accompanied by a tweet text that sarcastically asserted that Goodes would not like that commercial establishment.

Pro-Goodes users also engaged in the practice of appropriating personal and found texts and connecting them to the Goodes controversy through connective references. Indigenous activist and writer Celeste Liddle tweeted a picture of a sign she hung in her office door as a response to the war dance. The sign was a white sheet of paper with a hand-written text that read: "Invisible traditional weapon store. Be aware". The image was accompanied by the following tweet text: "Put on my office door today. Tharr be WMDs… #adamgoodes". "Tharr be WMDs" translates to "there be weapons of Massive Destruction", an alleged intertextual reference to WMDs in Iraq – the pretext that George W. Bush used to invade that country. The funny and vernacular creative joke mocks "white fragility" (DiAngelo, 2011) in Australia, and compares the labelling of an imaginary spear as "dangerous" to the large-scale lie that the Bush administration used to justify the invasion of Iraq. The joke, in turn, refers to the British invasion of Aboriginal land in 1788, as well as to the national lie that Australia was *terra nullius.* The multimodal tweet denounces with humour "white possessive logics" (Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

Indigenous vernacular creativity on Twitter was crucial to unmasking whiteness, and represented an opportunity to locate diversity of viewpoints and representation, especially in the context that memetic media "is constrained by the cultural systems that simultaneously facilitate it" (Milner, 2016, p. 85). This means that, since traditional producers of popular culture have historically generated media objects that reflect a certain vision of the world (and these are texts that people normally use for memetic participation), original contributions such as Celeste Liddle's tweet are opportunities to deconstruct

dominant narratives around the controversy through the use of personal media. As previous authors observe, some blatant racism contains parodic potential that can be turned to antiracist purposes (Gubar, 2000; Hewitt, 1986)

Another example of this practice was a tweet that contained a picture of a bottle of milk from the Australian supermarket chain Woolworths, which was sponsored by the AFL. The AFL campaign slogan written on the bottle's label read: "Official white milk of the AFL". The tweet text sarcastically ridiculed the use of the qualifying adjective "white", since milk can rarely be any other colour but white. The tweet works as an intertext to the institutionalised racism within the AFL (for an overview of the topic see Klugman & Osmond, 2013a), and as a critique of the articulation of whiteness in this institution, as exemplified by its late response to Goodes' vilification on the field. Other found texts that were connected to the Goodes controversy through the use of certain hashtags were the circulation of images of other dances, such as the Morris dance – a form of English folk dance which, users said, would have better pleased a white audience.

Pro-Goodes content sometimes made use of, and reframed phrases and discourses associated with racist and xenophobic groups (for example, "I'm not racist, but…"; "Love it or Leave it"; and "get over it") and turned them into their own slogans and commentaries. Reclaiming these phrases and discourses for Indigenous support, and countering previously race-related discourses, emerged as a counter tactic within the race controversy. One tweet, for instance, contained the meme Batman Slapping Robin ("My Parents Are Dead/Batman Slapping Robin", 2018), an illustration taken from a comic published in 1965. The meme consists of creating self-parodies by featuring custom-captioned speech bubbles. In the repurposing of the meme to engage with the Goodes controversy, Robin started the sentence with "I'm not racist, but…" Batman then slapped him and saied: "Yes you are!" Catchphrases such as "I'm not prejudiced/racist but…" are verbal strategies of colour-blind racism that people normally use before a racist statement (Bonilla-Silva, 2002). The example shows the difficulties of detecting racist discourse without due context. As racist slogans can be memetically reappropriated by counterpublics for anti-racist purposes, it is difficult to moderate these expressions without risking the censorship of anti-racism discourse.

One racist catchphrase that was transformed for the anti-racism discourse was the condescending suggestion that Indigenous people "get over it", suggesting that they forget the past, move on, and ignore systemic racism. One of the macros that circulated in this

regard showed the Indigenous flag with an overlaid text that read: "White Australia Logic. Anzac Day = Never forget. Bali Bombings = Never forget. Aboriginals getting their land stolen, being murdered raped and kids stolen from their parents = Get over it." Indigenous writer and journalist Amy McQuire wrote in *The Guardian* that Indigenous people cannot 'get over it', since Australia maintains open wounds with First Nations, such as the lack of recognition of the Aboriginal soldiers that fought in World War I and in the frontier wars, or the high Indigenous incarceration rates (McQuire, 2014).

Another racist catchphrase that was transformed for the anti-racism discourse was the anti-immigration slogan, "If you don't love it, leave". One text that circulated to engage with the Goodes' controversy stamped this slogan onto an image of the Aboriginal flag, suggesting that if white people do not like Indigenous culture, they can always leave the country. This latter reappropriation is an intertext related to racist attitudes to the management of the Australian national space, to which white people feel entitled to decide who belongs (Hage, 1998; Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

Some of the practices around the appropriation of visual objects to engage with the Goodes controversy also showed the importance of transforming media into social media-appropriate forms which can be shared (for positive or negative purposes), and which can spread widely in this form. An example of this transformation was users' wide circulation of a still video frame involving Goodes in a controversial wresting for the ball with Richmond footballer Taylor Hunt. One user tweeted a still video frame in which Goodes seemed to be grabbing Hunt's genitals. The tweet text asserted that the AFL should investigate the incident and @mentioned (that is, directly addressed the Twitter accounts of) various mainstream media outlets. The image was extracted from a game in which Swans played Richmond on 27 June 2015, one month after Goodes performed the war dance. The circulation of this still video frame without the rest of the recording, worked to create a controversial moment where none previously existed. In fact, the video of the entire play shows how there was no such controversial play, and Swans coach John Longmire said that Goodes' 'squirrel gripping' accusations were "disgraceful" (Curley, 2015). As Phillips and Milner (2017) note, within Internet culture, "decontextualization isn't a bug, it's a feature", and affordances such as modifiability facilitate this kind of mischief-making (p. 124).

The circulation and transformation of the still frame continued on Twitter, and generated in-jokes about Goodes being sexually attracted to Hunt. For example, photoshops

that showed the same still video frame with an overlaid rainbow – symbol of LGBT pride – were circulated. These were accompanying by a tweet that said Goodes was "feeling" the love and the hashtag #LoveAlwaysWins, an intertextual reference to the pro-LGBTQ hashtag #lovewins. Another photoshop showed Port Adelaide AFL players with jockstraps superimposed (photoshopped), the 'joke' being that AFL players needed protection against Goodes' gestures on the field. Users kept tweeting the still frame with different tweet texts, and often @mentioned the accounts of Australian mainstream media outlets (for example, *The Herald Sun,* and radio talk shows such as *1116 Sen Footy*, *Triple M Footy* and *3AW*) to catch their attention and prompt them to cover this fabricated story. As Phillips (2011) notes in her study of memorial pages on Facebook, mainstream media's hyperbolic and un-reflexive coverage of trolling provocations in these pages works to reward and further amplify trolls' antagonistic practices. One of Goodes' most vocal antagonists, *Herald Sun* columnist Rita Panahi, and the Twitter account of the media outlet *Fox News*, circulated the still frame to suggest that Goodes did not play fairly. This sensationalist media coverage contributed to amplifying the spread of this fake Twitter sub-controversy and rewarded users' efforts to push this lie into the mainstream.

Pro-Goodes content also transformed mainstream media content into social media-appropriate forms to be further shared. When conservative *Herald Sun* columnist Andrew Bolt[24] re-enacted the war dance on his TV program *The Bolt Report,* participants made a GIF of this moment to mock his cultural appropriation.

4.3 VISUAL NEWS-SHARING TO ENDORSE AND COUNTER WHITE NARRATIVES

Twitter users also engaged with the Goodes controversy by appropriating mainstream media content (for example, the sharing of online news through the circulation of screenshots), and by creating personal media (for example, screenshots of self-written texts) for political commentary. While the previous section has shown how the Goodes

[24] Andrew Bolt is one of the few public figures in Australia who has been found guilty of racial discrimination. In 2011, The Federal Court found Bolt to have breached Section 18c of the Racial Discrimination Act when two of his articles implied that light-skinned people who identified as Aboriginal did so for personal gain (Bodey, 2011).

controversy was used as an opportunity to perform and connect with broader Internet cultures and practices, this section focuses on users' news-sharing patterns via the visual.

Twitter, as a backchannel for news-sharing, has been extensively researched (Bruns et al., 2013; Smyrnaios & Rieder, 2013). Most of this literature focuses on the sharing of links to traditional and alternative outlets. However, Twitter participants engaged with the news around Goodes by sharing images containing transformed and original mainstream media content. For example, they shared screenshots and pictures of online and printed articles, printed political cartoons, and images with quotes of known Australian public media figures. This mode of participation happened mainly around Australian mainstream media, and users rarely took pictures or screenshots of Indigenous media outlets such as the *Koori Mail,* even though these outlets reported on the Goodes controversy (Maxwell, 2015).

The role of Twitter users as curators of mainstream media content related to Goodes – by means of the circulation of images and screenshots of this content – amplified non-Indigenous media framings of the controversy. With regard to personal media, users created their own drawings and political cartoons, and circulated screenshots of their self-written texts. Users' news-sharing patterns via the visual were more common among progressive voices than among anti-Goodes users, who were more active in engaging in memetic humour and play around the controversy. As described in the previous section, some anti-racist practices around the transformation of mainstream media contributed to the amplification of racism on Twitter.

Users shared photographs of printed newspaper articles on Twitter mainly to endorse or counter the narratives of Australian conservative media personalities who have long been engaged in Australian culture wars, such as News Corp columnists Andrew Bolt, Miranda Devine, and Rita Panahi; radio broadcaster Alan Jones; and ex-footballer and sports TV presenter Sam Newman. For example, Bolt's common racist tropes amplified on Twitter were his accusation that Goodes was starting a "race war" with his gesture of throwing an imaginary spear (see reverse racism), his defence that the booing was not racist (see racism denial), and his continuous portrayal of Goodes as the "archetypal black victim", "attention seeker", and "half Aboriginal" (see victim blaming and white frames on Aboriginality). One example of the transformation of mainstream media to endorse conservative views was a tweet that circulated a printed picture of one of Bolt's articles with an accompanying tweet text praising the views stated in the article and the hashtag #notracist.

The transformation and appropriation of mainstream media content to endorse conservative views of the Goodes controversy brought into light the opinion of an Indigenous blogger Dallas Scott, who wrote that Goodes was playing the "race card" (Scott, 2013). Andrew Bolt himself had before shared and praised Scott's opinions on Indigenous people's use of the "race card" to get social benefits (Bolt, 2015). In this case, users screenshotted Scott's blogpost and shared it on Twitter. Users used Scott's Aboriginality to present him as the spokesperson of the whole Indigenous community. Therefore, if an Indigenous man said Goodes was playing the "race card", the argument could not be racist. Holloway (2015), in an article for *Salon,* critiques this racist trope:

> It's equally frustrating, and incredibly dumb, to have it suggested that because another person who looks vaguely like you holds a different opinion or claims a different experience, your own opinion or experience is invalidated.

The views of conservative Australian figures were shared largely to perform anti-racism by publicly denouncing or "calling out" such views. Feminist writer Clementine Ford took a picture of one of Bolt's articles and circulated it with her critique on the tweet text. In this article, Bolt defined Goodes as "the archetypal black victim of white oppressors", and applied white frames on Aboriginality by writing: "a man with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ancestry". In reply, Ford wrote: "Look at how Bolt carefully crafts this to say that #Goodes isn't really FULL Aboriginal, so he's not REALLY black". Bolt's comment builds on a long history in Australia of white people policing Aboriginal identity, and defining "the accepted signifiers of Aboriginality" (Carlson, 2016, p. 10). This tradition is still reproduced by conservative personalities, who see skin colour as one of the "signifiers" that white people mobilise to cast doubt on Aboriginality.

Other appropriations of mainstream media reproduced problematic arguments that already resonated among some pro-Goodes users in their engagement with image memes; for example, their projection of Australian racism onto lower class whites, or 'bogans'. One tweet shared a picture of a letter to a newspaper editor with the title: "Boos expose worst of Freo fans". The tweet text accompanying the image was a quote from this letter to the editor, which accused those who booed of being "bogans".

Users also shared screenshots of online news to engage with the controversy on Twitter. Conservative public figures such as Rita Panahi and Miranda Devine engaged with this practice. In one of her tweets about Goodes, Panahi shared a screenshot of a poll by *FoxSports* in which the TV program asked its audience: "Do you think the booing of Goodes was racially motivated?" The image showed that 79.56% of respondents said "no",

and 20.44% said "yes". The tweet text accompanying the tweet read: "Extraordinary result given the campaign by radio, TV and print pundits (incl HS[25]) painting Goodes as a victim of racism". Indigenous writer Celeste Liddle shared a similar poll for the opposite purpose. She shared a screenshot of another *FoxSports'* poll that asked: "Did Goodes go too far with his goal celebration?" The image showed that 59.94% of the respondents answered "yes", and 40.06%, "no". The accompanying tweet text read: "And laugh and think, this is Australia, ooh… – My passport up for grabs #AdamGoodes #IndigenousRound #racism". The text is an intertextual reference to the 1985 song *Sounds of Then (This is Australia)* by the Australian band Gangajang. Liddle used irony to criticise how one part of white Australia received the war dance as 'inappropriate', and joked about the fact that she no longer wanted her Australian passport because of the country's racism. In this use of intertexts, Liddle distanced herself from the white Australia (reflected on the result of the poll) of which she is a part.

Another example of user transformations of mainstream media for anti-racism purposes was the circulation of the online front page of *The Australian*, where a story about Goodes reflected the age-old racist stereotype that all Black people look the same. In its coverage of the Goodes controversy, the paper illustrated Goodes's return to the field with a picture of Sydney Swans' Indigenous player Lewis Jetta. This misidentification of Goodes sparked all sorts of reactions on Twitter. "Dear @australian. This is NOT Adam #Goodes" pointed out Australian journalist Jano Gibson from *ABC News*, in a tweet with a screenshot of *The Australian*'s gaffe as evidence. The Twitter account of SBS *The Feed* – a TV program that dedicated their 'Douche Of The Week!' to *The Australian* for this mistake – also tweeted a similar screenshot. Although this particular controversy was mainly circulated by other journalist and Australian media outlets, ordinary users also amplified and shared *The Australian*'s gaffe.

The role of Australian mainstream media in reproducing racist stereotypes has been extensively researched (Jakubowicz et al., 1994), and Twitter serves as a platform to call out mainstream media's white frames in reporting race-based controversies in Australia. However, as we see in the next section, in some cases, the practice of echoing and calling out racist tropes and racialised discourse on Twitter and elsewhere, although meant to perform anti-racism, has unintended consequences for the amplification of racism.

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[25] "HS" stands for *Herald Sun*, the newspaper for which Panahi sometimes writes.

Users also engaged with the news by transforming popular quotes from Australian public figures and turning them into images to circulate on Twitter: another tactic to transform mainstream media content into social media-appropriated forms that can be shared and broadly spread. In his appearance on the TV program *Offsiders*, Australian ABC award-winning journalist Waleed Aly said:

> Australia is generally a very tolerant society until its minorities demonstrate that they don't know their place. And at that moment, the minute someone in a minority position acts as though they're not a mere supplicant, then we lose our minds. (Tyler, 2015)

People overlaid this quote on an image of him, and circulated it on Twitter. Aly's claim invokes the 'model minority' stereotype. Literature on the 'model minority' stereotype has mainly been developed in relation to Asian-Americans to explain their 'story of success' as a result of their 'hard work' and 'supportive and structured families'. In America, Asian stories of success are often mobilised to blame African-American disadvantage in society (Chow, 2017). Scholars highlight the "nativistic racism" embedded in this stereotype (Chang, 1993) which, in the Goodes case, worked to reinforced white frames on what a 'good' Aboriginal is. In Australia, when minorities challenge "white possessive logics" (Moreton-Robinson, 2015), they receive a disproportionate public backlash – what some have called the "brown poppy syndrome" (Joshi, 2017). This syndrome refers to the Australian tendency "to lop off anyone committing the crime of publicly challenging racism whilst having dark skin" (Joshi, 2017). Joshi (2017) calls it the 'no platforming', a right-wing analogue of a left-wing concept that refers to the denial of a platform to critical voices.

Users also shared political cartoons for racist and anti-racist discourse from progressive cartoonists such as First Dog on the Moon (*The Guardian*), David Pope (*Canberra Times*), and Peter Lewis (*Newcastle Herald*); and from conservative cartoonists such as Mark Knight, Chris Roy and Peter Broelman (*The Herald Sun*); Sean Leahy (*The Courier-Mail*); and Dean Alston (*The West Australian*). Cartoons have played a significant role in shaping public conversation in Australia (Phiddian & Manning, 2008; Quartly & Scully, 2009), a tradition that still resonates on social media.

One of the cartoons shared within the Goodes controversy on Twitter was drawn by Larry Pickering; it compared Goodes – 2014 Australian of the Year and dual Brownlow medallist – with Australian professional tennis player Nick Kyrgios, who is known for his displays of braggadocio and racket-wrecking temper tantrums during matches (Chammas, 2017). In this cartoon, it appears that Kyrgios is being booed, and Goodes asks him:

"Racism?" The tennis player responds: "No, I'm just an objectionable twat." The cartoon reflects again the "anything but race" strategy to deny racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2002). In this case, the booing was justified, not because of Goodes' Aboriginality, but because of his attitude.

Anti-racism discourse also shared and circulated political cartoons. The shared Indigenous account @IndigenousX tweeted Mark Knight's cartoon on the war dance. The cartoon showed an Aboriginal tourist guide who is showing Indigenous traditional art drawn in caves; this art depicted Goodes performing the war dance. The balloon speech read: "People are affected by Aboriginal art in different ways… Here, some see a strong leader of his people engaged in a cultural dance… Other just stand and boo…" The cartoon reflects the historical predominance of white culture in the management of the space, the control over what is tolerated in Australia, and the narratives around the nation (Hage, 1990, p. 89).

Many of the cartoons shared on Twitter reinforced a common racist trope already observed in the previous section: the middle-class, anti-racist strategy of attributing racism to lower-class or uneducated whites (Sullivan, 2014). These cartoons portrayed AFL fans that booed as brainless sheep. For example, Dean Alston *(The West Australian*) drew footy fans as animals shouting at Goodes: "Go back to the zoo!" Indigenous consultant, social innovator and entrepreneur Dameyon Bonson tweeted that, because of the way racism operates in Australia, the cartoon does not work well as a critique. Rather, it reproduces the racist stereotype of perceiving Indigenous people as less than human.

Users also created and shared personal media to weigh into the controversy. They mainly circulated screenshots of self-written texts and personal drawings. These self-written texts often denied the racist nature of the booing by articulating similar arguments to those described earlier in this chapter. Personal thoughts shared on Twitter also resonated with the anti-Goodes arguments articulated by conservative figures; for example, a screenshot that read that Goodes should have warned the audience about the war dance to "educate the masses". The idea that it is the role of people of colour to educate white people was expressed by Collingwood chief Eddie McGuire after Goodes performed the war dance. In an appearance on the program *Today* McGuire, who had previously compared Goodes to King Kong (soon after the incident where Goodes was racially abused by a Collingwood supporter in 2013), said of the war dance: "Had we known before the game that Adam or some of the Indigenous players were going to do some sort of war cry, we

could have been able to educate and understand the situation" (Hogan, 2015). This argument, as expressed by African-American scholars, is a symptom of white privilege (Lorde, [1980] 2011). Queer feminist writer and civil rights activist Audre Lorde argues: "[people of colour] are expected to educate white people as to our humanity", while "the oppressors maintain their position and evade their responsibility for their own actions" (p. 240).

Pro-Goodes users also engaged with the practice of sharing screenshots of their own self-written texts to express their feelings and opinions about the controversy. In these more personal contributions to the controversy, users also circulated their own drawings, which worked as political cartoons. One user, for instance, shared a personal drawing that portrayed Goodes pointing at a ship with British colonizers. In the drawing, the number on Goodes' back was "227 years", rather than his regular number 37, the former being the number of years since the British colonised Australia under the concept of *terra nullius*. The drawing recreates Goodes' gesture of calling out racism on the field in 2013, and connects the two events in the discussion of the war dance, while also remembering the massacre of Indigenous people during colonisation.

4.4 THE RACIALISED EFFECTS OF TWITTER'S CALL-OUT CULTURE AND WHITE SOLIDARITY

Two salient practices on Twitter had unintended consequences for the reinforcement and amplification of racism: anti-racism call-out culture, and white performances of solidarity. Rather than serving racial justice purposes, these well-intentioned practices worked to re-centre whiteness, and to amplify racist discourse.

To call out racist discourse on Twitter and elsewhere (for example, mainstream media, Facebook, Wikipedia, and even mobile apps), people shared screenshots as evidence of the controversial discourse found online. In the tweet texts accompanying these screenshots, users often @mentioned mainstream media to draw their attention to the racist discourse thriving online; @mentioned platforms to demand action against that content; and largely named and shamed the perpetrators of hate by mentioning their Twitter handles or the names of Australian public figures (for example, Andrew Bolt). For example, during the controversy, Goodes' Wikipedia page was flooded with hateful comments, some of which were screenshot by users, and circulated on Twitter. The Wikipedia edits shared on

Twitter narrated Goodes' fictional death, called him names, and used racist tropes against Aboriginal Australians; for example, depicting them as "petrol sniffers".

Users also shared screenshots of Facebook posts in which people racially abused Goodes, comparing him with primates. This longstanding racist trope went even further when it was appropriated as a question for The Trivia Crack app. One user shared a screenshot of one question appearing to be from the app; it read: "Which of the following starred in the 2001 film 'The Planet of the Apes'..?" The possible answers were Adam Goodes, Mark Wahlberg and Brad Pitt. The user who tweeted the screenshot mentioned @triviacrack in the text, which said "we need to talk about #racism". @triviacrack did not respond to the tweet; however, other tweets that replied to this thread suggested that it seemed like a "dodgy" photoshop.

Another practice of Twitter's anti-racism call-out culture was to criticise, and even shame, Australian public figures for their views (and silences) on the Goodes controversy. Then Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbot was one of the targets of these critiques, since he did not condemn the booing until Indigenous AFL player Lewis Jetta performed a re-enactment of Goodes' war dance on the field (Bourke, 2015). People shared fake screenshots of empty tweets from Abbott's fictional Twitter account, making a humorous point about his having nothing to say against racism. Brisbane Roar's goalkeeper Griffin McMaster was also publicly shamed and condemned for his racist declarations about Goodes on Twitter. McMaster tweeted: "Goodes calls Australia Day invasion day. Deport him. If you don't like it leave". He later deleted the tweet, but Twitter users had already taken screenshots and circulated them to call him out, and the media reported on the case (Mannix, 2015).

McMaster's tweet is an intertextual reference to Goodes' acceptance speech when he was named Australian of the Year, and it made use of the anti-immigration catchphrase "If you don't like it, leave it". The tweet misses two points. First, in his appearance on *Channel Nine* after receiving the Australian of the Year award, Goodes said about Australia Day: "It is Invasion day, it is Survival Day, it's all of those things to Aboriginal people and I think people need to understand for Aboriginal people, today is a day of sorrow, of hurt." However, Goodes added that, in the preceding 5 years, he had tried to turn the meaning of the day "around it", and see it as being "about survival," and "about celebrating our 40,000 year history, our culture that is still surviving". Second, the fact that McMaster claimed to "deport" Goodes sounds very much like Hage's (1998) "White nation fantasy" and

Moreton-Robinson's (2015) "white possessive logics"; that is, a white self-constructed fantasy of national space that ignores the fact that Indigenous people are the First Nations of Australia, and imagines white people as the only sovereigns of the country.

Twitter's anti-racism call-out culture contributed to platformed racism in two ways. First, the practice of further sharing hate content to denounce it, contributed to the amplification of racism. As Phillips and Milner (2017) argue: "Regardless of why someone retweets, reposts, reblogs, remixes, or further reappropiates memetic media, any act of engagement […] ensures that what we're sharing spreads a little further" (p. 123). Second, some of these shaming practices against known Australian public figures were more about performing 'good' anti-racist practices than contributing practically to an effective anti-racism agenda. The lack of awareness about how whiteness operates and manifests through everyday practices – even those of white or non-Indigenous allies – contributes to platformed racism.

White and non-Indigenous performances of solidarity had similar unintended consequences for the reinforcement of racism and white privilege in relation to the Goodes controversy. Users reacted to the racism Goodes was experiencing by sharing self-displays of solidarity with him: from selfies with him, to photos featuring white people held up to a camera and holding a sign with a supportive message (for a detailed analysis of this latter meme, see Milner, 2013). Typically, these visual objects were accompanied by "hashtagged solidarity" (Highfield, 2016): the use of hashtags to perform networked support such as #IStandwithAdam, #jesuisgoodes – an intertextual reference to the meme #jesuischarlie[26] – #CheerforGoodes, #StandbyGoodes, #walk4Goodes, and #IbackGoodes. The hashtag #IStandwithAdam did not originate from Twitter users but was created by *The Sydney Morning Herald* in their official campaign to support Goodes. The paper encouraged people to print a pro-Goodes poster that it had created and to take it to the stadium. The campaign went viral on Twitter, and people posted evidence of their memetic engagements with it by taking pictures of themselves holding the poster. Users also shared photos of the *The Sydney Morning Herald* support poster hanging in the entrance of their home or on their children's bedroom walls. They also widely shared images of white kids with the number 37 – Goodes' AFL number – painted on their arms or backs in support of Goodes. This

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[26] The hashtag #jesuischarlie originated on Twitter as a response to the terrorist attacks against the French satirical weekly newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015.

performance meant that the anti-racism practices gravitated around the children rather than Goodes, and worked to depict whiteness as 'good,' and 'cute.' Engles (2016) defines white people's tendency to immediately post showings of solidarity with "black victims" as "racialized slacktivism" (p. 92). He claims the need for a more "self-aware white activism" as a more effective practice for achieving an anti-racism agenda on social media (Engles, 2016).

Other performances of support also fell short of being effective anti-racism tactics. One image macro created in support of Goodes went viral on Twitter. The macro portrayed Goodes with the Aboriginal flag in the background, and the overlaid text: "Share! If you support Adam Goodes." Well-connected Twitter users shared this meme, thus contributing to its further spread. In his analysis of meme design, media theorist Geert Lovink (2017) notes that memes are "the perfect way to enter a story", and that the important question to ask is: "Which story?" In this case, the macro lacks any story, and only encourages users to "share".

Other image macros that circulated in support of Goodes, even if they were created for a well-intended purpose, became problematic from a Critical Race Theory perspective. For example, feminist writer Clementine Ford shared an image macro showing Goodes bare-chested and drinking water, with an overlaid text that read: "Share if you support Adam Goodes". The image emphasised Goodes' attractiveness, and depicted him in a sexy posture. Although the intent of the macro was to support and show admiration for Goodes, it unintendedly reinforced white people's objectification and fetishism of the black athletic body in particular, and black masculinity in general – a racist trope that has its roots in Colonialism (Carrington, 2002).

Other engagements with solidarity practices had a deeper appeal to the depth of racism in Australian sport. Users transformed past iconic memetic gestures against racism in and beyond Australia to show solidarity with Goodes. Iconic images spread virally across social media, becoming symbols of events and issues, and inspiring further visual reactions and remixes (Vis & Goriunova, 2015). In the Goodes case, users appropriated Indigenous former AFL player Nicky Winmar's gesture against racism in 1993 to emphasise that little had changed. Winmar's gesture and Goodes' war dance were "both intimate and public (…) a pronouncement of pride in the form of an open challenge" that remains "an arresting statement of race, discrimination, dignity and defiance" (Klugman & Osmond, 2013, p. 138).

Another iconic image of black body politics that circulated in support of Goodes' war dance was the picture of African-American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos performing the black power salute on the podium at the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico. The picture is iconic because of the power and historical significance of their gesture, but also because Australian athlete Peter Norman was also standing in the podium in solidarity with the two African-American athletes. In fact, on his return to Australia, Norman faced a public backlash for his gesture in support of the Black cause (Georgakis, 2012). This cultural memory work situated the Goodes controversy within wider and historical dynamics of race within Australian sport and beyond, and worked as an interesting and appropriate example of platformed anti-racism.

On Twitter, the solidarity of Indigenous voices also offered a richer contextualisation of the controversy in relation to broader issues that affect the Indigenous community in Australia. The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organization Twitter account (@NACCHOAustralia) linked the Goodes controversy to the high rates of death among the Indigenous community due to smoking. The rotating account @IndigenousX connected it to other Indigenous activist causes, such as the campaign to stop the forced closure of Aboriginal remote communities in Australia, articulated around the hashtag #sosblakaustralia. The success of #sosblakaustralia serves to highlight the role of social media as a useful tool for Indigenous political activism, and represents an increasing Aboriginal resistance orchestrated across platforms (Carlson & Frazer, 2016; Dreher, McCallum & Waller, 2016). The hashtag #sosblakaustralia also follows a broader tradition of race-activist hashtag publics on Twitter, such as #blacklivesmatter (for a detailed analysis of the hashtag in the US context, see Rambukkana, 2015).

In addition, vocal advocacy Twitter accounts such as @Kon__K, run by Kon Karapanagiotidis, Founder & CEO of the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre, often retweeted vocal Indigenous voices on Twitter, such as the Indigenous account @IndigenousX. As found in previous research, these types of collaborations are productive to create counter-narratives around issues that affect the Aboriginal community (Waller, Dreher & McCallum, 2015).

These examples point to a more effective way of performing white solidarity on Twitter: the practice of amplifying performances of solidarity from Indigenous activist organisations, and vocal voices that were already engaging and campaigning for Goodes (for example, tweets from Indigenous public figures Celeste Liddle and Dameyon Bonson).

As Daniels (2013) points out, while collective action sometime "lacks a clearly defined social goal", movement organisations online "are trying to affect social change" (p. 705).

4.5 CONCLUSIONS

The different ways in which racism was articulated on Twitter in relation to the Goodes controversy, especially through users' appropriations of image memes, and through both mainstream and personal media, is crucial to understanding platformed racism. On Twitter, platformed racism manifested not only through users' mischievous creation and appropriation of media, but also through user anti-racism practices that had unintended consequences for the amplification of racism and the reinforcement of white privilege. Regardless of the category and intent of practice, racist and anti-racist discourse made use of the same affordances and media to engage in the Goodes controversy. Both anti- and pro-Goodes users used similar visual objects (for example, image memes, mainstream media, and personal media) and cultural aspects of memetic culture (for example, humour, intertextuality, and modularity) to engage with the controversy.

Users also appropriated visual objects to engage in dehumanising racist tropes against Goodes (for example, the creation of image memes comparing Goodes with a primate). Nevertheless, the type of racism that mainly surfaced through users' appropriation of media objects was aligned with Bonilla-Silva's (2002) definition of the stylistic components of colour-blind racism – the various discursive moves to avoid overt racism. For example, in the case of memetic engagement with media, users used humour and play to cloak racial prejudice. The digital and media literacies at play in these creations were significant. User references to popular and fan culture (for example, recasting US wrestling star and media personality Hulk Hogan as an AFL fan), their remix of topical issues (for example, #LoveAlwaysWins), and their understanding of memetic aesthetics and forms (whether from a meme generator or user-made), situated their practices in a wider ecology of digital cultures. Intertextuality became essential to 'get the joke', and required an understanding of Australian popular culture and history. Homophobia as a somehow more acceptable cultural attack on Goodes (rather than overt racism) played a significant role in the articulation of racism in this controversy. Hegemonic masculinity is a feature of Australian white nationalism and the sports field (Anderson & McCormack, 2010;

Moreton-Robinson, 2015), and surfaced as a form of domination of 'racialised others' on Twitter; in this case, Adam Goodes.

Platformed racism also surfaced as the result of well-meaning anti-racism strategies that had unintended consequences for the amplification of racism and the centralisation of whiteness as a pivotal feature of online interactions (Brock, 2011; Kendall, 1998). Twitter's call-out culture contributed to the amplification of hateful and racialised discourse regarding Goodes; at the same time, it sometimes worked as a tool for 'good' users to performatively differentiate themselves from 'racists' and 'uneducated' Australians – a familiar cultural practice associated with white middle class identities. Similarly, white performances of solidarity were problematic since they worked to re-centralise whiteness over Goodes (for example, practices gravitating around self-displays). These performances of support also unintentionally served to reproduce racist stereotypes, such as white fetishisation of the black athlete body (Nakamura, 2014).

In parallel, platformed racism can also only be understood when set against the particular dynamics of race in Australia – dynamics that centre around whiteness as a category that distinguishes the dominant group from both Indigenous people and various waves of migration. The reading of some of the media objects that were shared to engage with the Goodes controversy surfaced this white Australian self-understanding of being the unique sovereigns of the national territory (Hage, 1998; Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

Chapter 5: The reproduction of white narratives on YouTube

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines how platformed racism was enacted on YouTube through user creation, transformation, and circulation of YouTube videos in relation to the Goodes controversy.

The chapter is structured as follows: After describing the collection, processing, and data analysis of YouTube videos; I first explore the use of YouTube as a cultural archive (Burgess & Green, 2009), and its role as a public space containing a heterogeneous collection of videos: from musical clips, TV shows and films, to vernacular genres such as 'how to' tutorials, parodies, and compilations. This use of YouTube was visible through users' appropriations of YouTube videos as annotations and intertextual references in their engagements with the controversy on Twitter. For example, users shared YouTube videos of popular quotes from TV shows to make a point about the war dance and the booing campaign.

Second, I explore how racist and anti-racist discourse was articulated on YouTube through users' creation, appropriation, and sharing of videos around the controversy. In this regard, I explore three salient user practices around the controversy on YouTube: user appropriation of YouTube memes; users' own creation of content – from videoblog-style videos (vlogs) to remixes – and their transformations and sharing of mainstream broadcast media videos.

Users creatively engaged with the Goodes controversy on YouTube by creating their own videos (for example, memes, parodies, remixes, and rants). For example, users transformed long-running YouTube memes such as the Downfall parody and Leave Britney Alone to engage with the Goodes controversy. Previous literature has explored the dynamics of participatory culture on YouTube (Burgess, 2008), as well as the shared characteristics of memetic videos (Shifman, 2011) and specific playful transformations of particular YouTube memes (Gilbert, 2013). This work stresses the central role of users' memetic engagements on YouTube in creating new social and cultural values, and perpetuating old ones. I build on this literature to situate users'

engagements with YouTube memes around the Goodes controversy within YouTube's vernacular culture and broader Internet cultures. In addition, I examine how users' engagements with YouTube's memes reproduced or countered dominant discourses of race in Australia.

YouTube as a broadcast platform for amateur and professional content creators, has also been largely explored (Burgess & Green, 2009; Cunningham & Craig, 2017). I draw on this literature to look at how channels that normally use YouTube to broadcast themselves – from ordinary users to amateur content creators – used the Goodes controversy to perform their rituals on the platform (for example, rants). I identify the type of amateur channels that engaged with the Goodes controversy (for example, their links to broader Internet cultures, such as channels with a strong alt-right agenda), and the extent to which this analysis was useful in understanding the articulation of platformed racism on YouTube.

Finally, I examine users' news-sharing practices on YouTube by exploring users' transformation and sharing of mainstream broadcast media on YouTube, and how this contributed to the reproduction of eschewed views of the controversy.

Collection, processing, and analysis of data

In my original dataset of 121 226 tweets that matched the keyword "Goodes" (extracted from the period 29 May to 16 September 2015), 926 tweets contained a link to YouTube videos (0.76% of the total). In this chapter, however, I only examine those videos that were originally posted by distinct Twitter users (that is, by filtering out retweets). This reduced my analysis sample to 529 tweets that contained links to YouTube videos. I followed these links to the YouTube platform to study the videos (for example, content of the video, channel that uploaded it, video description, and title) and the practices around them. The data analysis followed various steps.

First, from my sample of videos extracted from the Twitter dataset, I identified those that were unrelated to the controversy (that is, those videos that were uploaded to YouTube before Goodes performed the war dance on 29 May 2015) to examine the use of YouTube as a cultural archive. I read these videos in combination with the tweet text to make sense of the new meanings these media objects acquired when shared on Twitter. For example, I looked at why people shared the video clip of the Disney movie

Frozen to make a point about Goodes on Twitter. I examined the themes of these videos and how they worked as intertextual references within the public discussion around Goodes on Twitter.

Second, I identified those videos of the war dance and the events that fed this controversy; that is, videos that were created from 29 May to 16 September 2015. I examined their content (themes) and the type of channel that uploaded this content (mostly to identify the channels' broader interests beyond the Goodes controversy). At the same time, I was critically interrogating the politics of race discourse reflected in the creation, circulation, and transformation of these texts. As was the case on Twitter, I was interested in making sense of what people were doing with these videos, their practices, and the extent to which these practices enacted platformed racism. To do so, I situated these practices within broader digital cultures and discourses about race in Australia. Links to videos that were no longer available at the time of data analysis were labelled as "broken links," and false positives were coded as "not relevant".

In order to deepen my analysis of the way in which the controversy specifically played out on YouTube, I used YouTube's search function and followed its video suggestions to supplement my original video sample. First, I used the search function of the YouTube Data Tools (Rieder, 2015) and queried the term "adam goodes" to find new controversy-related content that had been uploaded from 29 May to 16 September 2015. With this data gathering, I was primarily interested in finding more user-generated content rather than more broadcast media content. My aim was to complement my reasoning around user practices with original YouTube content in relation to the Goodes controversy. For example, during this exploration, I found various vlogs (uploaded by ordinary users) that contributed original content to the controversy. I also found videos that were uploaded by alt-right channels that weighed into the controversy.

Second, while watching some of the content extracted with the YouTube Data Tools, I pursued a more organic exploration of YouTube-related videos. In this exploratory exercise, most of the content recommended was already familiar; however, I did find some new user-generated content, such as a video uploaded by the Indigenous collective Cope ST in which Indigenous actor Bjorn Stewart made fun of the dangers of imaginary spears.

5.2 YOUTUBE AS A CULTURAL ARCHIVE

Users on Twitter playfully commented on the Goodes war dance by reappropriating YouTube videos as intertextual references. One popular theme of discussion articulated through the sharing of videos on Twitter was Goodes' war cry dance. Users shared YouTube videos of other dances that would have better pleased a white audience. For instance, a Twitter user self-identified as Indigenous Australian tweeted in relation to the war dance that she was trying to think of a "white dance" Goodes could have done. She continued by saying that the Charleston came to mind; however, its origin was African-American and she could not think of any other examples. In response to this tweet, another user tweeted a YouTube video[27] featuring a 1992s sketch from the Australian comedy series *Fast Forwar*d – a parody of the talent show *New Faces* – in which two white contestants show their silly dance routine. Similar videos of white people dancing were shared, such as a video[28] of the Greek Zorba dance, and a clip[29] from the *BBC*'s TV show *The Office*, in which the character David Brent dances in front of his colleagues.

In response to the war dance, these videos make fun of "white fragility" in various ways (DiAngelo, 2011). First, they flip the negative stereotype of black people as good athletes/dancers rather than 'intellectuals' by making fun of the trope that 'white people cannot dance'. White People Dancing (also known as LOL White People) is a meme within Internet culture to parody white people's dancing style ("White People Dancing / LOL White People", 2018). The meme has its origins in Black stand-up comedy during the 1980s, where black comedians inverted stereotypes of black masculinity – men being "uncivilized" and "dangerous"– to deliver the stereotype of white men being "over-civilized, timid and cowardly" ("White Dude, Black Dude", 2018).

Second, these videos of white dances are parodies of white people's acceptance of certain cultural performances over others. For example, by joking about the fact that there would not have been an issue if a Greek player would have danced the Zorba, users highlighted that the booing was due to Goodes' performance of Aboriginality.

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[27] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=simatCov_SM&feature=youtu.be
[28] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-MucVWo-Pw
[29] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6Eaz-1_3iA

Goodes performed race through the war dance, and by doing so, he did not please the colonial gaze (Bhabha, 1990; Said, 1979). Within African-American culture and Indigenous culture, dance is an historical form of expression and resistance to hegemonic whiteness (Gilbert, 2003; Gottschild, 2016). Goodes used this on the field.

Another tactic to invert the racist stereotype of the "aggressive black man" attributed to Goodes' war dance was to share (on Twitter) YouTube videos featuring white athletes in various celebrations that reflected "violent actions". For example, users shared a video[30] featuring NRL player Bryan Fletcher where, to applaud his goal, he pretended that the rugby ball was a bomb and threw it to the crowds. Similarly, another user shared a video[31] featuring AFL player Tony Lockett doing the "fuck off" gesture to the crowds.

Users on Twitter also shared edited YouTube clips from movies and TV shows as humorous annotations to this Australian race-based controversy. For example, as a response to the online hate directed at Goodes, one user tweeted a clip[32] from *BBC*'s TV show *The Mighty Boosh*, in which the character Bob Fossil says: "Note to self, I hate whites". Another user shared a video[33] showing a gymnast doing a perfect pirouette. At the start of the clip the acronym "sjw" – short for "social justice warriors"[34]– was overlaid on screen and, and the word "delusion" appeared at the end. The tweet text accompanying the video read: "Clearly the AFL crowds are racist". The reading of the multimodal tweet implies that even if "social justice warriors" managed to impose the argument that the booing had a racial overtone (aka the perfect pirouette), the claim continued to be "delusional"; this reflects racial denial. One of the famous park bench scenes[35] in the movie *Forrest Gump* was also circulated on Twitter; in that scene, Tom Hanks explains a story to an old lady and, after the long narration, utters the famous line: "That's all I have to say about that". The tweet text accompanying the video said that Goodes was not Stephen Milne, a white former AFL player that pleaded guilty to assaulting a woman in 2004 (Flower, Deery, & Portelli, 2014). Users

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[30] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYGVr815ncw&feature=youtu.be
[31] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o25je7me5BE
[32] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wu6ilzcg9tg
[33] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYl17EFu3Bk
[34] "Social Justice warriors" is a term used by the alt-right and proponents of organised online hate campaigns like #gamergate to define those on the left defending civil rights and diversity on the Internet.
[35] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Otm4RusESNU

compared the Goodes booing to the passivity of AFL fans in failing to tackle cases of sexual assault perpetuated by white players. This argument worked to counter the aggressive black man stereotype, and to critique white hegemonic masculinity – a feature of whiteness in Australia that is also mobilised to oppress other collectives, such as women.

Users also circulated music videos on Twitter to discuss the Goodes controversy. For example, Skunk Anansie's video[36] clip *Yes It's Fucking Political* was shared on Twitter to define the war dance. Participants also shared music videos from Indigenous bands to illustrate the role that music and artistic expression has played in Indigenous resistance. Users on Twitter shared Aboriginal Warumpi Band's songs[37] "Black Fella, White Fella" and "Secret War" from the 1980s to stress the ongoing relevance of their lyrics today. Participants also shared Indigenous Australian rapper Briggs' song[38] "The Children Came Back", which has a reference to Goodes in its lyrics: "I'm Adam Goodes, and Adam should be applauded when he stands up".

Music videos, however, were also shared as anti-Goodes racialised discourse. For instance, the music video[39] of the hit song "Let it Go" from Disney's 2013 animated film *Frozen* was shared in a tweet that told Goodes that the video was dedicated to him. Saying "Let it go" to Goodes denotes superiority, and is reminiscent of telling Indigenous people in Australia to "get over it"; this is despite the fact that this is impossible, given the open wounds still present in this country (McQuire, 2015). Other videos were also used as racialised language. For example, one tweet included the musical video[40] "Apeman" in a tweet that told Goodes that the song was a tribute to his retirement. On YouTube, as on Twitter, the overt racist trope of comparing black people with primates, and hence considering them less human, was also salient. Other videos reflected common tropes of colour-blind racism, such as racism denial (Bonilla-Silva, 2002); this was already observed on Twitter and discussed in the previous chapter. For example, to deny the racist nature of the booing, participants shared on

[36] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcaUer4fuU8&feature=youtu.be
[37] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYLKGIf68So&app=desktop
[38] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-wMbFntrTo
[39] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0MK7qz13bU
[40] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFOuMv8k1bY&feature=youtu.be

Twitter the clip from *The Simpsons* featuring the character of Hans Moleman saying: "I was saying boourns" (as already described in Chapter 4).

YouTube videos were also used as tools to make visible the role that whiteness was playing within this controversy as an ideology and as a racial category. For example, participants on Twitter shared a video featuring white American comedian Louis CK talking about white privilege. In this clip, Louis CK humorously says how "lucky" he is to be white. He gives as an example the fact that he can get into a time machine and choose any age to live in since being white has always been "clearly better". This stand-up comic points to racism as a social, political, and economic project that has systematically oppressed people of colour (Lipsitz, 2006; Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

Participants also shared a clip from Old Cold Productions' web show *The Intern* – a media satire set in the newsroom of a fictional print tabloid. In the clip, two white male subeditors deny that there is racism in the media because they have never experienced it. The joke refers to two dynamics that surfaced within Australian mainstream media when discussing the Goodes controversy, especially the booing. First, traditional Australian media often invited white people to talk about whether the booing was racist. In these media appearances, commentators denied the racial overtone of the taunts by arguing that booing was part of AFL culture, and that white footballers also get booed. This racism denial of the booing was also brought to the forefront by the sharing of an *Al Jazeera*'s video[41] about countries that deny their own racism. The video, which featured Australian presenter, comedian and filmmaker Dan Llic, started with the catchphrase "Australians are not racists, but…" a verbal strategy of colour-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2002), and a meme within Australian popular culture.

YouTube was also used as an archive to find old videos featuring Goodes, his antagonists, and news information, in an effort to contextualise the war dance and the booing campaign. For example, users shared the video of Goodes' Australian of the Year 2014 acceptance speech[42] and his appearance[43] on the Australian TV program

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[41] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9-f5tbAhJg&feature=youtu.be
[42] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EV-cLb_Ttg
[43] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRvARbdeJms

Open Mike, where journalist Mike Sheahan interviewed him (Cordy, 2012). Users also circulated the press conference after Goodes was racially abused (2013),[44] and a video where young Indigenous boys, The Flying Boomerangs, performed their war cry to the AFL All Stars in 2011.[45] To claim that the war dance had been done before without all the media fuss that accompanied Goodes' performance in 2015, users also shared another video of the AFL All Stars performing the war cry in front of the media in 2011.

Twitter users also went to YouTube to find old videos starring Goodes' most vocal antagonists engaging in various cultural wars. For example, users shared a video[46] featuring former AFL player and presenter Sam Newman in *The Footy show* in 2009, where he called people of colour "monkeys". Another video[47] featured Eddie McGuire's appearance on radio *3AW693* in 2013, where he asserted that Goodes should promote the next *King Kong* remake. As Klugman and Osmond (2013b) argue, McGuire's King Kong comment links back "to a history of discrimination and violence that was justified by claims that Aboriginal peoples were lesser humans".

Goodes' antagonists also used YouTube to find videos that showed Goodes in controversial play on the field. For example, participants shared a 2013 video that features Goodes appearing to hurt AFL colleague Josh Gibson when wrestling for the ball. These videos were accompanied by tweet texts that used the footage to argue that Goodes was getting booed for being an unfair player, not for being Indigenous (see victim blaming trope discussed earlier).

5.3 THE RACIALISED POLITICS OF YOUTUBE'S POPULAR CULTURE

As they did on Twitter, YouTube users engaged with the Goodes controversy both directly, to express personal commentary about the war dance and the booing campaign; and more opportunistically, as raw material to participate in the popular culture of the Internet and its existing politics. For example, users appropriated the

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[44] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyrbUiJCkVw
[45] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRzRhOTNRKo
[46] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNwJAQn6Ym8
[47] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wujXoSlKhq4

popular YouTube memes Downfall parody and Leave Britney Alone, and connected them to the Goodes case.

The Downfall parody is a meme that developed on YouTube in late 2007, and consists of re-editing the bunker scene in Oliver Hirschbiegel's film *The Downfall*, in which Adolf Hitler becomes enraged as he finally understands Nazi Germany's imminent defeat in WW2 (Gilbert, 2013). The practice typically involves changing the subtitles of the German version to make it seem that Hitler is outraged by contemporary topics. In the Downfall meme, Hitler usually represents an outraged position that is made ridiculous in the parody. Although the meme reached a peak of popularity between 2008 and 2011, it continues to be a common response to news events within Internet culture (Highfield, 2016). One pro-Goodes and one anti-Goodes variant of this meme emerged from my dataset.

The first Goodes-related Downfall parody[48] was uploaded by an amateur channel that one year earlier had uploaded another Downfall parody in which Hitler was infuriated by allegations of corruption within the AFL made by Tania Hird, the wife of suspended Essendon coach James Hird (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2014). The reading of the re-edited subtitles in both parodies suggested the channel's familiarity with AFL-related controversies. In the appropriation of the meme for the Goodes case, part of the subtitles read:

> Adolf Hitler: By the way, guys, I am looking forward to hearing some quality Nazi-style booing this week, OK.
>
> Alfred Jodl (Chief of Operations): Big H, the media and the AFL are 'united' in saying booing is racist! And there is talk of banning the 'booooo'!"
>
> Hitler (ranting): Those sanctimonious AFL apes and their media sycophants are wrecking our game! I've booed at the footy since Stalin played back pocket for the Cohuna 2nds. I never worried when I got booed. I bet some Sydney footy 'expert' amped up this bullshit. Real footy fans are not racist! Where do the media and the AFL get off constantly forcing this utterly ridiculous crap down our throats…

In this rant, which I have not transcribed in its entirety, Hitler uses much of the terminology and many of the arguments already mobilised by Goodes' opponents on Twitter: the defence that the booing was not racist; and accusations of Goodes being a "sook", "a stager", "a provoker", "someone who bullies teenage girls", and someone who "plays the race and victim card". At one point, Hitler also says: "I'm not a fucking

[48] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBgyph6W4Xk

racist! I'm prejudice [sic][49]! Look it up!" The use of parody in this case served to ridicule racialised discourse against Goodes. However, the choice of the Downfall parody as a proxy to criticise racism is questionable as effective anti-racism humour. As Gilbert (2013) argues:

> We should continually consider what it means for American politics [in the Goodes case, for Australian politics] when Hitler is the 'go to' for condemnations of both the momentous and the mundane, especially as exaggeration and embellishment seem to typify the popular political milieu. (p. 421)

The second Downfall parody[50] was uploaded by another amateur channel. In this version, Hitler rants:

> How can people boo such a legend? Because of the war dance? I was throwing imaginary spears at home! I love it! (…) Goodessy wasn't a sook. He was a hero. I don't want to live in a world without Adam Goodes.

In this appropriation of the meme, Hitler's rant works to ridicule the war dance and Goodes' retirement. In both versions of the Downfall parody, and especially in the one that was mobilised to minimise the relevance of Goodes' war dance, the literacies at play were not as rich as those observed in users' engagements with memes on Twitter. The use of intertextual references to popular culture and humour, and users' understanding of the meme, was less apparent in the reading of the full transcripts of the subtitles.

Users also repurposed the memetic video Leave Britney Alone to engage with the controversy. In 2007, actor Chris Crocker uploaded a video to YouTube in which he played the role of an effeminate and over-emotional Britney Spears' fan imploring the general public to stop antagonising the signer after she did her infamous performance at the 2007 MTV Music Awards ("Leave Britney Alone," 2018). Leave Britney Alone follows the vlog genre; that is, videos "made by regular people, using low-end technology, paying little attention to form or aesthetics while attending to the daily life, feelings, and thoughts of the individual" (Juhasz, 2009, p. 148). The video also has all the common features of memetic videos: a focus on ordinary people, flawed masculinity, humour, simplicity, repetitiveness, and whimsical content (Shifman, 2011, p. 192).

The two appropriations of the meme that surfaced from my dataset worked as a weapon to attack Goodes' masculinity which, as observed on Twitter, was a recurrent

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[49] The subtitle reads "prejudice" although it should be more grammatically correct "prejudiced"
[50] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjvs-eCqPVs

tactic used by Goodes' opponents to avoid overt racism. The first Leave Britney Alone parody was a remix uploaded on 29 July 2015 by an amateur channel. The clip showed Chris Crocker saying: "How fucking dare anyone out there make fun of Britney, after all she's been through. Leave Britney Alone!" This was accompanied by an overlaid male voice saying "Goodsey" every time Croker said "Britney". The second parody was an imitation of the meme uploaded on 31 July 2015 by another amateur channel. In this spoof, a man dressed in a Sydney Swans jersey made a parodic plea to broadcaster Alan Jones, Collinwood's president Eddie McGuire, and the general public, to leave Goodes alone since he had "done a lot for the Indigenous community and Australia". The appropriation of the meme compares those defending Goodes with Crocker's hysterical fandom and irrational support, and this worked to undermine the racial justice involved in the calls to stop the booing. Goodes' opponents constantly framed the act of complaining about the booing being racist as effeminate and gay. In these appropriations of the Leave Britney Alone meme, users missed the layers of self-deprecating humour and over- the-top affect involved in Crocker's original meme. Instead, users focused on one of the features conveyed by the meme – flawed masculinity – to direct homophobe attacks to Goodes and those criticising the booing as racist.

Another practice that was prevalent on YouTube in relation to the Goodes controversy was the uploading of videoblog-style videos (vlogs) that expressed personal opinions and commentary on the controversy. This practice was used for both racist and anti-racist purposes. For example, on 6 August 2015, a male user of white appearance uploaded a video with a title that promised "some truths" about Goodes. The description of the video argued that Goodes had been "whining like a girl," and that what viewers were about to see was "what a real Australian thinks". "Real Australian" here signified as white and male, two features strongly linked to Australian national identity (Hage, 1998; Hartley & Green, 2006; Moreton-Robinson, 2015). In this video, the only content uploaded by this channel, the author appeared to be speaking straight to the camera with his face partially covered. The recording, which had the Australian national anthem in the background, alternated the author's narration with visual objects: a picture comparing Goodes to a monkey, and a picture of white convicts in chains, allegedly those shipped to Australia from Britain during the nineteenth century. In the clip, the author defended the girl who racially abused

Goodes in 2013 by saying that the AFL star actually looked "a bit" like an "ape". He then added that in Australia everyone has been persecuted:

> The Aussies were brought here on fucking boats, in chains mate, so we all know about racism mate. So don't look at us like if we were all racist because, you know, we point out one or two little things mate.

The video ended with a sign of the Australian flag and two Kangaroos with boxing gloves, and a written text that reads: "Does my flag offend you? Call 1-800. Leave Australia".

The video engaged with familiar overt and colour-blind racist tropes: from comparing black people to monkeys, to the use of diminutives to downplay the racist statement. The video, however, was paradigmatic of white supremacist views on race politics in Australia. The author set himself up as "true Australian", with the right to tell Goodes to "leave" the country if he did not like white Australians to "point out one or two little things" to him. He also distorted Australian history by comparing the genocide of Indigenous Australians during the colonial period – where First Nations people were treated like slaves and chained (Hollinsworth, 2006) – with an alleged racism that white convicts bore when they came to Australia. His grotesque analogy aligns with white supremacy narratives, which contend that the white race is under threat. The video also shows how conversations around race often trigger defensive and visceral reactions from white people, who normally do not want to acknowledge that they benefit from a system that privileges whiteness (DiAngelo, 2011).

My data exploration of YouTube did not surface any explicitly self-identifying Indigenous users who had uploaded original content about the controversy from 25 May 2015 to September 2015. However, in the process of complementing my original sample of YouTube videos, I came across a video[51] uploaded by the Indigenous artists collective Cope ST in response to Goodes' war dance. In this video, which was uploaded one year after the war dance controversy[52], Indigenous actor Bjorn Stewart ironically commented on the "dangers of Imaginary weapons" as a humorous critique

[51] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pY6IJ9sCzt8

[52] Although the video was uploaded to YouTube in May 2016, the narration of Stewart seems to indicate that the video was registered in 2015 as a personal response to the war dance. At the beginning of the clip, Stewart says: "Hello Australia, there is something that has come to my attention and it's been pressing on my mind for the last couple of weeks. What Adam Goodes did, has endangered the sporting community…" The temporal note "for the last couple of weeks" suggests that he recorded the video around the time when Goodes performed the war dance.

of white Australia. Stewart started his narration by ironically saying that he was going to call Goodes out because what he did "traumatized many Aussies". In his own words:

> What Goodes did has endangered the sporting community and has jeopardized viewers. I'll call him out and say his actions were dangerous and he has traumatized many Aussies. What I'm talking about is Adam Goodes' use of imaginary weaponry. Now, throwing an imaginary hunting spear congaed up by the ancient art of dance poses a great threat to mainstream homogenized white Australia. Now, you see, when you use an imaginary weapon from a dance barbs of the spears have been coated by a content called culture, for you people that are unaware of culture, this particular culture is over 40,000 years old. If these 40,000 years old culture comes into contact with white mainstream homogenized Australia it causes a bunch of adverse effects, such as fear and the responsibility of action.

As a sarcastic joke to criticise Australian national pride and white identity, he also told the story of an Australian white man that was hit by an "imaginary boomerang". Stewart says:

> I actually saw a man a couple of years ago get hit by an imaginary boomerang and let me tell you that the effects where shocking disaster the least. He was forced to see Australia in a new light and for Australia to be inclusive. His Aussie pride tattoo fell off, literally like fell off his arm, because how can you have Aussie pride when there is no achievement. And how can you find pride when it's only conditional. I've dabbled in imaginary weaponry and let me tell you. What Adam Goodes is doing is dangerous; he is creating a dialogue where Australia is forced to see its own ugly side. So I ask you, do you want see that side of Australia and be forced to move forward? I leave that with you.

Humour has historically played an important role as a tool of resistance for Indigenous Australians (Duncan, 2014; Holt, 2009). In this case, there is an opportunity in listening to Stewart's humour to understand counter narratives to racism. Steward made visible "white fragility" (DiAngelo, 2011) by joking about the potential dangers of imaginary spears and boomerangs, and spoofed the stereotype of black men being "aggressive" by comically reinforcing it: "What Goodes did has endangered the sporting community". He referred to white privilege by pointing at white Australia's "responsibility of action" with the Indigenous community, and encouraged Australians to not only acknowledge the complexity and historical roots of race relations in Australia, but also to understand the dynamics of race in contemporary Australia.

Racist and anti-racist discourse on YouTube also engaged with the practice of creating remixes about Goodes. For example, an amateur channel uploaded one video containing different images of Goodes in combination with an audio of boos and taunts of "You suck". The video ended with an image of Goodes when he was named Australian of the Year, and a comical voice saying, "Now, that's edgy as fuck". This latter sentence suggests the author's opposition to Goodes being the Australian of the

Year, and links back again to white ideas about who has the right to embody Australianness.

Another example of a remix engaging in racist discourse against Goodes is a video uploaded by an amateur channel that compared Muhammad Ali's appearance on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in 1971, with the war dance discussion on the Australian TV program Q and A. The video started with footage of Goodes' war dance, and was followed by the appearance of boxer Muhammad Ali on Michael Parkinson's *BBC* show. In this show, Ali claims that he wants to be with his own race, and the author of the remix considered this to be an "anti-white statement". This was followed by various images that made the point that, globally, there is a "white genocide". This argument is often mobilised by white supremacists (Ferber, 2004). The author of the remix linked this perceived "white genocide" to immigration, and also argued that "anti-racist" was "a code word for 'anti-white'". More than commenting on the Goodes' controversy, the author used this Australian race-based controversy to push their white supremacy agenda on YouTube. It seems that the author tried to use the hype around Goodes to make the video more visible on the platform. This form of "issue hijacking" – for instance, by tagging videos with popular key words – is a strategy some content creators on YouTube follow to increase views (Scott, 2016).

The remix genre was also used for anti-racism purposes, especially to show support for Goodes. For example, Australian comedian, singer, and songwriter Kieran Butler uploaded a video remix entitled "Don't be like Australia" – a promo for the artist's satirical show *Australia is fucked*. In this promotional video – which mixes music, images, and text – Butler sings a song about why he believes that Australia "is fucked". The song mentions Goodes: "When an Indigenous fellow who is quite good at sports dares to point out some salient fact. We buried him and jeer him making him feel shit. It's just how Australia acts." Throughout the clip, the artist also criticises Australia's treatment of asylum seekers and refugees, the country's colonial past, and the government's refusal to support renewable energies. Although Butler performs a critique of Australian racism in his song, the video is more about him promoting his show than it is about Goodes – another form of 'issue hijacking'.

Other channels also uploaded remixes in support of Goodes; these typically combined images of the AFL star with emotive songs. One example remixed images

of Goodes and other AFL Indigenous athletes – Lewis Jetta, Buddy Franklin, and Michael O'Loughlin – with Vanessa Amorosi's song "Heroes Live Forever" (which was performed in the 2000 Sydney Olympics opening ceremony). The video ended with a sign that read: "Don't forget white Australia has a black history". This is a reference to the double meaning of 'black': to the fact that 'Black' Australians were here first, and to the dark acts that were committed by the early settlers.

Other supportive videos uploaded to YouTube showed footage of a flash mob organised by the Faculty of the Victorian College in support to the AFL star. The students mimed the act of being warriors who were gathered to "change the world" and "fight racism". These examples of white solidarity, like those on Twitter, lacked self-reflexion about the deep issues at stake around the Goodes controversy – racism, whiteness, the right to represent, and Indigenous disadvantage – and the role of white privilege in relation to it.

In his critique of "white antiracism" on social media in relation to the death of African-American Trayvon Martin, Engles (2016) describes more effective ways of showing solidarity with cases of oppression against black people. He uses the example of a white woman who uploaded a video[53] on YouTube as a response to the social media campaign 'I am Trayvon Martin". In this video, the woman reflexively critiques a system that privileges white people such as Trayvon's murderer, George Zimmerman. Therefore, she says that she is not Trayvon Martin – a reference to white uses of the hashtag #IamTrayvonMartin – but she is George Zimmerman (13emcha, 2012). Engles (2016) writes about this video: "13emcha's vlog effectively critiques the decontextualized nature of narcissistic white activism (…) which can help to nudge aspiring white allies toward more self-aware, risky, and efficacious activism" (p. 94).

YouTube was also used to call out those who opposed Goodes. Unlike Twitter, call-out culture was not particularly salient on YouTube. However, one video did reflect this call-out practice. An amateur channel uploaded a clip (recorded with a mobile phone) that contained raw footage of a public event in a Melbourne club. Due to the poor audio, the author added subtitles to the video. It showed the views of an AFL manager who attended the controversial Goodes event, and was asked about Goodes. The manager justified the booing by articulating incongruent thoughts – what

[53] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBRwiuJ8K7w

Bonilla-Silva (2002) describes as whites' rhetorical incoherence when they try to find the right words not to sound racist. The AFL manager appearing in this footage suggested that calling out racism in 2013 "wasn't the right thing", and that what happened should have stayed with Goodes and "never got mentioned". With reference to the war dance, he added that he understood "it was traditional or whatever", but that Goodes "probably put himself out there a fair bit to get criticized". By claiming that Goodes should have coped with the girl's racial abuse instead of calling it out, and by questioning the suitability of the war dance, the AFL manager reinforced white frames on how to be a 'good' Aboriginal. The author of the video labelled the manager's rhetorical incoherence as "brain farts", and ended the clip by overlaying the hashtag #IstandwithAdamGoodes on the footage.

Other media practices on YouTube involved the use of the Goodes controversy as material for existing activities, such as content creators engaging with video product reviews. One amateur channel dedicated to reviewing products and "how to" videos, uploaded a clip to examine Ebay's auction for Goodes' imaginary spear. The bidding reached $AUD20 000. In his video, the author argued that the bidding succeeded because of the nature of the controversy and eBay's popularity. Furthermore, bidding for strange things is a memetic practice on eBay, and is often fuelled by its media coverage. For example, a cheeto loosely resembling Harambe – the infamous gorilla that was killed in the Cincinnati Zoo after he grabbed a three-year-old boy who climbed into the enclosure (Economos, 2017) – reached $US97 600 in 2017; and in 2014, a woman sold a slice of toast with burn marks that looked like the Virgin Mary (Peyser, 2017).

The examples reviewed in this section have shown various user practices around the creation of original content on YouTube to engage with the Goodes controversy. Some users created their own videos to express and reflect personal opinion and solidarity *about* the controversy. Others appropriated the controversy as an opportunity to perform on YouTube; for example, their transformation of YouTube memes, Kieran Butler's video promotion, and the video pushing a white supremacist agenda on the platform. In the next section, while maintaining the focus on original content uploaded *about* the Goodes controversy, I pay specific attention to professional and amateur content creators who used the Goodes controversy for their rants, bedroom videos, and professional YouTube user-generated shows.

5.4 THE ROLE OF LEAD YOUTUBERS IN THE NARRATIVES AROUND GOODES

The YouTube creator community started as a small group of lead users that spent time on the platform creating their own amateur videos as their main vehicles for social networking (Burgess & Green, 2009; Lange, 2007a). This community now includes commercial creators who use the platform to build a personal brand (Cunningham & Craig, 2017). Both amateur and professional YouTube content creators used the Goodes controversy for their particular interests and regular practices.

Seven channels fitting the description of content creators that regularly uploaded content on YouTube around various issues emerged from my data. All of these channels were run by male users of white appearance; two were professional content creators: *AngryAussie* (28 757 subscribers), and the YouTube-specific show *The Locker room* (2432 subscribers). The rest were amateur channels: two fitted the genre of 'bedroom cultures of young people' (videos where young people appear in their rooms looking at the camera and talking about various issues); three used YouTube as a platform to comment on various issues; and another was an alt-right channel belonging to an Australian man living abroad.[54] At the time of writing, this latter channel had 3758 subscribers.

The two amateur channels that fit 'the bedroom cultures of young people' genre uploaded racist videos about Goodes. One of them was particularly disturbing as it came from a white teenager boy who used strong racist language in relation to Goodes, and had a marked tone of superiority throughout his rant. The channel was subscribed to other channels producing similar content, and to other satiric and game-related YouTube content creators. In this video, the teenager started reading a letter that his school had released in support of Goodes when he was racially abused in 2013. He continued his rant by saying that the booing was part of the AFL culture, called Goodes the n-word, made gendered slurs, and performed a derogative mimicry of Goodes that resembled the movements of a monkey. The teenager also asserted that Indigenous people were "thieves" and "drug addicts", a negative stereotype often reproduced by mainstream media in Australia (Jakubowicz et al., 1994) that reinforces "histories of

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[54] This information was extracted from the description of the channel.

Indigenous dysfunction, corruption, neglect, and sexual abuse" around Indigenous Australians, to protect white privilege (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 162). The video reflected the aesthetics and tone of nerd culture, as well as engaged with the type of identity antagonism typical of the alt-right (Kendall, 2011; Phillips, 2016).

The other bedroom video denied the racist nature of the Goodes booing by comparing it with the booing that Manchester City star Raheem Sterling (born in Jamaica) and his girlfriend received from "black fans". The author mobilised the alleged fact that "black fans" booed the Manchester player, to make the causal claim than the booing could not be racist. This white rhetorical move to deny racism was also observed on Twitter when users appropriated the negative views of Goodes that were posted by Indigenous blogger Dallas Scott to exonerate their racism. This video was less aggressive than the previous one, but also reproduced the aesthetics of nerd culture.

Three other amateur channels weighed in to perform anti-racism discourse in relation to the Goodes controversy. One channel uploaded a video about Goodes in which a male user of white appearance reflected on the meaning of the Biblical name 'Adam'. He contended that the name was an opportunity to learn something about the Goodes controversy. His argument was that, according to the Bible, the first man was named Adam because he came from the ground, or *adamah.* For him, there was "a lesson for the humanity in understanding the name adamah", since the ground can serve two purposes. On the one hand, he claimed, one can look at the ground as something one can step on. On the other hand, the ground can be supportive and promote growth. Following this metaphor, the man invited the viewers to reflect on which interpretation of *adamah* played out in the debate around Adam Goodes.

Another example is a vlog (also uploaded by an amateur channel) in which a male user of white appearance criticised broadcaster Alan Jones for his "white-anting" – an Australian term for the process of bringing down a system from within – of Australian democracy. In the clip, the author accused Alan Jones of spreading "propaganda" through his media apparatus, and compared him with Nazi propaganda minister Paul Joseph Goebbels. The author showed the Goodes controversy as yet another case where radio talk shows in Australia have contributed to the hatred of racial minorities, another example being the race-based Cronulla Riots controversy (Hartley & Green, 2006). The entanglement between social media commentary and

radio talk shows in fuelling hatred against Goodes was visible in the data analysis across platforms. These YouTube channels exploited the Goodes controversy as fodder for the ongoing culture wars in Australia. This was visible by looking at other videos posted by their authors, who engaged in issues such as corruption, animal rights, and critiques of the Australian Liberal Party.

The discourse performed by the last amateur content creator who weighed into the Goodes controversy contributed to the articulation of platformed racism on YouTube by inadvertently reinforcing whiteness via counter-racism. In his video, this amateur content creator discussed why Australians were not "proud" of the war dance. He identified himself as non-Aboriginal, but as having "lived closed to Aboriginal people". In his view, this made him an authoritative voice on the issue. In this regard, Bonilla-Silva (2002) notes the common white strategy of claiming interracial friendships to signify that they cannot possibly be "racist". The main argument of the video was that Australia's past and present is a "train wreck" of Aboriginal and white Australian relationships, in which Indigenous Australian have suffered racism and intergenerational trauma. The author of the video often used sentences such as "what Adam is trying to explain", and asserted that Aboriginal people can be "very sensitive" to contemporary racist episodes due to Australia's past. Despite his well-meaning intentions, the author's discourse had a constant patronizing tone that resembles Hage's (1998) definition of "good nationalist" practices of inclusion, which still imagine white people in a superior position to racialised "others".

Another amateur YouTube channel that contributed to the Goodes controversy was an alt-right channel that joined YouTube in October 2014. In the description of the channel, the author wrote that he would discuss various themes, including "neoreaction/alt-right perspectives on politics, society and culture". The channel, which organised hangouts on YouTube around topics such as changing demographics and the culture creation of the alt-right, was subscribed to other channels holding similar alt-right views (for example, *Porridge Pals*, *Mark Dice*, and *Zarathusstra*). In terms of aesthetics, the videos uploaded by this channel relied heavily on the creator's voice narration (their face never appears on camera) over one fixed image related to the topic at stake.

On 7 August 2015, the channel uploaded a video about Goodes with the description: "No, you cannot have nice things; there is social justice to be done!" The

description is an intertextual reference to the Internet meme 'This is Why We Can't Have Nice Things' that originated in the image board 4chan, and is used to illustrate troll culture on the Internet (Phillips, 2015). Terminology such as "social justice" also comes from subcultural spaces such as Tumblr and Reddit, where the term "social justice warriors" is often used to make fun of the online activity of identity politics advocates (Milner, 2016). The author of the video appropriated the term "social justice" to mean that there is social justice to be done for the alt-right cause, rather than for other progressive goals. The use of this troll culture terminology works to build an ingroup identification with YouTube users familiar with these terms and tropes.

In the video, the author argued that Goodes "severely provoked and antagonized other people", and that he was a "very divisive figure" – all arguments already mobilised by Australian conservative media figures such as Andrew Bolt and Alan Jones. However, the purpose of his use of the controversy was mainly to build an argument about how Australian mainstream media, which he called "the Cathedral", constructed the narrative that the booing was racially motivated. "The Cathedral" is a term used in alt-right online forums to define established institutions such as universities and the mainstream press (Sullivan, 2017).

The author of this video mobilised the term to build his own theory about how "the Cathedral" worked in relation to the Goodes case. His argument was that, in the Goodes controversy, "the Cathedral" or "enemy" – which, in Australia, he believed was mainly embodied in the *ABC* and the *Special Broadcasting Service* (*SBS*) – constructed the narrative that the booing was racially motivated. He believed that this narrative was "very unrepresentative of the opinions out there". During the narration, he compared the workings of "The Cathedral" in Australia with its operation in other countries such as the US, where mainstream media influences debates around, for instance, the removal of confederate flags and same sex marriage: "It [The Cathedral] shouts down dissent…We need to build alternate institutions". The author used the Goodes controversy to construct a broader alt-right narrative that antagonizes difference, the media, and intellectuals (Nagle, 2017). Nevertheless, he is part of a larger YouTube network of alt-right figures who, for a long time, have been building a YouTube subculture that thrives on controversy and dissent with regard to topics such as identity politics, multiculturalism, and the political left (Rieder, Matamoros-Fernández & Coromina, 2018).

In my data exploration, I did not find any well-known alt-right stars (such as, for example, *Amazing Atheist*, *Thunderf00t* or *Sargon of Akkad*) or popular fan-funded YouTube talk shows involved in other cultural wars (for example, *The Rubin Report*) that engaged in the Goodes controversy. Only one Australian professional YouTube content creator engaged with it, and from an anti-racism position. *AngryAussie*, a veteran Australian YouTuber who joined the platform in June 2006, and who does mainly political commentary, uploaded a video to discuss the booing campaign. *AngryAussie* is part of what Cunningham and Craig (2017) call the "social media entertainment" industry, which is constituted by amateur content creators that use social media platforms such as YouTube to develop their own brands. *AngryAussie* has his own merchandising – for example, Angry Aussie T-shirts – and runs another professional channel called *LessAngryAussie*. Aesthetically, the channel follows the vlog-style and uses rant as his YouTube content vernacular. He usually covers controversial political topics, and his exaggerated explosion of anger is intentionally out of scale, and the source of humour.

In his video[55] about Adam Goodes, *AngryAussie* described the booing as "an orchestrated campaign against Goodes" that was "based in racism", although "white people who are into football" had "lot of trouble to accept". He argued that people disliked Goodes "because he used his public platform (…) to point out that the history between Indigenous and colonial Australians is not great", and asserted that "we [white Australians] need to make that better". He also added that the main reason people got "narky" at Goodes is because he made them feel "uncomfortable". *AngryAussie* was more reflexive of the way that whiteness manifested around this controversy, especially by highlighting the "racial stress" that white people typically feel when confronted by their own racism (DiAngelo, 2011). He acknowledged that "we" (that is, white people) need to make race relations in Australia "better". However, he still considered Australia's racism problem as being reflected mainly by those who booed, rather than as a shared problem of white Australia that has much to do with white privilege.

Another YouTube channel that defended Goodes was *The Locker Room,* a sports web show hosted and produced by former NRL player Denan Kemp. The channel

[55] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eB-mrf2e-pc

joined YouTube in May 2015, and used the platform and other social media such as Facebook for brand creation; it could, therefore, also be considered as part of the "social media entertainment" industry (Cunningham & Craig, 2017). On 3 August 2015, *The Locker Room* uploaded a video[56] in which Denan Kemp invited retired NRL Indigenous player Jamie Soward to discuss the booing campaign. During the interview, Soward said that Australia "should be embarrassed" by the way Goodes was being treated, and that those who booed should look at themselves "in the mirror". The claims resonate with the anti-racism discourses already articulated around Goodes in other media that was transformed and shared on Twitter and YouTube, and which highlights white Australia's reluctance to accept Indigenous culture as representative of the nation.

5.5 USES OF MAINSTREAM MEDIA VIDEOS ABOUT GOODES

Users' appropriations of mainstream media content also had a crucial role in shaping the debate around the Goodes controversy on the YouTube platform. Users curated, shared, and appropriated the news in relation to the war dance and the booing campaign by reposting various clips from Australian TV channels. Most of these clips were excerpts from mainstream channels and AFL related TV shows, rather than from Indigenous channels such as the SBS Network's National Indigenous Television (NITV), even though the latter posted videos about the controversy. This practice of reposting non-Indigenous TV content contributed to reproducing mainstream media narratives around the controversy.

Users reposted clips from broadcast media by sharing specific excerpts of a whole broadcast, and editorialising the videos by adding opinion or commentary on the titles, and descriptions of the content. In the cases where the titles of the videos were merely descriptive, the simple exercise of sharing a particular excerpt of a whole broadcast was already an editorial choice. In a few cases, users edited the broadcast mainstream media content by, for instance, creating video responses.

For example, on the same day that Goodes performed the war dance, YouTube users uploaded the footage that captured that moment: a broadcast from *Seven Sport*,

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[56] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lRR3WMSue-I

the sports TV channel of the Australian Seven Network. An amateur channel uploaded this footage under the title Goodes performs celebratory war cry". The description of the video read: "Goodes says people shouldn't be getting their backs up over something they don't understand, after he performed a celebratory war cry during Friday's indigenous round." The reposting of this broadcast was informative rather than opinionated.

In contrast, a more editorialised version of this practice was visible in the reposting of the same footage of the war dance by another amateur channel. The video, with the title "Adam Goodes wonders why he gets booed", had a long description in which the owner of the channel accused the media, "social justice warriors", and "political correctness" of constructing the narrative that the booing was racist. The author directly addressed his audience in the description:

> The many SJW's [social justice warriors] in the comments have completely misinterpreted the point of this vid (which is to be expected). Firstly, it's not to be taken seriously. Secondly, it has absolutely nothing to do with anyone's nationality. My criticism with this "celebration" is that it was aggressive and antagonistic, aimed towards a small pocket of away fans whose team was already well down in the game. (…) Lastly, it seems quite telling that most of the comments have chosen to fly the flag of moral superiority by insulting me and calling me a white boy racist.

The use of terminology such as "social justice warriors" and "political correctness", and the author's defensive attitude towards being "misinterpreted" – that is, because nothing online should "be taken seriously" – resonates with troll culture and alt-right tropes (Phillips, 2015). Through the practice of sharing broadcast mainstream media, while at the same time adding personal commentary, the channel was connecting the controversy with modes of YouTube address, and with discourses typical of dominant YouTube cultures such as the alt-right.

An amateur channel also uploaded the same war dance video under the title "Adam Goodes does a war cry towards Carlton fans". This time, the description was also editorialised: "The AFL's biggest flog further endears himself to opposition fans". The use of the term "flog" – a term that became a meme across platforms to insult Goodes – connects the video with the anti-Goodes discourse. Of the videos of the Seven Sport's war dance that were broadcast, this video, which was editorialised as a critique of the war dance, had the highest engagement[57]. This video was uploaded by an amateur channel of only 80 subscribers; nevertheless, the number of its views even

[57] 113 694 views and 397 comments

exceeded the number of views and comments that the same broadcast[58] received when uploaded by the official channel of the AFL (which had more than 95 000 subscribers at the time of writing). This example is an invitation to reflect on why this video received considerably more attention on YouTube than other videos showing the same broadcast. However, it also shows the importance of focusing on practices rather than on single texts only when examining complex controversies on YouTube. This is because racist discourse on the platform goes beyond the content being uploaded to include video titles and descriptions in addition to video comments.

In some cases, users' curation of mainstream media broadcast clips involved the alteration of the original content. For example, Australian journalist Waleed Aly's comment that Australia "is generally a very tolerant society until minorities demonstrate they don't know their place" also resonated on YouTube. At least three amateur channels uploaded a clip of Aly's appearance on the *ABC* TV program *Offsiders*. One of the videos was accompanied by a neutral description: "The Offsiders, 31 May 2015, ABC Television". The channel, however, wrote the first comment under his video. This read: "Hi all, thanks for your comments. I welcome debate and diversity of opinion but will be deleting abusive and racist comments." This comment suggests the channel's endorsement of Aly's views on the Goodes controversy.

Another amateur channel uploaded a video response to this clip to refute Aly's arguments. In this video response, with the description "Waleed Aly can read minds", the author stopped the footage every time Aly made an argument, and overlayed a text on the screen with his personal counterargument. For example, after Aly said that Goodes was not being booed because he was being provocative, the author wrote: "False. For decades provocative players have been booed by the crowd." According to the author, Aly "speculates" when he asserted that Australia is not tolerant of minorities' noncompliance; rather, he argues that this comment was "some sophisticated fabrication to hate Australians" (here, "Australians" means *white* Australians). The creator of this video also complained about the fact that "ordinary footy supporters have to shut up", and wondered whether: "booing for a few seconds at a footy match" meant "losing our minds". Moreover, the author of the video invoked "reverse racism" when Aly defined white Australia as "vanilla". Yet to respond to

[58] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5-ZVXE-LGw

Aly's claim that people booed out of discomfort, the author stated: "No, we ordinary Australians boo those who are so tediously politically correct, divisive and humourless you can't do anything they don't approve of." The author mobilised familiar tropes among Australian conservative and nationalist discourse (Ahluwalia & McCarthy, 1998); he also reclaimed humour as a shield for racist discourse by accusing those claiming that the booing was racist of being "humourless."

Users also shared mainstream media content to echo the opinions of known conservative media personalities (such as Alan Jones, TV presenter Sam Newman, and journalist Ross Greenwood) on Goodes. For example, one channel uploaded a video that featured journalist Ross Greenwood in his appearance on the TV show *Today*, in which he argued that he had booed Goodes and that there was "nothing wrong" with it. The description of the video read: "Following reports that Sydney Swans star Goodes is considering retirement from the AFL after being dogged with a booing scandal 'football fanatic' and journalist Ross Greenwood weighed in." The text appeared to be extracted from a *Daily Mail*'s article that covered Greenwood's appearance on the program (Noble, 2015). In cases like this, the ambivalence of this editorialised reposting did not give clues as to the poster's intent. However, the act of reposting these viewpoints on YouTube, as was the case on Twitter, worked to amplify racialised discourse against Goodes on the platform.

At least three different amateur channels reposted a video featuring former AFL player and TV personality Sam Newman's appearance on the *AFL Footy Show*. On this program, Newman said that people were booing Goodes because he was "acting like a jerk". One of the amateur channels that uploaded this Newman clip did not add any description to the video; therefore, the intent of the reposting was unclear. However, the same channel comments on another video about Goodes that was uploaded to YouTube: "I've heard plenty of women and people of all colours criticizing Goodes, and what exactly is the point in claiming that only white males are defending the booing?" The comment suggests that the channel disliked Goodes, and reflects a defensive attitude towards the accusation that "only white males" were defending the booing.

Other amateur channels shared on YouTube a video featuring broadcaster Alan Jones' opinions on Goodes during his appearance on the TV show *Seven Sunrise*. In this clip, Jones mobilised all the conservative tropes already identified in users'

racialised discourse around Goodes on Twitter (for example, other Indigenous athletes don't get booed; people boo Goodes because they do not like him; Goodes said all Australians are racists; and the war dance was "provoking"). The title of the video featuring Jones indicated the second when Jones specifically saied that Goodes was playing the victim card: "Alan Jones: Goodes is 'always a victim' 00:41". The practice of specifying in the title the exact moment when something was said is a tactic used by amateur channels to get their audience's attention and to emphasise their main point.

Although my main interest in this section was to identify user practices with regard to mainstream media broadcast content on YouTube, there was another relevant practice in users' activity in this type of video: participating in the comment section of the videos. The majority of the comment sections of these videos contained overt and colour-blind racist tropes; this activity aligns with the body of literature that documents this phenomenon (Brown, Moody-Ramirez, & Lin, 2016; Lange, 2007). The comment section of these videos, however, was also a source of information that enabled the mapping of unknown actors that also weighed in on the Goodes controversy on YouTube. Sometimes, discussions in the comment sections pointed me to new user-generated content.

One user, for instance, wrote under one of Newman's video that when Goodes became Australian of the Year, "he mentioned that he would be dedicating his efforts for 'his people'". The user thought this was a "rather odd statement". However, Goodes did not say such a thing during his Australian of the Year speech (2014). Regardless of what Goodes said, this user mentioned in his comment that he had commented on it in one of his vlogs. I followed this thread and looked at his channel. He had an amateur channel where he uploaded vlogs about various topical issues. On January 2014, when Goodes was named Australian of the Year, he uploaded a video to express his confusion when people use expressions such as "promote the cause of Aboriginal people […] because they are my people". This suggests that Goodes did make such a statement. In his vlog, he argues:

> Me coming from a white Anglo Saxon background, if I was to get up there and beat my chest and say well you know I am gonna do some good things for my people, I just wonder how I'd go, I think I can say I'd get vilified. I would be probably called racist, which is totally outrageous.

The vlog's discourse exemplifies how whiteness re-surfaced within this controversy. The author said that he did not understand – which can be decoded as he did not like

– when Indigenous people say "my people" to refer to Indigenous Australians. For him, this kind of statements does not promote "unity" as a nation. The problem here is that the author associates Indigenous pride as a threat to "what it means to be Australian" and, by doing so, indirectly reclaims the centrality of whiteness as a key element in the definition of Australian identity.

The comment section also served to uncover Indigenous participation on YouTube. For example, under *AngryAussie*'s vlog, one user, self-identifying as Indigenous Australian, wrote:

> my culture is starting to flourish at a rate, people cannot comprehend to manage within a short amount of time. (…) and with people like Goodes and Lewis Jetta (which by the way is my cousin) representing, we would not have successfully moved on from the past. Those of you with negative views on Aboriginals, and think that they know how we are, you don't know - because let's face it, we get handed everything apparently - How about giving yourselves to us, to listen to our pain, to join forces, to share with one another. Be proud that Australia has a war dance finally! Maybe your identity you have been searching for (Australia), is right under your nose. I wish more people were like you [*AngryAussie*] in this world.

Due to its circulation by a large number of distinct users on Twitter, another video appeared repeatedly in my dataset. The video was a clip uploaded by the official YouTube channel of ABC's satirical news program *The Weekly,* in which the host, comedian Charlie Pickering, covered the controversy surrounding Goodes. The video was shared by Indigenous users on Twitter, such as writer Anita Heiss, who praised Pickering's contribution to the Goodes debate as an example of white allies' effective counter-racism discourse. In this video, which had its comments disabled on YouTube, Pickering connected the Goodes controversy with the wider issue of Indigenous incarceration. He humorously shamed public figures Eddie McGuire, Andrew Bolt, and radio and television commentator Derryn Hinch[59] for their comments on Goodes. He then moved to seriously denounce Australia's disproportionately high Indigenous incarceration rates, which he called "the pointy end of the invisible spear".

On 2 June 2015, Amnesty International (AI) released a two-year investigation that showed Indigenous Australians were 24 times more likely to be jailed than their non-Indigenous peers (Wahlquist, 2015). Pickering zoomed in on the Northern Territory, where Indigenous Australians can be jailed without any paperwork, and represent 86% of inmates in the territory. The comedian asserted that the causes of this

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[59] Derryn Hinch – who was elected Senator of Victoria in 2016 for his recently established Derryn Hinch's Justice Party – said: "If you call Goodes 'spear chucker' you would be called a racist, when he actually has done the spear throwing as part of his act."

situation were "many" – such as "chronic poverty, lack of education, and disruption of families" – but that all of this was being "aggregated" by the way the Australian justice system treats young Indigenous people. To make this point, he exposed two cases of Indigenous Australians that were jailed for one year, one for possessing 30 dollars of marihuana, and the other for stealing hamburger buns. Pickering joked: "Oh! We're jailing people for stealing bread, how very 1788 of us" (an intertextual reference to convicts who were transported to Australia for very minor offences during colonisation).

The comedian also denounced the fact that "too many" Indigenous Australians are dying in police custody, and advocated the "roll out nationally" of New South Wales' Custody Notification Service. This is a phone line that police must call when an Indigenous person is arrested in NSW so that a lawyer can give legal advice, notify family, and try to ensure the safety of the person in custody. As a response to Amnesty International's warning that Australia was at risk of losing a whole generation of Indigenous Australians due to incarceration, Pickering asserted: "We've lost a generation before (…) AI has warned us not that something is about to happen, but that something is happening now. And we don't want to have to say sorry again".[60] Pickering's contribution to the Goodes case is a more reflexive critique of racism in Australia; and, being the perspective of a white ally, this critique is more aligned with the productive anti-racism strategies that are raised by critics of white solidarity on social media (Engles, 2016).

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

Platformed racism on YouTube was enacted through users' various practices and cultures of use around the creation of original content, their engagement with YouTube's popular culture, and their appropriation of mainstream broadcast media. As was the case on Twitter, platformed racism on YouTube manifested both through users' intentional appropriation of videos to perform racialised and homophobic discourse around Goodes, and through their anti-racist practices that had inadvertent

[60] Pickering's sentence "We don't want to have to say sorry again" is a reference to former Australian Primer Minister Kevin Rudd's National Apology to Indigenous people for the Stolen Generation.

consequences for the re-centralisation of whiteness (for example, videos uploaded by aspiring white allies supporting Goodes). The analysis also shows that studies of racist discourse on YouTube should not only focus on what is said on videos, but should also include an examination of their connective references, such as the video description, its title, and its comments. However, this is a methodological challenge.

While women contributed to the Goodes controversy on Twitter, the YouTube videos created *about* Goodes, and those created *using* Goodes as a proxy to perform on the platform, surfaced a dominance of white male voices. Similarly, I could not identify an active community of Indigenous content creators engaging with this controversy. While this does not mean that they are not on YouTube, this apparent participation gap in terms of content creation influences YouTube's attention economy and, hence, the way narratives around race relations in Australia are framed through original content on the platform. In a recent report about Indigenous Australians' use of social media, YouTube was not seen as a particularly salient platform by Indigenous people in terms of content creation or everyday interactions with peers (Carlson & Frazer, 2018).

On YouTube, similarly to what happened on Twitter, racism and anti-racism discourse engaged with the same practices to comment on, and use the controversy for their own purposes. Both pro- and anti-Goodes content creators engaged with YouTube's meme culture, and created their own vlogs and remixes. What was at stake on YouTube was the dominant cultures of use, and literacies around original content, and how platformed racism was entangled with broader racist cultures on this platform, such as white supremacist and an alt-right communities. While Twitter's anti-racism call-out was a salient culture of use that affected platformed racism and its associated amplification processes, the links between the alt-right and nerd culture in the Goodes controversy were specific to YouTube. That is, platformed racism on YouTube in relation to the Goodes controversy surfaced as being influenced and amplified by a broader alt-right and white supremacist culture, with its own tropes and agenda.

Chapter 6: Performing race on Facebook pages

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the uses of Facebook in the Goodes controversy, and how these uses reflected racist and anti-racist discourse. The chapter focuses on three media practices on Facebook: the creation of public pages; personal commentary through status updates; and user appropriation of mainstream media content. The chapter is structured in three main sections.

After describing the data collection, processing and analysis, I explore the practice of setting up Facebook public pages to perform race in the context of the Goodes controversy. The creation of public pages is a common practice on Facebook to respond to news events and issues (Bird, Ling, & Haynes, 2012; Khamis & Vaughn, 2012; Leaver, 2013; Marwick & Ellison, 2012; Phillips, 2011); this was visible in users' engagements with the Goodes controversy on this platform. Users created Facebook meme pages to both engage in racist and anti-racist discourse surrounding Goodes. They also created Facebook pages to support the star. In some cases, the activity of these pages gravitated around white performative acts of solidarity in which the protagonists were white people. These practices enacted platformed racism by inadvertently re-centring whiteness, rather than countering racism.

I then examine the role of personal status updates to make personal commentary on the Goodes controversy. Status updates are one of Facebook's primary affordances, and a key means of contributing personal stories and opinions to the public sphere (Lee, 2011; Papacharissi, 2010; Tagg & Seargeant, 2015). People on Facebook, from ordinary users to Australian public organizations and figures, engaged in racist and anti-racist discourse through their personal stories, experiences, and opinions in relation to the Goodes debate.

Finally, I interrogate users' appropriations of legacy media content on Facebook, focusing in particular on the Facebook links that people shared on Twitter that corresponded to mainstream media Facebook posts.

Data collection and analysis

In my original dataset of 121 226 tweets that matched the keyword "Goodes", 539 tweets contained Facebook links (0.4% of the total). To be consistent with the Twitter and YouTube data analysis, I only coded original and @mention tweets that contained Facebook links (no retweets), and this reduced the sample to 405 tweets containing Facebook links (see Table 2). From these 405 tweets, the Facebook links that were no longer available were coded as "broken links," and false positives were coded as "not relevant". Because of its interface, architecture, features, and the various levels of privacy in user interactions, Facebook is a complex platform to investigate (Rieder, 2014). In Section 6.3, I examine status updates as an everyday practice to express personal commentary (these status updates are Facebook posts that were shared on Twitter). In order to guarantee users' anonymity, I have paraphrased these posts, rather than quoting them literally. When personal status updates came from public Australian figures and institutions, I have reproduced them directly.

As I did for YouTube, I supplemented my original dataset of Facebook links shared on Twitter both through manual observations and by extracting further data from Facebook's API, with digital tools such as Netvizz (Rieder, 2013). For example, I used Netvizz's search module to discover new public pages that matched the keyword "Adam Goodes" to find more pages that users created specifically as a response to the controversy. I also followed Facebook's recommender system for public pages, and explored the like networks of public pages, to discover more pages that could be relevant to the controversy. I acknowledge that users might have created private Facebook groups to discuss the Goodes controversy. However, I limited my data gathering to investigate public social media data only (for example, content on Facebook public pages, mainstream media content posted on public Facebook pages, and Facebook status updates that were shared on Twitter). For the qualitative analysis, I examined users' creation, transformation, and circulation of media objects in these public pages (for example, image memes), and the extent to which the ideas and practices articulated around them connected to broader Internet cultures and racist and anti-racist discourses in Australia.

For the analysis of users' appropriation of mainstream media content on Facebook, I focused on those Facebook posts that were shared by ordinary users on Twitter. Since the act of sharing these Facebook links on Twitter involved a form of

curation, I followed these links to examine what kind of legacy media Facebook content was curated on Twitter. On Facebook, I looked at the themes of these mainstream media posts and how well they performed (for example, the engagement they received). I also performed a textual analysis, and explored the comments on these posts that received the most engagement.

Undoubtedly, more mainstream media outlets than the ones captured and described in this chapter posted on Facebook about the Goodes controversy. Nevertheless, the examples presented in this section do illustrate users' selective amplification of news stories and perspectives through their practices of sharing specific Facebook links (and not others) on Twitter.

6.2 THE CREATION OF PUBLIC PAGES TO PERFORM RACE

Facebook users created public pages specifically *about* the Goodes controversy, both to engage in racist and anti-racist discourse. In this regard, I identified three practices: the creation of pages entitled "Adam Goodes" with only a few posts, in order to both praise and attack his public persona;[61] pages of geo-located places; and meme pages. Some of these pages were created before 2015 – probably in response to other controversies involving Goodes (for example, when he called out racism in 2013, and was named Australian of the Year in 2014). Other pages were created in 2015 as a response to the war dance and the booing controversy.

One example of the practice of setting up pages for racist purposes was a page created in 2010. It bore no profile picture, was named "Adam Goodes",[62] and was liked by 14 people. The page had only one post that read: "I love casual bum". The use of homophobia as a cultural attack to avoid overt racism has been a common racist trope against Goodes across platforms; this reflects the strong link between whiteness and hegemonic masculinity in Australia (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). Likewise, practices of domination of white hegemonic masculinity have historically subordinated Black and gay men within the sports field (Anderson & McCormack, 2010). Another similar page was created in July 2015; it was named "Adam Bads", and its URL read "Adam is not

[61] Adam Goodes does not have an official public page on Facebook; hence, Facebook searches for him on the platform returned these "fake" pages (with abuse) as relevant results.
[62] https://www.facebook.com/adam-goodes-112025625484092/

goodes".[63] The page was liked by nine people and had two posts, which read: "strayin of da yeer bak 2 bak I reckon", and "stahp buin mii guiz". The posts depicted Goodes as a weeping person, a gendered attack that again reflects hegemonic masculinity tactics to dominate racialised others.

These posts also derogatively mimicked Aboriginal dialects. In her study of English speakers' mockery of Spanish, Hill (2008) notes that the practice of making fun of other dialects and language perpetuates pejorative racialization of historically marginalised communities, and reinforces whiteness. In this case, the practice of mocking Aboriginal dialects worked to reinforce Englishness as a cultural trait of Australianness; this, in turn, reinforces whiteness as a feature of Australian identity, and excludes Indigeneity from the national project.

The outlawing of Indigenous practices and culture was a racist practice of Australian colonialism (Malcolm & Koscielecki, 1997). On Facebook, this was reproduced through users' mocking of Aboriginal dialects and culture through their memetic engagements with specific Facebook affordances, such as the creation of public pages. However, users also created pages entitled "Adam Goodes"[64] to support him. One of these pages contained five posts by the page administrator; these posts were mainly articles about Goodes and YouTube videos of him playing in AFL games. The page had 2115 Likes as of September 2017.

Another practice was the creation of public pages of places with references to Goodes; these typically included a Google Maps location, with the place in question checked in. While the purpose of this practice was often ambivalent, the titles of the pages and the name of the geo-located places suggest that they were created to make fun of the booing. For example, some of these pages were: "The Adam Goodes Show",[65] "Yet Another Adam Goodes Show",[66] "Carlton vs Adam Goodes",[67] and "South Bound With Adam Goodes in Sliver Bullet".[68]

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[63] https://www.facebook.com/AdamIsNotGoodes
[64] https://www.facebook.com/Adam-Goodes-359762446711/ [last accessed January 27, 2018]
[65] https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Adam-Goodes-Show/262311823790586
[66] https://www.facebook.com/pages/Yet-Another-Adam-Goodes-Show/151761864915805
[67] https://www.facebook.com/pages/Carlton-vs-Adam-Goodes/193656720685132
[68] https://www.facebook.com/pages/South-Bound-With-Adam-Goodes-in-Sliver-Bullet/466296470126148

In "South Bound With Adam Goodes in Sliver Bullet", the address checked was a street called "boorth-Charlton Rd" (see Figure 1). The name suggests a wordplay between the act of booing ("boorth") and the Carlton Football Club ("Charlton Rd"); this appears to be an intertextual reference to the boos that Carlton fans directed at Goodes after his war dance in May 2015. In this case, creativity and play were mobilised for exclusionary ends.

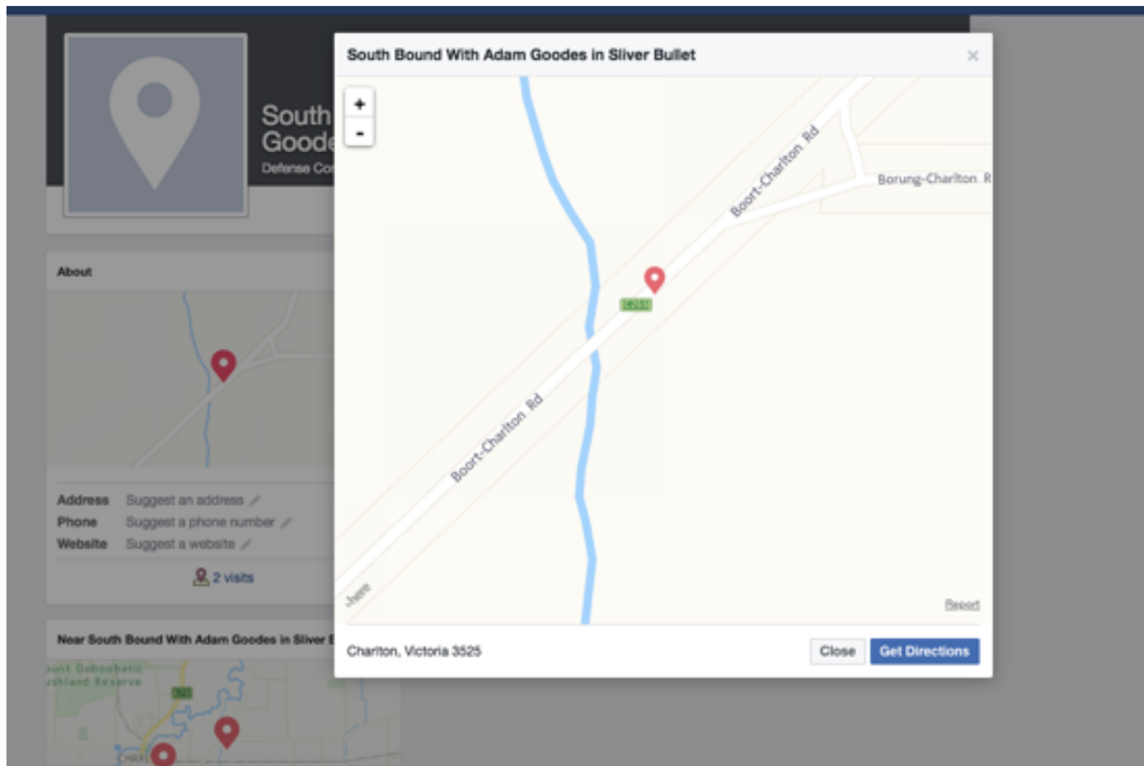

Figure 1. The Facebook page "South Bound With Goodes in Sliver Bullet", which had the "boorth-Charlton Rd" address checked in

Users also created meme pages in response to the Goodes controversy. Meme pages[69] that were set up to engage in racist discourse were: "Adam Goodes memes"[70] (276 Likes); "Boo Adam Goodes"[71] (4239 Likes); "Boo you Adam Goodes"[72] (13 Likes); "Adam Goodes is a Flog"[73] (434 Likes); and "Adam Goodes for Flog of the

[69] The number of "Likes" of these pages corresponds to the "Likes" captured by Netvizz at the time of the data gathering in October 2015, with the exception of *Adam Goodes memes.* This latter page was identified through the Facebook search function in the platform's interface, and the number of likes is as of September 2017.
[70] https://www.facebook.com/Adam-Goodes-Memes-1633082223605484/
[71] https://www.facebook.com/pages/Boo-Adam-Goodes/388712491338103
[72] https://www.facebook.com/Booyougoodes
[73] https://www.facebook.com/Sookyflog

Year"[74] (24 881 Likes). Two of these titles contained the Australian slang "flog" which, as described in Chapter 4, is an Australian slang term for a contemptible person, a term that was widely used by Goodes' opponents to refer to him.

While the majority of these pages had relatively few Likes, the page "Adam Goodes for Flog of the Year" stood out for having nearly 25 000 Likes. This was in part because Australian media reported on it for the racist content it contained (Fox Sports, 2015), as well as did other institutions such as the Melbourne-based Online Hate Prevention Institute, which reported the page as breaching Facebook's hate speech policy (OHPI, 2015). The symbiosis between Australian media and the page "Adam Goodes for Flog of the Year" also positively affected the visibility of this page. In fact, fans of this meme page bragged about this popularity in comparison to other Facebook pages created to support Goodes, which received fewer Likes. For example, one user posted a photoshop on the page "Adam Goodes for Flog of the Year", comparing the 23 000 Likes of this page with the 7055 Likes of the page "Adam Goodes Fan Club". The photoshop had an overlaid text that read: "Case Closed". This post shows that these pages were aware of each other, and that fans perceived Facebook's metrics as an indication of success on the platform (Marwick & Ellison, 2012)

The meme pages set up to engage in racist discourse around Goodes shared similar characteristics. In all of them, both users and the administrators of the pages could post. In general, users posted the most overt racist memes, while the administrators posted content that engaged in colour-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2009) and common racist stereotypes against Indigenous Australians. The content posted by the page owners received, by far, the most engagement. Moreover, the majority of the users that engaged in racist discourse did not use pseudonyms but their real names or, at least, names that sounded real. This could be considered an indication of the perceived impunity that users feel when engaging in racist discourse in meme pages. This is, for instance, because humorous controversial content is protected in Facebook's hate speech policy. The type of content posted on these pages was fairly similar, being mostly the posts of these pages image memes. Due to the popularity of the page "Adam Goodes for Flog of the Year", I examined users' creation and

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[74] https://www.facebook.com/pages/Adam-Goodes-for-Flog-of-the-Year/1589916354604087

transformation of image memes in this page as an example of common practices on these platform-specific spaces.

"Adam Goodes for Flog of the Year" was created on 29 May 2015, the same day Goodes performed the war dance against Carlton, and the last post was on 15 December 2015. The "About" section read: "Everyone needs to get around this page for the sake of the AFL. The sooner this flog retires the better. Remember this page doesn't tolerate racism." Since the content on this page was clearly racist from a Critical Race Theory perspective (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), this latter statement could be read as irony, or as reflecting white understandings of racism as simply overt bigotry. The profile picture of the page was a photoshop featuring Goodes when he delivered his Australian of the Year acceptance speech. His speaker podium read "Australia's Flog of the Year Award" rather than "Australian of the Year Awards 2014".

The cover picture of the page was an image macro of Sydney Swans players, with a caption that read: "'Boo a Roo' campaign against North Melbourne". This is an intertextual reference to a campaign led by the Sydney Swans (Goodes' AFL team) in 2001 in which the club promoted a booing campaign entitled "boo a roo" against North Melbourne. Goodes' opponents used this campaign to claim that the club promoted boos against North Melbourne in 2011, while at the same time condemning the Goodes booing. For Goodes' opponents, this was a sign of "hypocrisy" and of "double standards" that was used to deny the racist nature of the booing.

In general, Goodes' opponents invested their time in framing the booing as both a general non-racist practice that was part of the AFL culture, and as an individual right to express a dislike of Goodes that had nothing to do with his Aboriginality; rather, it was the exercise of free speech. This right was defended even when Goodes publically said that the booing was affecting him.

I gathered all the posts[75] on this page with the digital tool Netvizz. The page administrators posted 4% of the posts, 92% of them being image memes. Users were responsible for 96% of the remaining posts, 45% being image memes, and 46% being

[75] According to the data gathered in 2017 with Netvizz (Rieder, 2013), the page had 643 posts, with 51,616 users liking or commenting 85,262 times.

text-based status updates. The image macro that received the highest engagement[76] on the page (thousands of Likes, comments, and shares) was posted by the page administrators, and compared Goodes with Australian cyclist Shane Crawford. The caption read: “Singles out 13 yr old girl = aoty[77] [Goodes]. Rides 3600 km for breast cancer = the true deserver [Crawford]”. In 2013, Crawford, who is white in appearance, rode his bike from Melbourne to Perth to raise money for breast cancer. This feat, according to Goodes’ opponents, was far more heroic than his calling out racism in 2013; thus, they considered Crawford to be the “true deserver” of the Australian of the Year award. The post reinforces whiteness as a common feature of Australianness, and reflects whites’ self-perceived entitlement to decide what is and counts as *truly* Australian (Hage, 1998; Hartley & Green, 2006)

Other popular image macros on the page argued that white AFL players had been fined for making gestures such as flipping off crowds, while Goodes had not been reprimanded for “threatening to kill fans with a spear”. Comparing vulgar gestures with a performance of Indigeneity during the AFL Indigenous Round is rather odd, yet the argument resonates with the racist accusation that Indigenous people receive “special treatment” (Pedersen, Dudgeon, Watt, & Griffiths, 2006). Accusations of “special treatment”, however, deny whites’ historic accumulation of wealth through Indigenous dispossession (Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

The administrators of this page further spread a constructed sub-controversy that originated on Twitter: the circulation of the still video frame in which Goodes appears to grab the genitals of AFL player Taylor Hunt (as described in Chapter 4). The page administrators appropriated the video frame to depict Goodes as a sex molester. In the post engaging with this sub-controversy, the owners of the page reposted an image macro from the Facebook page “Everything AFL”. This macro comprised three images. On the top, a white man with paternalistic body language appeared next to Taylor Hunt, and said: “Where did the big sook touch you Taylor?” The image resembled a scene of an adult asking a child if someone had molested him. The second image showed a soft toy resembling Hunt and a finger pointing at his

[76] The image macro received 19,621 Likes, 3,094 shares and 1,632 comments,
[77] “aoty” stands for Australian of the Year.

genitals, which were hand drawn. In the third image, Goodes had an ambivalent facial expression, as if he were pouting.

On Twitter, this constructed sub-controversy reflected homophobia as a practice of domination of white hegemonic masculinity. On Facebook, the appropriation of this controversy reinforced negative stereotypes of Indigenous Australians – stereotypes long mobilised by politicians and the media that have historically worked to undermine Indigenous culture and people (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, pp. 159–164). These old stereotypes were now targeted at Goodes, and cloaked in humorous image memes posted on Facebook.

In 2007, John Howard's federal government sent military troops into Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory on the premise that rampant child sexual abuse was taking place. The facts were constructed "as something extraordinary and aberrant" that required "governmental measures" (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 153). Users' appropriation of the still frame on Facebook indicates that while racist ideas and practices shift on social media, arguments and justifications have not actually changed much from colonial times. That is, contemporary practices of exclusion against Indigenous Australians include the mobilisation of old negative stereotypes through memetic culture, which is given a boost by platform cultures and architecture.

The page administrators also engaged with the dehumanising meme of comparing Goodes with an "ape," a recurrent racist trope that has been commonplace across platforms in relation to this controversy (for a discussion on this topic within the American context see Everett, 2012). Users on this page also posted an image macro comparing Goodes with the infamous gorilla Harambe. The comparison with Harambe – who dragged and grabbed a child that fell into his enclosure – also worked to reinforce the idea that Goodes "abuses" kids, and stems from his call out of racism in 2013. These layers of intertextuality that worked to dehumanise Goodes become lost before we can know their context or, more broadly, before we can know how race and racism work in Australia.

Another image meme posted on this page was a stock macro template from the racist series "Aboriginal memes" (Oboler, 2013). The macro showed an Aboriginal man with the following caption: "Stolen Generation. I don't know nothing about no stolen generator". The macro both reinforces the negative stereotype of portraying Aboriginal Australians as thieves (Jakubowicz et al., 1994), and denies the existence

of the Stolen Generations. The wordplay in this macro is particularly problematic, given the intergenerational trauma that the Stolen Generations has caused within Aboriginal communities (Barney & Mackinlay, 2010). Here, again, memetic practices work to whitewash and make fun of racist practices from Australian colonialism, such as the forced removal of children from Indigenous families. The denial of the Stolen Generation is a specific racist trope in Australia that is highly offensive for Indigenous people, and it requires an understanding of this particular cultural context to *get the joke* and its potential harm. In turn, the fact that there are stock character macros that employ race as their memetic premise, such as Aboriginal memes, is *per se* problematic, since they reproduce the implicit white male centrality of memetic media (Milner, 2016, pp. 130–31). As Milner (2016) points out, predominant inequalities can be reinscribed through meme culture, both in everyday interactions and in technological design (Milner, 2016).

Not only did users create meme pages to directly respond to Goodes' war dance, but well-established meme pages on Facebook also used this controversy as raw material for their habitual racist and sexist jokes. Pages such as "AFL Memes", "Aboriginal Memes," and "The Footy Dean" weighed in. For example, "The Footy Dean"[78] – a Facebook page that was shared on Twitter among Goodes' opponents – posted several image macros about Goodes that were sexually explicit, homophobic, and openly racist. One of these image memes was a photoshop that whitened Goodes' skin, with the accompanying post noting that the star would "still be a dickhead" even if he were white. This reflects the racist stereotype of arguing that "black as character" – signifying uncontrollable behaviour – is impossible to hide, even beneath a white skin (Perkins, 2004). The joke of whitening Goodes' skin is even more problematic when contextualised within Australian history, since the practice of trying to "erase" Aboriginality through miscegenation, and the forced removal of Indigenous kids to place them with white families, was commonplace during post-colonial Australia (Frazer & Carlson, 2017).

The Facebook page "Absurd Aboriginal Memes"[79] also contributed to the controversy by posting image memes accusing Goodes, for instance, of harassing

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[78] 5,669 Likes as at July 2017
[79] https://www.facebook.com/inventedthestick/

women. Aboriginal meme pages are a long-running racist practice on Facebook, and often contain image memes depicting Indigenous Australians "as alcoholics, child molesters and welfare abusers" (Herborn, 2013). In 2012 and 2014, the Online Hate Prevention Institute (OHPI) conducted extensive negotiations with Facebook to get the platform to remove several meme pages containing racist attacks on Indigenous Australians (Oboler, 2013). Facebook initially ruled that the pages did not breach its terms of service; rather, it compelled their creators to label them as hosting "controversial content". Not until the Australian Communications and Media Authority was involved did Facebook decide to block these pages; even then, however, they only did so in Australia (Oboler, 2013). Facebook architecture makes it easy to copycat this particular genre of meme pages (as the presence of the page "Absurd Aboriginal Memes" shows), and makes it almost impossible to control this practice. However, Facebook's by default response of maintaining these pages after having been reported by recognised institutions (for example, OHPI) enacts platformed racism as an effect of platform governance.

In contrast, meme pages were also created for anti-racism purposes, and to counter dominant narratives around this controversy. Carlson's work (2013) shows that Indigenous activity on social media is particularly prevalent on Facebook, and that various Indigenous issue-based public pages and groups are dedicated to building and maintaining community. One such page, entitled "Hunting Convicts with Imaginary Spears", surfaced from my dataset as being Indigenous-issue based. It was created in June 2015 and contained some of the image memes posted on Twitter by users identified as Aboriginal (for example, First World Problems macro). The page, which often shared posts from other Indigenous issue-based pages[80], had modes of address such as "blackfullas", "whitefullas", and "deadly". The use of these and other signifiers (for example, the regular use of black emoji), and the page's mode of address (for example, the use of "we" to refer to the Indigenous community), suggest the page owner's Indigenous self-identification.

In terms of building counter narratives around the Goodes controversy, the title of the page is already a critique of white Australia. By asserting that Indigenous people were "hunting convicts with imaginary spears" – an intertextual reference to the first

[80] Pages such as "Ya Know Ya a Black Fulla When" and "Duwadi Entertainment"

settlers that arrived to Australia, most of whom were white convicts from the UK – the title sarcastically exposes the *real* violence against Indigenous people during the "Frontier Wars[81]" (Connor, 2002).

In terms of the content, the page appropriated some of the macros that were shared to support Goodes on Twitter, and changed the captions to introduce a new critical idea. For instance, one of the macros shared on this page was a transformation of the macro in which Goodes appeared with the Aboriginal flag in the background;[82] in this case, however, the captions read: "What if I told you, Australia is an imaginary world". The caption "What if I told you" is an intertextual reference to popular Internet meme Matrix Morpheus ("Matrix Morpheus", 2018). The meme typically features a screen capture of the fictional black character of Morpheus in the *The Matrix* franchise, the first line of which usually reads: "What if I Told You", followed by a second caption that often decries a pointless behaviour or idea ("Matrix Morpheus", 2018). The meme is particularly associated with the alt-right, whose members use it to "redpill" other people; that is, to influence or lecture them about their particular vision of how things are (Pearl, 2016). "Redpill" refers to the famous scene in *Matrix* when Morpheus gives Nero (played by actor Keanu Reeves) the choice to take a 'red pill' to see things as they really are, rather than living in a computer-simulated world.

In the appropriation of the meme for the Goodes controversy, the image of Morpheus is supplanted by Goodes, and the second line is used to make the point that Australia was settled under the legal fiction of *terra nullius*. In turn, by using this meme, the joke is to "redpill" white Australia to see things as they really are and acknowledge its racist past. This transformation of the meme represents a critique of Australian colonialism. It shows a better understanding of memetic aesthetics and forms than the macros and photoshops posted on the meme pages that engaged in racist discourse, and that were not situated within a wider ecology of digital cultures. The use of particular memes regardless of their content, connects to, or speaks back to specific Internet cultures and their politics. In this case, the act of "redpilling" someone is reappropriated for antiracism purposes. Frazer and Carlson (2017) argue that memes

[81] The "Frontiers Wars" is a term used in Australia to describe a series of conflicts between British settlers and Indigenous people during the colonial period.
[82] The caption of the macro that was widely circulated on Twitter read: "Share if you support Adam Goodes".

are a useful tool for challenging colonial ideologies such as “the founding national myth of ‘peaceful’ British settlement” (p. 6). In this case, this macro challenges the concept of *terra nullius* and, as Frazer and Carlson (2017) note, these engagements work as reminders of “the continuity of colonial power relations” (p. 8) in contemporary Australia.

The posts on this Indigenous issue-based page also showed a constructed humour similar to Celeste Liddle’s intervention on Twitter, and Bjorn Steward’s vlog on YouTube. When Indigenous Sydney Swans player Lewis Jetta mimicked Goodes’ war dance, to support Goodes, the page wrote a post[83] outlining five steps to follow for “surviving an imaginary spear attack”. The first three points read:

> #1 Watch the spear. Luckily the recent imaginary spear attacks have occurred without the use of an imaginary Woomera which would propel the spear at a much greater rate, thus improving your chance of evading the imaginary spear.
>
> #2 If you do get hit, DO NOT MOVE! You would be very unlucky to be speared twice. The imaginary spear attacks of 2015 have all been single spear attacks, so do not move. Ask those around you to do a thorough inspection of the wounded area.
>
> #3 Try to sit with a group of Aboriginal fans. So far, no Aboriginal person has been attacked in this recent spate of imaginary tribal warfare, so sitting with them looks like a very safe option. Another great thing about this is they don't just watch the footy, they still love to get out and play at the park or in the street. This is a great option, not only for your safety but also your health.

By recommending that white people “sit with a group of Aboriginal fans” as a great option “not only for your safety but also your health”, the post critiques the fact that social racial segregation in Australia has a role in white people’s lack of understanding of Indigenous culture. Research shows that the level of social proximity between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people in Australia is extremely low (Atkinson, Taylor, & Walter, 2010). In the US context, this segregation, DiAngelo (2011) argues, is one of the factors that most influence white people’s failure to see and understand the perspectives of people of colour. In the case of this Facebook post, the use of humour served to exemplify how certain practices of exclusion – or space segregation – still prevail, and affect white Australians’ understanding of Indigenous perspectives.

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[83] The posts received 999 Likes, 119 comments, and 617 shares.

Last, another common practice on Facebook was the creation of public pages to support Goodes,[84] such as: "Stand up for Goodesy"[85] (3051 Likes); "Cheer for Goodesy" (1122 Likes); "Cheer Cheer Adam Goodes" (892 Likes); "Support Adam Goodes" (760 Likes); "Adam Goodes for Speaker" (438 Likes); "Get Behind Adam Goodes" (432 Likes); "Adam Goodes Appreciation Group" (888 Likes); and the public group "I Stand with Adam Goodes" (272 Likes), among others. These pages typically received less engagement than the racist meme pages and, generally, were presented as spaces from which to "make a stand" against the booing and racism. In terms of content, they typically shared news stories about Goodes, and were sometimes a platform for white self-displays of solidarity that, as observed on Twitter and YouTube, worked to re-centre whiteness, rather than counter racism.

A 10-year-old Grovedale girl, who was a fan of Goodes, created the support page "Stand up for Goodesy". This page received the highest engagement of all the pages created for this purpose. Mainstream media amplified this story (Ryan, 2015), and this helped the page to gain greater visibility. Although the self-declared aim of the page was to support Goodes, its content gravitated around the white girl and her activities, and there was a clear focus on attracting mainstream media attention. The page had posts such as: "The excitement just keeps growing. FB followers look out for Soph during a story on Goodes on Channel 7 news tonight"; and "Excitement is rising as Soph is packing her suitcase for Sydney! She simply could not miss a final farewell to Goodesy". These posts were always accompanied by various images of the girl.

As on Twitter, the practice of performing white solidarity through images of white children suggests a desire to show a kind version of whiteness as an anti-racism response to racism. However, as Ahmed (2004) contends, this tactic does not work as an effective antiracism purpose: "Antiracism becomes a matter of generating a positive white identity, and identity that makes the white subject feel good about itself." For Ahmed, and other authors like Engles (2016) and Cole (2012), these practices are not effective anti-racism actions; rather, they work as a way of sustaining white privilege which, in turn, contributes to platformed racism. Certainly, not all white performative

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[84] The likes of these pages are from the data retrieved with Netvizz in 2015, wiwth the exception of "Stand up for Goodesy"; "Cheer for Goodesy"; Adam Goodes appreciation group; and the public group "I stand with Adam Goodes", with likes corresponding as of September 2017.
[85] https://www.facebook.com/Stand-up-for-Goodesy-399663986899730/

acts of solidarity contribute to platformed racism. As Frazer and Carlson (2017) point out, memetic culture can bring together "sympathetic liaisons" between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and these can work to "challenge the colonial arrangement and produce something new" (p. 10). My critique focuses on those white performative acts that do not work for anti-racism purposes or interact with Indigenous users' contributions but, rather, reflect "ineffectual narcissism" (Engles, 2016, p. 92).

In some cases, the activity of these support pages was spotted by Indigenous activist movements such as the Recognise campaign, which advocates for the meaningful recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian constitution. The Facebook page of the Recognise campaign left the following comment on the page "I Stand with Adam":

> Great work! Good to see you standing up against racism on and off the field. If you want to find out about how we can get racial discrimination out of our highest legal document head to www.recognise.org.au.

This intervention shows how Indigenous activism tried to redirect white solidarity to more meaningful ways of engaging with anti-racist activism, such as the possibility of engaging in initiatives that are already fighting to end racial discrimination in Australia.

6.3 PERSONAL RACIST AND ANTI-RACIST COMMENTARY THROUGH STATUS UPDATES

Users also contributed to the Goodes controversy on Facebook by expressing opinions and judgements in personal status updates, a common practice on the platform (Lee, 2011). The examination of the Facebook status updates of ordinary people and public Australian figures that were curated on Twitter (that is, Facebook links that users shared on Twitter) brought to light new actors that engaged with this controversy on Facebook; for example, Indigenous boxer Anthony Mundine, Indigenous rapper Birdz, writer Catherine Deveny, the music band Pilerats, and TV personality Andrew Costello. As has happened with most practices explored in this research, status updates were used to engage in both racist and anti-racist discourse.

Andrew Costello, from Channel 9's *South Aussie with Cosi* – a travel show about South Australia – posted a status on his public page that received the most

engagement[86] (thousands of Likes, shares, and comments) of all the Facebook links that were shared on Twitter. The post reproduced all the racist tropes mobilised among Goodes' opponents across platforms: it denied the racial overtone of the booing; accused Goodes of "exposing" the girl that racially vilified him in 2013; and asserted that it was not "the right time" to perform the war dance. Costello also invited Goodes to "ignore" the harassers because "haters gonna hate hate hate Adam …Shake it off shake it off'", an intertextual reference to Taylor Swift's hit song "Shake it off". In this post, Costello reinforced the common white projections of black men as both "hyper- aggressive" and "hyper-sensitive" (Bond, 2017), and also reproduced white people's patronising attitudes to Indigenous Australians. Costello's attempt to normalise the racism embodied in the act of booing, mirrors other instances of white privilege expressed overtly by public figures in Australia. In 2014, within the debate to remove sections of the Australian Racial Discrimination Act, Attorney General George Brandis declared that people had "the right to be bigots" (Chan, 2014).

Indigenous public figures countered racist narratives such as Costello's through their personal status updates. Indigenous rapper Birdz wrote this status update on his public Facebook page: "'Straya' - where being black is accepted, provided you do it the "white" way of course. #AdamGoodes #RecogniseThat #Birdz #RTBW #RacismStopsWithWho?" The post resembles a tweet more than a Facebook post, which suggests that Birdz cross-posted his activity on Twitter and Facebook. The use of the hashtag #recogniseThat reflects the common practice of wordplay on Twitter (Highfield, 2016). Birdz playfully appropriated the hashtag #recognise from the Recognise campaign to compel white Australia to "recognise" the workings of whiteness around the Goodes case. Birdz also appropriated the hashtag of the official campaign "Racism. It stops with me", launched by the Australian Human Rights Commission, and transformed it into a rhetorical question (RacismStopsWithWho?) to make a point about its obvious answer: racism stops when white people become aware of the problem and their contributions to it through their everyday practices. Birdz also engaged with the Goodes controversy with another status update that read:

> All this 'controversy' over Lewis Jetta and Goodes reminds me of when elders talk about how it used to be against the law to practice culture (ceremony, dance, language etc) on the mission

[86] The status was posted on 29 July 2015, and accumulated 41 629 Likes, 8851 comments, and 7692 shares as of January 2018.

> back in the day. We in 2015 right?? Same same... Shame job Australia. #Birdz #LewisJetta #AdamGoodes

Like other Indigenous counter narratives on social media in relation to the Goodes controversy, Birdz's posts worked to deconstruct colonial power relations still present in contemporary Australia. In this case, Birdz directly referred to the outlawing of Indigenous culture during colonisation. Indigenous boxer Anthony Mundine's status updates on the controversy served similar purposes. He posted in his public Facebook page that racism in Australia was built into the government's "psychic[87] [sic]" since the invasion in 1788, and that Indigenous people as "blacks will always be looked at as inferior!" Mundine wrote this post when Goodes announced he was taking some time off due to the booing. The boxer, like Birdz, connected the booing campaign with systemic racism in Australia.

White Australian public figures such as writer Catherine Deveny also engaged in anti-racism discourse through their status updates. Deveny wrote[88] on Facebook that she was "sick" of white people "telling the non-whites what's racist and what's not," and that the thing that she was "most over" was "meritocracy". She described meritocracy as a word used "to shut people up, undermine them, gaslight them and shame and belittle them." In other words, she added, meritocracy "is just another way of saying 'don't question my privilege.'" Her reference to meritocracy is an intertextual reference to Goodes' Australian of the Year acceptance speech, in which he publicly asserted that access to resources in Australia was not equal for everyone, and thus challenged discourses of meritocracy. Meritocracy, DiAngelo (2011) argues, confronts white privilege, and tacitly invokes white people's responsibility to remediate it (p. 57). Deveny also illustrated how racism in Australia intersects with patriarchy:

> White straight cismen speak. The rest of us are outspoken. White straight cismen have mouths. The rest of us are mouthy. White straight cismen opinions. The rest of us are opinionated. White straight cismen are passionate. The rest of us rant. White straight cismen are confident. The rest of us are attention seekers. White straight cismen are bosses. The rest of us are bossy.

In the case of Adam Goodes, whiteness and hegemonic masculinity intersected by constructing a negative image of the star. His public persona as a confident black athlete was portrayed as him being an "attention seeker"; his being passionate and performing culture was transformed into him being "aggressive"; his capacity to

[87] https://www.facebook.com/teammundine/posts/854816394587464
[88] https://www.facebook.com/catherinedeveny/posts/10153514811497296

publicly express that the booing was affecting him was mocked and labelled as him being effeminate; and his role as a leader and role model that called out racism on the field was interpreted as him "playing the victim/race card".

Public figures also used their Facebook status updates to reflect on how racism manifested online towards Goodes. The rock band Pilerats invited its audience to imagine that they were in a pub and, in response to a comment defending Goodes, someone "tossed" a pint to the ground, "scoffed loudly" and started "screaming shit like"[89]:

> GOODES IS A FLOG, HE DESERVES WHAT HE GETS 'CAUSE HE'S A DIRTY PLAYER, SUCK SHIT GOODESY YOU WEAK PRICK AND MAN UP IT'S FOOTY FOR FUCK'S SAKE

The post continued by saying that this is how people looked when they commented on posts of people that shared their support and opinions about Goodes: "You look like an angry crazy person at the pub who has no regard for other people's thoughts or feelings – especially not Adam Goodes," the post read. By situating the discussion in a pub and alluding to the action of "tossing your pint to the ground" as an act of defensiveness when confronted with one's own racism, Pilerats connected Goodes' opponents with archetypal white Australian masculinity which, in popular culture, is also associated with beer-drinking (Kirkby, 2003).

The sharing of Facebook links on Twitter also pointed me to public posts from Australian politicians on Facebook who expressed their solidarity with Goodes. For example, users curated on Twitter the Facebook post of banker and former NSW Liberal premier Mike Baird, who wrote[90] that the line had "been crossed" in the booing of Adam Goodes, and that it had to stop in the "spirit of good sportsmanship". Ordinary users and media outlets also shared on Twitter the Facebook post of Indigenous former politician Nova Peris who, in relation to the Goodes controversy, posted a video of her speech in Parliament about racism in Australia; as a result, she was harassed on the platform (Morgan, 2015).

Ordinary users also expressed their own opinions and stories through their status updates on Facebook, which they cross-posted on Twitter. The majority of users that engaged in racist discourse around Goodes through their status updates reproduced the

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[89] The status update received 1916 Likes, 191 comments, and 165 shares.
[90] The status update received 8639 Likes, 2402 comments, and 1075 shares as of August 2017.

conservative arguments already examined in previous chapters: that Goodes was playing the “victim card”; that he “bullied” and “vilified” a “naïve 13 year old girl”; and that the war dance was “unrespectful” and Goodes was “provocative” by performing it. Anti-Goodes status updates also claimed that the booing was a matter of “interpretation,” and that taunts on the field were part of the AFL culture; hence, Goodes should “cope” with it.

One user evoked concerns about the politics of voice within this controversy by asserting that he or she had worked in Aboriginal remote communities – hence, he or she *knew* – and did not “understand” Goodes’s war dance. This post claimed that there was “so much” support going into communities, and that there were “so many white Australians” wanting to volunteer in remote communities (aka ‘white saviour’ trope). She or he claimed that they didn’t know “anyone against aboriginals”. This was why she or he was “confused” about Goodes, and decided that “maybe silence” was “the go”.

Users also engaged in anti-racism discourse on Facebook through their status updates. One woman self-identified as white Australian, who said she was married to an Aboriginal man, wrote: “We, as white fellas in this country, have been socialised to be racist”; therefore, she believes that white people are heavily attached to whiteness and privilege. The post went on to argue that only when white people had a clear awareness of how whiteness and white privilege impact people of colour, would they realise that they are not “above and more important” than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This status update is more aligned with Engles’ (2016) definition of a more “self-aware” and “efficacious” anti-racism activism online (p. 94).

Other users who engaged in anti-racist discourse through their status updates stressed the need for better historical and multicultural education in Australia as a first step to unpack white privilege. The teaching of Aboriginal culture in primary and higher education, without traces of colonialism, is a contentious matter in Australia. At the same time, research shows the benefits of adopting curriculum frameworks that counter the development of racism and prejudice from a young age (MacNaughton & Davis, 2001).

Users who self-identified as Indigenous Australians engaged with the Goodes controversy through sharing their personal experiences with racism. For example, one user wrote that racism in Australia was “hurtful”, and would be always “excused and

white washed”. She explained how she had also been “abused” on social media for “standing up” for herself, community, and culture, and how people had “unfriended or blocked” her because they were “sick” of her “complaining”. She was reminded that being a proud Aboriginal person would always be “political”. Her story of racism as a shared experience among Indigenous Australians served to counter racist narratives that tried to isolate the Goodes case from Australian history, whiteness, and the impact that everyday racism has in the Indigenous community.

6.4 USES OF MAINSTREAM MEDIA CONTENT ON FACEBOOK

Twitter users engaged with the Goodes’ controversy not only by sharing links to articles from Australian media websites, but also by sharing pictures and screenshots of news articles (Chapter 4); by curating links of broadcast legacy media on YouTube (Chapter 5); and by curating links to Australian mainstream media posts on Facebook. This latter news-sharing tactic is no surprise as people are increasingly turning to Facebook for their news (Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy, & Nielsen, 2017; Shearer & Gottfried, 2017). Although there is no granular data about the percentage of people that specifically use Facebook for this purpose, 37% of online users in Australia report using social media to get their news (Sensis, 2017).

The curation of Facebook news on Twitter helped me to identify the patterns of mainstream media objects recurrently shared: users mostly circulated videos that were posted by popular non-Indigenous Australian mainstream and AFL-related media outlets on Facebook. Users circulated on Twitter the URLs of Facebook content (videos) from media outlets such as *The Today Show*, *ABC News Breakfast*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, and AFL-related TV shows such as *The Footy Show* – all non-Indigenous media.

In 2017, Facebook adjusted the newsfeed algorithm to prioritize long videos (Perez, 2017) and, in 2016, announced the importance of live videos when ranking the news (Kant, 2016). Both corporate moves showed the prevalence of the visual in conveying news information on the platform, and this was visible within the Goodes controversy. For example, the Facebook page of Australian TV show *Today* shared a video of Jesinta Campbell who was engaged to Goodes’ Sydney teammate and fellow Indigenous player Buddy Franklin. In this video, Campbell thanked Goodes for being

a role model for her future Indigenous children. The post received 8474 Likes, 3534 comments, and 1428 shares (as of July 2017). One user curated this video on Twitter with an accompanying tweet text that encouraged Twitter users to "read the comments" under this post on Facebook. The comment with most engagement, which received 2216 Likes, read: "Racism goes both ways your kids won't be Indigenous. They will be Australian. Stop segregating". The comment not only denies the Aboriginal heritage of Campbell's future children, but also positions Indigenous people as those who divide when, since colonisation, Indigenous populations have been, and continue to be segregated (Jayasuriya et al., 2003). The second comment with most engagement[91] accused Goodes of "playing the race card", and the media of magnifying the issue. Meanwhile, the third most popular[92] comment noted: "Racism works both ways Jacinta [sic].... (…) you are just perpetuating racism darl...not helpful". In this case, users went to Twitter to share the link of this post as a way of drawing people's attention to the kind of responses that pro-Goodes discourses were generating on Facebook; for example, evocations of reverse racism.

Another Twitter user shared a post of the Facebook public pages of the TV show *The Weekly*. The post was the video in which Charlie Pickering connected the Goodes controversy with the wider issue of Indigenous incarceration. The tweet was directed at @charliepick (Pickering's Twitter account), and praised his covering of the issue, while adding the hashtags #auspol, #adamgoodes, #sosblakaustralia #stopblackdeathsincustody, and #Australia. By using hashtags as connective references to the media object, the user linked the Goodes controversy with general conversations about Australian politics (#auspol), and with broader issues that affect the indigenous community (#sosblakaustralia and #stopblackdeathsincustody).

This video on Facebook accumulated 6939 Likes, 8527 shares, and 830 comments (as of February 2018). The comment with most engagement[93] under this video read: "Only in Australia could an Indigenous person be attacked for performing an Indigenous dance during an Indigenous game on what is Indigenous land. Shame on this nation!" The second most popular comment[94] was a screenshot of a tweet by

[91] 1432 likes
[92] 1126 likes
[93] 1063 Likes
[94] 508 Likes

comedian Aamer Rahman, which read: “White Australia, if a symbolic spear hurts your feelings imagine what 200+ years of genocide feels like. #AdamGoodes”.

The *Weekly*’s decision to allow people to comment on this video on Facebook contrasts with its decision to disable the comments under the same video on YouTube from its official channel. This is particularly incongruous given that the comment section under this video on Facebook seemed rather un-curated and contained racism. One comment read: “Calling someone an ape cause they look similar to a chimpanzee is not being racist, just like calling someone retarded who is clearly not is just disrespectful (…) No one can't tell me he dosent [sic] look like a chimp because he does.” A different user that did not agree with Pickering shared the same Facebook video on Twitter. Their tweet text read: “ABC News. It's Simply Not Goodes enough!”

Another example of mainstream media posts on Facebook that were shared on Twitter was a video posted by The *Sydney Morning Herald* on its public pages. Although the video was in support of Goodes, the user that shared it on Twitter did not endorse the views expressed. The tweet accompanying the video suggested that the media was constantly reporting on Goodes while there were more pressing issues to raise, such as an earthquake in Nepal and the situation of asylum seekers in Australia. On Facebook, the video posted by *Sydney Morning Herald* accumulated thousands of likes, shares, and comments, and featured various Australian public figures showing their support of Goodes. Although the most popular comment under this video was pro-Goodes, another comment with high engagement read: “Breaking news: sooks rally to support sooking.”

Although my main focus was to examine ordinary users’ appropriation of mainstream media content on Facebook, during my data exploration I also noticed how legacy media were promoting their own Facebook content (mostly videos) about Goodes on Twitter. *The Today Show* promoted on Twitter a video from its public Facebook page that featured Australian journalist Ross Greenwood defending the right to boo. The post received 32 435 Likes, 8290 comments, and 9617 shares on Facebook. The comment with most engagement[95] read: “(…) I'm sick to death of this Racist/Bigotry/Misogyny card been played, everyday it's being played (…)”.

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[95] 2,091 likes

AFL-related media outlets also shared on Twitter their own Facebook content. Australian television program *The Footy Show* (Channel 9) circulated on Twitter a video posted on its Facebook page featuring TV presenter and retired AFL player Sam Newman arguing that Goodes' war dance was "provocative". Newman appeared as saying: "Adam you are not as important as you think you are (…) you take yourself far too seriously". Nevertheless, he asserted that Goodes was not "well equipped" to handle the "reaction" that his war dance caused. Newman also stressed that people did not appreciated him turning Australian Rules Football into "a political forum". The post received 20 840 Likes, 4775 comments, and 5533 shares. The most popular comments on this video received far less engagement that the videos posted on mainstream media Facebook posts, and they largely denied the racist nature of the booing.

In general, mainstream and AFL-related media outlets shared on Twitter the links to their Facebook content that were more controversial and, hence, had the potential to trigger greater engagement. The majority of the mainstream media posts on Facebook that were shared on Twitter were videos that received high engagement on Facebook. This engagement-centric approach to news sharing on social media from legacy outlets contributed to amplify racist discourse.

Indigenous media outlets also promoted their Facebook content on Twitter. Radios *Noongar Radio, ABC Indigenous,* and *Caama Radio,* cross-posted their activity on both platforms. For example, *Noongar Radio* published on Facebook an open letter to Goodes from Dennis Eggington, Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia. Eggington argued that the booing was "anchored to Social Darwinism". He also asserted that the taunts displaced "the ugly underside of a country that romanticises a 'peaceful discovery' yet feigns outrage at any display of Indigenous culture that doesn't conform to the coloniser consciousness". The lie of *terra nullius* was a recurrent issue mobilised within Indigenous counterpublics to explain what was at stake in relation to the Goodes controversy: Australian racism.

Similarly, *Caama Radio*, Australia's largest Aboriginal media organisation, also curated its Facebook content on Twitter. Sometimes this Facebook content was not originally created, but consisted of Facebook posts from other Aboriginal organizations and institutions; for example, a letter posted by the Western Australia Student Aboriginal Corporation in support of Goodes. These curation practices among

Indigenous media outlets on Facebook and Twitter reflected a strategy to spread further Indigenous narratives and voices around the controversy on social media. In general, however, ordinary users did not curate the Facebook content of Indigenous media outlets on Twitter; rather, they curated the posts of non-Indigenous politicians, mainstream media, and AFL-related media sources. This practice contributed to shaping this controversy from a white frame.

6.5 CONCLUSIONS

Facebook users engaged in racist and anti-racist discourse around the Goodes controversy through the creation of public Facebook pages, personal commentary through status updates, and their curation of mainstream Facebook media content on Twitter. In this chapter, I paid particular attention to the practice of creating public pages as a response to the controversy.

On Facebook, platformed racism in relation to the Goodes controversy was amplified by the activity of new and established meme pages that traded their jokes with racialised others. Image memes in pages such as "Adam Goodes for Flog of the Year" traded with common racist stereotypes against Indigenous Australians (for example, the depiction of Goodes as a child molester). These stereotypes are highly exclusionary, especially in relation to the Australian media and politicians' long tradition of spreading a "discourse of pathology" against Indigenous Australians (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). Racist memes also denied racist colonial practices such as the forced removal of Indigenous children from their families. This denial reflects the way in which memes can work to reinforce and perpetuate white frames on Australian History.

In contrast, the memes posted on the Indigenous issue-based Facebook page "Hunting Convicts with Imaginary Spears" challenged colonial ideologies such as *terra nullius*. In this page, the literacies at play in the use of intertextual references to Internet popular culture (for example, the appropriation of the popular Internet meme Matrix Morpheus), and the use of humour, offered a sharp critique of white Australia that can be situated in the broader progressive uses of meme culture.

Facebook users also created public pages to show their support for Goodes. However, as observed on Twitter and YouTube, in some cases, these practices

contributed to platformed racism in that they amplified and re-centred whiteness, rather than countering racist discourses and working towards an anti-racist agenda. The creation of public pages that gravitated around white performances of solidarity did not contribute to the creation of new narratives and political groupings to challenge past and present ideas and practices of Australian racism. Likewise, ordinary users' curation of mainstream media Facebook content on Twitter surfaced a tendency to amplify the narratives of non-Indigenous media. On the other hand, Indigenous media outlets made use of cross-platform strategies to further spread their perspectives on the Goodes controversy.

Chapter 7: How platforms amplify and normalise racist discourse

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters, I described how users' engagements with memetic media on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook around the Goodes controversy enacted platformed racism. Platformed racism was enacted by 'bad' (that is, ill-meaning) actors' mischievous use of media. At the same time, the memetic practices of aspiring white and non-Indigenous allies had inadvertent consequences for the perpetuation of racism, and also contributed to the enactment of platformed racism.

The memetic uses of GIFs, images, and videos to engage with topical discussions on social media are far from trivial political acts (Highfield, 2016), and contribute a great deal to the dynamics of platformed racism. Memetic media are also powerful: they are easily shareable units of media that work well within the Internet's attention economy in general (Shifman, 2014), and on social media in particular. What we do with media has an impact on the business models, policies, and practices of the media platforms. For example, user practices influence platform algorithms, which can amplify old societal biases (Noble, 2018). In turn, users' abusive, sexist, and racist behaviour on social media is pushing platforms to clarify their policies and strengthen their enforcement of platform rules (Sandberg & Goler, 2017; Twitter Safety, 2017; Wright, 2017).

At the same time, what platforms do with media users' posts – particularly when it comes to content moderation – also impacts on the user community's cultural norms. For example, a platform's common errors and opacity in its moderation of racist and sexist content has pushed users to adopt new initiatives and strategies to counter hate online (Quodling, 2016); however, this sometimes has unintended consequences for the amplification of problematic speech on social media.

In this chapter, I focus on how platforms' amplification of user practices, and their governance processes influenced platformed racism in relation to the Goodes controversy. First, I describe how practices specific to Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube – that is, their "platform vernaculars" (Gibbs et al., 2015) – influenced the

amplification of racist discourse. Second, I study and evaluate platform governance in relation to this case study across these platforms.

Platform governance refers to platforms' governing of discourse through their policies, the different mechanisms they afford to users to moderate content (from filters to the flagging mechanism), and their active interventions in content through automated processes and human moderators (DeNardis & Hackl, 2015; Gillespie, 2018a; Helberger, Pierson & Poell, 2017; Suzor, Van Geelen & West, 2018). Platform governance derives from the shared efforts (or lack thereof) of users and platforms to identify, curate, moderate, and remove racist discourse. I evaluate the successes and failures of these efforts across platforms with regards to the Goodes controversy.

This chapter shows that platform algorithms amplified racist discourse, rather than prioritising diversity of viewpoints around the controversy. While some researchers argue that showing diversity of viewpoints will not help the cause, but rather create more polarization (boyd, 2017), others show that social media can help reduce misperceptions by showing content that both confirms and corrects people's views (Bode & Vraga, 2015). I argue that platforms should at least offer users the option of choosing what information will be shown to them, rather than being limited to the most popular and/or personalized content.

Findings also show that users' memetic engagements with media are a challenge for platform governance. Decisions about controversial content become political when set against competing community norms and cultures. For example, a platform's decisions not to remove visual memes that compare Indigenous people with animals and depict them as sex molesters, contribute to normalise racism against First Nations in Australia. Platformed racism enacted through users' memetic engagements with media, finds refuge in vague platform policies on hate speech (which usually protect humour). However, the everyday racism that surfaced through the exploration of user practices in relation to the Goodes controversy also exposed limitations in platform governance, as the remediation of racism in these spaces also requires the involvement of 'good' and 'bad' users.

7.2 PROBLEMATIC AMPLIFICATION PROCESSES

Users' appropriation of media across platforms contributed to the amplification of racist discourse in relation to the Goodes controversy. These practices, in turn, influenced the performativity of platform algorithms, which further amplified racist discourse. Generally, other user practices, such as liking, sharing, and commenting, also contribute to how algorithms rank and present content. However, the role of social buttons (for example, likes and shares) in scaling up racist practices in relation to the Goodes controversy varied across platforms.

Problematic amplification processes that derived from the entanglement of user engagements with media and algorithms were visible across platforms. For example, users' anti-racism call-out culture had an impact on Twitter trends, and had unintended consequences for the amplification of racialised discourse. Users were active in policing speech through the sharing of visual media as evidence of racist discourse both on Twitter and beyond. They circulated evidence of hate speech in the form of screenshots, and usually called out the perpetrators of hate by @mentioning them. Users also circulated images and screenshots of external media containing conservative Australian media figures' racist views of Goodes. As discussed in the previous chapters, this practice of reposting racist discourse, even if the purpose is the critical assessment or mockery of the perpetrators, inevitably contributes to issues of amplification, and increases the visibility of racist discourse (Phillips & Milner, 2017).

In the long term, the tendency to mention and amplify racist discourse influences platforms' algorithmic processes of ranking and ordering information. In the Goodes debate on Twitter, users' reposting of the views of conservative figures influenced Twitter trends. The Twitter trends algorithm is tailored for every user – based on followers, location, and interests – and identifies "popular" topics to help them discover "the hottest emerging topics of discussion on Twitter" ("Twitter trends FAQs", 2018). One user detected how Twitter's un-curated trends reproduced racialised discourse around Goodes, and shared this evidence on the platform as a screenshot. According to the screenshots circulated on Twitter, "Adam Goodes" as a topic was trending twice in 2015: on 31 May, after the war dance; and on 29 July, at the peak of the booing campaign. In both cases, Twitter's automatic description of the trending topic reproduced the victim-blaming racist trope articulated by figures such as Andrew Bolt and Alan Jones. For example, one of the screenshots shared revealed

how, on 31 May 2015, the description under the "Adam Goodes" trending topic read: "Victim Adam Goodes just crying wolf over the war dance." On 29 July 2015, the trend read: "Swans star Adam Goodes always plays the victim: Alan Jones."

These media objects also showed that user participation around this controversy on Twitter increased over time: from 3880 tweets regarding the trend in May, to 13 600 tweets in July. The repetition of the victim-blaming discourse on Twitter influenced how Twitter trends ranked it as the defining feature of the Goodes controversy. As boyd (2010) argues, the technological architecture of social network sites is shaped by practice; this leads us to reflect on the importance of what we do online in regards to the scalability and searchability of content. Decisions to expose hate speech and racialised discourse online, run the risk of perpetuating these discourses, as they become searchable and replicable, and are given a permanent online presence.

While YouTube users did not call out conservative media figures, they did share videos containing their views. Users' intent in posting these videos was generally unclear, as the description of the videos did not always show their stand on the issue. Independent of user intentions, however, the practice of reposting racialised discourse about Goodes from Australian broadcast media influenced YouTube's content discovery algorithms. For example, when looking for extra videos to complement my original sample, I searched for YouTube lists that matched the query "Adam Goodes". YouTube returned user-generated and automated (algorithmically-generated) playlists. One of these automated playlists was called "Popular Eddie McGuire & Adam Goodes videos". It included videos of McGuire engaging in racialised discourse about Goodes; for example, when he compared Goodes with King Kong, and thereby drawing on the stock racist trope that black people are monkeys, apes; or gorillas; and, hence, less than human. YouTube automatically deemed that the video containing McGuire's racist comments was relevant content to include in an algorithmic-generated list, the ultimate purpose of which is to make content discovery easier for the user.

YouTube also contributed to the discovery and visibility of content through its recommendation system. Previous research has shown how participants that access extremist content on YouTube are highly likely to be recommended further extremist content (O'Callaghan, Greene, Conway, Carthy, & Cunningham, 2013). In the case of

the Goodes controversy, in order to examine whether participants that accessed racialised content were likely to be recommended similar content, I looked at the network of associations of three related videos. These videos featured well-known Australian conservative media personalities who were critical of Goodes: radio presenter Alan Jones; television presenter (and president of rival AFL team Collingwood) Eddie McGuire; and Sam Newman. I extracted their video networks based on YouTube's "recommended videos" algorithm, and using the YouTube Data Tools (Rieder, 2015). On YouTube, the related videos network unveiled new videos discussing the booing controversy, and videos featuring the involvement of these three media personalities in other controversial issues, such as the presence of Muslims in Australia.

These recommendations are helpful in gaining an understanding of platformed racism in the national context of Australia. By liking and watching racist content directed at Goodes on YouTube, the platform's recommendation algorithm generated similar content about the opinions of Australian public figures known for their racist remarks about Aboriginal people. By following algorithmic outcomes, we can better understand how they work (Rieder, Matamoros-Fernández & Coromina, 2017). On YouTube, it is fairly easy to continuously discover new extremist and racist content, based on the platform's related videos recommendation. These "filter bubbles" (Pariser, 2011) – algorithmically driven recommendations that limit the type of content to which users are exposed – are problematic in that they contribute to the spread of racist discourse.

On Facebook, meme pages surfaced as a popular vernacular genre. These pages were typically well connected through Facebook's page-like network (an affordance that allows public Facebook pages to connect through the Like button). This networked structure of meme pages is important to Facebook's capacity to influence its mechanisms of content discovery, such as the page recommender algorithm.

In order to explore the extent to which abject humour on Facebook was well connected, I used Netvizz to gather the like network of a controversial meme page within my sample: "Absurd Aboriginal memes". I extracted all the pages that "Absurd Aboriginal memes" liked (12 pages), and all the pages liked by these 12 pages. In the end, I had a network of 156 meme pages, and visualised it with Gephi. The majority

of these pages were highly interconnected, and included the term “memes” in their titles.

The themes in which these pages memetically engaged varied. Some pages focused on geographic areas (for example, “Badass Baltic Memes”, “Vicious Vietnamese Memes”, “Germanic German Empire Memes”, and “Tasty Tasmanian Memes”); political parody (for example, “Greens Taking Credit for Things”, and “Political Memes for Middle-Class Teens”); fandom meme pages (“Horny Austin Powers Memes”); and racist and sexist abject humour in general (for example, “Stick Memes and Ardent Aboriginal Memes”). Some of these pages, such as “Prestigious Prussian Memes” and “Memes can Melt Beams” had the alt-right symbol Pepe the Frog as the profile picture.

The fact that meme pages are a popular genre on Facebook, plus the fact that these pages were well connected, seemed to influence Facebook’s page recommendation system also. Unlike on YouTube, on Facebook it is not possible to extract the algorithmic generated recommendation for pages. Hence, following algorithmic outcomes on Facebook requires manual explorations such as Bucher’s (2012) observation of her Facebook feed to describe the workings of the algorithm.

In the majority of meme pages in my sample, Facebook’s interface showed me[96] pages that “people also liked”; and pages “liked by this page” that contained similar racist and sexist image memes. For example, for the page “Ardent Aboriginal Memes”, Facebook pointed me to other racist and sexist meme pages that people also liked: “Old Mate Bryan”, “Dank Memes for Aboriginal Teens”, and “Memes Can Melt Beams”. Facebook’s interface also showed pages liked by “Ardent Aboriginal memes”, such as “Wholesome Holy Roman Memes” and “Edgy Egyptian Memes”. Facebook’s recommendation algorithms for pages, generated similar content about controversial humour that targeted Aboriginal people and other racial minorities.

Many recommender systems, including those on social media such as Facebook and YouTube, tend to favour popular content and personal interests (Helberger, Karppinen, & D’Acunto, 2017). Clickstream patterns of users inform content visibility

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[96] I used my personal account (with which I do not regularly visit racist pages or click on them) interchangeably with a research Facebook account that I used to follow racist pages. In both cases, Facebook’s page recommendations based on what “people also like” suggested more racist and sexist pages.

and algorithmic ranking; this often translates into “racially exclusive” content discovery that reproduces offline segregation patterns (McIlwain, 2016). In this sense, it is not strange that YouTube is disabling the related videos function as a measure to downplay the visibility of content flagged as controversial by the YouTube community (Walker, 2017). However, it is technically possible to program recommendation algorithms that promote more diverse content exposure (Munson et al., 2009). As Helberger, Pierson & Poell (2017) note, Facebook “only offers users the possibility to choose from ‘pages similar to,’ and not ‘pages other than’ or ‘pages likely to provide a contrast-viewpoint’” (p. 10). For them, the inclusion of minority views “could be a way to improve the quality and diversity of engagement on social networks” and to counter “selective exposure behaviour” (p. 10). Overall, problematic amplification processes derived from platform algorithms that contribute to platformed racism could be mitigate with more ethical and less engagement-driven design (Harris, 2017).

Other user practices such as liking, sharing, and commenting had a different impact on the amplification of racist discourse across platforms. On Twitter, platform metrics such as Likes and retweets did not play a crucial role in this amplification. Racist tweets by ordinary users accumulated low levels of engagement compared to anti-racist and solidarity tweets, while tweets by Australian public figures that engaged in racialised discourse (for example, conservative columnist Rita Panahi) performed well on the platform. However, individual engagements with memetic media to dehumanise, denigrate, and abuse Goodes were commonplace on Twitter. As Milner (2016) argues, spread is not the most important feature of a meme; rather, its significance depends on how it resonates within collective contexts. In this sense, tweets containing racist memetic media reinforced discourses of “dysfunctional” Indigenous character and culture that were historically propelled by politicians and the media in Australia (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 162).

Unlike users engaging in solidarity practices, Twitter users that used memetic media to make fun of Goodes and perform racialised discourse did not use specific hashtags to increase the visibility of their racist tweets. This non-use of hashtags as coordinators of “ad hoc publics” (Bruns & Burgess, 2015) worked to tacitly disguise the visibility of these tweets within the public conversation around Goodes. Everyday racism on Twitter in relation to the Goodes controversy was more hidden, and less preoccupied with being viral than other organised and overt hate campaigns such as

Gamergate, which tactically use Twitter's affordances to increase their visibility (Quodling, 2016; Burgess & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016). The everyday racism articulated through the visual on Twitter revolved around having fun at Goodes' expenses, rather than harassing him. In general, image memes were useful in veiling hate under the guise of humour.

On YouTube, vlogs uploaded by amateur content creators that engaged in overt racist discourse and reappropriations of popular YouTube memes to attack Goodes (for example, the Downfall parody meme) also failed to receive the highest engagement of the controversy content that was shared. Rather, the debate gravitated around the TV content uploaded by amateur channels, some of which contained racialised discourse (such as victim blaming, racism denial, and paternalist narratives) and received high engagement.

Unlike Twitter, YouTube offers the possibility to give a "thumbs down" to a video. This affordance, however, was not widely used to 'punish' racist content on the platform. In addition, the fact that YouTube does not provide information about the number of times a video has been shared, limits researchers' ability to measure the shareability of racist videos and, hence, their spread on the platform. The uses of the Goodes controversy on YouTube, for example, showed that everyday racism on this platform goes fairly unnoticed when compared to the exposure of alt-right stars with large fan bases, whose controversial content receives a large numbers of views. However, as seen in this case study, the pervasiveness of everyday racism on YouTube – content that would not necessarily violate YouTube rules – had an impact on how the controversy played out on this platform. What was shared (for example, mainly non-Indigenous broadcast media clips) and who weighed in by means of uploading user-generated content (for example, mainly white men), influenced the re-centralisation of white narratives around this race-based controversy on YouTube.

On Facebook, racist content on public meme pages received high engagement (the sum of Likes, shares, and comments) in comparison to similar memetic media on Twitter and YouTube. Facebook architecture – for example, the ability to create public pages – facilitated the concentration of racist content in compounded spaces. These spaces, although public, seemed to be perceived by fans as being more private and closed than Twitter's. In these public pages, the majority of users that shared racist

media used their real names or, at least, names that sounded real. This could be considered an indication of their perceived impunity when socializing in these pages.

The posts of Australian media celebrities (for example, Costello's post) that engaged in racist discourse around Goodes were also popular on the platform. Social metrics award content with a certain legitimacy (Beer, 2016), and the fact that racist posts were liked and shared by thousands of people triggered concern among Facebook users. For example, one user wrote that the Goodes controversy was leading to "the most dreary news reports and Facebook statuses" he had ever seen, while another argued that racism in Australia would be difficult to fix "when 41, 000 people liked" racists posts.

7.3 THE CHALLENGES OF PLATFORM GOVERNANCE

The distributed nature of content moderation and the challenges of platform governance in relation to racist discourse were visible in the uses of the Goodes controversy on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Platformed racism was enacted by a mode of platform governance that reproduced Indigenous inequalities as a result of the platforms' vague policies, their chain of liability in content moderation processes, their reluctance to understand the cultural specificities of racism in Australia, and their lack of transparency. First, overt hate speech thrived across platforms in spite of their policies and user flags. Second, humour and play served to cloak racism around the Goodes controversy.

This highlights the problems of mobilising memetic media for dehumanising purposes, and raises the question of where to draw the line on what constitutes acceptable speech on social media. Moreover, crowd-sourced efforts to police racist discourse and users' appropriation of some technological affordances to moderate content, worked to both amplify and veil racism in the Goodes case. Last, the platforms' lack of transparency in their notice and takedown messages in relation to controversial speech, worked against promoting the message that racist speech would not be tolerated on these digitally mediated spaces.

Hate speech policies and the various manifestations of racism on social media

On Twitter, overt racism was embedded in images circulated, despite the platform's policies. Users created visual objects comparing Goodes with primates, and overlaid racist slurs on images. As an experiment, through its drop down menu flagging mechanism – which, as Crawford and Gillespie (2014) note, is "limited" (p. 413) – I flagged one of the images comparing Goodes with a monkey. I went through three screens to report the image: I first selected that the tweet was "abusive or harmful"; second, that the abuse directed "hate against a race, religion, gender, or orientation"; and, third, that it was "targeting someone else", not me. Twitter first sent an automated message saying that the content would be reviewed. After a few days, it sent a notification to my Twitter account stating that the image comparing Goodes with a monkey did not violate its policies, while its hate speech rules prohibit "repeated and/or or non-consensual slurs, epithets, racist and sexist tropes, or other content that degrades someone" ("Twitter Rules 'Hateful conduct'", 2018).

Research suggests that the number of flags a social media post receives, and the public attention that online hate speech attracts, both influence a platform's intervention in offensive content (Gillespie, 2018a). The social media platforms, however, tend to deny this claim (Farkas & Neumayer, 2017; Tobin, Varner & Angwin, 2017). With the reporting of one post, my aim was not to draw a conclusion about a causal connection. However, the racist trope of comparing black people with primates frequently appears in memes on Twitter, where it circulates without punishment (Morrissey, 2012). Twitter has intervened in this type of content when it has targeted high profile public personalities and has, therefore, received significant media attention (Weaver, 2016). Users policed the appearance of this dehumanising meme by sharing screenshots of tweets engaging in this racist trope before they were deleted. However, Twitter does not accept screenshots as evidence of abuse (Matias et al., 2015), and this facilitated "tweet and delete" abusive tactics around Goodes.

Although overt racism was present within my dataset, most of the racist texts relating to Goodes were cloaked in humour and play. Twitter does not mention humour in its general hate speech policy. However, in its reference to hateful content in its advertising rules, it specifies that the "mockery" of historical events, or practices that affect protected groups, is not allowed ("Twitter Ad Policy 'Hateful Content'", 2018).

This more nuanced explanation of the multiple forms in which racism can discursively manifest is lost in the general hate speech rules; this makes it difficult to act upon racist content that uses ambivalent humour and play to dehumanise people of colour (Phillips & Milner, 2017). In this regard, jokes about the denial of the Stolen Generations (that is, mockery of a traumatic Australian historical event) are likely to remain on the platform despite being highly offensive to Indigenous people.

On YouTube, users also engaged in overt racism towards. Two channels uploaded original content in which the authors asserted that Goodes looked like an "ape", and called him the n-word. Similar racist tropes were found on the comment sections of other videos uploaded to discuss the war dance and the booing campaign; this aligns with other research that found racist speech on YouTube's comment space (Brown et al., 2016). On YouTube, I also flagged a vlog from my dataset that compared Goodes with an "ape". In this case, I went through two screens. I first selected that the content was "hateful or abusive"; however, from the options that followed this first choice, I did not really find any useful explanation of the type of racism I wanted to flag. I was given the option to select from content that: "promoted hatred or violence"; was "abusing vulnerable individuals"; was "bullying"; or that had an "abusive title or description". An option to select content that contained "hate against a race, religion, gender, or orientation" would have been more useful in this case.

Unlike Twitter, YouTube provided a text box to give further context to the flag (in 500 characters); here, I explained why the practice of comparing black people to "apes" was racist. After my flag, the platform also sent an automated message saying that the content would be reviewed; however, I heard nothing more. As a general norm, YouTube does not send a response to flagged content as Twitter and Facebook do. The video I flagged was still online as of January 2018, however; this suggests that YouTube considered that it did not violate its hate speech policies. While YouTube is increasingly ensuring that videos that get monetised do not contain hate speech, historically, its general attitude towards racist content has been a permissive one (Oboler, 2012).

On YouTube, users have also reappropriated long-running memes, such as Leave Britney Alone, as homophobic attacks on Goodes to avoid the charge of overt racism. This ambivalent memetic engagement to perform racist discourse without "sounding racist" – as Bonilla-Silva (2002) notes in reference to white people's strategies to

"avoid direct racial language while expressing their racial views" (p. 43) – is also a challenge for platform governance when set against community norms.

On Facebook, meme pages also contained overt racism, comparing Goodes with a primate. As I did on Twitter and YouTube, on Facebook I also flagged one of the images memes that engaged in this dehumanising meme, in particular, one macro comparing Goodes to the gorilla Harambe. Similar dehumanizing macros have been previously reported by Australian media and institutions; this reporting forced the administrators of some meme pages containing this macro, such as "AFL Memes", to remove it (Clarke, 2016). On Facebook, I went through three screens to report the image: First, in response to the question "What's going on?", I selected that the macro "shouldn't be on Facebook". The second screen did not give me a suitable option,[97] so I clicked "something else". In the third screen, I could click the option, "This insults or attacks someone based on their religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation". Facebook also sent me an automatic message saying that they would review my flag and, a few days later, it responded with the news that the image meme did not violate its policies. It was, however, the only platform that specifically offered the option to choose that the content was "not funny" as a reason for a flag. However, it is hard to imagine how Facebook would decide whether something was funny or not; this dilemma is not clearly specified in its policies.

In general, platform responses to my flags were aligned with past complaints about their tendency to ignore flags to racist content unless public institutions or media watchdogs intervene. Speech that dehumanised Goodes was also present in the comment section of Australian mainstream media posts in their public pages.This aligns with the findings of previous research on racist social media comments about Goodes and Indigenous Australians (Faulkner & Bliuc, 2016; Harlow, 2015). Platformed racism enacted by platform governance was also visible on Facebook in relation to how the platform failed to understand the cultural specificities of racism in Australia, and why certain content targeting Goodes should have been removed. For example, one Facebook page from my sample, "Adam Goodes for Flog of the Year", contained various racist memes against Goodes that traded in old negative stereotypes

[97] The options (as of January 2018) were: "This is nudity or pornography"; "This is a photo of me or my family that I don't want on Facebook"; "This humiliates me or someone I know"; "This is inappropriate, annoying or not funny"; "This is a false news story"; and "Something else".

of Indigenous people historically mobilised by the media and politicians in Australia; for example, portraying them as rapists, abusers, and violent (Jakubowicz et al. 1994; Moreton-Robinson, 2015). This page was reported by the Online Hate Prevention Institute (Online Hate Prevention Institute, 2015) and by various Facebook users. This was visible through user traces on these pages (for example, posted screenshots of their flags).

"Adam Goodes for Flog of the Year" was still online as of January 2018, and this indicates that Facebook considered it not to be in violation of its hate speech policies. Nevertheless, the platform had publicly announced the implementation of a new requirement that page administrators using "cruel and insensitive humor" should include their identities on their posts so that they could be held accountable for them (Levine, 2013). "Adam Goodes for Flog of the Year" did not have the contact details of its administrator, let alone their names. Thus, platformed racism can be enacted through platform governance when platforms such as Facebook, after having been advised and informed about the potential harm some content can cause particular communities, ignore this advice and allow the content to remain. Facebook (as a company) and its moderators do not need to know the specificities of racism in each region or cultural context of the world. However, it can choose to be more attentive to the complaints of its user base if it wishes to tackle the complex issue of social media racism. Above all, one would expect Facebook to be more attentive to the complaints of recognised local institutions such as the Online Hate Prevention Institute.

Humour is directly or tacitly protected on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube due to their liberal free speech ideologies (Streeter, 2011), and the importance of satire to political discourse (Baym, 2005; Harrington, 2012). However, this becomes problematic when satire, humour, and play are recurrent cultural ploys to disguise racism on social media, as was the case across platforms in the activity around the Goodes case. Many of the racist tropes mobilised against Goodes played with satire and parody, especially through meme culture. This humour was mainly directed to denigrate Goodes' public persona, especially with respect to his masculinity, where humour traded with homophobia as a kind of more acceptable attack than overt racism. Irony and satire were also used to reinforce colonial narratives around Indigenous Australians that were now targeted at Goodes. Such narratives typically elevate white

people to a position from which they feel entitled to police First Nation people and their behaviour in (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 159).

Chain of liability in content moderation: from platforms to users

Platform affordances were used in a variety of ways during the Goodes controversy: to disguise racist posts, moderate racist content, report abuse, and avoid seeing racism. On Twitter, for example, users applied the sensitive media filter to hide sexually explicit material and racist image memes that targeted Goodes. One tweet assessed that Goodes was being a "#BIGBLACKSOFTCOCK" for considering retirement because of the booing campaign. The picture accompanying this tweet was an image of a black man's genitals disguised by the sensitive media filter. The tweet again reflected how homophobia and racism intersected this case study. The tweet suggested that Goodes was "big" and "soft" at the same time, thus playing with the stereotypical portrayal of black people as over sexualised, while and at the same time suggesting that Goodes was not really a man. Another tweet that used the sensitive media filter suggested that white people were the only people who "can't be proud". The tweet contained an image macro that praised white identity.

Users also engaged filters and the blocking option to avoid confrontation with abusive users, and prevent the appearance of racist comments on their personal accounts and interactions. On Twitter, users tweeted about having blocked people who abused them for having publicly defended Goodes on the platform. On YouTube, some channels that posted content about the Goodes controversy (such as the official channel of *ABC*'s satirical TV show *The Weekly*) disabled the comment section of their videos to avoid racist discourse. Other channels explicitly stated in their video descriptions that they would actively moderate racist comments. On Facebook, users reported that they had unfriended some people for their racist views on the Goodes controversy. These initiatives denote and reflect users' awareness of the thriving of racist discourse on social media, and their mechanisms for coping with it.

In the social media conversations around the Goodes controversy, users also publicised the fact that they had flagged posts for hate speech. Users' policing of racist content on Twitter was more about calling out those engaging in such discourse, than encouraging others to flag controversial tweets. In contrast, Facebook users intervened

in controversial spaces such as meme pages to let them know they had reported the page. On Facebook, I also identified public pages with the stated purpose of collectively flagging racist meme pages related to Aboriginal Australians.

Quodling (2016) observes that social media users, confronted by the perception that platforms are not doing enough in terms of content moderation, sometimes get organised to tackle racist and sexist discourse themselves. I identified one of these collective efforts in the Facebook page "Shut Down Aboriginal Memes", a page self-described as "a forum for discussing issues surrounding racism in social media.". The page often encouraged people to flag controversial meme pages that targeted Indigenous Australians, and weighed in on the controversy by calling out racist discourse targeted at Adam Goodes. The activity on this public page aligns with previous research that documents users' crowdsourced efforts to stop hate and propaganda by using platform-specific affordances such as Facebook groups (Farkas & Neumayer, 2017).

In contrast, on YouTube, it was difficult to identify traces of an active call-out culture, or a pattern of users policing racist content. However, some users that engaged in overt racism on the platform were troubled about the fact that YouTube was starting to "censor" them. This trend was not visible with regard to the Goodes controversy; however, it surfaced when following the connections of the alt-right channel that uploaded a video about Goodes.

Traditionally, those concerned with content moderation issues on YouTube are content creators that use the platform as a social network (Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 67), and who typically advocate for keeping YouTube free from any intervention. During my YouTube data exploration, I encountered some of these conversations among YouTube users. By following the network connections of some vloggers that antagonised Goodes (for example, *Revolutionary Expat*'s subscriptions), I came across the channel *Porridge Pals* (2766 subscribers), another alt-right content creator. A quick look at the content uploaded by *Porridge Pals* showed that the channel often uploads videos discussing YouTube's moderation practices. For example, on 26 August 2017, the channel uploaded a video[98] to denounce YouTube's "new censorship tactic". In this clip, the author shows how, when trying to watch the video "Race

[98] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUwpBItoUmM

Differences in Intelligence" (uploaded by the channel *New Century Foundation*), YouTube displayed a pop-up message that read: "The following content has been identified by the YouTube community as inappropriate or offensive to some audiences". *Porridge Pals* also showed how the platform had removed the possibility of subscribing to the channel that had uploaded this video, and had disabled the related video function and the possibility to like, comment and share the content.

The comment section under the *Porridge Pals* video served as a discussion forum. Users not only showed their outrage at YouTube's content moderation measure to minimise the visibility of racist content, but also shared tips to circumvent these measures; for example, they recommended accessing the video "Race Differences in Intelligence" – unavailable to some— by different means, such as by accessing it through others' mirroring of the video. Mirroring the video and reposting it were strategies encouraged by users to avoid "YouTube's censorship". One user wrote: "We all need to stop bitching and just starve the beast already. Use Ad Blockers when using YouTube, and watch banned content on Bitchute". Another suggested: "Remember to download videos of this nature or controversy. We'll be seeing a lot less of them, and the more of us that mirror them, the better". This use of cultures on YouTube contributes to platformed racism, as some users are invested in maintaining overtly racist content on the platform as a flag against its "censorship".

The discussion under the *Porridge Pals* video reflects users' reactionary tactics to bypass prohibitions, and suggests certain technical mastery among those users who wish to prevent YouTube from becoming a 'safer' space. In the comments on the video, some users shared a link to Twitter that showed the origin of this controversy. The link pointed to a tweet[99] containing a screenshot of the YouTube video "Race Differences in Intelligence", and a tweet text that read: "You can't find this video. You can't like it. You can't comment. You can't go to the creators channel. Your channel is next. Speak up". The tweet had 5600 Likes, 2800 retweets and 458 replies (as of August 2017). This example, and the Twitter data analysis around the Goodes controversy, shows how Twitter is often used to draw people's attention to content moderation and governance issues on other platforms.

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[99] https://twitter.com/BadgerPundit/status/901622902738571264

Despite some users flagging content and calling out racist discourse on Twitter and Facebook, other users showed little concern about these displays of social justice. On Twitter, most of the abuse of Goodes came from accounts using pseudonyms. During my second round of coding, when I tried to access certain tweets, Twitter returned a message saying that the accounts had been suspended. One of the accounts suspended was @BillfromBendigo which, in 2015, circulated a screenshot of a text accusing Goodes of being "half Aborigine" (coded during my first round of coding). By typing @BillfromBendigo on Twitter's search function in August 2017, the platform returned user reactions to the suspension of this account. Users joked that the account had been in "Twitter jail again" – implying that the user was a recurrent offender – and complained about the fact that the platform did not give a reason for this ban. Transparency, therefore, is paramount in avoiding the reactionary and victimisation attitudes of racist offenders when they are banned. In addition, research shows that when an organisation's rules are clear and transparent, people tend to follow them (Benesch & Matias, 2018). Explaining why content violates Twitter policies is beneficial for its victims and its perpetrators, who could – at least in theory – use this feedback to moderate their behaviour.

The reply chains also showed how participants praised the new account of the alleged offender, now renamed with another pseudonym. This example demonstrates that being banned from Twitter is not a problem for certain users: accounts are disposable, and removal is not perceived as a threat to the continuation of their abusive activity. Gillespie (2017) argues that being suspended or banned from a social media platform does matter, since there is the risk of detaching one's friends and family (p. 269). However, when it comes to users who engage in racist discourse under false names, Twitter's bans do not matter a great deal; they (or their bots) can easily join the platform again under different names.

On Facebook, users also seemed unconcerned about being held accountable for their racist behaviour on meme pages. In the "Adam Goodes for Flog of the Year" page, fans often answered the comments of those who said they had reported the page by ironically asking them: "How did ya go?" The exploration of the like network of Facebook meme pages also showed page administrators' tactics to avoid possible bans. For example, I found that some meme pages added the number "2" at the end of their titles, which was an indication of their being a back-up page for the original (in case

Facebook censored them); for instance, the "about" section of the page "Shit Memes 2" stated: "Back up page for shit memes and everyone chill."

Platforms' enforcement of rules: broken links

Platform interventions in the Goodes controversy were visible through the examination of the automatic messages that Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube displayed when content was no longer available. In general, these messages did not offer enough information to understand whether the content had been taken down by the user or by the platform. However, in some cases, explanations of the reasons behind the takedowns were provided.

On Twitter, 6% of the tweets containing images from my dataset were no longer available as at July 2017. However, Twitter provided the least information about the reasons behind content not being available and accounts being suspended. For an account suspended within the Goodes dataset, one Twitter message read: "Account suspended. This account had been suspended. Learn more about why Twitter suspends accounts or return to your timeline". The message did not give further information about the reasons behind the ban, and only redirected users to Twitter's general rules about why the platform suspends accounts. Not even in high-profile cases does Twitter give information about why accounts are suspended. For example, Twitter suspended the account of the alt-right figure Milo Yiannopoulos (@Nero) in July 2016 after a prolonged racist and misogynist hate campaign against actress Leslie Jones. If one tries to access the account @Nero, Twitter simply says that it is a suspended account.

For the rest of the tweets about Goodes that were no longer available, Twitter activated this message: "Sorry, that page doesn't exist!" Since I had undertaken two rounds of coding, I had coded tweets in my first round that were no longer available in my second round. Some of these tweets contained images of Goodes that compared him with a monkey. In other cases, tweets were already unavailable in my first round of coding. However, since these tweets were available at the time of data gathering with TrISMA, I had the tweet text. The text of some of the tweets suggested that some of the visual objects they contained could be controversial racist content, since they included hashtags such as "#GoodesIsAWanker", "#sook", and "#ihatehim".

While we know that they potentially contained controversial speech, based on the messages that Twitter returned, it is not possible to know whether these tweets were taken down by the platform or by the user. This is despite the fact that, although not visible in my dataset, Twitter outlines in its Term of Services that the platform will provide information about when content is withheld in response to a report from a copyright holder or from countries that demand content to be removed. In these cases, the automated messages specify that content has been removed "in response to a report from the copyright holder", or withheld in a specific country in accordance with national laws.

Similarly, 8.5% of the YouTube links that were shared on Twitter around the Goodes controversy were no longer available as at August 2017. In this case, too, YouTube's automated messages did not provide useful information in terms of knowing whether the content had been removed for violating YouTube's hate speech policies, or whether it had been the platform or the user who had taken it down. Unlike Twitter, YouTube provides information on its automated takedown messages when its hate speech and harassment policies are violated. This fact would suggest that YouTube links that were shared to discuss the Goodes controversy, and that were no longer available, were taken down for reasons other than hate speech. However, things are not so straightforward. In 2012, the Online Hate Prevention Institute published a report on a YouTube channel that uploaded 1700 videos containing hate speech on one day. The account was suspended after being reported. If one tries to access this channel[100] now, YouTube returns the following message: "This account has been terminated due to multiple or severe violations of YouTube's policy prohibiting hate speech." When trying to access the videos[101] containing hate speech uploaded by this channel, however, the message returned by YouTube simply says that the videos are no longer available because the channel associated with it has been terminated.

Although YouTube seems more committed to transparency than Twitter in regards to the reasons behind content take downs and suspension of accounts, there are still inconsistencies that could be improved. With regards to the Goodes case, YouTube did specify (in its messages) that some content had been removed for

[100] http://www.youtube.com/user/momlvx1
[101] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdBXlBTUhvA

copyright infringement, or that certain videos were not available in Australia[102]. The majority of messages, however, simply notified the fact that accounts had been terminated and that videos had been deleted, without any further details or reasons.

Finally, a significant number of the Facebook links that were shared on Twitter (45%) were no longer available as at July 2017. This percentage is by far the highest in comparison to tweets with images and YouTube links that were no longer available, and suggests a more active content moderation culture on Facebook. Like Twitter and YouTube, Facebook did not provide much information on its automated messages when content was no longer available in relation to the Goodes controversy. Generally, the messages specified that it was not possible to access certain content or pages.

In one case, when trying to access the public page *Boo Adam Goodes*, Facebook returned this message: "Content unavailable in Australia. You're unable to view this content because local laws restrict our ability to show it. If you'd like more information please see Help Centre." By accessing the link from another country, the page turned out to be yet another meme page containing racist memes targeting Goodes, and had accumulated 4239 Likes. The automated message proves Facebook's intervention in content and, although it denies access to this page in Australia, it is left open for the rest of the Facebook community. The message did not specify which local laws this content was violating.

The banning of racist meme pages in Australia alone is a common Facebook response with regard to moderating racist content against Indigenous Australians and other minorities in Australia (Oboler, 2013) The ban on the public page "Boo Adam Goodes", however, contrasts with the fact that a similar meme page, "Adam Goodes for Flog of the Year", is still active, despite having been reported multiple times by various Australian civil actors. At the very least, the example shows Facebook's inconsistencies in its enforcement of rules in relation to racist content specific to Australia.

[102] This message could be improved by giving more information, as is the case for a message displayed by Facebook in similar circumstance. This read: Content unavailable in Australia. You're unable to view this content because local laws restrict our ability to show it. If you'd like more information please see Help Centre".

7.4 CONCLUSIONS

Platformed racism unfolded in the Goodes case as a combination of user practices and technology. Practices specific to each platform worked to amplify, disguise, and normalise racist discourse; to reinforce racism with respect to Aboriginal Australians; and to protect whiteness as a key feature of online interaction (Brock, 2009; Kendall, 1998). While simple metrics of popularity (Likes, shares, comments, and viewing) were not the main factors for the amplification of racist discourse on Twitter and YouTube, racist image memes on public pages attracted high levels of engagement on Facebook.

Racist discourse circulated on social media, despite platforms' hate speech policies. When this type of content was flagged, the first reaction of platforms was to assess whether the content violated their policies. Within a legal context, scholars argue that systemic racism explains the justification of racial vilification in the name of freedom of expression (Delgado, 1982). This tendency is reproduced on social media platforms, and informs the platformed racism construct.

In the social media discussion around Goodes, users showed little concern about being held accountable for engaging in racist discourse, especially in racist discourse that was mediated through memetic media. In general, humour, irony and play – which are protected on platform policies – served to cloak racism across platforms. However, these cultural uses of meme culture are political, and often work to marginalise the already underrepresented in society. Homophobia was a recurrent trope to attack Goodes, as it was perceived as a more acceptable cultural attack than overt racism, despite the fact that it is also prohibited in platform policies. These performances raise the question of where to draw the line on what is acceptable speech, and stress the importance of context in determining the harm embedded in racialised discourse. People also disguised racist attacks through the use of certain technological affordances, such as Twitter's sensitive media filter.

Platforms' systematic approaches to content moderation contribute to normalise racist discourse. Previous chapters have shown that racism online manifests in various ways, and that racialised discourse – although harmful for some communities – does not always violate platform policies. However, age-old dehumanising racist tropes, such as the comparison of black people and monkeys, thrived across platforms without platform intervention. This racist trope clearly violates Twitter, Facebook and

YouTube policies, yet appears to be common and accepted across platforms. There is clearly room for improvement here in terms of remediating the circulation of this type of content on social media.

Racist discourse was also normalised by the lack of information in platforms' automatic messages when content was no longer available. Platforms provide clear information when content is taken down because it violates their copyright policies, or when it is withheld because of government demands. However, this rigor is rarely enforced when content is no longer available because of its having violated platforms' hate speech policies. Platforms' opaque governance is rarely fair or equal for all (Gillespie, 2018a; Suzor, Van Geelen & West, 2018). As Oboler argues, "when the sanction for copyright infringement is greater, and more rigorously enforced, than the sanction for promoting genocide, we need to stop and question our priorities" (in Jewish Press Staff, 2012).

Anti-racist practices with visual objects also contributed to platformed racism. For example, Twitter's call-out culture had a doubly problematic amplification effect. On the one hand, the reposting of racist discourse contributed to the spread of further hatred of Goodes. On the other, white allies' practice of criticising the views of conservative Australian media personalities worked to prioritize white views on racism over the opinions of Indigenous users, who were also criticising the same personalities. User and media over emphasis of the opinions of conservative media figures in the Goodes controversy influenced Twitter trends, which reproduced associated racialised discourse. On YouTube, there was no visible Indigenous creator community that engaged in this controversy; this fact, combined with the fact that the controversy was largely discussed by the reposting of TV clips, also contributed to amplifying the views of Australian conservative media personalities.

There are a number of ethical and methodological challenges in studying the visual as "a widespread social media form" (Highfield & Leaver, p. 58). One of these challenges is how we might moderate racist discourse that is articulated by users' appropriations of visual media. If they are to be effective, platform governance practices must evolve alongside the platform cultures of use.

Improved platform governance mechanisms and processes are required. For example, hate speech embedded in images complicates the automatic recognition of abuse, as opposed to the algorithmic banning of certain words, tags, or hashtags. In

addition, this study has demonstrated how images that are *per se* not racist can become racist discourse in combination with connective references, such as hashtags and tweet texts. In order to understand the various layers of meaning and intent in users' memetic appropriation of media, platforms need to implement clearer channels of communication with users to facilitate the evaluation the suitability of visual content in relation to its contexts of use.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study has proposed and explored the original concept of 'platformed racism' as a new type of racism derived from the material politics of social media platforms and the cultures of use associated with them. On the one hand, the research has demonstrated how Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook reinforced white privilege and amplified racism in their mediation of the Adam Goodes controversy as a combination of their business models, infrastructure, and governance. On the other hand, in expressing a range of political perspectives, users also contributed to the re-centring of whiteness and the perpetuation of racism through their uses of memetic media and technology appropriation in their participatory practices across platforms. The examination of this Australian race-based controversy on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube serves as an example for more general and universal practices of, and responses to platformed racism.

This research has revealed two main patterns of user engagement with media that contributed to the enactment of platformed racism around the Goodes controversy. On Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, some users earnestly argued about Goodes' war dance and the racist implications of the booing campaign; these contributions connected to standard racist and anti-racist discourse. Other users saw this controversy as additional raw material for their participation in ongoing and broader social, cultural, and political phenomena (for example, the "culture wars" and the "alt right"). These phenomena expand through digitally mediated spaces, especially in the Anglosphere.

The Goodes case study was useful in understanding platformed racism because it revealed how ordinary racist practices intersect with established digital racist cultures on social media. For a proportion of social media users, race-based controversies such as the Goodes booing campaign, serve as excuses to amplify and propel already established racist agendas that are articulated and organised through digital platforms (Marwick & Lewis, 2017). These included the weaponising of meme culture against racialised others, and an active alt-right and white supremacist culture on YouTube.

The challenge in tackling platformed racism, therefore, does not lie in banning or cracking down on a particular practice, but in understanding the cultural aspects of participatory social media culture (for example, the use of humour and intertexts), and the ways in which ordinary uses of media connect and speak to broader problematic digital cultures. This entanglement enacts platformed racism as a structural and ordinary form of racism that is articulated through social media. As a concept, platformed racism contributes to the body of literature that investigates race and racism online as socio-technical constructs (Brock, 2009, 2011; Daniels, 2013; McIlwain, 2016; Nakamura & Chow White, 2012; Noble & Tynes, 2016; Sharma, 2013).

In Chapter 2, I have built a case for the importance of platformed racism as a conceptual framework for the investigation of the way in which racism is built into new institutions (social media platforms), and the way racial dynamics shift as a result of emergent participatory practices. Platformed racism is both ordinary (that is, enacted by everyday practices) and structural (that is, secured and reinforced by platform business models, norms, and processes). I have defined platformed racism as a new form of racism that is informed by a libertarian ideology that sees technological innovation as detached from the socio-cultural and historical contexts underlying that innovation (Streeter, 2011).

Platformed racism has a dual meaning. On the one hand, it identifies platforms as amplifiers and manufacturers of racist discourse by means of practices and affordances specific to each platform – or what Gibbs et al. (2015) call, their "platform vernaculars". On the other hand, it is enacted by modes of governance that can reproduce inequalities and normalise racism. It challenges the discourse of neutrality that characterises social media platforms' self-representations (Gillespie, 2010), and positions platforms as active actors in contemporary articulations and reproductions of systemic racism (Feagin, 2013). Platformed racism is being increasingly normalised by platform governance and logics, and user practices, and is in need of scholarly attention.

To move beyond the US-centric scholarship on race and racism online (Brock, 2009, 2011; Cisneros & Nakayama, 2015; Daniels, 2013; McIlwain, 2016; Nakamura, 2002, 2008, 2014; Sharma, 2013), I have studied platformed racism in relation to an Australian race-based controversy: the Adam Goodes war dance and its unfolding booing campaign. I contended that the national and platform specificity of platformed

racism needed nuanced investigation. Accordingly, in Chapter 3, I contextualised the Goodes case study within broader cultural dynamics of race and racism in Australia. Especially, I have focused on scholarly work that links historical articulations of whiteness in Australia to the management of the national space, masculinity, and white people's self-entitlement to decide who belongs in the Australian national project (Hage, 1998; Hartley & Green, 2006; Moreton-Robinson, 2015). This critical approach to the articulation of whiteness in Australia was fundamental to understanding the extent to which platformed racism reinforces white privilege in Australia. Whiteness is produced and reproduced by everyday practices (Frankenberg, 1993), and this was visible in users' engagements with media across platforms.

To study user practices around the Goodes controversy on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, I used the multiplatform issue mapping method (Burgess & Matamoros-Fernandez, 2016). I studied users and their platform activity – its features, practices, and processes – in relation to this race-based controversy by using digital methods. That is, I followed the "methods of the medium" (Rogers, 2013, p. 5) to account for the platform-specificity of platformed racism. I focused on popular practices as a way of understanding people's use of media – especially visual media – and its impact on the articulation of racism on each platform. Through the Goodes case study, I have shown how memetic culture shaped differently on each platform (Burgess, 2008), and the extent to which it contributed to the enactment of platformed racism. I contextualised user media practices within broader Internet cultures, and performed a cultural analysis from the perspective of racial critique.

In the remainder of this chapter, I outline the main findings of the case study and their implications, proceeding in chapter order. First, I describe the specificities of platformed racism on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube in relation to the Goodes controversy. Second, I focus on how the manifestations of race and racism on social media in relation to this controversy are a challenge for platform governance. Third, I propose a number of recommendations for working towards a 'platformed antiracism'; to reach this goal, both platforms and users need to improve their practices. Finally, I outline the limitations of this research, its further implications, and the emerging questions it has generated.

In Chapter 4, I described how Twitter users created, transformed, and circulated various visual media to engage in racist and anti-racist discourse. Users appropriated

external texts (for example, ordinary pictures and GIFs), and linked them to the Goodes controversy through connective references. For example, users gave new meaning to existing texts by using certain hashtags (for example, #adamgoodes), and by adding personal commentary to their tweet texts. This is an important methodological challenge in the study of racism on Twitter, as visual objects that are not racist per se contributed to platformed racism through these connections.

Users on Twitter also appropriated and topically remixed texts so that the context was newly apparent within the media itself. Anti-Goodes Twitter users demonstrated their knowledge of meme aesthetics and popular culture; this was visible in the mix of topicalities and intertextual references that connected the controversy to other racist events (for example, the Hulk Hogan controversy). Vernacular creativity on Twitter, which is "contextual specific" (Burgess, 2007, p. 32), was often used around the Goodes controversy to perpetuate a "discourse of pathology" towards Indigenous people – a discourse that is commonly articulated by politicians and the media in Australia (Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

These appropriations did not reflect strategic uses of memes to antagonise Goodes – as seen in trolling practices (Phillips, 2015). Rather, users playfully used Goodes as an object for their racist, homophobic, and sexist jokes. Getting the 'joke' in these appropriations – which is part of the success of a meme (Milner, 2016) – involved having a previous knowledge of AFL culture, Goodes' involvement in past controversies, and Australian political culture. User engagements with visual media on Twitter also reflected the links of whiteness and hegemonic masculinity with Australian nationalism. Anti-Goodes users often used homophobia as a more acceptable attack on Goodes than overt racism.

Intentionally racist appropriations of visual media objects were not the only user practices that enacted platformed racism on Twitter. The unreflexive uses of media for anti-racism purposes also had unintended consequences in reinforcing racism online. For example, the use of "digital blackface" through GIFs of black people expressing extreme emotions, worked to perform and reinforce racist stereotypes by reducing Black identity to emotion and performance (Jackson, 2017). Similarly, performances of solidarity by white and non-Indigenous would-be allies that gravitated around self-displays, worked to recentralise whiteness around the Goodes controversy. In this regard, scholars suggest other, more productive ways of showing solidarity with Black

people; for example, by engaging with critical reflexions on the workings of whiteness when race-based controversies are discussed on social media (Ahmed, 2004; Cole, 2002; Engles, 2016).

Other salient anti-racist practices on Twitter, such as users' visual call-out culture, also had the inadvertent effect of further spreading racist discourse, and centralising whiteness as a central feature of online interactions (Brock, 2009; Kendall, 1998). On the one hand, the practice of reposting hate and racism online –even if the aim was critical assessment – contributed to its further spread (Phillips & Milner, 2017). On the other, this practice widely echoed conservative Australian narratives around race on Twitter (for example, the views of Australian columnist Andrew Bolt and radio broadcaster Alan Jones), a dynamic that was picked up and further amplified by Twitter's algorithms. For instance, Twitter trends accounted for the fact that Goodes was trending on July 2015 by ventriloquising from tweets the racist frame that he was 'playing the victim card'. In addition, it is a common strategy of white would-be allies to attribute the source of Australian racism to conservative media figure and 'bogans' (Australian slang for uneducated people). In the US context, Sullivan (2014) argues that this strategy disguises the fact that racism is a shared problem. In this way, white left-leaning middle-class people exonerate their position of power in a system that constantly benefits them (Sullivan, 2014).

In Chapter 5, I examined the uses of the Goodes controversy on YouTube. On that platform, users' engaged in racist and anti-racist discourse by appropriating long-running YouTube memes; by creating their own vlogs and remixes; and by their appropriations of mainstream broadcast media content. As was the case on Twitter, user engagements with popular YouTube memes showed the use of homophobia as a common practice of domination of white masculinity over racialised others, especially within the sports field (Anderson & McCormack, 2010).

Explicit racism was also salient on YouTube in relation to the Goodes controversy, which was visible in users' vlogs that compared Goodes with an "ape"– which invokes racialised stereotypes of Aboriginal people that are focused on falsehoods of genetic and cultural inferiority (Coram, 2007) – and called him the n-word, a racist slur linked to a long history of white oppression. Users' also engaged in racist discourse by appropriating apparently neutral mainstream TV content and giving it another meaning through the descriptions of the videos. For example, one

user shared the video of the war dance and wrote in the description of the clip that Goodes was "AFL's biggest flog". The term "flog" – Australian slang for a contemptible man – was commonly used to describe Goodes, without users being accused of using overtly racist terms. This linguistic move – of using everyday slang – aligns with Bonilla-Silva's (2002) description of white people's common strategy of talking "nasty" about black people "without sounding racist" (p. 41).

Some YouTube channels used the Goodes controversy to advance their pre-existing alt-right and white supremacist agendas, and to gain further attention within public discussions around race on the platform; this is in an important feature of the way that platformed racism articulated on YouTube. The press often portrays YouTube as reflecting a "radicalization of the angry white male" (Levin, 2017), and promoting a "toxic prank culture" (Romano, 2018). However, research has found that the alt-right often thrive in broad race-related issues on YouTube, such as the refugee crisis (Rieder, Matamoros-Fernández & Coromina, 2018). All the content creators that contributed to the Goodes controversy with original content on YouTube were men of white appearance. In these videos, users used terminology and rhetoric commonly articulated by the alt-right, such as "social justice warriors", the fight against "political correctness", and the idea that white people are being "discriminated" against in a multicultural society. At the same time, amateur content creators that uploaded their vlogs to defend Goodes were also involved in broader culture wars in Australia; therefore, they also used this controversy as another excuse to perform their own agendas, rather than acting as engaged anti-racist allies.

While Indigenous users organised around key platform affordances on Twitter and Facebook – for example, the rotating account @IndigenousX and public Facebook pages – on YouTube, it was more difficult to identify an Indigenous 'community' of content creators. This apparent relative absence of Indigenous content creators, combined with the fact that users mostly appropriated non-Indigenous mainstream broadcast media to engage with the Goodes controversy, influenced the resonance of white frames around this controversy on YouTube. These different modes of participation raise important questions about platforms' attention economy and its reward for original content, as interesting counterpublics could be going on in more quasi-private spaces, such as YouTube comments.

In Chapter 6, I examined how users on Facebook engaged in racist discourse around Goodes through the creation of public Facebook pages, the use of their status updates for personal commentary, and their appropriations of mainstream media content on this platform. The practice of creating public Facebook pages *about* the controversy surfaced a popular genre on Facebook that was dominant in the articulation of platformed racism: controversial meme pages. Users' appropriations of memes on these Facebook pages were less creative than on Twitter, and more targeted to plainly and negatively stereotyping Goodes as a "child molester" – a common racist stereotype articulated by the media against Indigenous Australians (Herborn, 2013; Jakubowicz et al., 1994).

Similar to what was observed on Twitter and YouTube, established platform-specific actors – such as meme pages dedicated to controversial humour – used the Goodes controversy as another opportunity to perform their racist and sexist jokes. Meme pages on Facebook, which often trade with humour to cloak racism and sexism, are well connected through the Like button. These networked connections influenced the Facebook page recommender system, which typically suggested further racist meme pages that people also liked. This algorithmic amplification of racist humour contributed to platformed racism on Facebook.

Anti-racism practices on Facebook also inadvertently contributed to platformed racism. Users created public pages to show their support for Goodes, but these posts leaned towards self-displays of solidarity. Performances of solidarity that re-centre whiteness, rather than addressing the causes of systemic discrimination, do not contribute to countering racism on social media (Engles, 2016). White frames on the Goodes controversy were also amplified by user practices of sharing the links of Facebook's non-Indigenous mainstream media content on Twitter. While Indigenous Australians are active on Facebook (Carlson, 2013), and Indigenous media contributed to the Goodes controversy on this platform, users tended to circulate the Facebook URLs of non-Indigenous mainstream media sources on Twitter.

In Chapter 7, I examined, on the one hand, the platforms' algorithmic processes that contributed to the amplification of racism in relation to the Goodes controversy. On the other, I evaluated the successes and failures of the shared efforts (or lack of thereof) of users and platforms in identifying, curating, moderating, and removing racist discourse. When set against competing community norms and cultures, frictions

and contradictions emerge from platform governance; this is a key aspect in the enactment of platformed racism. The different ways that racism manifested in relation to the Goodes controversy (for example, through meme culture, and the cloak of humour and play), and its national specificity (for example, in the use of historic negative stereotypes of Indigenous peoples) is a challenge for platform governance.

First, the Goodes case study has shown not only that a racist meme culture is an everyday practice within Internet subcultures (Massanari, 2015; Milner, 2013; Phillip, 2015), but also that memetic engagements that trade with racialised others with humour and play are also commonplace on social media. This ordinariness of racism has become culturally embedded on many of these platforms. The fact that humour can work as a racist discourse by itself predates the Internet (Hill, 2008). However, the fact that memetic culture is rewarded by the platforms' attention economy (Shifman, 2014) now makes visual racist memes a key component of platformed racism, and a challenge for platform governance.

Second, users' engagements with media across platforms perpetuated Australian racism, which is linked to hegemonic masculinity; to white frames on who has the 'right' to manage the national space; and to the concept of what it means to be a 'true' Australian (Carlson, 2016; Hage, 1998; Hartley & Green, 2006; Moreton-Robinson, 2015). Age-old racist tropes based on biological ideas of race were salient across platforms, and resonate with the way in which racist discourse articulates against black people in other national contexts, such as the US (Everett, 2012; Milner, 2016).

The linking of maleness and whiteness to Australian identity commonly works to exclude Indigeneity as part of the national project (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). This link was also visible in users' engagements with the Goodes controversy across platforms, where Goodes was often portrayed as not being 'man enough'. This national specificity of racism is almost impossible to address through the platforms' current mechanisms for governing public discourse. It is especially challenging when understandings of racist discourse require the situating of 'jokes' in particular cultural contexts.

Platformed racism in relation to the Goodes controversy was enacted by a mode of governance that reproduced old inequalities that disadvantage Indigenous Australians. This governance was typified by vague policies on hate speech and the

limits of humorous expression; a chain of liability in content moderation issues to moderators, end-users, and algorithms; and an opaque and often inconsistent enforcement of rules. The analysis of the notice and takedown messages around the Goodes controversy proved that platforms intervened in content; however, they did not provide enough information to understand the scope and type of racism directed at Goodes. While scholars argue that more transparency is needed to understand platforms' algorithmic contribution to the circulation of ideas (Pasquale, 2015), more transparency in the notice and take down message is also needed to act as a deterrent for those that engage in racism online.

In their governance, platforms often secure white privilege by only supporting initiatives to improve racial justice when it suits their interests – what Critical Race theorist and legal scholar Derrick Bell (1980) terms "interest convergence". Thus, platforms' improvements in their governing of public discourse have been fundamentally responsive to the demands of their advertisers, or to the threat of users leaving their services. This type of governance "without clear consequences" (Ananny & Gillespie, 2016, p. 11) is a sign of privilege, and one that normalizes racism as an ordinary and structural socio-technical construct.

Clearly, a more active and reflexive approach to the governing of public discourse is needed to protect the already marginalized in society. Platform governance is a pressing and complex issue that platforms need to improve (Gillespie, 2018), and it requires a deep change in their company culture and priorities.

8.2 OPPORTUNITIES FOR 'PLATFORMED ANTIRACISM'

In this section, I propose a number of suggestions that both users and platforms could adopt to work towards a 'platformed antiracism'. From a platform perspective, this research has shown that platforms could improve their design and processes to remediate platformed racism.

A first compelling issue for platforms to address is the need to minimise the spread of racist discourse. In this regard, algorithmic amplifications of racist discourse, and the creation of filter bubbles, are pressing needs (Pariser, 2012). In the Goodes controversy these needs were particularly visible on YouTube and Facebook. Research shows that it is possible to code recommender algorithms that prioritise diversity of

viewpoints, rather than personal preferences and popularity (Munson, Zhou & Resnik, 2009). Platforms could give users the choice to choose between various recommendation logics (for example, popular content versus diversity of viewpoints) in order to neutralise selective content exposure (Helberger, Pierson & Poell, 2017). On Facebook, for instance, it is possible to filter comments on posts based on different options: users can decide to prioritise the most "relevant" comments (often comments that received the most engagement); the most recent (by date of creation); or 'unfiltered' comments, which include spam. Similar options could be implemented with Facebook's page recommender system or YouTube's video suggestions.

This study has shown that a large proportion of users participated in the Goodes controversy to perform their usual agendas across platforms, such as an alt-right and white supremacist agenda on YouTube, and humorous controversial meme pages on Facebook. If platforms are serious about minimising the spread of racist discourse, they could identify 'bad' actors that recurrently target hot topics to perform their racist agendas. Measures such as YouTube's disabling of engagement metrics and the subscription buttons of controversial channels (Walker, 2017), could also be implemented in other platforms to limit the spread of racism cloaked in humour; for example, controversial meme pages (especially if they have been reported for hate speech).

In terms of platform design, scholars and the press are advocating for the redesign of user interfaces and social media buttons "to encourage thoughtfulness" (Madrigal, 2018). This path to more responsible design could involve the implementation of mechanisms to improve the negative emotion and viral outrage that thrives on platforms such as Facebook (Larsson, 2017). For example, this could be done by opting for more "respect-based emoji" rather than the "angry" emoji as a preferred option to show disagreement (Manjoo & Roose, 2017). Design changes that align with Nextdoor's solution to tackle racial profiling on its platform could also serve as exemplary ways to tackle old biases. Before users can post a crime and safety message, the site displays a banner that reads: "Ask yourself – is what I saw actually suspicious, especially if I take race or ethnicity out of the equation?" (Hill, 2016) The main takeaway from these types of initiatives is the idea that users tend to react favourably to platforms when they are more transparent and clear about what is allowed on their spaces (Benesch & Matias, 2018).

Scholars explain platforms' reluctance to tackle the thriving of racist, sexist, and other types of abuse online in terms of the fact that controversial content triggers user engagement, and therefore, has commercial value (Roberts, 2016; Shepherd et al., 2015). Hate circulation certainly has benefits for platforms. Nevertheless, these companies are improving their content moderation processes, largely because of increasing pressure from their advertisers, governments, NGOs, and ordinary users (Gillespie, 2018a).

While platforms need to minimise the spread of racist discourse, they also need to move towards a better understanding of how racism articulates on these spaces. First, abuse is increasingly being mediated through the visual. Second, an understanding of the cultural specificities of harmful speech in different regions of the world is fundamental to guaranteeing that platform governance is aligned with basic human rights (Gillespie, 2018a; Suzor, Van Geelen, West, 2018). There is room for improvement for platform governance in terms of their definitions of 'acceptable speech'; the improvement of design-level choices; the way in which moderation processes are disclosed; and in their systems of dispute resolution (Gillespie, 2018a; Venturini et al., 2016; Suzor, Van Geelen & West, 2018). For example, platforms need to encourage content flagging as a useful mechanism to detect racist discourse, while at the same time they need to be aware of the potential biases and misuses of the reporting system. That is, platforms need to make sure that mischievous reporting practices do not silence counterpublics.

In this study, I identified one Facebook page, "Shut Down Aboriginal Memes", that encouraged people to flag controversial meme pages against Indigenous Australians. This crowdsourced effort is aligned with similar initiatives on Facebook that collectively report pages engaging with controversial content (Farkas & Neumayer, 2017) and, potentially, has more impact on platform governance that call-out strategies do. At the same time, users concerned with the spread and circulation of racist discourse on social media could also benefit and cooperate with institutions and organisations that are already advocating for better platform governance processes. Initiatives, such as the US-based Online Censorship Project[103] and the Australian-

[103] https://onlinecensorship.org/about/who-we-are

based Online Hate Prevention Institute,[104] are collecting evidence about platforms' inconsistencies in their interventions around hateful content. The Online Hate Prevention Institute encourages users to report hate speech through their project Fight Against Hate, the purpose of which is to achieve greater transparency in the way that platforms respond to users' flags.

Recent research also points to the need to evaluate platform policies and practices with regards to content moderation issues, in order to guarantee key values in a "legitimate governance" (Suzor, Van Geelen & West, 2018, p. 8). This "legitimate governance" could involve improvement in platform listening techniques so as to better understand and attend to their user base demands. For example, over time, the Twitter Help Center has changed from hosting interactive, transparent forums, to publishing static policy statements (Johnson, 2017). Such a reduction in channels by which to listen to users' voices impedes the pathway to a platformed antiracism. More channels of communication between platforms and local organisations working in human rights in different parts of the world would also be desirable. This recommendation is aligned with recent platform efforts to collaborate with women's, LGBTQ, and Human Rights groups to tackle the thriving of hate online (Matias et al., 2015).

However, as Helberger, Pierson and Poell (2017) point out, governing online platforms is the shared responsibility of platforms and users. This study has shown that this claim is especially true with regards to the production and reproduction of racism on social media. A more reflexive use of media objects by social media users could inhibit the reproduction of racist dynamics on social media. First, this implies that practices such as "digital blackface" (Jackson, 2016) and "white slacktivism" (Engles, 2016) could be easily re-addressed through an improved digital and race literacy.

A more critical use of media objects would also involve thinking about ways to effectively use memes for anti-racism purposes. Instead of creating image memes with simple messages of support during a race-based controversy, anti-racism allies could use this 'easy to share' format to introduce counter-narratives to racism. In this regard, Indigenous peoples' engagements with memes are a good example of creativity that is targeted at the "achievement of an anti-colonial politics" (Frazer & Carlson, 2017).

[104] http://ohpi.org.au/

Accordingly, the amplification of counterpublics as an anti-racist strategy on social media could help remediate platformed racism.

Users' memetic engagements around the Goodes controversy across platforms provided a window to instances of Indigenous people's creativity that countered dominant narratives on race in Australia. My cultural analysis of the Twitter and Facebook uses of the Goodes controversy surfaced an active Indigenous community that countered dominant narratives about Indigeneity, nationalism, racism, and whiteness in Australia. Contributions from Celeste Liddle on Twitter, Bjorn Stewart on YouTube, and Indigenous meme culture on Facebook reflected original and humorous critiques of white Australia. Milner (2016) argues that people memetically engage with texts when they resonate enough with them so as to inspire iteration and creativity. Indigenous peoples' engagement with media objects involved remix and playful iterations to make visible "white fragility" (DiAngelo, 2011), and the influences of colonialism in Australian racism. As Frazer and Carlson (2017) note, Indigenous memes "bring to surface the continuity of colonial power relations and makes visible the violence that is carefully elided from mainstream discourse" (p. 8).

White and non-Indigenous allies could amplify Indigenous narratives on social media through various platform affordances: by following, subscribing, liking, sharing, and commenting. This is especially the case since Indigenous Australians are already active on social media for activism purposes through key platform affordances such as the Twitter rotating account @IndigenousX, and the hashtag #sosblakaustralia (Carlson & Frazer, 2016). The amplification of their activity would potentially help to redirect platforms' economies of attention to more productive anti-racism discourses. In addition, since users normally use existing texts in their memetic engagements with media (which have been created by traditional producers of popular culture), original contributions (such as Celeste Liddle's tweets) are opportunities to deconstruct dominant narratives around the controversy with personal media. Indeed, vernacular creativity on social media by Indigenous Australians is a site of hope in the deconstruction of Australian mainstream media white frames on race issues in Australia (Carlson & Frazer, 2016; Dreher, McCallum & Waller, 2016; Kennedy, 2018; Waller, Dreher & McCallum, 2015).

8.3 FURTHER IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND EMERGING QUESTIONS

Platforms have never been under more scrutiny and regulatory pressure to prevent extremist and hate-filled content and behaviour than they were at the time of documenting this study in April 2018 (Gillespie, 2018a). At the same time, platformed racism is being increasingly normalised by platforms' governance and logics, and requires scholarly attention.

Platformed racism aligns with an established body of research that interrogates the material politics of platforms, and the uneven power relations they reinforce (Burgess & Bruns, 2015; Gillespie, 2010; Gerlitz & Helmond, 2013; van Dijck, 2013). In these analyses, race as an analytical lens has been largely marginalised to explain platforms' power relations. A way to move forward in explaining some of the biases and logics of social media platforms could be to interrogate platform politics from a Critical Race Theory and Whiteness Studies perspective. Whiteness, and its link to enterprise, Christianity, masculinity, neutrality, and individualism (Dyer, 1997) can be a useful lens through which to interrogate platform architecture, design, and governance.

Platforms are under pressure to do better in their governing process, which is often aligned with advertisers' interests (Roberts, 2016). At the same time, as Gillespie (2018b) observes, there are "competing economic incentives for platforms to be more permissive than they claim to be, and to treat high value producers differently than the rest". Apart from these business interests, some cultural biases that inform their priorities, design, and governance are informed by whiteness, and there is room to explore the connection between whiteness and technoculture.

This study has its limitations, and opens the door to different methodological approaches and data gathering. While an extremely valuable resource in its ability to capture historical tweets from Australian accounts, the TrISMA dataset (at the time of data collection) did not include any Australian Twitter accounts created after 2013. Newer accounts (some of which could even have been set up in 2015 to harass Goodes) were not included in my dataset. By using the keyword "goodes" as my seed for the data gathering, I did not collect the tweets directed to Adam Goodes' Twitter account (@adamroy37), unless the tweet text mentioned "goodes". Thus, I might not have captured some of the tweets directed at him.

Moreover, my primary focus has been on public social media – in part, because public discourse was the object of analysis; and, in part, to guarantee users privacy. However, counterpublics (and also racism) can be articulated in other more private and hidden spaces such as Facebook private groups and private chats, or YouTube comments. These private and hidden spaces point to an obvious limitation of this research: I have not supplemented my analysis of platform traces and media objects with interviews. Thus, further research on counterpublics to platformed racism could be undertaken through a mixed methods approach by interviewing Indigenous social media users; for example, community leaders across platforms. Studying the activity of Indigenous voices on social media is a challenge for white scholars in term of interpretations of the data and data mining. Collaboration with Indigenous scholars and interviews could help overcome this challenge.

Overall, this study demonstrates both the ordinariness and structural nature of platformed racism which, as a new form of racism articulated trough social media, requires further examination. Further research could empirically examine platformed racism around other racial controversies in other national contexts. The 'platformed' concept could also be expanded to interrogate the material politics of platforms with regards to other ordinary and structural sociocultural issues, such as sexism and misogyny. The outcomes of this future investigative work have the potential to inform better platform governance initiatives.

At the same time, more critical analyses of user practices are also fundamental to a reflection on the way that whiteness contributes to the production and reproduction of racism on social media. In turn, we as users can easily address this phenomenon with more reflexive and informed uses of media objects online.

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