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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I explore how logics of enclosure underscore policies about national identity, citizenship, and belonging in Australia. Darwin, the capital of Australia's Northern Territory, has become a central place for policy struggles over migration and Aboriginal communities over the past ten years. The city offers a lens through which to read geopolitical processes of migration and detention, sovereignty and citizenship, and settler colonialism and consider their consequences for people's everyday lives. Asylum seekers in Australia face policies of mandatory detention while they wait and hope for refugee status, and Darwin's many immigration detention centers have earned it the name 'Detention Capital of Australia.' Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory have also experienced restrictive policies since the 2007 Northern Territory Emergency Response legislation targeted their communities, and Darwin has become the capital of this 'Intervention' into Aboriginal communities as well. I argue that these sets of policies reveal a common logic towards policymaking in Australia that relies on containment to engage with populations perceived as threatening to perceptions of Australian nationality. A logic of containment—an approach towards policymaking relying on strategies of enclosure—underscores policies towards asylum seekers and Aboriginal populations. I conclude that similar logics of enclosure, or containment, trap Aboriginal Australians, asylum seekers, and advocates seeking justice, confining their minds and bodies, limiting possibilities for their futures, and revealing the precariousness of their *human* security in the search for a secure *national* identity.

GEOGRAPHIES OF CONTAINMENT:
LOGICS OF ENCLOSURE IN ABORIGINAL AND ASYLUM SEEKER POLICIES IN AUSTRALIA'S
NORTHERN TERRITORY

by

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Dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Geography

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To Eleanor, with hope

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Chapter 1. Introduction: Logics of Containment

On one of the first days after I had moved into my apartment in Darwin, Australia, the city had a significant visitor. Roads were closed through the central business district, and all routes between the Parliament building along Darwin's waterfront and the military base further inland were lined with police and military security personnel. I switched on the television to watch live coverage of the event unfolding not five miles from where I lived. US President Obama had joined Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard at the podium, a sea of Australian and US troops filling the airplane hangar around them. Australian commentators were floored: Gillard had never conducted such an American-style campaign event with Australian military before, and she clearly looked awkward even as Obama joked with the assembled troops. Obama announced that the US would expand its presence in Asia by stationing a rotating group of 2,500 US Marines in Darwin. It was, as he told the troops, "the perfect place" (Calmes 2011). I had arrived in Darwin just one week prior. I found the city oppressively humid, hot, and claustrophobically built, with concrete bunker-style buildings lining the flat, wide roads. I had already begun second-guessing my decision to come to Darwin. How could this remote, unwelcoming community be a significant research site? Yet for Obama, Darwin represented 'the perfect place'—clearly, this community contained more than it seemed. The television cameras moved to shots of Air Force One idling on the tarmac of the military base runway. I watched the plane gather speed on the screen, then stepped out of the front door of the apartment. Air Force One rose from over the palm trees lining the street. I watched it until the plane flew out of sight.

Obama's visit was a symbolic nod to the geopolitical significance of Darwin for Australia's international partners. Commentators tied the increased US Marine presence to the growing strength of China in the region, as well as US national interests in South China Sea shipping lanes (Calmes 2011). Obama's visit also gestured to the continuing significance of Darwin for Australia itself. This remote northern community maintained a disproportionate hold on Australian geographical imagination and national identity. Darwin was Australia's 'Gateway to Asia' and the most accessible route to its most remote Aboriginal communities, a frontier town in spirit and a government town in practice.

Yet Darwin is also a central site for two controversial issues in contemporary Australian politics. Asylum seekers in Australia face policies of mandatory detention while they wait and hope for refugee status. Darwin's three immigration detention centers with a capacity of over 3,200 detainees have earned it the name 'Detention Capital of Australia.' Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory have also faced restrictive policies since the 2007 Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) legislation targeted their communities, and Darwin has become the capital of this 'Intervention' into Aboriginal communities as well. Darwin therefore also represented 'the perfect place' for other policy struggles related to Australian national identity, citizenship, and belonging, prompting the question: for whom in Darwin can Australia be home? (Schlunke 2002)

As the 'capital' of both immigration detention and the NTER policies, Darwin offers a lens through which to read geopolitical processes of migration and detention, sovereignty and citizenship, and settler colonialism and to consider their consequences for people's everyday lives. I argue that these sets of policies reveal a common logic toward policymaking in Australia that relies on *containment* to engage with populations perceived

as threatening to perceptions of Australian nationality. A logic of containment—an approach toward policymaking relying on strategies of enclosure—underscores policies toward asylum seekers and Aboriginal populations. Containment logics result in practices of enclosure as concrete as imprisonment and as ethereal as the foreclosure of possibilities.

By analyzing policies directed at Aboriginal Australians and asylum seekers together, I do not argue that these policies are similar. They have very different contexts, and related, but distinct, histories. Yet holding these policies alongside one another, I contend, allows related aspects of their underlying structures to emerge and illuminates shared logics of policymaking directed at people on the margins of Australian national identity. In automobile manufacturing, oftentimes manufacturers will build different models of car on similar chassis. Some vehicles become minivans, others sedans, but they may share the alignment of axles or the placement of brake lines, similarities only revealed by holding the models alongside one another. Considering very different policies together reveals these shared pieces, the common axles of policy design, and highlights structural similarities that drive policies.

Two central questions drove my analysis of policies directed at Aboriginal Australians and asylum seekers in Darwin and Australia's Northern Territory (NT): First, how have logics of containment directed at Aboriginal and asylum seekers in Darwin and the NT been constituted? Second, what is the significance of containment logics for Darwin and the NT, and how do forms of containment impact Aboriginal and refugee advocacy and activism? In this dissertation, I conclude that similar logics of enclosure, or containment, trap Aboriginal Australians, asylum seekers, and advocates seeking justice, confining their minds and bodies, limiting possibilities for their futures, and revealing the precariousness

of their *human* security in the search for a secure *national* identity (see Hyndman 2004). Darwin, as this analysis details, is a place where containment logics have become particularly embedded. Yet events in this small community also suggest the extent of Australians' unreconciled and deeply conflicted perceptions of national identity, rooted in fraught histories of colonization and migration.

Containment is a geographical logic, connecting territorial and spatial forms of enclosure such as imprisonment with broader psychological forms of restraint and limitation that move across and through these areas—such as the panicked public discourse I detail in Chapter 2 and the traumatic effects of advocacy work that I will explore in Chapter 6. The study of containment as a *geographical* logic also draws attention to the particular places where containment practices, discourses, and imaginaries take hold. It is no coincidence, I will argue in Chapter 6, that practices to contain Aboriginal people and asylum seekers have become magnified in Darwin. Situating containment logics within a global historical and geopolitical context reveals that their raced, classed, gendered, and colonial effects become embedded more deeply in certain sites, such as Darwin, than others (e.g., Bashford and Strange 2002; Kaplan 2005). It is important to understand why legacies of containment continue in places such as Darwin and to situate them within “global disciplinary strateg[ies]” for mobility and transnational economic networks (Reid-Henry 2007: 627; Cresswell 1996; Cresswell 2006; Gilmore 2007).

While other scholars have noted resemblances and geographic parallels among Aboriginal reserves, quarantine stations, internment camps, and the detention centers that presently confine asylum seekers (Bashford and Strange 2002; Schlunke 2002; Rajaram 2003; Anderson and Taylor 2005; Perera 2007b; Anderson and Perrin 2008; Nethery 2009;

Neumann and Tavan 2009; Perera 2009; Perera 2009b; Perera and Stratton 2009), this is the first in-depth study that examines Aboriginal and asylum seeker issues through the lens of a common logic. By investigating the significance of two prominent issues in Australian public life and public policy in Darwin, this research contributes to knowledge about containment. Such knowledge encourages the development of both advocacy strategies to document and public policies to check proliferating forms of containment in Australia and elsewhere.

Juxtaposing logics of containment as an approach has several limitations. Fundamentally, I approach this project with the assumption that a logic of containment *does* underlie different policies in different areas of Australian public life and that different policies based on logics of containment *are*, in fact, comparable. I assume that comparison is meaningful, both in this specific case and perhaps even for other policies in other places. These assumptions, like the conclusions I draw from them, are contestable. Additionally, a dissertation-length study of two policies cannot acquire the depth of the study of a single one, and comparisons often tend to be somewhat asymmetrical, although I have tried hard in this analysis to provide an overall sense of balance even as individual chapters may lean more heavily on one area of policy or the other. Furthermore, holding the policies alongside one another *implies* perhaps greater connections and continuity than the diverse histories and different contexts of these policies could support. This approach highlights points of congruence, rather than areas of dissimilarity.

Yet for all of these limitations, I believe comparing these policies reveals implicit or taken-for-granted aspects of Australian policymaking. While both policy areas are widely studied within Australia, approaching these policies through logics of containment draws

important connections between the two disparate areas and encourages similar comparison and analysis in other locations. Comparison encourages analysis to travel and calls attention to understudied points of convergence. For example, Phillips' (2009: 26) doctoral thesis theorizes containment as a "way of thinking about the control of populations or groups through confinement and surveillance, and is born out of new ways of conceptualizing space in modernity. It... underpins our ideas about race, populations, and nations." I similarly consider containment as an idea structuring diverse types of policies undertaken by the Australian state and as a biopolitical tool that creates particular geographic spaces to exclude those who represent a threat to Australian national identity, even as I extend that logic into quite different realms of study. Phillips' work exemplified how containment logics, as I theorize them, are potentially mobile, manifesting themselves in different gendered, raced, and sexualized ways depending on where and when they are applied.

An in-depth study that connects the spatial, territorial, and psychological repercussions of Aboriginal and refugee containment logics and explores their consequences in people's everyday lives offers important insight into Australian national identity. Comparison allows for interdisciplinary research. Conceptualizing diverse histories as being shot through with *logics of containment* broadens and deepens the interdisciplinary literature on immigration, borders, and detention in postcolonial places, specifically recognizing the importance of geography to the study of postcolonial politics, immigration, and nationality.

Situating containment within geography

This project is situated within multiple areas of geography and interdisciplinary study. Most broadly, the dissertation is informed by political geographic work on borders and migration (e.g., Sibley 1995; Cresswell 2006; Coleman 2007a; Nevins 2008; Mountz 2010) as well as citizenship and sovereignty (e.g., Isin 2002; F and Wills 2007; Cresswell 2009; Perera 2009a; De Genova 2010b; Staeheli 2010; Isin 2012; Jeffrey et al. 2012; Jones 2012). Interdisciplinary scholarship on detention (e.g., Bashford and Strange 2002; Kaplan 2005; Gregory 2007; Gill 2009; Martin and Mitchelson 2009; Coffey et al. 2010) and colonization and decolonization struggles (e.g., Mohanty 1991; Sparke 1998; Braun 2002; Smith 2005; Stoler 2006; Perera 2007; Stoler 2008) are also central to this analysis.

Geographers have extensively researched various aspects of containment in different areas of the discipline: forms of spatial enclosure (e.g., Howitt 2001; Trudeau 2006; Fields 2007) and aspects of psychological exclusion (e.g., Sibley 1995; Cresswell 1997; Herbert 2008; Barker et al. 2010) are connected in studies examining the continued legacies of apartheid (e.g., Bremner 2004; Clarino 2008) or the individual impacts of immigration geopolitics (e.g., Sparke 2006; Winders 2007). Geographies of exception or abandonment (e.g., Pratt 2005; Hubbard et al. 2008) have been elaborated on within the Australian context (Instone 2010; Kamp 2010). Yet geographers rarely conceptualize spatial, territorial, and psychological forms of enclosure as operating as part of a similar logic. Indeed, while geographers have sporadically and variously studied containment, they often treat the concept as a policy or fixed spatial arrangement rather than an ongoing policy framework with spatial and psychological ramifications.

My theorization of containment as a logic draws heavily on critical geopolitical scholarship (e.g., O'Tuathail and Agnew 1992; Dodds and Sidaway 1994; Dodds 2001; Sparke 2006; Sidaway 2010). For example, geopolitical scholars have explored the Cold War containment of the Soviet Union (Porter 2009; Kelly 2010). For them, containment is a territorial strategy synonymous with defensive actions of exclusion or isolation, although other geographers argue that it is being supplanted with visions of space that prioritize flows, networks, mobility, and engagement (Coleman 2007b; Mitchell 2010). Urban geographers have also invoked ideas of containment as a method of organizing and disciplining urban space (Rhodes 2010; Samara 2010). Diverse applications of containment invoke spatial separation used to protect certain populations from something profoundly negative. I theorize containment as an underlying narrative or geopolitical discourse shaping how political power becomes embedded in particular spaces, such as Australia's NT. I examine how containment is situated, produced, and challenged, questions framed by this tradition of critical geopolitical scholarship.

My emphasis on the everyday consequences at multiple scales of these geopolitical discourses, however, builds most directly on feminist geopolitical scholarship (Dowler and Sharp 2001; Hyndman 2001b; Secor 2001; Hyndman 2004; Fluri 2009; Massaro and Williams 2013). These scholars pay particular attention to practices of resistance and challenge and emphasize the importance of *human* security in a subdiscipline often focused on questions of *national* security (Hyndman 2004). The focus on human security and the everyday, embodied consequences of logics of containment are theoretically grounded in a feminist epistemology that emphasizes the multiple scales (Marston 2000; Katz 2001;

Nagar et al. 2002; Cope 2004; Sharp 2007) and everyday practices (e.g., Smith 1987; Brown and Staeheli 2003; Mountz 2003; Fluri 2009) at which national policies take shape.

For example, feminist geographers focus on the way that political activities at every scale are populated and embodied (Brown and Staeheli 2003; Fluri 2009). The everyday consequences of containment logics also draw from feminist analyses of the everyday as both repeated actions (Mountz 2003; Painter 2006; Garmany 2009) and embodied repercussions (Smith 1987; Aretxaga 2003). Highlighting the everyday embodied aspects of containment foregrounds material effects of state practices, violence, security, and mobility that a focus on different scales renders invisible (Hyndman 2001a; Mountz 2004).

Containment logics operate within interconnected scales (Marston 2000; Katz 2001; Hyndman 2004; Sharp 2007). Feminist geographers emphasize a contingent, relational concept of scale: the impact of local activities can “jump scale” to the national or global level and vice versa (Cope 2004: 71). Conceptualizing containment as a process occurring at multiple interconnected scales makes visible power that moves across and through spaces of containment (Hyndman 2004). Building on this feminist scholarship, this project examines the everyday, multiscalar impacts of containment logics, using Darwin as a lens to frame geostrategic global processes, national arenas of public debate, Territory-level regional and community consequences for migrants’ and Aboriginal people’s daily lives and the embodied effects on advocates of this traumatic work.

Context: Darwin and the Northern Territory

Darwin, a community of about 125,000 people (in 2013), is the capital of Australia’s Northern Territory (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013). Within the Australian geographical imagination, Darwin is both remote and central to ideas of Australian

nationality. The paradoxical combination of remoteness and centrality shapes Darwin and the Northern Territory and their relationship to the rest of Australia and helps to explain the prominence of policies of containment such as the NTER and the detention of asylum seekers.

Remoteness

Darwin is the only major urban center of the NT, closer in miles to Manila, Jakarta, or Singapore than it is to Australian cities such as Melbourne or Perth (Pike 1956). Because of its location, Darwin was known as Australia's 'Gateway to Asia' for many years and continues, as Luckman et al (2009: 73) describe, to occupy the Australian imagination as a "'strategic military outpost' on the northern frontier" as well as "a focal point for (post)colonial struggles over mineral resources and space."

Darwin's remote image has been bolstered by the repeated cycles of disaster and rebuilding that have characterized its history: during the twentieth century, Darwin was destroyed by fire, two different cyclones, and bombing by the Japanese military during World War Two (Luckman et al. 2009: 74). After Cyclone Tracy demolished the town in 1974, southern newspapers even worried, "Do we need a Darwin?" (Shevill 1975). In each case, the city was rebuilt, its planning and subsequent economic growth influenced strongly by post-disaster federal government intervention. Sectors such as territory and federal government employment, defense (16,000 military personnel and family live in and around Darwin), mining, and tourism (1.5 million people visit Darwin each year) continue to bolster Darwin's growth (Luckman et al. 2009: 74).

Because of its orientation toward Asia, tropical climate, and the history of Asian migration to Australia's north coast, Darwin has a multicultural feel—farmer's markets

feature green vegetables from Vietnam, Javanese tempeh, Chinese market garden produce, and fresh mangos from across the Northern Territory. National newspaper columnist

Nicholas Rothwell (2007: 51) describes Darwin this way:

It is growth and wild luxuriance, it is youth, pleasure, sunshine, the exuberance of movement and the incessant rhythm of the tropics. It is the palms swaying against the harbor, purple nightfalls, frangipani blossoms, smoke plumes filling a hazy sky. But it is also the smell of rotting vegetation and decay, wet season thunder, cyclones, rain falling from lead banks of cloud. It is Paradise and Inferno cohabiting; grand hotels, plaques and war memorials at every turn, a marble parliament big enough for a superpower; and, close by, corrugated iron shacks, musty backpackers' markets, wrecking cranes, an endless empire of second-hand car yards. It is characters who seem to have been sweated like dreams out of the ground..."

Compared with other cities in Australia, Darwin's population tends to be younger, more mobile, and more male (Carson et al. 2010: 2). Darwin's ethnic makeup also differs from southern Australian cities. Not only does Darwin have a long history of Chinese and other Asian migrants settling in the area (since the 1870s) and the highest proportion of indigenous residents of any Australian city, but because of the concentration of government services, it has also been a popular resettlement destination for African refugees, particularly from the countries of Sudan, Liberia, Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia (Carson et al. 2010: 28-29).

Centrality

For all of Darwin's remote allure, the city and the NT as a whole are centrally embedded in Australia's economic relationships, military geostrategic calculations, and priorities of the federal government. Darwin's prominence in the Australian economy derives from its centrality to the increasingly profitable mining industry and proximity to markets in China and Japan. While the mining industry only makes up 3.5 percent of the Northern Territory's workforce (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011a), it has a disproportionate presence in Darwin. Many mining employees are fly-in, fly-out workers

who reside in other parts of Australia, but the rhythms of the two-week mining shifts cause the community's mood to fluctuate as people transition in and out of shifts (Luckman et al. 2009). Gold, manganese, and uranium make up most of the revenue derived from mining, although liquefied natural gas and crude oil are also found in the Northern Territory (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011a).

Uranium has been an especially controversial product of Northern Territory mines since it was first discovered south of Darwin in 1949. Contemporary promotional material described the discovery: "Uranium at Rum Jungle! An exotic-sounding name now known all over the world. Overnight, the northern portion of the Territory became Uranium Land, the richest uranium-bearing country in the world" (Pike 1956: 77). Today, uranium mining has become a focus of struggle over Northern Territory lands and communities. Health problems near the Jabiru mine in the east part of the Northern Territory, for example, continue to affect the Aboriginal community living there, and Aboriginal communities have protested plans to site a radioactive waste dump in the Muckaty Land Trust (Beyond Nuclear Initiative 2012). Activists opposing the Northern Territory Intervention repeatedly cite the connections between its mandatory leases of Aboriginal lands and the changing regulations over entrance to these lands as being part of an attempt to loosen protections over these lands for the mining industry. As Dr. Helen Caldicott, anti-nuclear advocate, alleged, "The land grab from the Aborigines is actually about uranium and nuclear waste" (Cardy 2007; The Daily Telegraph 2007).

Darwin is also a key strategic location for the Australian military. Darwin has the best port site of any in Northern Australia and one of the two best airfields. It currently hosts Australian Navy, Airforce, Army, as well as the offices of the Northern Command

(NORCOM) (Wran 1995: 173-174). In 2010, defense represented 7 percent of the Darwin workforce as well as 7 percent of the national defense force (Carson et al. 2010: 51). As the geopolitical importance of Asia, particularly China, continues to increase, Darwin is poised to play a larger role in national defense, as well as international partnerships (see Ansley 2012).

Because of its strategic location and loyal military partnerships in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, Australia already hosts major US satellite, communication, and training facilities (Maclellan 2011: 18-20). Australia's remote bombing ranges have been especially key to this partnership as other long-term bombing sites, such as those on Puerto Rico and Hawaii, have been closed due to political pressure from local residents (Maclellan 2011). President Obama's visit to Darwin in November 2011 served as a reminder of the strategic and geopolitical importance of Northern Australia for Australian and US interests in Asia, and his announcement of the deployment of 2,500 US Marines to Darwin was a tangible show of his administration's 'pivot' toward Asia (Calmes 2011).

The federal government controls much of the Territory's mining industry and the military deployed in Darwin, illustrating a third key aspect of Darwin's centrality to national imaginaries: the prominence of the federal government. Jurisdictional ambiguity colors policymaking in the NT, because it, unlike much of the rest of mainland Australia, has never been granted statehood. After 1978, the Australian federal government granted the Territory many of the rights of statehood yet continued to control Aboriginal land, National Parks, and uranium mines (Carment 2009). As a Territory, the NT does not have equal parliamentary representation in the Australian federal government, and decisions about the Territory repeatedly occur at the federal level (Carment 2009).

Aboriginal support for remaining a Territory—under which jurisdiction Aboriginal corporations retain greater power than they do in neighboring states—was key to referenda for statehood being rejected in 2007 (Carment 2009: 20). In 2011, the campaign for statehood was resurrected, buoyed by frustration at the federal governments' plans to establish the nuclear waste dump at the Muckaty Land Trust, as well as the 2007 Northern Territory Intervention. Aboriginal community members across the NT asked campaigners for statehood, "If we'd been a state, would the Commonwealth have been able to intervene in our communities?" (Stratham 2011: 1) During interviews for this project, several residents of Darwin attributed both the Intervention and the siting of three detention centers for asylum seekers in the area to the imbalance of power of the federal government vis-à-vis the Territory administration. Campaigns for statehood were put on hold indefinitely after the 2012 Territory General Election. The NT's jurisdictional ambiguity and the federal government's dominance in local and regional policymaking are important factors in both the operation of the NTER and the detention of asylum seekers in the community.

The geography of Darwin

Key locations mentioned throughout the dissertation are featured in this map of Darwin and its suburbs:

Darwin Central Business District (brown) (1)

Lamaroo Beach (2)

Myilly Point—peninsula in yellow adjacent to (1)

Military property, including Australian Army, Navy, and Air Force sites (yellow) (3)

Bagot Aboriginal Community (purple) (5)

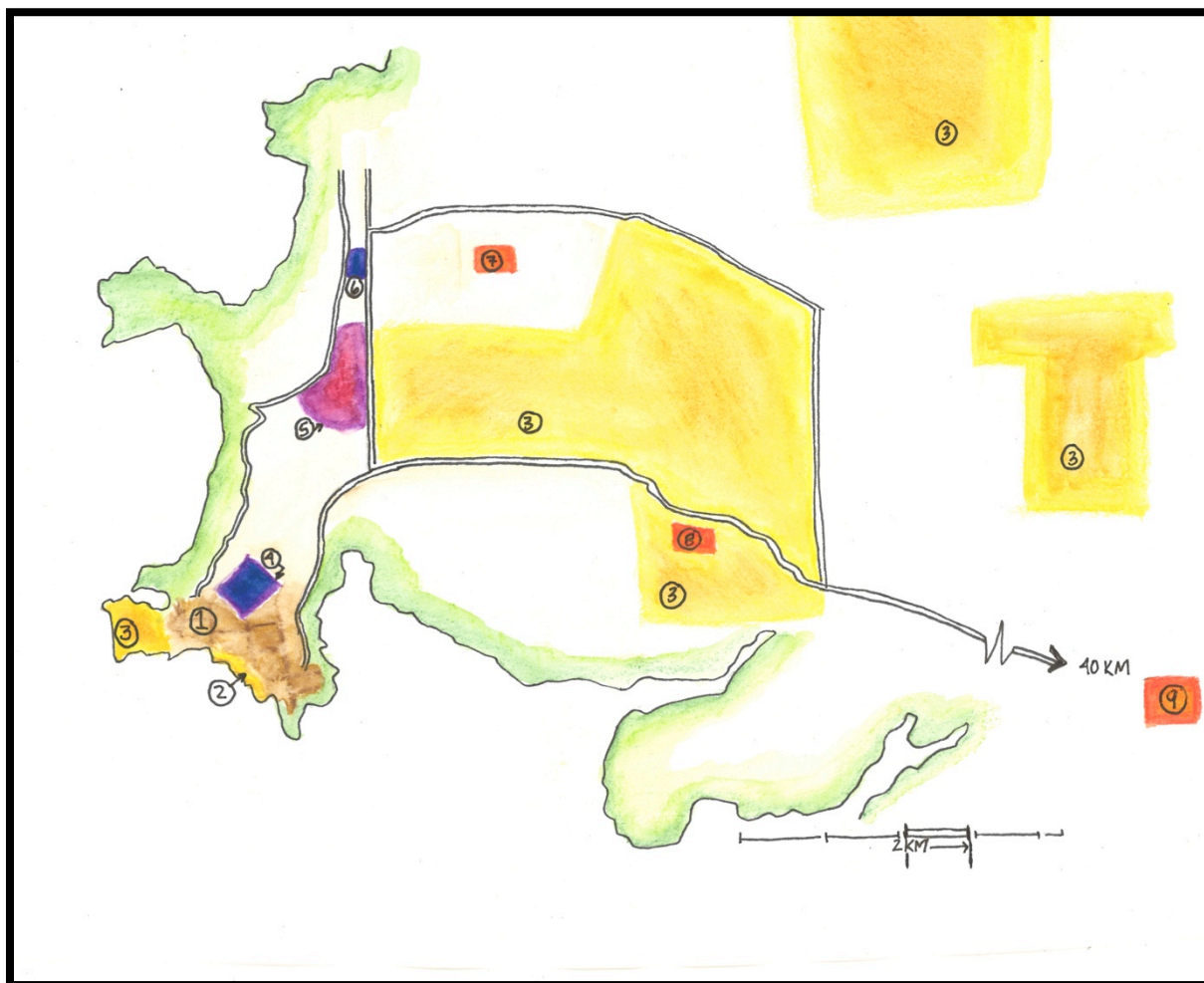
Sites of Aboriginal institutions:

- Former site of Kahlin Compound and Darwin Hospital (blue) (4)
- Former site of Retta Dixon Home (blue) (6)

Immigration detention centers (orange):

- Darwin Airport Lodge Alternative Place of Detention (7)
- Northern Immigration Detention Center (8)
- Wickham Point Detention Center (9)

Figure 1. Map of Darwin, by K. Coddington.



Methods

I undertook an ethnography of a particular *logic*, the logic—and accompanying practices—of containment that underscored policies directed toward both asylum seekers and Aboriginal populations in Australia's Northern Territory. I focused on the post-2001 timeframe for asylum seeker policies and a post-2007 scope for the NTER policies, although contextualizing these policies within Australian history required a longer timeframe for research. I structured research with two primary questions in mind:

- How have logics of containment directed at Aboriginal and asylum seekers in Darwin and the NT been constituted?
- What is the significance of containment logics for Darwin and the NT, and how do forms of containment impact Aboriginal and refugee advocacy and activism?

I became interested in policies affecting asylum seekers and Aboriginal residents of the NT because of my involvement in a collaborative research project. As part of the Island Detention Project (Principal Investigator Alison Mountz), I conducted ethnographic research about the use of islands as sites of detention and migration management in Australia in 2010 and 2011. This project is a multi-year international collaboration between a team of geographers looking at asylum, migration, and detention on Guam and Saipan (US), Lampedusa (Italy), islands in the Caribbean, and Christmas Island (Australia). We are examining migrant movements and state enforcement practices and using mapping as a tool to connect with advocacy efforts in the different fieldsites. I conducted over 100 semi-structured interviews and carried out participant observation in Perth and Christmas Island (Australia) in 2010 as well as in Sydney and Melbourne (Australia) and Jakarta and

Yogyakarta (Indonesia) in 2011. Interviews with asylum seekers, advocates, relatives, employees, island residents, NGOs, journalists, political and community leaders sparked a lasting interest in Australia's controversial policies directed toward asylum seekers as well as introduced me to the policies of the NTER, known as the 'Intervention,' in the Northern Territory.

The intersection of these two policy regimes in the same part of Australia prompted me to ask: what was it about Darwin that invited these disparate restrictive policies at the same time? I was aware of past containment projects involving Aboriginal Australians—quarantined territories, restrictive boarding schools, and child removal policies—and the new Intervention legislation eerily echoed some of these past projects. At the same time, hundreds of asylum seekers were incarcerated in detention facilities in Darwin. What kind of logic would emerge, I wondered, if I 'thought together' the disparate policies of Aboriginal community Intervention and asylum seeker detention? What kind of connections could I draw across the historical, geographical, and political divisions that separated these two areas of policy, history, and advocacy? And what did it mean to connect these two sets of policies under a common logic in the city of Darwin, where legacies of refugee, migrant, and Aboriginal containment have become embedded?

To answer these questions, I turned to ethnographic research and conducted participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and archival and secondary source research in Darwin between November 2011 and March 2012.

I conducted participant observation in multiple locations as I lived and worked in Darwin, including public spaces, public transportation, grocery stores, farmers' markets, libraries, streets, community festivals, lectures, museums, art installations, film screenings,

and the threat of an approaching cyclone. I visited detention centers and attended meetings and events of two advocacy groups affiliated with Aboriginal and asylum seeker justice efforts. Participant observation, an ethnographic method that elucidates how social processes occur in particular places, connects the experiential aspects of living and being in a place with the “processes and meanings that undergird sociospatial life” (Herbert 2000: 550; Stacey 1991). Participant observation requires time spent with a particular community or in a particular place and critical reflection on that time through close description and detailed fieldnotes (Geertz 1973; Clifford 1986). Geographers have long used participant observation as a method to learn about how people experience different spaces (Megoran 2006; Dunn 2007).

I used participant observation to learn about community dynamics in Darwin and how asylum seeker and Aboriginal issues manifested in people’s daily lives. What were the everyday consequences of Aboriginal and asylum seeker policies? Arguments on the bus between Aboriginal residents and drivers, for example, suggested the difficulties of cross-cultural communication and the level of tension created by conflicting understandings of the appropriate use of public space, issues that connected explicitly with a focus on alcohol and the regulation of public space in the NTER. In another example, observation at the meetings and events (21 meetings and events) of the two advocacy groups with which I became involved demonstrated how these groups hashed out possibilities, brought up potential obstacles, and eventually made collective decisions. Later conversations with members of both groups helped to explain why people made decisions in the ways that they did and how personal levels of stress, exhaustion, and trauma influenced these group decisions. In a third example, conducting participant observation at detention facilities (11

visits) helped me understand the everyday consequences of detention policies: what kind of lives did people in detention lead? What kinds of interactions did they have with staff? What kinds of medication and mental health care did they have access to? How did I interpret their levels of stress and exhaustion? Together, participant observation in these different locations helped me understand some of the everyday consequences of the policies I studied for Aboriginal people and asylum seekers, how advocates engaged with the policies and made decisions, and how community dynamics in Darwin shaped the embeddedness of containment policies there.

I also conducted 25 semi-structured interviews with refugee advocates, Aboriginal advocates, local historians, members of community organizations, members of city and local governments, journalists, scholars, medical professionals, neighbors, and other interested parties. Semi-structured interviews are another way of connecting theory and individual experiences but also highlighting how people make sense of their lives and envision containment (Valentine 2001; Avis 2002). Semi-structured interviews provide consistency by focusing on similar topics across a variety of conversations yet allow for interviewees to highlight important themes (Anderson and Jack 1991; Yow 2006). Interviews thus act as “vantage points” into the worlds of other people—people who through their very conversation help to shape the type of knowledge that the project can produce (Pratt 2002: 228). I identified people through my participant observation and research into the Darwin community, using personal connections as well as the snowball method to find additional interviewees (Babbie and Benaquisto 2002).

Interviews explored interviewees’ relationship to Aboriginal and refugee issues, their explanations of representations of containment, changes in these representations

over time, and their understanding of the significance and impacts of these representations on advocacy and policy. Interviews lasted about 60 minutes. I did not record the interviews; instead, I wrote detailed notes during and after interviews. I often found myself learning the most from snippets of conversation outside formal interview parameters: conversations in cars, quick exchanges before events, casual descriptions over a drink, and the confidences people share when they determine that you, too, have been in similar situations (see also Winders 2001). Interviews helped me flesh out the everyday findings of the policies I studied for Aboriginal people, asylum seekers, and advocates. I used interviews to explore further my conclusions from participant observation and develop new ideas for connections to investigate. Interviews were especially insightful in making connections between Aboriginal imprisonment and policies of the NTER detailed in Chapter 3, developing the emphasis on gender in Chapter 4, and elucidating the effects of trauma on advocates in Chapter 5.

To provide historical and geographical context for asylum seeker and Aboriginal policies in the NT, I conducted archival research in the Northern Territory collections of the Northern Territory Parliamentary Library and the Charles Darwin University Library, as well as in the 'local interest' section of the Darwin City Library. I gathered information and materials, including books, newspapers, government documents, and media publications covering topics including refugees, Aboriginal issues, Intervention policy repercussions, local advocacy, and Darwin and NT history. Initially, the archival research cast a broad net, as I searched for any local source pertaining to migration or Aboriginal people, and through my iterative research process, I prioritized histories of asylum seekers in Darwin, histories of Aboriginal institutions, and local reporting and government documents about detention

centers and the impacts of the NTER. As interviews and participant observation coalesced around particular themes—panic, imprisonment, citizenship, and trauma—I revisited the archives to search more thoroughly for material.

For all of my fieldnotes, interviews, and data collection, I employed procedures approved by the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board (IRB), including prescribed data management protocols and strict confidentiality rules, which safeguarded my data and encouraged the trust of project participants. Together, the variety of sources allowed me to focus and prioritize research findings, triangulate them for greater internal consistency, and juxtapose the very different histories of Aboriginal communities and detained asylum seekers to highlight a connected logic of containment affecting both populations.

Chapter outline

Chapter 2 serves as an overview of the policies of mandatory detention for asylum seekers and the NTER legislation targeting Aboriginal communities. I focus on two events that were perceived as moments of policy panic: the arrival of the *M.V. Tampa* in 2001 and the roll out of the NTER legislation in 2007. This chapter provide detailed background information about how asylum seeker and Aboriginal policies were implemented and publicly received and challenges some of the most common ways that these implementations were later understood. I ask: what does interpreting political events through a lens of panic camouflage or enable? In Chapter 2, I argue that panic perpetuates a logic of containment that frames public debate over asylum seekers, Aboriginal communities, and Australian belonging more generally within certain parameters. Even as policies slowly solidified over time, the panicked perceptions hid this background and

shaped the parameters of future debate, leaving later analysis to continually recenter debates on the political motives and the perception of public panic, rather than the longer-term changes these policies enabled. This chapter provides a skeletal framework for the rest of the dissertation, employing narratives deployed through federal government and national media sources at the national scale to frame multiple scales of analysis that I use in the following chapters.

Chapters 3 and 4 shift the scale of analysis, focusing on events in Darwin and the Northern Territory to understand how containment logics manifest. If Chapter 2 provided a skeletal outline of containment regimes operating in the Northern Territory, Chapters 3 and 4 explore the muscular structures of containment logics: how do they become material practices? How are people 'contained?' Chapter 3 explores how logics of containment or enclosure operate on the ground. I argue that logics of containment become realized through racialized bordering practices and forms of incarceration. These forms of enclosure have racialized, violent, and viscerally embodied effects on both Aboriginal people and asylum seekers in the Northern Territory. Chapter 4 describes the resurrection of the 'ward of the state' in contemporary asylum seeker and Aboriginal policies. This category, neither citizen nor non-citizen, simultaneously promises and withholds the benefits of citizenship. I argue that wardship is built upon expectations about family life, economic activity, and appropriate behavior, expectations that are impossible to fulfill. Wardship, thus, becomes another strategy constructed through logics of containment in Australia, enclosing certain populations to ensure their inability to participate in political community.

In Chapter 5, I flesh out the analysis by exploring the embodied effects of trauma on

advocates and activists who work with affected populations. The scale of the body—the advocates' bodies, as well as my own—allows me to explore the contagious nature of traumatic advocacy work. I argue that the embodied experiences of trauma prompt advocates to limit their work in various ways. Here, containment logics are practiced through the imagination: possibilities become constrained. Advocates protect themselves through distance, limitations, and containment of their actions. They become individual agents of containment, constructing a geography of advocacy characterized by barriers, distance, and self-protection. Contagious trauma, the transfer of stress, fatigue, or burnout, thus becomes instrumental in containing advocacy and foreclosing the possibilities people can imagine.

Finally, I conclude in Chapter 6 by envisioning containment as a *geographic* logic, asking why these forms of containment become embedded in Darwin. I argue that geographical location, ambiguous jurisdiction, transient populations, and historical erasure all play significant roles. Yet Darwin also represents a microcosm of some of Australia's most ambivalent tendencies regarding the relationships among difference, nationality, and belonging. Logics of containment embedded in Darwin have repercussions for *human* security throughout Australia, confining the minds and bodies of Aboriginal Australians, asylum seekers, and advocates seeking justice in the search for a more secure *national* identity (Hyndman 2004). Logics of containment directed at these perceived threatening populations highlight conflicts over national identity within Australia.

Chapter 2. Panic! Containment policies in the 2000's

"Control, containment, or betterment of the lower orders is a reoccurring feature of panic politics." (Lancaster 2011: 30)

Marion Scrymgour, the Northern Territory Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts, criticized plans for a raft of federal government interventions into Northern Territory Aboriginal communities during the summer of 2007 by calling this issue the "black kids' Tampa" (Scrymgour 2007). Although she was forced to retract her comments, Scrymgour's insight connecting the media frenzy over Aboriginal child sex abuse in Northern Territory communities with the similarly panicked public reception to asylum seekers arriving onboard the *M.V. Tampa* in 2001 demonstrates an intuitive connection many Australians made. Here were two similarly politically divisive moments, both constructed as national emergencies during the Howard administration (Sparrow 2007). Both events targeted Australians' moral compasses: were asylum seekers taking advantage of lax Australian rules? Were Aboriginal families living large off federal government support? Both cases featured populations largely marginalized from Australian national identity and public consciousness: remote Aboriginal communities in the vast, unpopulated Northern Territory and troubled migrants from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and other parts of the Middle East. Stories of sexual abuse, poverty, Muslim beliefs, and idleness heightened fears of "belonging and not belonging, about the sanctity of territory and the fear of transgression" (Sibley 1995: 43).

The two policy areas connected by Scrymgour are the primary subjects of this dissertation: the mandatory detention of asylum seekers and the restrictive policies of the Northern Territory 'Intervention' directed toward Aboriginal Australians. While neither

policy—as I will argue in this chapter—*began* with the moments of panic explored in this chapter, these events provide vantage points into how Australians frame policies toward asylum seekers and Aboriginal Australians and allow us to lay the groundwork for chapters that follow. This chapter critically examines the perceptions of policy panic in both cases to provide detailed background information about how these policies were implemented and publicly received, and to challenge some of the most common ways that these implementations were later understood. Part of the rationale for this project is to explore how narratives of panicked events—*regardless* of whether they are understood as ‘manufactured’ or ‘real’—have consequences for policies, places, and people. What does interpreting political events through a lens of panic camouflage or enable?

Both the arrival of the *Tampa* and the Intervention into Northern Territory communities are commonly characterized as moments of policy panic, when moral panics among the wider Australian public spurred harsh nationalist responses from government officials, epitomized by the moment when Prime Minister Howard responded to the *Tampa* by declaring that, “we will decide who comes to this country” (Clarke 2001). Both policies have since been interpreted as policy ‘shocks’ as well, massive, calculated, and premeditated responses to trumped-up panics, where politicians played on the public panic to accomplish their own goals. This chapter offers a different interpretation. I argue that panic creates a *logic of containment* that frames public debate over asylum seekers, Aboriginal communities, and Australian belonging more generally within certain parameters. Rather than a ‘moral panic’ or an overnight transformational ‘shock,’ the two sets of policies slowly solidified over time. Yet the panicked perceptions of these policy events hide the background ‘accounting’ and shaped the parameters of future debate,

leaving later analysis to continually recenter debates on the political motives and the perception of public panic, rather than the longer-term changes these policies enabled.

This analysis relies on a common panicked narrative that emerged from government officials, media reporting, and later scholarship. I borrow here from traditions of discourse analysis (e.g. Foucault 1982; Hall 1997) that frame ‘discourse’ as that which becomes sayable or knowable, creating both definitional and social boundaries. Discourse analysis asks fundamentally genealogical and critical questions: how is it, for example, that these events come to be framed as ‘panic’? And, the critical angle: what are the exclusions from this particular discursive formation; what are its limits? (Foucault 1982) This analysis, while not adhering to all of the elements of strict discourse analysis (for example, it eschews the focus on statements, rules, subjects, practices and authoritative knowledge listed in Hall [1997: 45]), borrows from its focus on framing narratives. I ask, following examples of discourse and narrative analysis (e.g. Pratt 1999; Hier and Greenberg 2002; Gale 2004; Every and Augoustinos 2008), how is it that ‘panic’ becomes the dominant way of framing the arrival of the *Tampa* and the allegations of the sexual assault of Aboriginal children? What does the ‘truth’ about panic enable? What narratives does it legitimize, and what events does it conceal? If I had conducted a content analysis—as I cite here in Footnote One—I would note that the narratives of these events *are* described through panic. Borrowing from traditions of discourse analysis, I ask: *how* it is that this occurs, and what are its effects?

This chapter assembles the pieces of the policy debates often hidden from view, and these pieces solidify throughout the chapter to form the backbone of the dissertation itself. I build on these policy events in the following chapters, examining the muscular structure

of enclosure practices and citizenship relations that allows containment policies to function and fleshing the story out further by exploring the embodied effects of trauma on advocates who work with affected populations. As I move outward, transforming the policy skeletons with working pieces and embodied stories, I also examine interconnected scales of analysis: I move from the national scale in this chapter to the scale of the Northern Territory in the next chapters and finally to the scale of the bodies of the Darwin-area advocates I met and worked with in the chapter that follows.

I begin this chapter by briefly discussing two ways in which the *Tampa* arrival and Intervention have since been framed in media, activist, and academic analysis: the ‘moral panic’ and the ‘shock doctrine.’ Next, I turn to two events that become our vantage points into the formation of policies toward asylum seekers and Aboriginal Australians, using government documents, media reports, academic scholarship, and other secondary sources about the events to describe the arrival of the *Tampa* in 2001 and the decision to intervene in the Northern Territory in 2007. I spend the next two sections of the chapter examining how panicked perceptions created a logic of containment. The consequences of that logic geographically enclosed a narrative that hid policy precursors while simultaneously authorizing the continued use of particular narratives. Finally, I consider the implications, asking, in the case of these panicked policies, who really feels the fear?

A panic primer

Both the arrival of the *Tampa* and the legislation responding to Aboriginal child sexual abuse (abbreviated as the NTER) were characterized as ‘moral panics.’¹ The term

¹ See for Aboriginal children, e.g. (Anthony 2009; Tedmanson and Wadiwel 2010; Billings 2011); and generally for child sex abuse e.g. (Comaroff and Comaroff 1998). See for asylum seekers, e.g. (Perera 2002;

'moral panic' was first introduced by Jock Young (1971) in his book *The Drugtakers: the Social Meaning of Drug Use* but most fully developed a year later by Stanley Cohen, in *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*. Cohen (1972) defines a moral panic as an event that becomes defined as a threat to social values, especially an event involving a social taboo. Ben-Yehuda and Goode (1994) describe five essential elements of moral panics: social values determined by clear consensus; concern leading to hostility between the panicked and the deviants; a disproportionate reaction to the threat the deviants pose; and a high degree of volatility in the situation. Cohen (2002) further argues that moral panics can be both 'quiet' and 'noisy' in terms of their presence in public debate. David et al (2011: 220) note that most research on moral panics focuses on illegal drugs, violence, sexual behavior, and migration, calling "sex, drugs, and idleness" long-standing "powerful triggers" for moral outrage. Moral panics are understood as potentially successful at securing temporary order, but their volatility does not often lead to permanent political change (Hughes et al. 2011). However, their influence, particularly when taken up by the media, is considerable: for example, Pearce and Charman (2011) describe the influence of media representations of asylum seekers as 'illegitimate' as contributing greatly to the moral panic over asylum in the UK.

Another way of interpreting the Aboriginal child abuse and *Tampa* panics is through the idea of the shock doctrine. Naomi Klein's (2008) 'shock doctrine' describes how the construction of disasters as exceptional, rather than inevitable, outcomes of capitalist processes allows states a 'clean slate' upon which to enact political and economic

Mares 2003; Hyndman and Mountz 2008; McKay et al. 2011). See also other cases of migrants and moral panic in the US, e.g. (Maira 2007) or in the UK, e.g. (Van Houtum and Boedeltje 2009; Balch and Balabanova 2011; Banks 2012).

transformations. Crisis and disaster form pretense for the imposition of neoliberal policies in cases as diverse as the Chilean Pinochet coup in 1973, the Argentine invasion of the Falklands Islands in 1982, or the most recent US war in Iraq (Klein 2008). Klein's understanding of the premeditated, manufactured nature of many political 'emergencies' highlights the struggle for narrative around which many crisis situations emerge. If the public can be convinced of the urgency of the crisis and the legitimacy of the response, Hart (2008: 160) argues, states can centralize authority, resources, and public support for preferred outcomes while discrediting or silencing opposition (also see Mountz 2010). Both the *Tampa* and the NTER have been described through shock doctrine approach to politics, the mad waving of the red flag of panic to usher in a suite of premeditated policies. The "engineering of the Australian population's anxieties and fears around race and immigration" created a media and public panic at the time of the *Tampa* arrivals (Stratton 2009: 679). The "disoriented or distracted" Australian public was receptive to the group of policies introduced under the NTER, and Aboriginal Australians could not put up a fight: "in essence," wrote one commentator, "it's much easier to inflict conservative economics upon a population already overwhelmed by misfortune" (Sparrow 2007: 1; McMullen 2008: 14). Together, the idea of the overwhelmed government responding to a public 'moral panic' or, alternatively, the calculating officials sneaking in premediated policies as the public reeled in shock incorporate much of the academic, media, and activist analysis of these two events. In both cases, panic, whether 'manufactured' or 'genuine,' becomes the story, as I will detail from the two vantage points below.

Vantage points

M.V. Tampa and the moral panic over migration

The arrival of the *Tampa* provides a vantage point to explore one of the two areas of Australian policy-making analyzed throughout the dissertation: Australia's policies of mandatory detention for asylum seekers. In late August 2001, at a time when asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran were already spending extended periods of time detained in Woomera and Baxter detention centers and media reports over mass breakouts, hunger strikes, self-harm, and suicide attempts were becoming increasingly common, a ship carrying over four-hundred asylum seekers departed Indonesian shores (Ward 2003). After the ship began to sink, The M.V. Tampa, a Norwegian freighter, rescued the 433 passengers. The captain attempted to deliver them to Australian-owned Christmas Island, but the Australian government refused to let them ashore for several days (Hyndman and Mountz 2008). The Howard government "drew a line in the sea," as Perera (2002:1) writes, and refused entry to the asylum seekers, threatening the Norwegian captain with human-smuggling charges and ignoring his distress calls.

That same evening, Prime Minister Howard rushed the Border Protection Bill through parliament, legislation that radically changed the Australian landscape for asylum seekers. The government retroactively excised offshore territories, including Cocos Islands, Ashmore Reef, Christmas Island, and Cartier Island for the purposes of migration claims (Perera 2002). The new legislation authorized both the interception of asylum seekers arriving by boat by the Australian military and their diversion to Pacific island nations for processing as part of the 'Pacific Solution,' including Nauru and Manus Island, and Papua New Guinea (Anderson and Taylor 2005). Howard had attempted to convince Indonesia,

East Timor, and Fiji to take the asylum seekers aboard the *Tampa*, but all three countries refused. After New Zealand agreed to take 132 asylum seekers, the Howard government persuaded Papua New Guinea and Nauru to house the remaining people from the *Tampa*, establishing their future role as Australian migrant detention centers (Bem et al. 2007). The Border Protection Bill also established a dual system of asylum processing, where boat arrivals went through a truncated refugee claims process and had limited access to legal services or judicial review (Perera 2002).

Meanwhile, other events in late 2001 escalated the sense of urgency around immigration issues in Australia. Just two weeks after the *Tampa* anchored off Christmas Island, hijacked airplanes hit the World Trade Center, Pentagon, and a Pennsylvania farmfield in the US. Australian Government ministers cited an “undeniable link” between migrants and terrorists like those who carried out the attacks of September 11th (Klocker and Dunn 2003: 71), and Howard, attending meetings with President George W. Bush in Washington D.C. at the time of the attacks, quickly pledged Australia’s “steadfast commitment to work with the United States” (White 2003). At the same time, the Howard administration had begun implementing key portions of the Border Protection Bill that employed Australian Navy ships to interdict and turn back asylum seekers traveling by boat from Indonesia under Operation Relex (Manne and Corlett 2004). Four boats, SIEV 5, 7, 11, and 12, carrying over 500 asylum seekers, were eventually forced back into Indonesian waters (Mares 2011). Government and media seized upon accusations in early October 2001 that parents aboard one ship had thrown their children overboard as Australian ships approached, despite quick and undeniable claims that these accusations were false. Slattery (2003) and Saxton (2003) interpret the Howard government

accusations and the “Children Overboard” affair as part of a wider political agenda determined to exaggerate the threat of asylum seekers to gain support for the national security policies implemented in September. Finally, in November 2001, Howard’s party retained power in national elections, a development I will address in more detail below.

Framing the *Tampa* asylum seekers as a crisis, as did both the Howard administration and the Australian media, obscures the longer history of Australian debates over asylum seeker arrivals. The arrival of asylum seekers had been a matter of increasing concern for Australians between the late 1970s, when Vietnamese asylum seekers began arriving in Northern Australia by boat, and the late 1990s. Whereas in the late 1970s, 60 percent of Australians surveyed by opinion polls wanted some refugees arriving by boat to stay in Australia, by 1993, only 7 percent agreed. The percentage of people who wanted to send people straight back rose from 20-32 percent in the late 1970s to 44 percent by 1993 (Phillips and Spinks 2011a: 6). After the end of the war in Vietnam, the next groups of asylum seekers to arrive by boat were Cambodians in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This time, the Australian government opened Port Hedland “Reception and Processing Center” in 1991 to accommodate some of these asylum seekers, and by June 1992 there were 478 asylum seekers in detention throughout the country (most in Port Hedland, in West Australia, and Villawood, in New South Wales) (Phillips and Spinks 2011b: 3).

The Migration Amendment Act (1992) authorized mandatory detention for unauthorized boat arrivals, a temporary measure that became permanent and applicable to all unlawful non-citizens later that year as part of the Migration Reform Act 1992, which has since that year remained “unreviewable” by the Australian courts (McMaster 2002: 284). The Australian courts acknowledged that because detention was ‘administrative’

rather than punitive, they had no jurisdiction over asylum seekers in detention. Detainees were fully under the jurisdiction of the immigration department. Howard re-introduced Temporary Protection Visas for asylum seekers in 1999 (they had first been used for Chinese fleeing the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989), which required reassessing asylum seeker's status every three years (Manne and Corlett 2004). Some of the first documented protests by asylum seekers inside remote detention centers occurred in the mid-1990s, when Chinese asylum seekers had a rooftop protest at Port Hedland detention center. The Australian public began to take more notice of the conditions of detention in 1999, however, after the construction of Woomera detention center. Detainees began participating in riots, fires, mass escapes, suicide attempts, and a 300-person hunger strike in February 2001 (Whyte 2003).

The standoff over the asylum seekers on board the *Tampa* was not an isolated event, therefore, but many scholars describe it as a "turning point" in terms of asylum seekers' legal protections (Mares 2003; Gentry 2007), as a "defining event" (Kevin 2002), and as a "fiasco" (McMaster 2002). The debates in the Australian media and parliament during the negotiations for the Border Protection Bill are often seen as watershed moments in terms of the relationship among media, government rhetoric, and public opinion, creating a sense of urgency and panic that necessitated a swift, harsh government response.

For example, O'Doherty and Augustinos (2008) argue that the government and media together produced an atmosphere of crisis by using nationalist rhetoric focused on questions of border security and sovereignty (also see Philpott 2002). Pickering (2001: 172) gives examples from the 2001-2002 debates over asylum seekers in the *Sydney*

Morning Herald and the *Brisbane Courier Mail* that liken asylum seeker arrivals to threats of invasion:

We are soon to be 'awash', 'swamped', 'weathering the influx', of 'waves', 'latest waves', 'more waves', 'tides', 'floods', 'migratory flood', 'mass exodus' of 'aliens', 'queue jumpers', 'illegal immigrants', 'people smugglers', 'boat people', 'jumbo people' 'jetloads of illegals', 'illegal foreigners', 'bogus' and 'phoney' applicants, and 'hungry Asians' upon 'our shores', 'isolated coastlines', and 'deserted beaches', that make up the 'promised land', the 'land of hope', the 'lucky country', 'heaven', 'the good life', 'dream destination', and they continue to 'slip through', 'sneak in', 'gathering to our north', 'invade' with 'false papers' or 'no papers', 'exotic diseases', 'sicknesses' as part of 'gangs', 'criminal gangs', 'triads', 'organized crime', and 'Asian crime'. In response, 'we' should have 'closed doors', only sometimes having 'open doors', we should respond with the 'navy and armed services at the ready', 'we' should 'send messages', 'deter', 'lock up', and 'detain', 'we' should not be 'exploited', 'played for a fool', be seen as 'gullible' or be a 'forelock-tugging serf.'

Media and government rhetoric escalated the public sense of crisis, engaging in what Dreher (2003) calls a "signification spiral" where events become linked together in more significantly threatening ways. For example, the solicitor general told the Federal Court that, "Today, invasions don't have to be military... They can be of diseases or unwanted migrants," explicitly linking fears of Asian invasion with the arrival of asylum seekers (cited in Welch 2012: 329). Analysis of government and media depictions of asylum seekers during 2001 often cites the politics of fear and the 'new racism' that dominated the representations of asylum seekers as 'burdensome,' 'threatening' and 'illegal' 'boat people' or 'queue jumpers' (Leach 2003; Gale 2004; Klocker 2004; Every and Augoustinos 2007). Perera (2002a) describes how Prime Minister Howard's speeches following the *Tampa* used pronouns—'ours' or 'we'—to unite Australian opinion behind his policies, whereas asylum seekers were constructed as threats to the body politic (see similar analysis also in Bigo 2002; Hier and Greenberg 2002). Although such media categorizations were prevalent even before the standoff, parliamentarians escalated their use of generalizations and nationalist rhetoric to differentiate asylum seekers from other 'illegal' immigrants (Klocker and Dunn 2003; Slattery 2003; Every and Augoustinos 2007).

The combination of an international political and diplomatic crisis with the elevated media and government rhetoric caused what many interpreted as a full-blown ‘moral panic’ over the *Tampa* asylum seekers. Mares (2002) describes the atmosphere of panic which descended over the journalists covering the *Tampa* standoff and the migration debate that followed, and Oberoi (2009), Welch (2012) and McKay et al (2001) echo the analysis of many academics who define the *Tampa* incident as a ‘moral panic’ over immigration. Indeed, the characterization is so common that it has become a well-advertised prompt on PaperDue.com (2012), a website devoted to selling term papers to university students: “Describe how moral panic over asylum seekers reinforces cultural stereotypes of white Australians.” The vantage point of the *Tampa* arrival illustrates the perceived panic over asylum seeker arrivals and how Prime Minister Howard’s extreme policies were positioned as a nationalist response to the moral panic of the Australian public. Yet as this analysis will discuss, this story is framed by a narrative logic of containment, which hid policy precursors and shaped future debate over asylum seekers.

The Northern Territory Emergency Response and the moral panic over Aboriginal culture

The second vantage point on Australian policy-making in this chapter focuses on policies directed toward Aboriginal Australians, the second policy area analyzed in this dissertation. On 15 June 2007, the Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle, or ‘Little Children Are Sacred’ report, issued 97 recommendations to the Australian government regarding Aboriginal child sexual abuse in the Northern Territory, carefully noting as well that “abuse of children is not restricted to those of Aboriginal descent, or committed only by those of Aboriginal descent, nor to just the Northern Territory” (Wild and Anderson 2007: 5). Six

days later, Prime Minister Howard and Mal Brough, the Minister for Families, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) announced a sweeping legislative package committing \$580 million in the first year alone to address the ‘national emergency’ regarding the situation of Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory (Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs 2007). Brough described the government’s plan as a response to Aboriginal communities that had become “failed societ[ies] where basic standards of law and order and behavior have broken down” (Watson 2011: 912). He explained that “With clear evidence that the Northern Territory government was not able to protect these children adequately, the Howard government decided that it was now time to intervene and declare an emergency situation” (Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs 2007: 2).

On the 17th of August of 2007, the Australian Parliament passed the five-part Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) legislative package. The legislation included ‘law and order’ measures, financial controls over Aboriginal Australians, and control over Aboriginal lands. The laws created a new designation for Aboriginal communities called ‘prescribed areas’² where the possession and consumption of alcohol or pornography would be forbidden and the use of publicly funded computers would be monitored. Courts would be forbidden to consider customary laws and cultural practices when setting bail or issuing jail sentences, and the Australian Crime Commission and Australian Federal Police would be employed to implement the NTER. The NTER also created new financial regulatory structures for Aboriginal Australians, including

² Prescribed areas included more than two-thirds of all Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory, including Aboriginal land, town camp areas, and areas under freehold title (Australian government department of Families 2012).

disbanding the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) that provided waged employment in remote communities and creating government business managers to control service provision in Aboriginal communities. Finally, Aboriginal Australians' welfare payment would be quarantined to purchase mandated 'essentials' by means of a debit card at a licensed store. The legislation loosened the regulations governing access to Aboriginal land, replacing the permit system and establishing federally-controlled, five-year leases over Aboriginal-controlled land. In 2008, accompanying legislation by the Northern Territory government banned teaching Aboriginal children in Aboriginal language for the first four hours of the school day (Murphy 2012). To apply the measures of the NTER directly to the Aboriginal communities of the Northern Territory, the legislation also lifted the protections of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs 2007).

The NTER legislation was proposed within a context of rising concerns about violence, sex, and dysfunction in Aboriginal communities. The Australian media "rediscovered Aboriginal dysfunction" in 2005 and 2006, Sutton (2011: 34) writes, and print and television sources increasingly began publicizing Aboriginal welfare dependency, corruption, rates of disease, substance abuse, violence, criminal justice, financial viability of remote communities, and abuse of women and children. Television programs, for example, began documenting violence in Northern Territory Aboriginal communities and the alleged sexual slavery of Northern Territory Aboriginal children on popular programs such as ABC's *Lateline* (Pether 2010: 26; Sutton 2011: 34). The "sensational" media accounts culminated in May 2006 with ABC's *Lateline* featuring the reports of Nanette Rogers, the Chief Crown Prosecutor in Alice Springs, who described the sexual abuse of Aboriginal

babies and the rape of an Aboriginal child by her father, graphic descriptions never before heard during primetime Australian television (Pether 2010: 26; Watson 2011: 911). The following evening, Brough, Minister for FaCSIA, accused Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory of housing pedophile rings (Watson 2011: 911). The media explosion documenting the graphic sexual abuse and pedophile allegations prompted an investigation by the Northern Territory police into the Mutitjulu community in Central Australia, an inquiry by the Australian Crime Commission into the sexual abuse of Aboriginal children in Alice Springs, and finally, the establishment by Labor Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Clare Martin,³ in late 2006 of the board of inquiry who would later release the 'Little Children Are Sacred' report (Pether 2010: 27).

The portrayal of crisis in the Northern Territory obscured a long history of Australian government intervention in Aboriginal communities. Australians formally dispossessed Aboriginals from their lands beginning with mid-19th century reserves followed by policies that permanently removed Aboriginal children from their families (Prout and Howitt 2009). Aboriginal activism, an amended national constitution, and the passage of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* (1976) ushered in a new era of self-determination, replacing federal assimilation policies (1950-1970) (Kowal 2008; Robbins 2010; Watson 2011). Many Aboriginal people, taking advantage of newly accessible welfare funds, moved to traditional homelands, creating outstations and new communities. Their mobility and advocacy led to government-backed 'self-determination' initiatives, yet these policies provided few resources and little infrastructure (Kowal 2008). The federal government formally began a process of national reconciliation after the *Mabo*

³ The federal government's decision to 'intervene' in the Northern Territory was also undoubtedly shaped by the contentious relationship between Brough and Martin (Pether 2010: 26).

v Queensland (1992) High Court case cast out the *terra nullius* doctrine, legally acknowledging Aboriginal systems of law pre-dating colonization and further legitimizing native title claims, and the release of the 'Bringing Them Home' report (1997) documented hundreds of cases of Aboriginal children removed from their families as part of the Stolen Generation (Watson 2011).

Even as legal and political recognition of Aboriginal rights increased, so too did debates over self-determination policies. Were remote Aboriginal communities truly 'viable?' (Austin-Broos 2011: 82) Media and public figures began debating the relationship between Aboriginal culture and community distress—was it one of causation? (Austin-Broos 2011: 103). For example, Johns (2008: 68) writes that “having recognized for decades the impediment that Aboriginal culture poses to success, policy-makers nevertheless chose cultural observance over success.” As these debates ramped up, two influential pieces captured public attention. In 2000, Aboriginal lawyer Noel Pearson delivered a speech titled 'The Light on the Hill,' arguing that passive welfare dependency was at the heart of Cape York Peninsula's indigenous communities' struggles with alcohol, poverty, and social problems (Pearson 2000: 1). Instead, he demanded accountability among indigenous communities and an empowered indigenous leadership to wean communities off welfare (Pearson 2000). In 2001, anthropologist Peter Sutton described his 20-year relationship with the Aurukun community on Cape York Peninsula as the transformation of a “once livable and vibrant community” to a “disaster zone” (Sutton 2011: 1). He urged academics, especially, to acknowledge their role in perpetuating public rhetoric about empowerment even as communities imploded in front of them (Sutton 2011: 47). Pearson, Sutton, and critical editorials in *The Australian* framed the debate in

terms of failed self-determination policies and pathological cultural problems among Aboriginal communities.

Drawing on this long-standing debate about the genesis of Aboriginal community 'dysfunction,' government and media debate over the 'Little Children Are Sacred' report characterized Aboriginal people as victims of welfare dependency and "problem sexual behavior" (Pether 2010: 31). Rather than situating communities within "centuries of violent legalized subordination, including genocidal practices of varying kinds... or persisting racism," sensationalized media reports and government officials implied that Aboriginal *people*, particularly *men*, were the problem (Pether 2010: 31). Yolngu elders from Ramingining spoke out against these pervasive negative public depictions of Aboriginal people, stating that "Many people are feeling stigmatized by this blanket policy that brands all Aboriginal people as alcoholics, irresponsible parents and child molesters" (Nine News 2011). Despite the emphasis in the 'Little Children Are Sacred' report on the importance of contextualizing abuse in Aboriginal communities as primarily a problem of child neglect within communities struggling with extreme impoverishment, the NTER stripped the 'crisis' of these contextual underpinnings (Pether 2010: 30).

The rhetoric surrounding the unveiling of the NTER portrayed the situation of Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory as a crisis. The graphic media coverage combining allegations of violence, sexual abuse, and Aboriginal children created what analysts called a "full-blown moral panic" among the Australian public (Anthony 2009: 91; Watson 2011: 911). The Northern Territory's Aboriginal children faced an "emergency" that represented "major blight on the nation's social fabric;" in the words of Howard himself, the situation of Aboriginal children was "sickening" and "horrifying," and he

painted a grim picture where children were “living out a Hobbesian nightmare of violence, abuse and neglect” (Pether 2010: 26; Gordon 2008b: 35; Howard 2007: 69-70). The graphic descriptions both excited and repelled the Australian public, some scholars argued, the combination of sexual humiliation and violence akin to the graphic photos produced during the war in Iraq. Indeed, Aboriginal scholar Marcia Langton wrote,

The everyday suffering of Aboriginal children and women, the men who assault and abuse them, and the use of this suffering as a kind of visual and intellectual pornography in Australian media and public debates... is like Baudrillard's 'war porn' (quoted in Tedmanson and Wadiwel 2010: 19).

Prime Minister Howard framed the situation as an unprecedented response to a catastrophe, calling the situation of Aboriginal children “our Katrina” (Billings 2009: 36). The presentation of the NTER as an unfolding crisis demanded a new approach, Howard (2007: 71) claimed, focused on “restoring law and order.” His language emphasized actions such as “cleaning up” and “bringing some normalcy” to “stabilize” communities with “law, order, and protection” (Howard 2007: 72). The urgency and timing of Howard’s intervention assuaged some of the “widespread moral outrage” resulting from the coverage, Hart (2008: 158) argued.⁴ Yet the timing, as I will discuss below, was similar to that of the *Tampa*: both events occurred before major federal elections.

⁴ Its crisis packaging and swift passage through the legislature notwithstanding, the NTER did not go unchallenged. Some scholars attribute the swift and fierce challenges from the Northern Territory government, Aboriginal communities, and human rights NGOs to the connections between historical interventions into Aboriginal communities and the proposed NTER actions (Billings 2009). Medical practitioners and human rights advocates were especially quick to challenge the initial proposal of mandatory children’s health checks to find and treat abuse victims. Compulsory exams, these experts and advocates warned, would amount to “further abuse of Aboriginal children” (Australian Government Department of Families 2008). By the time the NTER medical taskforce did arrive in communities, despite having dropped the ‘compulsory’ aspect of the health exams, the presence of the Australian military and the rumors of compulsory exams caused up to a third of the population of remote communities to flee (Australian Government Department of Families 2008).

Containing the debate

Obscuring the accounting

Panicked policies shaped the limits of debate over the *Tampa* arrivals as well as the abuse of Aboriginal children. Although in both cases the authenticity of the urgency was quickly questioned by the Australian public and scholars who later wrote about the issues, panic—manufactured or not—nevertheless framed the story. In both cases, panic molded debates into particular logics of containment, obscuring important political trajectories and histories and simultaneously bringing others to light. As Orr (2006: 6) writes about panicked crowds, the psychological chaos of the flight of the crowd “render[s] more obscure [the disaster’s] financial and legal accounting.” Rendering into obscurity is precisely one means by which panic constructs a logic of containment. In both Australian cases, what became increasingly lost in the panicked shuffle are the policy precursors. Previous policies set the stage for the undeniably premeditated panicked government responses, as well as the longer-term political goals these events realized.

In the wake of the undetected arrival of two asylum seeker boats in 1999, the government established task forces to deter boat arrivals. The task force pursued three main objectives: (1) preventing irregular migration, including targeted aid funding in Afghanistan and Pakistan and information exchange with source countries; (2) interrupting the transit of asylum seekers by posting staff in overseas airports, capacity building with transit countries, strengthening intelligence gathering, and regional cooperation, most intensely with Indonesia; and (3) developing remote detention centers and strengthening legislation limiting the opportunities for asylum seekers to achieve refugee status in

Australia (Howard 2003: 36). During the *Tampa* standoff, Australian Federal Police and the Indonesian National Police joined to implement several of these strategies (Welch 2012).

In 2000, the Australian government passed the *Defense Legislation Amendment (Aid to Civilian Authorities) Bill*. Passed—but not used—under the guise of the approaching Sydney Olympics in 2000, the law authorized the federal government to call out the military on domestic soil for any reason under the vaguely defined umbrella of “domestic violence” (Head 2005). In the case of the *Tampa*, the bill authorized the Australian special forces to board the ship, which, the government argued prohibited asylum seekers from contacting lawyers or applying for protection visas.⁵ Despite a Federal Court ruling for the asylum seekers, the government removed them to Nauru, whereupon the High Court refused to consider the Federal Court appeal, effectively sanctioning the Australian government’s use of the military to interdict asylum seekers (Head 2005).

Harsher policies toward asylum seekers continued to be developed in 2001. In February, Defense Minister Peter Reith issued new regulations controlling public statements and access to public documents (Parliamentary Press Gallery Committee 2002; Ward 2002). These regulations built on existing restrictions on media coverage of asylum seekers in detention: for example, journalists were prohibited within 700 meters of the Woomera detention center (Welch 2012). During the *Tampa* standoff previous media limits had been increased to ban not only aircraft carrying photographers but also any photographs that could “humanize” or “personalize” asylum seekers on board (Burnside 2002; Odgers 2002; Parliamentary Press Gallery Committee 2002). Australian intelligence warned the government of asylum seekers departing from Indonesia, and military sources

⁵ In the case *Victorian Civil Liberties Council Incorporated v Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs*.

later confirmed that Australian special forces had been training for “such a contingency” as the *Tampa* standoff beforehand (cited in Ward 2002: 23).

The ‘emergency’ framework similarly obscured policies preparing the federal government for the NTER. Positioned as an urgent response too fast-paced to be subject to Parliamentary review (Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs 2007), the policy package was instead a combination of previously tested ideas waiting for implementation. On Cape York Peninsular, severe alcohol restrictions had been in place since 2003, and plans for the government to acquire Alice Springs town camps to create “normalized” neighborhoods occurred in early 2007 (Tilmouth 2007; Sutton 2011). Mal Borugh, the Indigenous Affairs Minister, proposed changes to welfare payments that would quarantine benefits, much like the NTER later legislated, first in early 2006.

Other important precursors had to do with indigenous governance. The depoliticization of indigenous governance structures that resulted in the installation of government business managers in Aboriginal communities as well as the destruction of the CDEP program began with the Howard government’s de-funding and eventually abolishing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) in 2004. Indeed, Altman (2007: 309) claims that the impossibility of uniting the Howard government’s push for ‘mainstreaming’ Aboriginal policy with ATSIC’s more expansive understanding of reconciliation meant that the organization was “destined to fail.”

Finally, Howard administration policies extended an opening throughout the Northern Territory toward the mining industry. The construction between 2001 and 2004 of the Adelaide-Darwin railroad line (and the involvement of Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg, Brown & Root) opened Darwin and the greater Northern Territory region to

increased speculation regarding bauxite, uranium, and gold mines as well as liquid natural gas production (Symon 2004). NTER opponents later suggested that the weakened permit system and government-held land leases under the NTER would allow for increased mining on Aboriginal lands (Watson 2009).

An aspect of political accounting that received somewhat greater public attention when the panicked policies were implemented was the timing of both the *Tampa* standoff and the NTER in relation to federal elections. The *Tampa* incident played out in the context of an approaching federal election yet was also part of longer-term political agendas. Challenging poll numbers and low public opinion seemed likely to derail Howard's attempt to serve a third term as Prime Minister; as former Coalition Leader Greg Barns said at the time, "The real issue here is that Mr. Howard has been behind in the polls" (Kelly 2001). Public opinion of Howard rose sharply as a result of his handling of the *Tampa* standoff, and the Liberal Party coalition won the election. The Australian Labor Party National Secretary, Geoff Walsh, noted that "the *Tampa* did it... Talk to political veterans who say they have never seen an issue like *Tampa*... *Tampa* remade John Howard's image" (quoted in Schultz 2005).

Howard's administration introduced the NTER legislation three months before a national election—an election which, unlike the 2001 *Tampa*-driven federal election, the Liberal party lost. Yet the context of the NTER minimized by the media and government rhetoric of 'emergency response' was also deeply reflective of longer-term Howard administration priorities. Howard had never exhibited great concern for the rights of indigenous Australians; indeed, after he was elected, he immediately withdrew Australian support of the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples (Turner and Watson

2007). His long-standing opposition to what he called the “rights agenda” surfaced in such moments as attempts to weaken indigenous land rights throughout his administration, lack of federal support for reconciliation projects, abolition of the ATSIC, refusal to issue a national apology for the Stolen Generation, and snubbing invitations to attend the 40th anniversary of the Gurindji walk-off (an event which is now seen as the genesis of the Aboriginal land rights movement) (Turner and Watson 2007: 208-210; Rowse 2007: 308; Turner and Watson 2007; Lawrence 2008). These long-time positions of the Howard administration were also reflected in the Howard administration’s decisions *not* to direct funding and political attention toward indigenous communities in the years before the NTER, despite government awareness of poverty, disadvantage, and community violence (Watson 2009).

The urgency of both events obscured how closely policy changes dovetailed with longer-term political goals of the Howard administration. Before becoming Prime Minister, Howard had been instrumental in shifting the Liberal Party’s platform away from multicultural programs, and upon taking office he rapidly cut the budgets of both multicultural agencies and Aboriginal programs (Papastergiadis 2004).⁶ For example, after his election in 1996, Howard restricted access and cut \$11 million in funding to Adult Migrant English Service programs (Wise 2007). Wise (2007: 2) also notes a transformation in official language about multiculturalism after Howard took office, recalling that, “By 1997 he had virtually ceased to use the ‘m’ word at all, preferring references to ‘our culturally diverse society.’” Instead, Howard preferred to focus on ‘Australian common

⁶ Howard’s hostility to multiculturalism also undoubtedly was connected to the popularity of Pauline Hanson, and the right-wing xenophobia of the One Nation party she represented, which peaked in electoral popularity in the late 1990s in Australia (Every and Augoustinos 2007).

values' threatened by immigration, multicultural programs, and the increasing authority of Aboriginal land claims (Papastergiadis 2004). Howard's hostility to multiculturalism throughout his tenure as prime minister also fits within longer traditions of fear-based Australian policies concerned with the imagined threats of racial difference and the possibilities of Asian invasion (McMaster 2002; Philpott 2002; Papastergiadis 2004; Wazana 2004).

Legitimizing the exceptional narrative

In the case of both the *Tampa* and the NTER, Howard's panicked framework diverted attention from the political and electoral calculus behind the scenes. Emergencies become exceptional, deviations from the 'normal' state that governs the rest of the time.⁷ Panic throws a curtain over the furious construction of that normality, obscuring the vast accounting that goes on. Simultaneously, however, panic also highlights other ideas, narratives, and plans. When certain possibilities for thinking about a situation involving asylum seekers or Aboriginal communities in crisis become curtailed, others become legitimated. The logic of containment operating within the public debate over these two issues shaped the debate in a particular shape, lending credence to ideas that would otherwise be more questionable.

Depicting events as a crisis—staged or otherwise—had lasting effects on narratives used to describe them. Both the case of the *Tampa* and the NTER became positioned through media coverage, government rhetoric, and later academic reflections as exceptional circumstances. Yet these characterizations help to legitimate the extreme

⁷ While this analysis does not employ 'exceptional' to represent precisely Agamben's 'state of exception,' which he defines—very coarsely summarized, as the space where the force of law becomes separated from the law itself—the idea of politics increasingly embracing the exceptional character of emergencies as the norm is, of course, directly attributable to Agamben's insights (Agamben 2005).

'exceptional' actions taken in response. At the time, media framed the standoff over the *Tampa* as a 'crisis;' later, scholars described it as a 'moral panic' (Ward 2002). Journalists have since critiqued media coverage that framed *Tampa* as an emergency: Mares (2002: 71) writes that "in fact it was no crisis at all." Panicked interpretations miss the political exigency and prefabricated aspects of the situation, (Ward 2002: 21) argues, instead of recognizing the short- and long-term political agendas behind what he calls a "premeditated gambit." Yet in both cases, the legitimacy of the crisis *becomes* the story, dominating the analysis: were people panicked, or not? Were the policies improvised, or not? Framing the *Tampa* through the lens of 'panic' also obscures the coordinated policies that took advantage of Australians' increasingly negative perceptions of asylum seekers and authorized the ongoing detention of boat arrivals, and pursued interdiction and other regional strategies for deterring boats. Indeed, McMaster (2002: 288) understands *Tampa* to be the "culmination of a policy approach to asylum seekers which had become increasingly securitized and repressive" rather than the initiation of one. Furthermore, it minimizes the importance of the *permanent* legal shift authorizing domestic use of Australian Defense Force and the clear indications of government preparedness for a standoff over asylum seekers in terms of media restrictions and training for special forces (Head 2005). Rather than a panicked improvisation, Manne (2004: 43) instead understands the *Tampa* as a "near inevitability."

Similarly, militarized terminology used to describe the implementation of the NTER cemented its portrayal as an extraordinary crisis—demanding exceptional government response. Military terminology, such as Howard's description of the NTER as a project promoting "stabilization, normalization, and exit," reinforced the image of "an invasion of

hostile territory to subdue the natives” (Lawrence 2008: 2). The use of the North West Mobile Force (NORFORCE), members of the Australian armed forces, to provide logistical support for the health exams and community surveys gave the appearance of a war against Aboriginal communities (Billings 2009: 24). Indeed, an Australian government review critiquing the implementation of the health checks noted that the images of military personnel and vehicles descending upon Aboriginal communities proved to be a “veritable road show” (Australian Government Department of Families 2008: 2). These images gave credence to opponents of the NTER, who accused the legislation of “once again boil[ing] down to the legitimizing of the right to invasion of Aboriginal lands and lives” (Watson 2009: 47).

Another danger in interpreting the *Tampa* or NTER as a panic-driven event is that panics are often interpreted as ‘irrational’ (Young 2011). Instead of a culmination of long-term changes in asylum seeker policies, military ‘call-out’ policies, rules for media coverage, and political strategies, combined with the possibility of gaining short-term political points, for example, the *Tampa* standoff is understood as a ‘mistake.’ The event becomes an individualized situation—a difference, David et al (2011) note, from moral panics of the past—where the ‘risk’ posed by asylum seekers is connected with Australian security (Bigo 2002; McKay et al. 2011). For example, framing the NTER as an ‘emergency response’ legitimized the position that Aboriginal self-determination policies, and more broadly the *communities* in which they were implemented, had self-destructed. Panicked framing permits aspects of the NTER to fail as individual policy ‘mistakes’ even as narratives of *individual* failure and pathologized deviance shape public understanding of Aboriginal issues. These depictions mask the ongoing *communal* effects of colonization on Aboriginal

people and the more recent trauma inflicted on Aboriginal communities by assimilation and Stolen Generation policies (Billings 2009: 5).

Urgent policy responses are justified by their emergence in 'exceptional' situations, their excess mediated by their 'panic-driven' invention and application. Implicitly, however, these exceptional panic policies normalize the securitized state apparatus and long-term political changes (Traister 2012). The 'noisier' the panic, the quieter the long-term changes that brought it about (Welch 2012). Panicked policies become productive: they clothe rational political maneuvers in masks of irrationality (Young 2011). They create "organizational structures" to perpetuate their legitimizing assumptions, such as a continued 'culture of disbelief' that assumes the illegitimacy of the migrant (Lancaster 2011: 32; Oberoi 2009).

Reading the NTER through a panicked lens creates a taken-for-granted 'organizational structure' to get Aboriginal communities back on track: namely, through 'normalization.' An exceptional circumstance only makes sense in relation to something 'normal.' 'Normal' almost reflexively becomes the redemption narrative for troubled Aboriginal communities in response to their crisis. Manderson (2008: 261) stresses the ubiquity of 'normalization' as a solution for Aboriginal problems throughout the NTER legislation:

The government proposed to use its special powers to ensure 'normalised tenancy requirements' in Aboriginal townships; town camps would be treated as 'normal suburbs'; amendments to the permit system aimed to 'normalise access arrangements for Aboriginal land'; the welfare reforms enforced 'normal community standards' until such time as Aboriginal communities were 'stabilised and normalised'; the government professed itself committed to longer term action 'required to normalise arrangements in these communities'.

Given that measures in the NTER neither provided 'normal' services to Aboriginal Australians nor granted Aboriginal communities 'normal' land rights or community

governance structures (and that the NTER legislation required temporary removal of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*), it became clear that ‘normal’ did not mean *the same as* other Australians but rather a desire from the Australian government that Aboriginal communities become assimilated (Manderson 2008: 261). ‘Normalization’ narratives, camouflaged in emergency rhetoric, were in fact normative statements: they implied that Aboriginal people, culture, and communities “ought to be changed until they become normal” (Manderson 2008: 262). Buried within the normative assumptions about normalization and assimilation were further ideas promoting individualized neoliberal capitalist methods for addressing the struggles of Aboriginal communities, underlying assumptions I explore more fully in Chapter 4. The entire ‘viability’ debate over the future of remote communities and the media explosion around Aboriginal welfare dependency was structured around neoliberal distaste for collective community governance and land management, and the NTER legislation relied heavily on policing of individuals (e.g. through welfare quarantining) and an emphasis on better parenting and community governance through individual responsibility to address community problems (McCallum 2007: 13; Billings 2009).

Containment of public debate through panicked policies shapes the narratives about what is considered exceptional and normal and legitimizes particular perspectives about the proper way to transform crisis into ‘normalcy.’ By obscuring the accounting behind the scenes and highlighting particular narratives for crisis management, panic creates a logic of containment enclosing public debate about asylum seeker and Aboriginal policy.

Who panics?

Panic creates logics of containment by curtailing public debate about the context and background of 'emergencies' while legitimizing new narratives about their causes and resolutions. Traister (2012) writes that by framing events of 9/11 as exceptional, the US attempted to normalize a particular version of the *nation*: the 'emergency' posed as an exception to the 'normal' workings of the nation-state. Similarly, in Australia the 'rational irrationality' of panicked policies for both the *Tampa* standoff and the NTER legislation was partially to shift the frame of the debate over asylum seekers and Aboriginal communities (Young 2011). The extreme policies undertaken at the time of the 'emergencies' made the continued, permanent shift toward more militarized containment policies for both Aboriginal and asylum seeker populations *appear* more moderate by comparison. The 'exceptional' methods of containment that continued past the moments of emergencies, such as the mandatory detention of asylum seekers and the expansion of welfare quarantine policies to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians outside the Northern Territory, become seen as 'normal' through the containment of debate over these issues. It is as if a 'new reality' is birthed through the panicked construction of logics of containment, a new starting point for all policy and debate that follows, echoing Baudrillard's (1992: 158-159) 'panic-stricken production of the real and of the referential:'

There is a plethora of myths of origin... Escalation of the true, of lived experience, resurrection of the figurative where the object and substance have disappeared. Panic-stricken production of the real and of the referential, parallel to and greater than the panic of material production: this is how simulation appears in the phase that concerns us - a strategy of the real, of the neoreal and the hyperreal that everywhere is a strategy of deterrence.

The logics of containment that produce 'new normal' have important repercussions for current political debates in Australia. As the numbers of boat arrivals climbed in 2011-2012, debate over reinstating the policies of the Howard government toward asylum

seekers gained traction. The Liberal party began campaigning once again to ‘Stop the Boats,’ using the arrival of asylum seekers as a political tool to capitalize on what many perceived to be the Gillard government’s inability to manage asylum seeker arrivals, a tool underscored by the belief that Tampa and its aftermath really did stop the boats (Marr 2011). In August 2012, the Labor government took the Liberal party’s position and reinstated the Pacific Solution, reopening offshore processing facilities on Nauru and Manus Islands (Human Rights Watch 2012).

Indeed, Howard’s management of the Tampa and the 2001 Federal election are now interpreted as a “political masterstroke” (Mares 2011: 1). Official statistics show that the number of asylum seekers dropped after the implementation of the Pacific Solution (Marr 2011), although these statistics do not account for the number of asylum seekers who were interdicted at sea under Operation Relex (four boats with at least 600 people in 2001 and another four boats in 2002) or those whose boats sank during the journey (including the 353 drowned passengers of the SIEV X in 2001 and at least three boats in 2002) (Marr 2011; Rintoul 2011a). Marr (quoted in Jones 2011b) commented that: “in the end Australia did, in fact, force back 670 asylum seekers and I believe that that was absolutely crucial to the stopping of the boats.” A statistical analysis on asylum seeker arrivals by boat during the Pacific Solution indicates that global asylum trends—such as the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001—had a far greater influence over Australian asylum seeker arrivals than Howard’s policies (Pollytics 2009). Despite these analyses, current debates over asylum seekers continue to tout the efficacy of Howard’s policies, interpreting the media and government panic over the event as securing a temporary, *successful*, form of order over perceived asylum seeker chaos (Hughes et al. 2011).

In the case of the NTER, the heavy-handed government performance in Northern Territory communities drew criticism from people across the political spectrum, and efforts to frame Aboriginal communities as ‘abnormal’ continue to face intense debate (Hart 2008). Most data from NTER programs and initiatives lacked empirical evidence of success before implementation and continue to show no measureable benefits to individuals and communities (Yu et al. 2008; Cox 2012). And yet—despite these indications that the NTER *has* failed in its stated outcomes and only had mixed success in reframing the debate over indigenous communities, it has *also* undoubtedly succeeded in transforming the landscape of Australian Aboriginal policy.

Many of the provisions of the NTER significantly extend the federal government presence in Aboriginal communities, experienced daily through negotiations over welfare payments and the securitized justifications for indigenous deviance (Watson 2011). Anthony (2009), for example, reports that the metaphors of crime that legitimated the NTER have been interpreted pervasively, increasing the rates of indigenous criminalization for minor driving offenses. Protests and advocacy did little to stop the extension of welfare quarantining policies to Aboriginal families and low-income individuals throughout Australia in 2011 nor the continuation of NTER policies in the Stronger Futures legislative package passed in 2012. Indeed, despite empirical evidence dismissing their effectiveness, the Australian government is establishing programs connecting Aboriginal children’s school attendance to their parents’ welfare payments, even as schools are no longer allowed to teach in children’s first languages (Cox 2012).

The ‘emergency’ narratives continue to legitimize the perception that Aboriginal culture *is* itself an emergency. Pathologizing Aboriginal culture stigmatizes *all* Aboriginal

Australians and, as indigenous leader Patrick Dodson notes, subjects them to the “overwhelming and relentless judgment” by other Australians that they should live by Western standards (quoted in Rintoul 2012: 1). The NTER’s success has been to extend the pathologized portrayal of Aboriginal Australians, legitimizing increased state presence in virtually all aspects of Aboriginal life, even as none of the risk factors cited in the ‘Little Children Are Sacred’ report for child abuse and neglect have been addressed (Murphy and Robson 2012).

The potency of the panicked arguments of the *Tampa* and NTER ‘emergency’ events for current policy demonstrates how fear, panic, and urgency become carefully managed commodities for policy-making in Australia. Fear may be unintentionally used to rationalize policies (see Hyndman 2007), but it may also be an intentionally manufactured element of policy success (see Pain and Smith 2008; Hiemstra 2011). Policymakers may intend to manage and *create* fear, attempting to buffer public fears between excessive uncontrollable panic and apathy (Orr 2006). Brookbanks (2002) describes an increasingly popular mental-health reform effort driven by moral panic over deviant behaviors that threaten public safety called anticipatory containment, where individuals believed to have the capacity to disturb others are detained before they can do so. These mental-health strategies eerily echo panicked policies in Australia, attempting to manufacture a sense of urgency around a particular population to permanently shift political debate.

As public debate becomes enmeshed in a logic of containment and future policies build upon the new normal, underlying issues about *why* Australians panic over asylum seekers and Aboriginal child sex abuse allegations become buried. Class, race, and xenophobia linger on the margins of public discussion, as the newly normal nation

“registers the seductions of rendering invisible, say, a national history of racialized colonial violence that undermines the legitimacy of the nation itself” (Pether 2010: 33). For example, the NTER straightforwardly removed the application of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, while at the same time, Howard (2007: 75-76) announced that the policy “has got nothing to do with race” and instead represented the intentions of a “truly color-blind society.” Yet race had everything to do with how Aboriginal adults were constructed as the ‘problem’ (Rowse 2007: 54). Rhetoric contrasted the failure of Aboriginal parents with the plight of the children: the NTER “was hell bent on” “answer[ing] the call” to “protect” and “save” Aboriginal children (Pounder 2008: 3). Howard later located his motivation for introducing the NTER in his response to commentator Noel Pearson, who “conjured up the image of the tiny child cowering in the corner” (Pounder 2008: 3; Hart 2008: 168). Just as in the early-20th century, stereotypes about Aboriginal race and sexuality framed debates over Aboriginal governance (Billings 2009). Disciplining the excessive, out-of-control sexuality of Aboriginal people once again served as a justification for political subjugation and social control (Tedmanson and Wadiwel 2010: 18; Pether 2010: 25-26). The failure of Aboriginal adults—parents, community leaders, and especially men—would be replaced by “success in the name of the child” (Altman 2007: 318).

Interpreting the *Tampa* standoff and the NTER as policies born through panic recenters the white Australian public at the heart of Australian national identity. *Who* panics within these panicked policies? White Australians do. It is the “racialized panic” of the white Australian public that generates debate over asylum seeker and Aboriginal policies (Murdolo 2002: 126) and the historically consistent preoccupation with whiteness that has shaped the legacies of both Australian border enforcement and policies directed at

Aboriginal people (Stratton 2004; Perera 2009b; Casey 2012). Hage's (2003) examination of 'paranoid nationalism' identifies the figure of the 'white warrior,' the marginalized white Australian whose anxiety focuses on Aboriginal people or migrants, the always-racialized others who threaten the Australian way of life (also see Hage 1998; Bulbeck 2004; Kelada 2008). The 'paranoid nationalists' Hage (2003) identifies are the people who panic in the face of events like the *Tampa* arrival and the NTER; their fears become the topic of discussion, their panicked responses to questions of national identity, race, migration, and Aboriginality become the focus of media and future public debate. In contrast, Aboriginal community members and asylum seekers become silenced. Just as Orr (2004) writes about the 9/11 violence, individualized trauma and psychology become the only ways to explore Aboriginal and asylum seeker panic; their stories lose the context of history and politics used to rationalize white public anxieties.

Without the larger context behind asylum seekers' decisions to flee, one is left with dehumanizing images of asylum seekers on boats. Without the framework of colonization and repeated separation of children and parents, one encounters only the puzzlingly sudden rise in homeless Aboriginal families in Darwin who fled their remote communities in terror, children in hand, after the Australian military arrived in 2007 (Coddington, fieldnotes, February 15, 2012). Individualized suffering becomes the only way to frame these stories, dominated always by the panic of the politicians in Canberra. Panic thus works to further shape the debate: caught within a logic of containment authorizing the limits of public debate over asylum seekers and Aboriginal communities, asylum seekers and Aboriginal people are further contained, their panicked bodies forced to serve as the only explanation for their suffering. Their containment represents a psychological form of

the 'ethnic caging' Hage (1998: 105) describes. As Mr. Dhulumburrk, Yolngu man from Ramingining (Rintoul 2011b) said, "We want to engage with government, we want to take control of our lives and we want to build our future, but these policies leave us penned like animals with nowhere to go."

Chapter 3. Enclosure, Race, and Borders

The prison industrial complex (PIC) functions to control those on the margins of Australian 'citizenship': Indigenous people, the poor, the young, the non-heteronormative, people of colour, the unruly and the 'dangerous'. Throughout Australia's colonized history, racialized communities have been disproportionately targeted for incarceration: Indigenous, Irish and Chinese people early in Australian colonialism, and since then Lebanese, Vietnamese, Africans and others. All of these communities – especially Indigenous communities – continue to be pushed to the margins of Australian 'citizenship' and especially targeted by the PIC to ensure that they 'play by the rules'. The PIC does not solve issues of poverty and violence; it contains the fallout from structural inequalities primarily to make sure that the privileges of the powerful are protected.

—**Sydney's Cross Border Collective, crossbordersydney.org**

Activists involved with Sydney's Cross Border Collective identify the prison industrial complex as an enforcement tool of a particular form of racialized Australian national identity. Prisons, they argue, operate as tools of border enforcement, disproportionately targeting racial minorities and populations perceived as threatening. As their critique suggests, both prisons and borders apply similar logics of containment toward populations on the margins of citizenship and national belonging: racialized immigrant groups, Aboriginal people, and others. This chapter expands on the connection that the Cross Border Collective identifies in their work, arguing that logics of enclosure are fundamentally bordering practices. Logics of enclosure produce forms of incarceration that operate through racialized violence. Contemporary forms of enclosure affecting Aboriginal residents of the Northern Territory and asylum seekers build on histories of Aboriginal incarceration in Australia.

I make this argument using both archival and qualitative research. I use sources from government, media, memoirs, personal communications within government archives, and secondary sources to describe the histories of Aboriginal imprisonment. I employ fieldnotes from participant observation, information from interviews, and secondary

sources to describe the contemporary forms of enclosure among Aboriginal Australians and asylum seekers in the Northern Territory.

This chapter anchors the public debates analyzed in the previous chapter within the context of the Northern Territory, exploring how logics of containment or enclosure operate on the ground. Logics of containment become realized through racialized bordering practices and forms of incarceration, and these forms of enclosure have racialized, violent, and viscerally embodied effects on both Aboriginal people and asylum seekers in the Northern Territory.

I begin by drawing connections between forms of incarceration such as prisons and immigration detention centers and practices of bordering. Next, I outline historical forms of incarceration and enclosure targeting Aboriginal Australians. I then focus on two contemporary, interconnected areas of enclosure directed at Aboriginal Australians: imprisonment and the racialized violence of the Northern Territory Emergency Response legislation. Finally, I connect the historical and contemporary forms of Aboriginal incarceration with contemporary policies of detention for asylum seekers. I conclude by exploring the role of imprisonment and enclosure as bordering practices and their relationship to Australian national security.

“The prison itself is a border:”⁸ Enclosure, racialized violence, and borders

Contemporary forms of incarceration affect both Aboriginal Australian and asylum seeker populations within Australia, drawing on legacies of past practices of Aboriginal enclosure and racialized violence as well as genealogies of migrant imprisonment. Scholars

⁸ Davis and Dent quoted in Loyd et al. 2009: 85

have drawn connections between policies resulting in Aboriginal and migrant enclosure in Australia (Perera 2002; Rajaram 2003; Perera 2006), linking especially the unreconciled nature of colonial dispossession with struggles over asylum seeker arrivals (Pugliese 2002; Gorman 2007; Anderson and Perrin 2008; Tedmanson 2008). For example, Schlunke (2002: 5) posits that refugees raise white anxieties about their unsettled colonial history and relationship to indigenous Australia. Enclosure and racialized violence target populations who do not sit easily within national imaginaries of Australian belonging. As Rajaram (2003: 299) writes about the present-day detention of refugees in Australia, “ ‘not Australia’ [becomes] peopled by those who have tried to enter ‘real’ Australia, in order to remind us of the ‘true’ Australian space.” Excluding troubling populations, such as asylum seekers or Aboriginal Australians, from the national imaginary is thus also a method of reinforcing who ‘truly’ belongs.

Both detention of asylum seekers and disproportionate imprisonment of Aboriginal people are bordering practices. Both are predicated on ideologies of exclusion, where the prison becomes a method of dividing ‘us’ from ‘them.’ Such ideologies simultaneously construct a cohesive national imaginary while producing stereotypes of difference (Sibley 1995; Cresswell 1996). Exclusion is an important underlying logic for both detention and disproportionate imprisonment, but it is not a simple, stable, or complete form of exclusion where the excluded are permanently on the outside. Prisons or immigration detention centers represent a very porous and liminal zone: prisoners and migrants are excluded—temporarily—from the nation-state yet are subject to it. They may at some point become included, if, it is suggested, they regulate their bodies and mobility in appropriate ways.

Exclusion in sites of enclosure enacts continuous performances of national identification and dis-identification (Nevins 2002; Nah 2007; Hardwick and Mansfield 2009).

These performances are spatialized; differentiation between 'us' and 'them' is repeatedly reenacted at sites such as barbed wire fences, checkpoints, or guard stations. As Perera (2007: 1) writes, "Political struggles are not fought on the surface of geography but through its very fabric/ation." Spatial bordering strategies literally keep outsiders at a distance (Bigo 2007: 23). In fact, *place* becomes an important part of both prison and detention strategies: each is based on the rationale that the state may legitimately mark and differentiate people based on whether they appear "out of place" (Hyndman and Mountz 2008; McLoughlin and Warin 2008b; Loyd et al. 2009; McDowell and Wonders 2009; Alberti 2010). In the case of migrant detention, the state's ability to know and categorize populations and individuals becomes normalized (Soldatic and Fiske 2009) and enforced through circular logic: people 'out of place' are identified as such and confined in some manner, yet their incarceration is justified precisely because their identities are in question (e.g., Hall 2010).

Imprisonment and detention are both racialized, gendered, classed, nationalist, colonialist, and white supremacist strategies (Peck 2003; Smith 2005; Sudbury 2005) that connect to the global political economy of what Peck (2003: 226) calls "carceralization." Each becomes "not a building 'over there' but a set of relationships that undermine, rather than stabilize everyday lives everywhere" (Gilmore 2007: 242). Race becomes a key element of these relationships. For example, in the case of migrant detention, governing practices of enclosure distinguish bodies that belong within a "pure" national self from pathologized, racialized refugees who might contaminate the Australian national body

(Bashford 1998; Amoore 2006). Australian descriptions of asylum seekers as “queue jumpers” dehumanize and criminalize refugees, disconnecting their bodies and fates from other Australians (Perera 2002). Asylum seekers are imagined as “not really in Australia. They are in the empty ungoverned space of their bodies” (novelist Bernard Cohen cited in Perera 2002). Attaching pathologized or racialized understandings of the national self to particular bodies operates as a bordering practice toward asylum seekers as well as toward Aboriginal Australians (Anderson and Taylor 2005; Anderson and Perrin 2008). Indeed, racialized violence also becomes a type of internal border control (Perera 2007a). For example, the death of an Aboriginal teenager as he was pursued by police prompted riots in Redfern, Sydney, in 2004. Crowds reacted to the unstated assumption that the Aboriginal teenager did not belong where police encountered him, that only non-Aboriginal Australians had the right to access *all* Australian space (Shaw 2006).

Despite their shared focus on racialized, spatialized tactics of exclusion, imprisonment and detention are not identical. Migrant detention represents an expansion of state space into ambiguous legal terrain (Scott 1998: 187). Legally, spaces of detention become sites where the state alone determines the use of the law or lack thereof. Prisons, on the other hand, are usually fully placeable within the legal system. For Agamben (2005: 4), states of exception such as the detention facility derive from “not a special kind of law (like the law of war)” but rather “a suspension of the juridical order itself, [defining] law’s threshold or limit concept.” Yet some geographers argue that states of exception are produced *through* the law as well as its withdrawal (Gregory 2006; Gregory 2007; Reid-Henry 2007). Gregory (2006: 420) writes about Guantanamo Bay that “law becomes the site of political struggle not only in its suspension *but also in its formulation, interpretation*

and application.” While Guantanamo Bay is not (at this moment) a migrant detention facility, it operates on a similarly ambiguous legal terrain. Reid-Henry (2007: 226) cautions against reading the *decision* to work within or outside the law as a “state of exception that can be counterposed to a rule-governed world of ‘normal’ politics and power.” Instead, the legal ambiguity of spaces of detention derives from the *redistribution* of the power to decide which—if any—laws are applicable from the national or international legal *system* to state actors. Detention may function like a prison or like a refugee camp. It may adhere to international laws; it may override local ones. National governments (sometimes foreign governments) become the only authority capable of determining the legal framework for spaces of detention, extending ‘state space’ and state legitimacy over more legal and, importantly, also physical terrain.

Yet even as detention centers and prisons differ in the extent of their ambiguous role in—or outside—the legal system, they share a common uncertain end. As bordering practices, both detention centers and prisons are powerful but not static. In each case, the prisoner suffers from ambiguity: inside the nation, but outside its care; outside the nation, yet under its control. As Kristeva writes, this ambiguity is corrosive. “We may call it a border; abjection is above all ambiguity. Because, while releasing a hold, it does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it—on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger” (quoted in Sibley 1995). Part of the ‘perpetual danger’ of the border is its instability. Borders construct spatial fictions based on the desire to create certainty about national belonging where little certainty exists. Indeed, the greater the actual heterogeneity of the nation, Comaroff and Comaroff (2005) argue, the more likely it becomes that these spatial fictions will fall apart (Sibley 1995; Scott 1998;

Nevins 2002; Katz 2007; Nah 2007). As tactics of border enforcement, prisons and detention centers thus become strategically significant to the construction of Australia's highly "mobile, unstable, racialized border" and perhaps also to the instability of that border (Perera 2007b: 203).

Historical practices of Aboriginal enclosure

Incarceration plays a central role in the contemporary Australian national imaginary. While in the past, white Australians tended to downplay the settlement of Australia through the involuntary migration of convicts from Britain, today connections with Australia's convict past are celebrated. If one visits the many prisons reconstructed as museums throughout Australia, one can purchase convict outfits for friends, babies, even dogs. Indeed, the frequency of these conversions of prisons to national monuments throughout Australia reflects the central place of containment within white Australian history (Casella 2005). As a recent editor of *Historic Environment* wrote, "confinement... is part of Australia's traditional psyche" (cited in Casella 2005: 454). Yet even as Australians have increasingly celebrated the imprisonment of white Australian settlers, Aboriginal histories of enclosure are less visible in public arenas.

Australia's early white settlers relied on incarceration as a form of control of Aboriginal populations. The belief in Australia as *terra nullius*, or the empty continent, underscored white settlers' disregard for Aboriginal life in the newly occupied colony. A common belief among early settlers was that Aboriginal people were so unsuited for modern life that they would perish quickly. Settlers' assumptions became violently juxtaposed with the resistance efforts of Aboriginal populations who did not die as quickly as settlers assumed (Howitt 2001; Anderson and Taylor 2005; Perera 2007a). Strategies to

enclose Aboriginal populations through fenced-off areas or the creation of townships to confine Aboriginal communities soon proliferated, but violence between settlers and Aboriginal people led to more formalized dispossession of Aboriginals from their lands (Prout and Howitt 2009). Settlers formed hunting parties to kill Aboriginals for sport or poisoned flour rations distributed to indigenous communities (Tedmanson 2008). Colonists justified their violent intentions by asserting that indigenous people did not own the lands they occupied, a rationale only overturned by the Australian court in the *Mabo* decision of 1992 (Perera 2009).

During the mid-19th century, settlers maintained the belief that the Aboriginal population would die out. Operating under these same assumptions, territorial governments began to establish protectorates for the remaining Aboriginal populations. Protectorates ostensibly shielded Aboriginal populations from white settler attacks but also confined people through near total control over Aboriginal mobility and, in some cases, control over custody of children, property, and possessions (Nethery 2009). Inspired by similar colonial policies in the Caribbean, Australian protectorates grouped indigenous people in reserves around missions, imagining settlements based on English villages (Anderson and Perrin 2008; Lester and Dussart 2008; O'Brien 2008). Many protectorates took "custodianship" of all Aboriginal children and enacted legal segregation on reserves, which became sites of constant surveillance, control over mobility (which was amended only in 1971), and forced labor (Tedmanson 2008; Martinez and Lowrie 2009; Prout and Howitt 2009). Violating these rules was grounds for further isolation and segregation on islands used as forced labor prison camps, such as Palm Island off the coast of Queensland

(Tedmanson 2008). These Aboriginal containment strategies were rationalized as “for the public good” (Bashford 1998; Bashford 2002; Bashford and Strange 2002).

The government understood racial segregation of the Aboriginal population as not only a strategy of benevolent protection but also an effective public-health measure. Aboriginal reserves served as effectively quarantined areas in the 1930s and 1940s because of their severe controls over mobility. For example, Aboriginal people with leprosy were segregated and held on different islands; the leper colony on Fantome Island was established in 1940 and did not close until 1973 (Bashford 2004). Western Australia enacted strict legislation in 1941 known as the ‘leper line’ that prohibited movement of *all* Aboriginal people south of the 20th parallel of south latitude, legislation that was not overturned until 1963 (Bashford 2004).

By the 1940s, government enthusiasm for Aboriginal reserves began to wane. The permanent removal of a generation of Aboriginal children from their families, a policy known as the Stolen Generation, had, according to government officials, effectively destroyed indigenous societies (Kowal 2008; Prout and Howitt 2009). Rather than emphasizing physical forms of incarceration, the government of the 1950s and 1960s began to promote policies of assimilation, policies that are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. At the same time, Aboriginal activism began to coalesce around issues of civil rights, dispossession of land, and the removal of children from families (Howitt and Jackson 1998; Anderson and Taylor 2005; Ginsburg and Myers 2006). Aboriginal activists pursued native title claims, challenging the colonial appropriation of land (Davies 2003). Aboriginal activism and changing international political attitudes toward indigenous rights helped end assimilation policies by the 1970s. Yet as the next sections suggest, even as Aboriginal

reserves and assimilation-era controls over mobility slowly lost popularity, disproportionate levels of racialized, violent enclosure continued to figure prominently in the lives of Aboriginal populations throughout Australia.

Contemporary practices of enclosure

The next three sections detail different forms of enclosure affecting contemporary Aboriginal and asylum seeker populations. I argue that logics of enclosure underlie different contemporary forms of incarceration. Each example builds on the historical preoccupation with confining and incarcerating Aboriginal populations that drove Australian policies through the 1940s. Together, these examples illustrate practices of enclosure that operate through racialized violence.

The first section examines the disproportionate levels of incarceration of Aboriginal Australians, particularly in the Northern Territory. Disproportionate incarceration, I argue, is the result of both structural racism and racialized violence in the criminal justice system. Next, I turn to the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) legislation and the rise in imprisonment, spatial segregation, and informal forms of enclosure that resulted from its implementation. Practices of enclosure and violence directed at marginalized groups connect these policies of imprisonment directed at Aboriginal Australians to contemporary policies mandating detention of asylum seekers, who are also imprisoned in the Northern Territory.

Aboriginal people and the criminal justice system

The legacies of early-twentieth-century practices of enclosure and racialized violence directed toward Aboriginal people continue in the disproportionate presence of

Aboriginal people in the Australian criminal justice system. Overall, Australia boasts a much smaller (166 prisoners per 100,000 adult population in 2012) imprisonment rate than the United States (500 prisoners per 100,000 adult population in 2010) but incarcerates Aboriginal people at the much higher rate of 2,247 per 100,000 (Guerino et al. 2010: 1; Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012). Men represent the majority of Indigenous⁹ people in prison: for a point of comparison, at the end of the apartheid regime in 1993, South Africa had an imprisonment rate for black men of 851 per 100,000; Australia has a rate of 4,194 per 100,000 (Ting 2011: 2; Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners represent 27 percent of the prisoner population but only 2 percent of the Australian population (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders lead in nearly every indication of disproportionate imprisonment. They are more than 20 times as likely as non-Indigenous people to be in jail without a sentence, 26 times more likely to be jailed after sentencing, and more likely to be in prison after a prior imprisonment (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011b: 31; Geoghegan 2011). Juveniles are imprisoned at a rate *28 times higher* than non-Indigenous juveniles (397 vs. 14 per 100,000), accounting for 59 percent of the juvenile detention population (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs 2011: 11). Disproportionately high levels of incarceration affect Aboriginal people of all ages.

High rates of imprisonment are the result of racism embedded within the Australian criminal justice system, illustrated in trends such as where policing takes place and how racially discriminatory policies are enforced across different spaces (McDonald 1984: 9;

⁹ Indigenous refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who are often grouped together for statistical purposes within Australian statistics.

Gooda 2011). Policing in the Northern Territory, for example, has tended to enforce contradictory understandings of public and private spaces when it comes to Aboriginal people, Cunneen (2001) argues. Homes and communities on Aboriginal reserves, typically understood as private spaces, are policed as if they were ‘public spaces.’ Yet at the same time, the use of taken-for-granted *public* spaces, such as parks and open space, restrict Aboriginal use through clean-up or tidiness initiatives that discourage Aboriginal gatherings. These practices demonstrate the assumption by white Australians, Cunneen (2001: 184) and Fisher (2012) argue, that Aboriginal people are not appropriate members of the ‘public’ allowed to use such spaces.

Policing trends also depend on where police are. The creation of 18 new police stations in the Northern Territory in remote Aboriginal communities under the “Taskforce Themis” NTER initiative, for example, has become correlated with intensified policing practices, including stretching legal provisions for alcohol regulation to include unrestricted searches of Aboriginal homes and cars. Encouraging intensified policing practices in Aboriginal areas unsurprisingly leads to increasing numbers of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system (Pilkington 2009). The correlations between enforcement and space also extend beyond policing to the broader criminal justice system, where ‘law and order’ concerns often obscure the racial assumptions behind spatially discriminatory policies (Perera and Newsinger 2000).

The disproportionate Aboriginal presence in Australian jails is also due to obstacles Aboriginal people face as they proceed through the criminal justice system. Aboriginal people are more likely to be jailed—rather than summoned—for minor offenses, like public order or suspended drivers’ licenses (Cunneen 2001; Gooda 2011). Jail sentences incur bail

conditions, while summons do not; thus, Aboriginal people face more charges of breaches and remand for failure to meet bail conditions (Cunneen 2001; Gooda 2011). Furthermore, if re-arrested, Aboriginal people tend to face harsher penalties because of prior jail sentences (Cunneen 2001; Ting 2011). Mandatory sentencing laws, implemented throughout the 1990s, limited judicial discretion for sentences (2008; Ting 2011).

Yet other challenges extend beyond the nature of the criminal justice system. While disproportionately policing and jailing Aboriginal people as a group, the correctional system also tends to strip people from their cultural and socio-economic contexts, which have a significant impact on incarceration rates (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner 2009: 45-46). Collective trauma and grief over colonization, forced removal of children, widespread institutionalization, and legacies of generations of incarceration affect Aboriginal families and communities (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs 2011: 43; Cunneen 2001). The Australia Human Rights Commission cites studies demonstrating that Aboriginals were more likely to have been incarcerated if they had not graduated from year 12, were unemployed, lived in poverty or overcrowded conditions (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner 2009).

Health and mental health also play a significant role in the criminalization of Aboriginal people. Drug and alcohol abuse, mental-health issues, and extremely high rates of hearing loss (which affects individuals' behavior when they come into contact with police) tend to increase contact with the criminal justice system (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs 2011: 15; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner 2009). Differences in body language

and English comprehension often negatively influence police behavior (Cunneen 2001). Aboriginal people also engage in resistance to policing and discriminatory laws, and what the criminal courts interpret as juvenile 'delinquency' or 'justice offenses' may often represent historical forms of Aboriginal resistance such as passivity, non-cooperation, or absconding (Cunneen 2001). Together, spatial, legal, and cultural or socio-economic factors help to explain some of the disproportionate rates of Aboriginal incarceration.

Disproportionate levels of incarceration are connected to high levels of racialized violence directed at Aboriginal people. Policing of Aboriginal communities, for example, draws on a history of paramilitary or military interventions and extreme surveillance as well as attempts to control Aboriginal movements. These histories lead to contemporary overpolicing of Aboriginal communities. Ongoing debates about the legitimacy of charges of overpolicing reveals the structural racism behind often-violent levels of police presence in Aboriginal communities (Cunneen 2001: 2). For example, when the Australian National Council on Drugs released a 2009 report linking drugs and alcohol to high rates of Indigenous imprisonment, scholars charged that the report neglected to contextualize the statistics with the degree to which Aboriginal populations are over-policed (Simmons 2009).

In another example, prosecutors are often blamed as being 'soft' on Aboriginal people charged with homicide if they seek manslaughter charges (e.g. 2008: 2). Despite the numbers of studies showing the disproportionate length and frequency with which Aboriginal people are sentenced, media and commentators continue to accuse courts of being lenient toward Aboriginal offenders. Aboriginal people are portrayed as thinking of jail as a vacation, inherently or innately violent, or as incapable of understanding

consequences of violent actions, reiterating historical assumptions portraying Aboriginal people as primitive or inferior (McDonald 1984; Cunneen 2001).

Overpolicing also leads to disproportionate numbers of Aboriginal people encountering violent conditions while incarcerated. Former correctional system employees cite the preoccupation with control and containment as dangerous for prisoners (Ting 2011). As one prison employee noted, “There’s been a significant move away from the notion of rehabilitation. Duty of care now is generally about... covering your back” (quoted in Ting 2011: 2). Violence in policing and failure to care for inmates results in injury, suffering, even death. The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody released a groundbreaking report on Aboriginal deaths in 1991, covering the 99 deaths in custody that occurred between 1980 and 1989. Despite the hundreds of recommendations issued and the increased public awareness of Aboriginal deaths in custody, people continue to die. Over two-hundred Aboriginal people have died in custody since 1991 (Geoghegan 2011; Tlozek 2011). Indeed, the recommendations of the 1991 report coincided with the increased popularity of punitive approaches throughout the Australian justice system that follow neoliberal trends of ‘governing through crime.’ This juxtaposition may account for the continued persistence of Aboriginal deaths in custody (Ting 2011).

Recently, for example, relatives mourned the death of Kwementyaye Daniel Briscoe, who died at the Alice Springs Watch House on January 2, 2012 at 27 years old (Cavanagh 2012: 1). He died facedown, alone, in his cell after being taken into custody for extreme intoxication, a condition that is not considered a crime. The coroner for the case cited police care as being “completely inadequate and unsatisfactory and not sufficient to meet his medical needs” (Cavanagh 2012: 78). Relatives claim that police beat Briscoe three

weeks prior to his being taken into custody (Gosford 2012).¹⁰ There are no corporate murder laws that allow for the prosecution of negligence leading to death in custody in Australia, so holding the criminal justice system accountable has been difficult (Towell 2011). While deaths such as Briscoe's receive greater attention today than they did in the 1980s, the everyday ongoing violence of the prison environment continues. As Charandev Singh (quoted in Ting 2011: 2) notes, "Breaches don't just happen in isolation... They're ongoing. For every person who does die, there are many more who nearly die."¹¹

Ironically, overpolicing and disproportionate incarceration of Aboriginal Australians exist simultaneously with the neglect of Aboriginal populations by the criminal justice system. Neglect represents another form of racialized violence. Aboriginal people lack protection from violence in disproportionate numbers: in the NT, for example, Aboriginal people were hospitalized twice as often for assault as non-Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal women were hospitalized at *eighty times* the rate of non-Aboriginal women (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs 2011; 2012). Studies also show strong connections between vulnerable women and rates of incarceration: Aboriginal women who are abused or use drugs or alcohol are much more likely to be imprisoned (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs 2011: 46). Aboriginal children face similar violence by

¹⁰ The circumstances of his death are identical to the death of Cedric Trigger, another Aboriginal man who died of a head injury while in custody in Alice Springs in 2009 (Cavanagh 2012; Gosford 2012).

¹¹ Many of the deaths in prison result from police violence or negligence, but many are also the result of self-harm, echoing extremely high rates of self-harm and suicide in Aboriginal communities as a whole. Deaths by suicide are difficult to track in the NT due to a lack of a central registry, but statistics on children who die from self-harm, to give one example, are alarming (Skelton 2012). In the 1980s, there was no difference between Aboriginal, Northern Territory, and Australia-wide rates of youth suicide. Recent statistics note that rates of youth deaths by hanging in New South Wales are at 1 per 100,000, compared with 18 per 100,000 in the NT and 30 per 100,000 among Aboriginal youth in the NT (Office of the Children's Commissioner Northern Territory 2011; AAP 2012). Disproportionate rates of suicide affect Aboriginal people of all ages; for instance, in 2011-2012 the small Indigenous community (1,000 population) of Doomadgee, Queensland, reported 18 deaths by suicide over a 14-month period (Lewis 2012).

neglect. They are more likely to suffer maltreatment, neglect, child abuse, and become subject to care and protection orders at *ten times* the rate of non-Indigenous children (Australian Institute of Criminology 2012: 159-160).

High levels of victimization do not translate into better care for Aboriginal Australians. Violence, particularly violence against women, is rationalized as the “Aboriginal way” of problem solving, an assumption that echoes stereotypes of Aboriginal people as both primitive and inferior (Cunneen 2001: 162). Aboriginal people are also the victims of entrenched police harassment and brutality (Cunneen 2001). The racialized violence of the criminal justice system thus operates both to overpolice and underpolice Aboriginal populations. They experience both disproportionate attention from the criminal justice system and, simultaneously, its neglect. Aboriginal people are confined to lawless spaces, where the legal system exists as “a fiction as abstract as Canberra,” Mills (2008: 38) writes. Disproportionate incarceration and the racialized violence that results echoes past forms of enclosure limiting Aboriginal Australians’ access to the law. Practices of enclosure are extended in the new forms of incarceration and violence produced through the Northern Territory Intervention.

Northern Territory Emergency Response

Implementation of the NTER only strengthened the disproportionate levels of incarceration, enclosure, and racialized violence in the Northern Territory. General levels of imprisonment are already higher in the NT than in other parts of Australia.¹² Indigenous prisoners represent 82 percent of the NT prison population (Australian Bureau of Statistics

¹² Structural racism within the criminal justice system and the NT’s high proportion of indigenous residents are key factors in explaining these high numbers.

2011b: 27). Compared with other states, the NT has the highest overall imprisonment rate, at 762 per 100,000 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011b: 20). The NT has the highest proportional increase in overall prison numbers, both recently (between 2010 and 2011) and over the past decade (2000-2009), when rates increased 90 percent, compared with 66 percent nationally (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs 2011: 8-10; Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011b: 19). The rapid increase in prisoners has prompted the construction of a new 1,000-bed, AUD \$320 million jail near Darwin predicted to be over capacity as soon as it opens (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner 2009).

The NTER promises to continue to increase levels of Aboriginal imprisonment even further. Both the 2007 legislation and the follow-up 2012 Stronger Futures bill have toughened bail conditions, decreased the rate of acceptance of applications for parole, increased levels of policing leading to jail sentences,¹³ and maintained the NT's record of extremely low rates of community based (non-custodial) sentences and alcohol and sexual abuser rehabilitation programs (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner 2009: 43; Martin 2012). The NTER also prohibits taking into account customary law for sentencing, effectively barring the use of Aboriginal law in NT courts. Not only does this measure increase the length of sentences, it also represents further neglect of Aboriginal people by the Australian legal system. As Tommy Jangala Watson (quoted in Gosford 2012: 34) stated, "The Intervention is getting on top of us Aboriginal people. It has taken our law, we can't use that law, enforce that law." What this means, his

¹³ This includes jailing people for traffic offenses, which the Australian Human Rights Commission claims is "unheard of" in the rest of Australia (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner 2009: 43; Martin 2012).

brother Billy Jangala Watson (quoted in Gosford 2012: 34) added, is that “Everybody’s gone wild because of the Intervention – now there is no law.”

Yet the types of enclosure encouraged by the passage of the NTER are not limited to increased levels of Aboriginal incarceration. The NTER also echoes past policies of Aboriginal reserves and protected areas, spatially enclosing entire Aboriginal communities. The NTER provides a clear case of a racially discriminatory policy explicitly targeting, and criminalizing, Aboriginal spaces within the NT. Indeed, the Howard administration had to lift the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* to implement the legislation. Aboriginal people are subject to the NTER simply because they are Aboriginal. For example, in an encounter reported at a Centrelink (welfare benefits) office in Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island, John assisted his mother Julie in determining why she was subject to welfare quarantining, or income management.

The officer answered, ‘It’s a response to the Little Children are Sacred Report’. John was surprised, ‘You must think she is a child abuser. I want my mum exempted from income management.’ The officer asked, ‘What are the reasons she should not be income managed?’ John thought, then demanded, ‘First you tell me the reasons she is on it.’ At first the officer could not answer; eventually he replied, ‘Because she lives on Aboriginal land’ (Webb 2008: 18).

The NTER unambiguously mapped and intervened in particular spaces such as Prescribed Areas. Aboriginal communities designated as Prescribed Areas were subject to both formal legal and informal social enclosure through their labeling with large (over six foot square signs) calling attention to alcohol and pornography restrictions. In addition, town camps or areas where Aboriginal people camped near urban centers became the focus of intense public scrutiny and police enforcement. Aboriginal communities targeted with Prescribed Area regulations were thus isolated and defined as ‘problem’ spaces (Lawrence and Gibson 2007). They represented the sites of pathologized cultural failings and individual

inappropriate behaviors and were legally (and, through the use of signage, physically) enclosed by the state.

Other methods of informal enclosure have resulted from the NTER legislation. The complications of administering income management programs, for example, tie Aboriginal people to Centrelink (welfare benefits) offices even as they need to undertake travel for funerals or other significant occasions (Coddington, fieldnotes, February 24, 2012). Women in Darwin's Bagot community reported other forms of enclosure they experienced while using the Basics Card. Initially, the restrictions on funds prevented them from paying for taxis or public transit, cutting off their access to groceries and basic household supplies, even in Darwin's urban center (Coddington, fieldnotes, February 24, 2012). Another example of the creation and policing of problematized spaces is the experiences of Aboriginal people 'sleeping rough.' In Darwin, advocates argue that the implementation of Intervention policies has led to an increase in long grassers, or Aboriginal people who live outdoors. Long grassers may have left remote communities because of "a perceived loss of rights, autonomy, and purpose; an increase in violence and conflict in communities; fear and confusion over the new laws; and a perceived lack of future" (Holmes and McRae-Williams 2008: 8). Extensive policing and continued depictions of Aboriginal inhabitants as 'out-of-place' have informally enclosed areas where long grassers wish to congregate. Though their "distance from normative models of settler Australian citizenship," long grassers represent another Aboriginal population facing enclosure and spatial segregation (Fisher 2012: 173).

The disproportionate levels of Aboriginal incarceration, spatial segregation, and informal types of enclosure, whether within jails, communities, or public spaces, have been

accompanied by increasing levels of racialized violence. Many white Australians interpret the NTER through fundamentally racist lenses. The state and media rhetoric about child sexual abuse, ostensibly the rationale for the implementation of the legislation, decontextualized such abuse from histories of Aboriginal poverty and intergenerational trauma. Aboriginal culture was assumed to be the problem, a discourse of cultural pathology that rendered continued racism “morally clean” (Stringer 2007: 10). For example, racism explains the ease with which white Australians casually pathologize Aboriginal culture as inappropriate and out of place. When questioned about the increased levels of Aboriginal people sleeping rough in Darwin after the implementation of Intervention policies, hundreds of non-Aboriginal Darwin residents surveyed attributed sleeping in the long grass to romanticized understandings of Aboriginal ‘walkabouts.’ No one, the study reports, “identified dispossession, internal displacement, colonization, stolen generation, cultural genocide or any other government policy geared toward the control of Aboriginal people as a reason that they might be staying in the long grass” (Holmes and McRae-Williams 2008: vi).

Increases in levels and intensity of policing of Aboriginal communities exemplify the rise in racialized violence prompted by the NTER. Media and state demonization of Aboriginal people emboldened local policing efforts. Anthony (2010: 97) found an increase in Indigenous criminalization in terms of minor driving and traffic offenses after the Intervention began. She attributes the increase to the increased police presence in Aboriginal communities and the additional powers granted to them by the Intervention legislation. Overpolicing represents “a criminal net being thrown more widely” rather than an overall increase in crime per se, legal scholar Anthony (2010: 97) concluded. In another

example, police raids of town camps in Alice Springs after the Intervention demonstrated a more forceful, militarized police presence in that community. As a statement by town camp women (in Gibson 2009: 34) noted,

This is not the first time that police have acted in a way that could be called police brutality. The use of excessive force. Confrontation by police in our camps has replaced investigation... The police systematically conducted home invasion on each house, resulting in frightening women and children, scaring and frightening old people. Our communities are now being subject to psychological intimidation by police and there is an atmosphere of terror.

Other Aboriginal people in Alice Springs reported new police curfews as well (Gibson 2009: 30).

Racialized violence also took more mundane forms, such as media demonization and street harassment. As Valerie Martin (Gibson 2009: 28) described, “It’s getting worse now. People shout from the car at me. Our old people have had glass bottles thrown at them, just while they are sitting there.” Basics Cards used for income quarantined funds prompted the policing of purchases by shopkeepers and other shoppers. Aboriginal people using the card were segregated into separate lines and faced other disparaging treatment in shops and in Centrelink benefits offices (Gibson 2009: 24-25). “The way we are being treated in shops, being spoken to like dogs—‘Go and line up over there!’,” Maxine Carlton explained (Gibson 2009: 28). Everyday examples of racialized violence contribute to practices of enclosure directed at Aboriginal Australians, practices reflected in treatment of asylum seekers facing mandatory detention policies as well.

Asylum seekers and mandatory detention

Asylum seekers imprisoned in detention facilities face racialized violence and imprisonment as well. These policies also build on Australia’s history of racialized violence and incarceration. As of October 2013, over 9,600 people were detained in immigration detention facilities through Australia. In addition, nearly 2,000 people were detained in

Australian-operated facilities on Nauru and Manus Island, Papua New Guinea. The average time in detention was 199 days, but about 350 detainees had been detained longer than one year. The longest stay in detention was 1,152 days, or over three years (Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) 2013).

Race plays an important, if implicit, role in migrant detention in Australia: commentator Tsiolkas (2013: 6) referred to race as the “elephant in the room” of asylum seeker politics. Scholars have theorized that Australian immigration—like its criminal justice system—is underpinned by structural racism (Frow 2007: 40; Giannacopoulos 2011). Part of the claims of structural racism have to do with how rules regarding mandatory detention are applied to asylum seekers. Since 1992, Australia has required the detention of people who arrive in Australia without a visa or those that have cancelled or invalid visas, adverse security assessments, or are suspected of people smuggling. People who arrive by airplane and clear customs—with either valid or convincing visas in hand—are permitted to make asylum claims. Because they make these claims while possessing a visa, however, they are not required to remain in detention. Those dubbed “irregular maritime arrivals” (IMA), on the other hand, arrive by boat lacking visas and are detained. Annually, boat arrivals represent about four percent of all migrants to Australia (Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) 2013).

These categories are highly racialized and classed: those who can afford plane fare, visas, or convincing false documentation enter by airplane, bypassing the detention system. Asylum seekers who arrive by boat are primarily from Afghanistan, Iran, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Iraq, whereas asylum seekers from China and India dominate the non-IMA category (Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2013). The racism that

underpins mandatory detention only for boat arrivals, Giannacopoulos (2011: 4) argues, is the “product of this colonial system and not simply the product of bad laws.” For asylum seekers in particular, Frow (2007) argues, Australia had a history of being able to select particular refugees, so the current pattern of ‘spontaneous’ boat arrivals also disrupts the state’s full control over the protection process.

Historically, race drove immigration policies in Australia and inspired forms of enclosure that scholars connect to contemporary migrant detention (Bashford and Strange 2002; Schlunke 2002; Rajaram 2003; Anderson and Taylor 2005; Perera 2007a; Anderson and Perrin 2008; Nethery 2009; Neumann and Tavan 2009; Perera 2009; Perera 2009a; Perera and Stratton 2009). The first official act of the Australian Commonwealth in 1901 was the Immigration Restriction Act, often referred to as the White Australia Policy (Bashford 1998). Motivated by anti-Chinese agitation throughout the colony, the Act served as a method of geographical, political, and racial separation of the new Australian nation from Asia (Bashford 1998; Bashford 2004).

Public health policies were another method of enacting policies of enclosure directed toward migrants, just as they were for Aboriginal Australians. Quarantine was the only public health power granted to the Commonwealth government in 1901 (Bashford 2002). The 1908 Quarantine Act provided the authority to begin enforcing restrictions on mobility, especially at locations around the maritime border, including quarantine stations at North Head (Sydney), Thursday Island, Darwin, Townsville, Fremantle, and Bunbury and leper colonies at Mud Island, Dayman Island, and Friday Island (Bashford 1998; Bashford 2002; Bashford 2004). The threat of disease transmission through migration was explicitly racialized. Popular opinion maintained that Chinese men threatened the white

settler body politic through sexually transmitted or highly contagious diseases (Bashford 1998). The colonization of Australia constructed a new white nation over a metaphorically empty continent. The new nation maintained its racialized identity through regulation of mobility (Howitt 2001). Because people *imagined* Australia as a white nation during the early-20th century, quarantine and other immigration regulations began to make it so (Bashford 1998; Bashford 2002; Bashford and Strange 2002). Full removal of the White Australia immigration policies did not occur until 1973 (Bashford 1998).

Contemporary policies directed toward asylum seekers build on these racialized legacies and are legitimized through the dehumanization and criminalization of asylum seekers by policy makers, in the media and within public debates. Asylum seekers are portrayed as threats to Australian sovereignty through images of floods, waves, or tides, and these sources characterize boat arrivals as not being “genuine” refugees (Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2004; Perera 2006; Hyndman and Mountz 2008; McLoughlin and Warin 2008b). Asylum seekers continue to be dehumanized through labels such as queue jumpers, people traffickers, boat people, or illegal immigrants (Perera 2006; Mountz 2010). Although as of 2012 more than 93 percent of asylum seekers were successfully admitted to Australia, people arriving by boat continue to be demonized as ‘bogus refugees’ (Hyndman and Mountz 2008; McLoughlin and Warin 2008b).

Practices of detention rationalize and normalize processes of criminalization in public discourse. Members of the public may come to believe that migrants must *be* criminals if they are detained like criminals (Loyd et al. 2009; Hall 2010).¹⁴ The

¹⁴ Criminalization of migrants is not unique to Australia (Wilder 2007; Hyndman and Mountz 2008; Sokoloff and Pearce 2008; Guzman 2009; Khosravi 2009; Lawston and Escobar 2009). Depictions of migrants as criminals have accompanied more general strategies of governing through crime (Gottshalk 2008; Perkinson

securitization of migration, however, is itself a way of perpetuating *insecurity* (Larsen and Piche 2009). More people become threatening all the time, yet the source of their threat is uncertain: they are “presumed to be dangerous in a non specific way” (Bashford and Strange 2002: 520). Migrants internalize the need to surveil and discipline themselves, carrying a sense of insecurity with them wherever they go (McDowell and Wonders 2009). Race-based fears about boat arrivals combine with the criminalization of legal practices of seeking asylum, creating toxic justifications for the incarceration of migrants.

Incarceration of asylum seekers leads to different types of racialized violence. The temporary promise of immigration detention and its contrast with the often-prolonged realities of migrants’ incarceration is especially difficult for already-traumatized asylum seekers. Asylum seekers become “trapped in a permanent and frozen liminal state” (McLoughlin and Warin 2008b: 260). As Pugliese (2002: 2) describes, detention involves both physical confinement and punishing mental limbo:

On the one hand the refugee is bounded and contained by the spatial materiality of a razor wire prison that strictly delimits their freedom of movement and marks the material borders of their existence; on the other hand, the refugee, because of the indefinite nature of the detention, is sentenced to a temporal openendedness that knows no limits.

Isolation and the remote locations of detention facilities demoralize asylum seekers and create or exacerbate mental-health issues, which often continue long after they are released (Perera 2002: 1; McLoughlin and Warin 2008b; Coffey et al. 2010). Detention also isolates asylum seekers from communities of support (Perera 2002).

Such violent environments have inescapable consequences for individual refugees’ mental health. For example, the violent effects of prolonged detention had negative mental

2008). The conflation of migrant and criminal becomes expressed through terms such as “crimmigration” law and punitive “immcarceration” (Hernandez 2008; Kalhan 2010).

health costs for Habiburam, a refugee held in Darwin detention centers. He (2012: 323-324) described his experiences as prolonged incarceration took its toll:

Resigning oneself to wait in a confined place with no power to make decisions about our future is a totally new kind of mental torture. The guards' replies to our questions are hazy and send us mad: 'the process is underway'. Rohingyas are set free in a tiny trickle. I'm eaten away by bitterness. I can't distinguish day and night anymore, because my nights are sleepless and my days have no light. I've become a zombie. I pass whole days in bed... We force ourselves to contain our anxiety. We have to stop ourselves complaining or getting carried away because we're under surveillance. Any excess emotion is looked on badly and noted down... Some crack. Then it's solitary confinement and drugs. That happens to me sometimes.

Another refugee at the Northern Immigration Detention Center in Darwin, Ali reported about how his confinement—by then over two years—had resulted in repetitive behaviors. Ali slept poorly, waking every two hours, and could no longer sit for over 20 minutes. Instead, he walked repeatedly alongside a 50-meter stretch of fence, the only open space he could access. He suffered from anxiety and hopelessness and was repeatedly traumatized by witnessing other asylum seekers cut and hang themselves (Coddington, fieldnotes, November 29 and December 6, 2011). As these examples suggest, detention is both traumatic and psychologically corrosive for asylum seekers.

Racialized violence also often occurs on the canvas of the asylum seekers' own bodies (see among many Evans 2003). For example, between January and February 2013, over 144 incidents of self-harm took place within Australian detention facilities (Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) 2013). Violence, from abuse by guards to self-harm and suicide attempts, is commonplace. Frequent riots, hunger strikes, arson, suicide, jumps from roofs, or protests by sewing lips together characterize asylum seekers' experiences in detention (Browning 2007). Habiburam (2012: 333-334) also wrote about the violence inflicted upon his body as he lingered in detention:

Suicide cases affect everyone's state of mind and are contagious. I suffer from violent headaches, and I feel like my chest is in the grip of a vice. I have trouble thinking. I continue to shut myself away, my head under the pillow so as not to see these guards, these walls and these fences whose very perpetual presence in my field of vision is a torture. In the pillow, I try to go blank, to imagine that I'm

somewhere else. I now only eat during the night. As much as possible, I refuse their drugs, anti-anxiety medicine, sleeping pills, antidepressants. When I accept them, I sleep. For a long time. I forget. Here, I've lost control over my life. I can no longer choose dangerous routes, whatever they are. The ambivalence between my body and mind eats away at me. I'm treated properly, without physical violence, and given healthy food, but emotionally I'm going through hell. And, insidiously, my mind tortures my body.

Ali also described the medications he took for depression and sleeplessness, the anxiety that kept him awake and pacing, and his thoughts of suicide. One day, he confessed that, "They're going to have to find some place to bury me" (Coddington, fieldnotes, December 3, 2011). Such experiences illustrate only a small part of the profound violence of detention, violence similar in many ways to that of imprisonment. Disproportionate imprisonment and detention of asylum seekers occur simultaneously throughout the Northern Territory, on the same ground where Aboriginal people historically faced forms of imprisonment and enclosure. These multiple forms of imprisonment represent bordering practices, segregating marginalized populations in an effort to create a more secure Australian national identity.

Sovereign in/securities

Throughout this chapter, I have described projects of incarceration connected to practices of racialized violence concentrated in Australia's Northern Territory. Contemporary practices of Aboriginal incarceration and enclosure, both general disproportionate levels of incarceration and those practices directly related to the NTER, are linked with histories of Aboriginal incarceration in Australia's prison-dominated past. Legacies of Australia's obsession with imprisonment also resurface in contemporary practices mandating detention for asylum seekers arriving by boat. In each case, incarceration is accompanied by racialized violence, exacerbating the negative consequences of these policies for asylum seekers and Aboriginal people.

Forms of imprisonment and racialized violence are bordering practices. They are based on logics of exclusion and enacted spatially at particular sites: the prison, the Prescribed Area, the town camp, or the detention center. These sites become places excluded from imaginaries about what it means to be Australian: through criminalization, spatial segregation, and racial discrimination, they outline inappropriate claims to Australian national identity. Bordering practices demarcating the bounds of national identity are based on logics of containment. Perceived threatening populations—the inappropriate Aboriginal, the dehumanized asylum seeker—are confined, institutionalized, and incarcerated, suggesting their fundamental ‘out of place’ existence within Australian borders. Incarceration physically separates and de-identifies these troubling populations from collective assumptions of who belongs within Australia.

State logics of containment manifest themselves in the bordering practices of prisons, detention centers, and Prescribed Areas, and are connected to the global growth of imprisonment and detention. These forms of incarceration are situated within Australia’s historical context and also enmeshed within global processes: they represent an “inherently multiscale” project, Loyd et al (2009: 88) contend. The growth in prison facilities around the globe, particularly those designed for immigration detention, is part of a “global disciplinary strategy” for mobility that has become what Reid-Henry (2007: 627) terms a “more normal part” of current imperial projects (Herbert 2008; Khosravi 2009; McDowell and Wonders 2009). Prison and detention have become profitable industries; indeed, detention is commonly outsourced, for example, to private companies, humanitarian agencies, and the International Organization for Migration (Sudbury 2005; Hyndman and Mountz 2008; Flynn and Cannon 2009). Private contractors may have a

financial interest in increasing the numbers of detainees (Wilder 2007; Hernandez 2008; Venters et al. 2009) and are increasingly profiting from their role in what Khosravi (2009: 54) calls the “global circuit of deportation” as well.

Detention and imprisonment are woven into transnational economic networks as well, both as warehouses for the unemployable (ex-offenders) and as jobs for both detainees and employees (Gilmore 2007; Peck and Theodore 2008; Sokoloff and Pearce 2008; Loyd et al. 2009; Burnett and Chebe 2010). It is through these histories and locations within global economic and political networks that enclosure within prisons and detention facilities is enacted as a practice and produces inequality that is overlaid with raced, classed, gendered, and colonial connections (Hernandez 2008; Rodriguez 2008; Sokoloff and Pearce 2008; Alberti 2010). Former and current detainees are produced as a class marked by their incommensurability with people who belong in place (Hernandez 2008: 41).

Harsh policies leading to disproportionate imprisonment and migrant detention attempt to project strength and confidence over national security concerns. For example, as then-candidate for Prime Minister Tony Abbott argued in 2011, asylum seekers threaten Australia’s national security and reflect a ‘soft’ approach to governance: “The Government has taken a long time to learn some bitter lessons: that it’s impossible to have secure borders without taking strong action against those who violate them; and that governments that are a soft touch won’t be taken seriously” (Australian Conservative 2011). Yet in their attempts to strengthen national security, these policies fundamentally damage the *human* security of affected populations (Hyndman 2004). Furthermore, they emphasize the highly contingent nature of belonging for other Australians not directly

affected by these policies: the abjection of the Aboriginal prisoner or detained migrant, to paraphrase Kristeva (quoted in Sibley 1995) is not a method of total exclusion from the nation, but rather a symbol of the ‘perpetual danger’ that all Australians face. The border is mobile; the border is unstable. If state policies act against these racialized minorities, they could act against others as well. Bordering practices such as imprisonment and detention are thus ambiguous consequences of logics of containment, increasing feelings of *insecurity* across the nation as a whole (see Hiemstra 2012).

State attempts to combat feelings of insecurity around racialized imprisonment and detention policies center on tactics of denial. Policies toward asylum seekers are *not* racially motivated, Australian leaders often claim, despite the distinct policies directed at different methods of arrival. For example, in a debate over freezing bridging visas for asylum seekers in 2013, Prime Minister Abbott challenged accusations that the procedure would be racially motivated. Instead, he said that it was “important” that asylum seekers “be monitored by the government... [and that] the government has to maintain control of the system” (AAP 2013). The Prime Minister, local enforcement agencies, and even selected Indigenous spokespeople also deny that the Northern Territory Intervention is based on racially discriminatory legislation, even as the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* had to be removed for its implementation (Gibson 2009; Dunn and Nelson 2011).

Osuri (2008: 6) claims that colonial sovereignty functions precisely because it “operates through legal fictions which disavow their colonizing status.” Denying the explicit racialization of asylum seeker or Intervention policies is an example of such colonial policies at work. Both racialized violence and its denial are part of colonial sovereignty projects, Giannacopoulos (2006) and Aboriginal scholar Moreton-Robinson (2009) claim.

These contemporary denials build on the white sovereign violence of illegal possession, the myth of *terra nullius* that encouraged efforts by white settlers to enclose and incarcerate Aboriginal Australians from the beginning of colonization. Australian law, born from and maintained through racial violence (Giannacopoulos 2006), struggles to maintain racial hierarchies in contemporary Northern Territory Policies, leaving uncertainty about Australian belonging and sovereignty in its wake (Osuri 2008).

Chapter 4. Wards of the state and the promise of citizenship

In 1961, a Darwin judge heard the case of three Aboriginal men who petitioned the state for full citizenship. Classified because of their race as ‘wards of the state,’ the men argued that their lifestyle made them good candidates for citizenship. As proof, they offered specific behaviors, such as using knives and forks at the dinner table, sleeping in beds, and attending schools. The judge was skeptical, maintaining that they wanted citizenship rights to gain access to alcohol. “Yes,” answered one of the petitioners, “but not only that—I want to live the right way.” Despite his assurances, the judge determined that the case be dismissed; the men were “in need of the benefits of wardship” (1961). The case of the three Aboriginal petitioners illustrates the gulf between the full citizenship held by white Australians and the promise of citizenship offered by the category of the ‘ward.’ Wardship was framed as a gateway to potential citizenship, government pamphlets declared, as long as Aboriginal people were determined to assimilate, to become “accustomed to living in houses,” and to acquire jobs within “the white man’s world” (Minister for Territories 1957; Department of Territories 1967). Yet even as the Australian government promoted a shared civic culture, racialized categories still drove policy, and the ‘Australian way of life’ was fundamentally a white one (1959; Conor 2006; Davis and Watson 2006; Haebich 2007)

This chapter focuses on the category of the ward and how its promise of citizenship limits political subjectivities. Constraints on political subjectivity, I argue, become consequence of logics of containment. I trace the emergence of the category ‘ward of the state’ in the 1950s and 1960s in Australia and its reemergence in two contemporary cases in the Northern Territory. Both Aboriginal Australians impacted by the 2007 Northern

Territory Intervention legislation and asylum seekers in mandatory detention grapple with the reemergence of wardship, the promise of citizenship without its eventual fulfillment.

Wardship represents, as I argue in this chapter, an in-between status: wards were neither citizens nor non-citizens, but rather an anticipatory citizenship formation constructed by the Australian state. By citizenship, as I elaborate below, I mean the formation of political subjects, their capacity for making rights claims, as well as their *capacity to govern themselves* and the *discourse that defines such capacities* (Isin 2012: 568). The ward is a not-yet citizen, and the deeds, acts, and discourses that define the ward's capacities to act as a political subject can maintain their anticipatory nature even as people 'achieve' formal citizenship. Wardship can be layered on top of citizen *and* non-citizen status alike. Rather than accounting for the grey areas between 'citizen' and 'non-citizen,' therefore, wards exist beyond this theoretical continuum, demanding a more nuanced accounting of political subjectivities and people's relationships to the state. Wards of the state fit into broader genealogies of sites of enclosure in Australia (Bashford 1998; Bashford and Strange 2002), as well as in the context of white settler colonialism (Haggis 2012).

I argue furthermore that wardship is built upon expectations about family life, economic activity, and appropriate behavior. These assumptions underscore an implicit bargain between individuals and the state, that neoliberalized self-discipline, 'living the right way,' as the Aboriginal men promised, will lead to both formal citizenship rights and a sense of belonging. Built-in impediments, however, ensure that this bargain is difficult, if not impossible, to fulfill. Wardship thus becomes another strategy constructed through

logics of containment in Australia, enclosing certain populations to ensure their inability to participate in political community.

This chapter is based upon both archival and qualitative research. I use sources from government, media, memoirs, personal communications within government archives, and secondary sources to describe the creation of the 'ward of the state' category of the 1950s. I employ fieldnotes from participant observation, information from interviews, and secondary sources to describe the contemporary reemergence of the ward relationship among Aboriginal Australians and asylum seekers in the Northern Territory.

This chapter builds on the previous chapter's exploration of imprisonment and racialized violence as practices of bordering and how they have embodied effects on both Aboriginal people and asylum seekers in the Northern Territory. That chapter laid out some of the more concrete forms of enclosure or containment facing asylum seekers and Aboriginal Australians but discussed how less tangible forms of enclosure affect these populations as well. This chapter continues the investigation of how people become 'contained,' exploring the role of promises of citizenship within strategies of containment. What logics underscore practices of containment, and what are the embodied effects of these practices? This chapter focuses on the scale of the Northern Territory, and the territory-wide ramifications of both national and territory policies. I begin the chapter by theoretically framing my discussion of citizenship. After describing the creation of the 'wards of the state' in the 1950s, I then explore how wardship reemerges within the two contemporary cases. I conclude by considering the implications of containment logics and practices for effective change.

A framework for citizenship

T. H. Marshall's influential essay "Citizenship and the Social Class" (1949) describes citizenship as membership or status. Derived from the Greeks and Romans, Marshall argues, citizenship is a Western European phenomenon that becomes connected to a specific nation-state territory (McMaster 2003). Some scholars argue that citizenship as a concept provides the link between the 'blood' of individual subject bodies and the 'soil' of sovereign territory, connecting the living body to the sovereign one through the idea of birthright (Wadiwel 2006). This relationship literally gives life to sovereignty: as de Genova (2010b: 51) argues, citizenship becomes a site of both entrapment and struggle, where subjects become "ensnared" in the "state project of producing people in its own image."

Citizenship is increasingly also understood as constituted through social practices such as mobility (Painter and Philo 1995; D'Arcus 2004; Cresswell 2009). Cresswell (2009), for example, traces the national project of establishing *legitimate* mobility through the standardization of the passport (e.g., Torpey 2000) and other identity documents, arguing that the citizen became identified, and defined, by his or her mobility. Migration also remains a key site for geographical scholarship on citizenship (e.g., Gilmartin 2008). Vas Dev (2009), for example, discusses how the Australian state frames asylum seeker mobility as 'illegal,' a perception that renders them undeserving of the moral 'good' of citizenship.

The nation-state continues to dominate studies of citizenship, but geographers have increasingly attempted to de-center the state, broadening the notions of what is considered citizenship practices and where they might occur, including a significant focus on the city as a space of struggles over citizenship (D'Arcus 2004). Recent surveys of geographical scholarship on citizenship demonstrate this widening focus. Painter and Philo (1995: 111)

argued for the theoretical extension of the “fundamentally exclusionary impetus” of national boundaries as spaces of citizenship to also include the issue of people *within* national boundaries who did not exemplify national ideals. Kurtz and Hankins (2005) wrestled with the discordance of clean ‘membership’-style categories in studies of citizenship and the messy social practices of lived citizenship, arguing that citizenship becomes a constant struggle with political subjectivities and state practices existing in tension with one another, not properly captured by either the ‘membership’ or the ‘practices’ approach to study. Staeheli (2010) continued to call for research on citizenship in spaces and scales that bridge commonly assumed divisions. She noted that research on citizenship continued to be based on underlying assumptions about scale and space: research on the global South emphasized popular lived citizenship practices, and research on the global North focused on the transnational ‘cosmopolitan’ citizen.¹⁵

Of course, the idea of citizenship, many authors note, is inextricably bound up with the creation of a ‘non-citizen’ through processes of difference and othering. Although scholars have traditionally emphasized the *exclusionary* processes of creating the non-citizen, how citizens are essentially defined by what they are *not* (e.g., McMaster 2003; D’Arcus 2004), recent approaches stress how logics of othering simultaneously produce a citizen and non-citizen *together* (Cresswell 2009). Rather than first demarcating a non-citizen and then producing citizens with rights and sensibilities to fill the gap, the two come into being at once: both included, both excluded, like the flipped colors on a photographic negative. Studies that focus on non-citizens as the cast-off ‘other’ may also miss finer grained distinctions, such as the migrant (Gilmartin 2008), disabled person (Crooks et al.

¹⁵ A division that subtly maintains some of the Orientalist assumptions perhaps at the root of the concept of citizenship (Isin 2012).

2008), or 'shadow citizen' (Cresswell 2009) struggling for rights within national territories, the Canadian Aboriginals who become legal 'strangers' in their native lands (Valverde 2010), or the perceived outsiders who lack a sense of national belonging (Sibley 1995; D'Arcus 2004). Critics of citizenship research argue that scholars' reliance on their own strict boundaries (citizens and the non-citizen others, for example) tends to masculinize research and relies too heavily on concepts such as 'tolerance,' 'recognition,' and 'multicultural' that foreclose political debates on the *causes* of marginalization (McGrath 1995; Staeheli 2010).

Even as scholars attempt to broaden citizenship as being both formal membership *and* the social-cultural practices that help to create feelings of belonging, too often citizenship studies retreat to less useful binary oppositions, such as the problematic citizen versus non-citizen duality described above. Isin (2012) argues that this problem is not simply a matter of 'finer-grained' analysis but rather a conceptual over-reliance on the nationality-state-citizenship apparatus that maintains the 'fiction' of citizenship as a European invention. He suggests that the idea of citizenship—that of 'person' separated from the political subject 'citizen'—is perhaps more closely connected to the Orientalist logic of the colonizer and colonized and asks, how can citizenship be reconceptualized beyond these problematic binaries? Decolonizing citizenship, Isin (2012: 568) posits, requires reinventing new ways of becoming political subjects. He frames citizenship through *acts* of rights-making, *acts* of self-governance, and the *discourse* that defines one's capability to act, providing a useful re-framing of citizenship:

The concept of 'political subjectivity' becomes crucial because an essential component of the juridico-legal institution of citizenship is the formation of political subjects either with the right to have rights or making rights claims. *Who has the capacity to govern themselves, who lacks such capacities and the*

discourse that defines such capacities become effective instruments of the formation of political subjects and their subjectivity (italics mine Isin 2012: 568).

Isin's scholarship (2002; 2012) provides an alternative genealogy of citizenship, tracing its Orientalist beginnings and outlining a roadmap towards decolonization through a focus on acts that create political subjectivity (De Genova 2010b). This framework stresses the state's formative role in producing citizenship knowledges (Jeffrey et al. 2012) yet also provides space for politics that reject normative state sovereign categories (De Genova 2010b).

Yet Isin's framework has also come under scrutiny for its reliance on *acts* and *deeds* that produce political subjects rather than the *individuals* who act and embody these subjectivities (Staeheli 2010: 399). Perera (2009: 649) emphasizes citizenship as the *embodied* acts, everyday performances that attempt to "access the experience of citizenship." She argues that a "close scrutiny of the ways in which citizenship is actually embodied by the state discloses a scenario filled with the anxious enactments of citizens as actors" (Perera 2009a). Perera's (2009) focus on embodied citizenship connects with scholarship that Pearson (2002) and Veracini (2011) conduct on the specificity of settler colonial citizenship processes. Pearson (2002) argues that citizenship processes operate concurrently in settler colonies to constitute relations of difference vis-à-vis the state: Aboriginal minorities become constituted both as 'Aboriginal' and eventually as a 'minority,' migrant minorities undergo 'ethnification' to become inferior members of the nation-state, and settler majorities experience 'indigenization' as they become 'at home' in the settler colony. Similarly, Veracini (2011) discusses the processes through which settlers disavow indigenous inhabitants, describing the 'libidinal economy' of settlers who desire both the *land* and the *indigeneity* of indigenous occupants in particularly embodied ways. He (2011:

9) cites Stoler's (2006) description of colonialism's carnal knowledges to describe the colonizer's intense desire to know the indigenous subject's body.

Recent reformulations about citizenship have sparked new ideas about how and where people demand full citizenship status. For example, Miraftab and Wells (2007) describe how the rise of new enclosure practices have led to new demands for rights from those who they term 'insurgent citizens.' They attempt to look beyond the juridical 'membership' definition of citizenship to see how neoliberalism is producing new political subjectivities. People both refuse aspects of traditional 'liberal' citizenship and look to the law to reinstate other ones, thus both resisting *and* appealing to membership-driven notions of citizenship (Jeffrey et al. 2012). Another example is the category of 'aspirational citizens' described by Staeheli (2010). She describes how state projects reimagining citizens as consumers often conceal violent processes of boundary-making and public shaming through apoliticized narratives of individual responsibility (also see Ong 2006; Jeffrey et al. 2012). 'Insurgent' and 'aspirational' citizens represent an ambiguous category, individuals who are both resistant to and absorbed by state narratives about citizenship. Underlying neoliberal assumptions guide these models of citizenship, fragmenting 'citizen' as a collective category and imbuing it with economic expectations.

My analysis draws from Isin's (2012) focus on the acts, deeds, and discourses that allow for making claims to rights as well as the capacity to govern oneself. I extend these arguments by employing both Perera's (2009) focus on the embodied performances of citizenship and the increasing neoliberalized models of citizenship described by Miraftab and Wells (2007) and Staeheli (2010). I argue that the ward relationship is an anticipatory citizenship formation that limits the capacity of individuals for self-governance, offering the

promise of full citizenship if certain behavioral expectations regarding families and appropriate economic activities are eventually met. Wardship becomes reinvigorated and reworked in two contemporary cases, as I discuss throughout this chapter. Both Aboriginal populations affected by the Northern Territory Intervention legislation and asylum seekers in Australia face contemporary versions of wardship, and its paternalizing, gendered, and neoliberal discourses limit their ability to govern themselves.

Wards of the state: family relationships, economic conduct, and appropriate behavior

The “benefits” of wardship awarded to the three Aboriginal men in the 1961 Darwin legal ruling were short lived: the legal category of ‘ward’ was only applied to Aboriginal Australians for sixteen years. Yet the category of ward fit into a broader context of protection policies in Australia, particularly in the Northern Territory, where Aboriginal populations greatly outnumbered white settlers during much of the 20th century. The context of protection policies within the Northern Territory is also important because it sets the stage for the two contemporary policies taking place in the Territory today. This section provides an overview of national and Territory protection policies that culminated in wardship and describes the assumptions about family and economic activities that accompanied the construction of the ward category.

Protection policy precursors

National policy-makers had debated the eventual emergence of Aboriginal Australians as citizens as far back as the 1930s, but the assumption that Aboriginals were unready for citizenship and in need of government ‘protection’ dated back still further. Throughout the twentieth century in both the Territory and across Australia, policies

towards Aboriginal Australians moved from explicitly lethal violence toward what Sharp (in Nakata 2007: 130) calls 'soft violence.' Soft violence included regimes of surveillance, confinement, and collective deprivation, and national and Territorial governments collectively framed them as Aboriginal 'protection' (McGrath 1995). The idea of 'protecting power' harnessed by the state took hold in the Territory between 1911 and 1937. Leaders ostensibly wanted to keep Aboriginal inhabitants away from the threats of miscegenation, opium, alcohol, and the influence of Chinese migrants. Tactics included institutionalization in the "best interests of the child" where children were "encouraged to live white, think white." The Territory government enacted community patrols, prohibitions on Aboriginal transit, and kept diaries of Aboriginal movements to curtail the "danger of their being mischievously exploited" (Gray 2011b: 120; McGrath 1995: 280; Austin 1997; Chesterman and Galligan 1997).

For example, successive legislation passed in 1910 and 1911 gave newly established Aboriginal Chief Protector Baldwin Spencer the freedom to move Aboriginals onto and between reserves, to serve as a property trustee, to grant Aboriginal women permission to marry non-Aboriginal men, to declare places 'prohibited areas' where Aboriginals would be forbidden to enter, and to take control—physically and legally—of any person defined as Aboriginal (Chesterman and Galligan 1997). Aboriginal employers would have to be licensed to prevent the exploitation of their employees, yet the payment of wages was deemed too corrupting for Aboriginal employees. Indeed, as Spencer (quoted in Austin 1997: 44-45) wrote, Aboriginals were "mentally, about the level of a child who has little control over his feelings, and is liable to give way to violent fits of temper during which he may very likely behave with great cruelty."

In 1918, the Chief Protector assumed legal custody and guardianship of all Aboriginal children, authorized the arrest of Aboriginal residents without warrants, began more zealously enforcing prohibitions on mixed-race sexual encounters, and administered discipline on Aboriginal reserves (Chesterman and Galligan 1997). The national government began to classify reserves alongside other institutions of government incarceration, including prisons, asylums, and institutions for the blind or diseased (Nakata 2007: 137). In the Northern Territory, laws prohibited Aboriginal residents' movement after sunset in 1919 and legally denied them the vote in 1922 (Chesterman and Galligan 1997). Public concerns about the vulnerability of employed Aboriginal men to exploitation and Aboriginal women to prostitution led to the recommendations of the Bleakley report for better working conditions and legal protections. Then-Chief Protector Cecil Cook instead responded that the Aboriginal people as a whole were a 'child race' in need of protection and declined to pursue the recommendations (Gray 2011a). Cook focused instead on the 'problem' of the 'half-caste,' pursuing policies of child removal and attempted to mandate marriages between half-caste and white residents of the Northern Territory to, as he wrote, "fuck 'em white" (Gray 2011a: 71).

Even as these extensive regulatory regimes were implemented in the Northern Territory, the Chief Protector and other government authorities were also focusing on the 'conversion' of Aboriginal residents to citizens, a transition that was intimately bound up in bloodlines and skin color (Jennett 2011). Cook noted that while 'wild uncivilized blacks' and 'semi-civilized' fringe dwellers, as he termed them, were probably not appropriate for future citizenship, the 'detrribalized half-caste' was a possible citizen-in-the-making. He argued that "the policy of the Commonwealth is to do everything possible to covert the

half-caste into a white citizen” (in Chesterman and Galligan 1997: 148). A federal conference on Aboriginal Welfare in 1937 formally incorporated this policy into an overarching program of assimilation. This period became what Aboriginal residents of the Northern Territory came to call ‘government time,’ whereupon full-blooded Aboriginal people would remain on reserves and half-castes would be assimilated into white Australian society (Smith 2004).¹⁶

Assimilation meant eventual citizenship, policy-makers suggested, and indeed, the 1939 Aboriginal Policy suggested “raising... their status so as to entitle them by right and by qualification to the ordinary rights of citizenship” (Chesterman and Galligan 1997: 148). By 1943, the advent of World War Two and the incorporation of Aboriginal residents as members of the Australian armed forces began to challenge Territory racial politics. The Chief Protector was granted the authority to exempt half-castes from the Aboriginal Ordinance and procedures identifying half-castes through dog-tags if they proved their manner of living to be acceptable (Gray 2011a). Campaigns for citizenship for Aboriginal Australians gained momentum with new developments for white Australians. In 1948, after half a century of federation, white Australians lost their status as British *subjects* and became citizens (Jennett 2011).

¹⁶ The debates over Aboriginal welfare were dominated by religious organizations, whose missionary practices have determined the geography of Aboriginal institutional life in the NT since the late 1800s. Different religious groups operated different missions and reserves throughout the NT, including Bathurst Island, Rapid Creek, and Daly River missions (Catholic); Oenpelli, Groote Eylandt, and Roper River missions (Church Missionary Society); Goulburn Island, Milingimbi, Elcho Island, and Yirrkala missions (Methodist); Hermannsburg and Finke River missions (Lutheran); and Kapargoo mission (Angelic). Together with government-operated institutions such as Kahlin Compound (Darwin); Warrabri, Yuendumu, and the Channel Island Leprosarium, these religious institutions have shaped reserve life and debates over assimilation. Aboriginal communities continue to be based in the areas where these missions once operated, and their presence has permanently transformed the geography of remote NT (Read 1978; Saunders 1989; Fraser 2008).

Wards of the state

The creation of the category of ‘ward of the state’ as a form of anticipatory citizenship occurred formally in 1951, as the Australian government struggled to imagine the transition of some Aboriginal residents to full citizenship. The Commonwealth was determined to frame this transitional state through a ‘social’ rather than ‘racial’ lens (Gray 2011a). They needed a racially neutral term that would legally exclude all possibility of white Australians falling under the partial, anticipatory citizenship they proposed for Australian Aboriginals and settled on ‘wards of the state,’ a term that would mimic “the kind of action customary under the laws in respect of neglected children, the feeble minded, or other persons who need special care” (Gray 2011a: 116). The ward, they determined, would be defined as person who “by manner of his living, his inability to manage his own affairs, his standard of social habit and behavior, his personal associations... stands in need of special care” (Gray 2011a: 119). Also, critically, wards were people who *could never* be declared eligible to vote, a distinction ensuring that only Aboriginal people, not the white Australian voting public, would be designated as wards.

As one member of the legislature said at the time, it was a way of “seeming to recognize Aborigines as human beings without doing so,” a point made all the more clear by the inclusion of items such as ‘tribal name’ and ‘tribal language’ on paperwork for ward determination (Gray 2011a: 118). Wardship retained national government control over wards’ property, sexual relations, marriage, movement, and alcohol consumption. Vast amounts of data collection ensued to ascertain the status and location of all wards in state ‘care’ (McGrath 1995; Gray 2011a). The culmination of this data collection was the Register of Wards, a document known dismissively as the ‘stud book.’ By 1957 the Register listed

over 15,000 persons of ward status. The attempt to cement contact between individual wards and the state was such a labor-intensive and ultimately impossible project that one Territory politician called it “chasing Aborigines round the bush with a magnifying glass” (Gray 2011a: 121). The ‘stud book’ built on a longer legacy of state efforts to fingerprint, photograph, tag with bronze discs (in the 1930s) or brass discs (in the 1910s), or even permanently tattoo Aboriginal people for identification and classification purposes (Long 1998; Gray 2011a). Stud books and the vast resources of bureaucracy devoted to gathering data on Aboriginal people echo Stoler’s (2006) description of the colonial compulsion to *know* the bodies of the colonized subject. As Stoler (2006: 11) writes, many colonial strategies of governance “work through people’s bodies and hearts,” policing intimacy in the making of empire.

Wardship had a particular *anticipatory* temporal quality. Government pamphlets stated that Aboriginal people would assume full citizenship “when they are able,” and their ability would be measured based on the “stage of advancement which he has reached” (Minister for Territories 1957). Wardship was supposed to appear as a progressive measure that no longer tied citizenship to skin color, but rather to aspects of life that individual Aboriginal people could themselves control such as their behavior or education, yet the status was also an implicit promise to white Australians of delay. ‘Potential’ citizenship was supported by assumptions of ongoing Aboriginal inequality, and they existed in “a permanent state of ‘not yet’” (Rowse 1998: 114; McGrath 1995; Smith 2004).

Raced and gendered expectations: the ‘problem’ of the Aboriginal family

Wardship was especially concerned with gendered assumptions about Aboriginal people and their family relationships, particularly the relationships between parents and

children. Colonial depictions of Aboriginal parenting practices categorized them as animalistic, unnatural, and, at best, undisciplined. Indeed, according to court rulings, “being ‘Aboriginal’ was in itself reason to regard children as neglected” (Conor 2006: 173).

Parenting and gender roles within the family were the focus of wardship policies.

Authorities throughout the Northern Territory, for example, attempted to force Aboriginal women to give birth in hospital settings (Cowlshaw 1999) and continued to intervene in Aboriginal marriage practices (Cowlshaw 1999). The level of surveillance over Aboriginal parenting meant that the “Aboriginal family was allowed no privacy” from the state (McGrath 1995: 103). Through the focus on parenting and family structures, wardship maintained and also extended policy frameworks that infantilized Aboriginal families. Entire families became “dependent children in need of protection,” and individual wards were treated “as if that ward were an infant” (Fraser and Briskman 2005: 110; Gray 2011a: 123; Nakata 2007: 129; Cowlshaw 1999: 174).

The most extreme policing of parenting occurred in the form of child removals. Mixed-race Aboriginal Australians, then known by authorities as ‘half-castes,’ had been troubling Australian state authorities for decades. These individuals literally embodied the breaking of colonial sexual taboos by the color of their skin. Practices of child removal, later known as the Stolen Generation, continued intensively during the period of wardship (Cowlshaw 1999). Authorities assumed Aboriginal parents would reject their lighter-colored children as white parents would have and thus believed that institutionalization saved children from lives as outcasts. Institutionalizing ‘half-castes’ also erased the discomfiting visage of white children in black Aboriginal camps and provided these children with the skills and culture needed to transition toward citizenship (Cowlshaw

1999; Smith 2004). Removals, Smith (2004) argues, were the result of both the movement toward state intervention into poor families and this logic of racial categorization.

Wardship also relied on gendered understandings of appropriate masculinities. Colonial policies were often based on philosophies that valorized hard work (Austin 1997). Institutionalization of Aboriginal people on missions, reserves, and pastoral stations relied on unpaid and sometimes forced Aboriginal labor to achieve settlement goals (Smith 2004). Cash, employers and authorities argued, led to the “degradation of the Native” (Gray 2011a: 73). Rationing, the practice of distributing food and goods to Aboriginal families at specific sites throughout remote areas of the Territory, Rowse (1998) argues, was central to understanding some of the common assumptions about Aboriginal men and was also the focus of state intervention to shape families to white Australian sensibilities. Rationing became a method both of sustenance and government, wrapped up in paternalistic assumptions about the potential moral jeopardy of Aboriginal people who took food and goods from settlers and government officials. Rationing prompted worries from colonial administrators about the potential of Aboriginal people to become “pauperized” by the exchange. Aboriginal men who took rations did not adequately perform the role of breadwinner, white authorities believed, and seemed to lack the compulsion to work in exchange for the goods they received. Practices of sharing rationed goods and government benefits among extended families also troubled authorities, who struggled to enforce nuclear family structures and prevent such behaviors (McGrath 1995; Rowse 1998).

The doubts about Aboriginal masculinity, family structures, and parenting became part of the uneasiness surrounding wardship. The ‘problem’ of the indigenous family (Rowse 1998) was that it was ill prepared, even *permanently* incapable of guiding children

toward Australian citizenship (Conor 2006). Aboriginal masculinity presented an even more troubling picture. On the one hand, colonial administrators believed that Aboriginal people, particularly men, did not 'need' the corrupting influence of money in their lives. On the other, authorities maintained that citizenship required the adoption of appropriate behaviors commodifying labor power and freeing Aboriginals from welfare dependency. In either case, whether as infantilized and vulnerable or as lazy and idle, Aboriginal men were not quite ready for the responsibilities of citizenship (Rowse 1998).

Behavioral modification: a path toward citizenship

Wardship made assumptions about the inability of Aboriginal Australians to parent or labor correctly, assumptions that were incorporated into discourses of appropriate family or masculine behavior. If wardship represented the *promise* of citizenship, appropriate behaviors by individuals became the path toward its accomplishment. If, as Ahmad (cited in Casey 2012: 12) writes, "Colonial encounters... involve a transition from distance to proximity," wardship became the moment when racial categories could, ostensibly, be bridged by certain behavior practices. As McGrath (1993) notes, it was a matter of both looking whiter and acting whiter. Wardship was based on the assumption that the individual was able, at least in theory, to transcend the troubling and un-Australian behaviors of Aboriginals as a group. The focus on behavior modification by the individual foreshadows the emphasis on neoliberal economic behaviors in contemporary versions of wardship detailed in this chapter.

For example, one program of the ward era challenged Aboriginal residents to live in white-style homes. Living structures provided a concrete representation of Aboriginal progress: authorities allowed Aboriginal families in Darwin to move from rudimentary

dwellings to 'real' houses if they exhibited appropriate behaviors and appearances (Read 1995: 288). Alcohol consumption was another example of behavior regulation. For many Australians, drinking alcohol provided a measure of appropriate Australian behavior. The struggle over access to alcohol for Aboriginal people, particularly men, became a central test of membership in the nation. Indeed, as McGrath (1993: 110) writes, "maybe grog was citizenship."

Appropriate mobility was another frequent concern, one exacerbated by the paperwork and bureaucratic demands of ward registration and surveillance. For example, the 'problem' of controlling the 'drift' of Aboriginal people from remote communities to Darwin prompted the establishment of Maranboy Native Settlement in 1943. Its subsequent history, however, demonstrates the practical difficulties of maintaining control over Aboriginal mobility and behavior. Aboriginal residents protested their forced moves from Maranboy to King River Compound (1946) and then to Tandangal (1947-1951). Administrators found their "overall system of containment and control threatened" by excessive and uncontrollable movement of people in and out of the compound (Smith 2004: 42). In attempts to gain control over resident mobility, authorities at Beswick Creek Native Settlement (renamed Bamyili) introduced European foods to attract permanent residency and tightly controlled male and female interaction within the compound. Former residents recall these behaviors as "welfare... taking control over us" (Smith 2004: 61).

These examples demonstrate the widespread connections between wardship and behavior modifications and how 'acting white' became a critical foundational assumption behind becoming an *eventual* citizen. Eating white food, drinking alcohol, and enacting white patterns of settlement were tests of Aboriginal appropriateness. Together, gendered

assumptions as well as the promotion of appropriate behavior are aspects of the ward relationship that continue to the present. These assumptions color and legitimate the anticipatory quality of the ward's political subjectivity, the not-yet-citizenship it continues to promise.

Dismantling the ward era

The legal dismantling of the ward era occurred slowly over the next two decades. In 1957, the vote was formally extended to Aboriginal residents. The legal definition of the ward had been written to exclude voters as a way of preventing white Australians from being designated as wards. Expanding the franchise to include Aboriginal residents thus prevented national authorities from designating new wards. The new regulations literally trapped those previously designated as wards, as non-ward family members given the right to vote were physically prevented from visiting their ward relatives still incarcerated on reserves (Gray 2011a). This often meant that 'full-blooded' Aboriginals would be prevented from interacting with their 'half-caste' relations.

Aboriginal activism grew throughout the 1960s. Aboriginal residents of the Northern Territory made important activist contributions, including challenging the still-enforced Ward Employment Ordinance in the 1964 Northern Territory Aboriginal Rights parade through Darwin. Gurindji stockworkers and servants staged a walk off at Wave Hill Station in 1966, a moment since interpreted as the start of the movement for Aboriginal land rights throughout Australia (Gray 2011a).

Even as Aboriginal residents of the Northern Territory began to demand full citizenship rights, a national antiracist movement gathered steam throughout Australia (Jennett 2011) during the 1960s. Activists set up the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra

in 1972 to assert sovereignty and land rights, and throughout the country during the 1970s, activist 'pig patrols' monitored police treatment of Aboriginals in custody (Davis and Watson 2006). Responses from the national government were slow in coming: Aboriginal Australians were formally granted citizenship in 1967 but did not have the same civil or legal rights as white Australians. The national government still maintained that it had the right to make laws 'on behalf of' Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal people were not even required to vote, as were white Australians, until 1983 (Mercer 2003; Moreton-Robinson 2009). The paternalizing, gendered assumptions and focus on appropriate behaviors that characterized the ward era were reworked for new times and contexts, dangling contemporary promises of citizenship that remain unfulfilled.

Reemergence of the ward: the Northern Territory Intervention

The Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) legislation of 2007 ushered in a suite of legislation targeting Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. The policies, created ostensibly in response to allegations of child sexual assault detailed in the 'Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle/ Little Children Are Sacred' report released earlier that year, became known as the Northern Territory Intervention. The legislation created new regulations for Aboriginal land ownership, and alcohol or pornography consumption. It also established an income management regime that would 'quarantine' families' government benefits to be spent on rent and other state-determined necessities. The Northern Territory (NT) became, again, a "crucible" for white Australian relations with Aboriginal people (Gray 2011b: 11), as the Intervention policies worked to reshape governance of Aboriginal communities (Gray 2011a). As Osuri (2008: 2) describes, the Intervention prompted the questions: "what new powers were being consolidated in

relation to Indigenous subjects? What kinds of Indigenous subjects did these forms of power aim to produce?" For many Aboriginal people facing the Intervention policies, the resemblance was clear; one person described it as "here we are back in the welfare days again. Forced to line up for our handouts" (Gibson 2009: 6).

I argue that the Intervention legislation recycled knowledges of Aboriginal people. Knowledges of Aboriginal people from the ward era inform and justify contemporary governance in particular ways (see Lawrence and Gibson 2009). In this section, I discuss how the Intervention refashioned the ward relationship through a neoliberal lens and refocused attention on Aboriginal people through discourses about family, economic activity, and assumptions about appropriate behaviors. The Intervention, in other words, re-warded Aboriginal people with a strangely familiar relationship to the state. Intervention policies promoted a refashioned form of anticipatory citizenship for Aboriginal residents of the Northern Territory.

Set up for failure: gendered expectations, neoliberal governance, and citizens in name only

The NTER refocused national attention on Aboriginal parenting in the Territory. Just as in the ward era, assumptions about the roles of parents, children, and the place of the nuclear family were central points of tension. Allegations of child sexual assault accompanied inflammatory media reports about neglected children, unfit parents, and failed families and communities. Critiques of Aboriginal parenting fell into two different categories of colonial logics perpetuated in the Intervention, Lawrence and Gibson (2007) argue. Aboriginal parents were assumed to be draining resources from a strapped government because they were incapable of parenting correctly. At the same time, by

acting as ungovernable citizens, parents were also jeopardizing the next generation, failing to raise children capable of the responsibilities of citizenship.

Aboriginal people interpret Intervention policies as critiques of their parenting practices and react with shame and anger. Warlpiri elders from Nyrripi (Gibson 2009: 11), for example, tied the quarantining of welfare payments and regulations over alcohol to parenting practices: “We don’t drink. We know how to look after the kids.” Similarly, the practices of bulk ordering groceries through Government Business Managers in remote communities were attributed to parenting problems, as Jimmy (Gibson 2009: 14) from Ti-Tree explained. He noted that food boxes are now delivered “because they reckon the kids weren’t getting looked after properly.” Intervention policies have been interpreted through gendered lenses, particularly regarding government assertions that ‘women like the Intervention’ because of income management helps their families. This claim draws on assumptions of appropriate mothering practices yet fails to reflect the diversity of Aboriginal women’s experiences, according to Aboriginal activist Barbara Shaw of Mt. Nancy (Gibson 2009: 51).

Like in the ward era, critiques of parenting are also methods of infantilizing entire families. The NTER’s programs and policies have been criticized as profoundly disempowering (Gibson 2009; Concerned Australians 2011). As Aboriginal resident James Japangardi Marshal (quoted in Gibson 2009: 44) described at a community meeting in Yuendumu in 2007, “We are like a puppet on a string and you mob will be telling us what to do. We haven’t got any rights.” Examples of the powerlessness experienced by Aboriginal people included not being paid for ‘Intervention work’ projects proposed by Government Business Managers in communities; the extraordinary amounts of time and energy people

who received income-managed benefits expended trying to access their funds; and the shame and anger people felt at having their purchases tightly controlled by the state.

Aboriginal people drew direct connections between new regulations, powerlessness, and infantilization. For example, Christopher Poulson (quoted in Gibson 2009: 47) at the same 2007 meeting asked, "Is this law only for blackfella and the government is treating us just like a little boy?" Similarly, in 2011 at a community event, Joy White, a member of the Bagot community in Darwin, said, "We are right here in Darwin and yet we are treated like little children. I won't stand for it." In addition, Aboriginal residents of the Territory particularly critique how the NTER limits their freedom of movement. Issues with receiving funds from the 'Basics Card,' the debit card containing welfare payments managed by the government, prevented people from traveling interstate and attending funerals and other significant events in other parts of the country (Gibson 2009). Using the card stigmatized people making purchases, and many people reported shame, confusion, and anger from having to stand in 'Basics Card only' lines at registers or having shopkeepers police their purchases (Gibson 2009).

Expectations about Aboriginal masculinity also shaped Intervention policies, as they had in the ward era. Once again, men were expected to be breadwinners, but now these interpretations of masculine economic independence were connected to neoliberal assumptions about individual citizens as consumers and the superiority of privatized, market-based reforms compared with communal economic relationships. As in the ward era, government policies stressed the importance of people having 'real' jobs, particularly young men. Previously, many men in Aboriginal communities were involved with the CDEP voluntary work program. Under the NTER, this program was replaced by the *compulsory*

STEP 'work for welfare' program, which was supposed to open up new opportunities for Aboriginal employment (Stringer 2007).

In practice, however, many remote communities experienced a drastic drop in the amount of available work. Contracts for new buildings were increasingly given to national corporations with fly-in, fly-out workforces, and people who had jobs under the CDEP program were cut from STEP work projects (Gibson 2009). When I talked to activists about these changes in remote communities, they described Aboriginal friends using the phrase 'it's snowing' to signal the numbers of white contractors and state employees that descended into Aboriginal communities after the Intervention (Coddington, fieldnotes, February 15, 2012).

Other neoliberal policies accompanied the STEP transition. The NTER replaced communal land ownership in Aboriginal communities with mandatory government leases that would transition into private land tenure. This policy followed on the heels of the Aboriginal Land Rights Amendment Act of 2006 that had eased access to the mining industry and the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Act that had eliminated Aboriginal community consent procedures for nuclear waste dumping on Aboriginal lands (Stringer 2007). Tenancy management provided an important source of income for many communities. Yet even as government leases summarily withdrew these income sources, the promises of new housing and funds for communities were not often realized (Gibson 2009). As Fisher (2012: 176) notes, private property serves as an important rerouting of Aboriginal sovereignty claims.¹⁷

¹⁷ The challenge to Aboriginal land claims and sovereignty struggles by the provisions of the NTER and the other legislation mentioned are significant, and deserving of their own dissertation. Land rights have been the central organizing principle for sovereignty claims by Aboriginal Australians, and the erosion of land rights

Furthermore, the NTER introduced Government Business Managers in Aboriginal communities to promote economic development. Managers' roles built on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations Act of 2006, legislation that constituted Indigenous Australian groups as corporations (Stringer 2007). In practice, Government Business Managers were criticized by community members as hiding behind barbed wire fences, refusing to engage with the community, and drawing large salaries for little work. In Yuendumu, for example, community members nicknamed the Government Business Manager 'egg' because he stayed in his nest all day (Gibson 2009: 17).

Negative assumptions about Aboriginal family life and economic potential accompanied the NTER legislation, but Aboriginal residents were also given tools by the legislation to prove their worthiness of full citizenship potential. Behavior modification was a method of achieving 'eventual' citizenship in the ward era, and these expectations were revived during the Intervention. One of the Intervention's policy precursors was the development of Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs) signed with individual Aboriginal communities in various parts of Australia beginning in 2004. These agreements promised government services in exchange for setting community and family goals for personal hygiene, household cleanliness, and truancy prevention (Lawrence and Gibson 2007). SRAs blended neoliberal individualized market rationalities that stressed individuals' capacities to develop 'responsibility' with the familiar colonial logics of rationing (Lawrence and Gibson 2007).

obtained after the activism of the 1960s-1980s is ongoing, especially in the Northern Territory, where vast mineral rights and lack of Territorial jurisdiction over mining claims are jeopardizing hard-fought Aboriginal communal land holdings. See Green 2007; Strelein 2009; Walter 2010 for a much more thorough discussion of these important and ongoing issues.

The NTER legislation (2007) and the Stronger Futures (2012) policies that followed maintained their focus on behavior. Authorities restricted alcohol and pornography consumption across all Aboriginal communities deemed 'Prescribed Areas.' Income management policies limited where and when Aboriginal people spent money. Restrictions were placed upon the use of customary law in criminal sentencing. These policies are widely interpreted as targeting Aboriginal *culture* by focusing on certain behaviors. As Aboriginal community member Rosalie Kunoth-Monks of Utopia (quoted in Concerned Australians 2011: 27; Gibson 2009) said, there has been a "tremendous amount of soul searching of Aboriginal people feeling that they have done something wrong but they couldn't put their finger on what it is that's wrong. They've come to the conclusion what is wrong is that we were born black into a different culture."

Paradoxical assumptions about Aboriginal capabilities lay beneath these economic changes. On the one hand, a foundational assumption of income management was that Aboriginal people were incapable of spending money if they did earn it. On the other hand, the state eagerly attempted yet again to shape Aboriginal parenting and economic roles. Lawrence and Gibson (2007: 660) write, the Aboriginal "community becomes a discursive space of governmental intervention, a practical means of forming subjects as consuming citizens, and a way of obligating ethical self-conduct" through these market-based transformations. Yet I would argue that rather than creating consuming citizens, the NTER offered promises of citizenship benefits in exchange for increasingly neoliberal family behaviors yet simultaneously worked to prevent Aboriginal families from achieving these stated goals. Aboriginal residents were supposed to adopt neoliberal forms of self-regulation, according to state assumptions about families and economic behaviors. Parents

were supposed to help their children grow, yet lacked the power and authority to do so. Men were supposed to work, yet private contractors and business managers took over community economic activities. Aboriginal families were set up to fail.

The NTER promoted sweeping changes to the governance of Aboriginal economies and family lives. New policies advocated neoliberal strategies of privatized, corporatized economic development. They promised that individual responsibility and appropriate behaviors would demonstrate Aboriginal capacity for full citizenship rights. Yet at the same time, the NTER policies relied on long-standing beliefs that Aboriginal models of family life, economic governance, and community culture were unacceptable. The state framed inappropriate behaviors as evidence of failed Aboriginal culture and connected these behaviors with Aboriginal people's lack of capacity for citizenship. This is a connection Aboriginal activists have drawn, and contested, as well. Otto Jungaarayi Simms (quoted in Gibson 2009: 44) asked in 2007 at Yuendumu, "Are we bad? You see these old ladies, are they bad? You're telling us how to live. We know how to live! We are law abiding citizens." Jungaarayi Simms explicitly called out the underlying assumptions connecting wardship to Intervention policies: a belief that Aboriginal people fundamentally did *not* know how to live, that this failure denied them full Australian citizenship, and that until that point, their citizenship was in name only.

Reemergence of the ward: Asylum seekers in detention

The ward relationship is not limited to the contemporary circumstances of Aboriginal residents of the Northern Territory. Promises of eventual citizenship in exchange for appropriate behaviors underscored by gendered, neoliberal expectations about the citizen subject also occur in a very different context: that of asylum seekers in

mandatory detention within the Northern Territory and throughout Australia. Asylum seekers and Aboriginal residents occupy profoundly different contexts and do not share many similar experiences (Cox 2011), yet both are affected by state discourses, acts, and deeds in the construction of Australian citizenship. In both cases, people are interpreted through the lens of their ability to govern themselves. If citizenship is to be understood, following Perera (2009: 649) and Isin (2012: 568), as not simply a status bestowed by the state—which Australian Aboriginals formally have, and asylum seekers formally do not—but also the *capacity to govern oneself* and the *discourse framing this capacity* determined by the *everyday performances* attempting to “access the experience of citizenship,” then I argue that both Aboriginal Australians and asylum seekers in Australia have stories that can be read alongside one another.

Just as the Intervention recycled particular knowledges of Aboriginal people, so too did policies toward asylum seekers recycle particular aspects of the ward relationship, twisted to fit the unique circumstances of migrants. Again, citizenship became the reward for appropriate behaviors. This section explores how discourses of citizenship were shaped by similar gendered, neoliberal discourses and how these discourses mandated appropriate behaviors through which asylum seekers could ‘earn’ citizenship rights. Elements of the relationship between the state and its wards became reconstituted in policies and practices of mandatory detention in the NT.

Incapable and un-Australian: parenting, economic activities, and disciplinary behaviors

Assumptions of Australian citizenship for asylum seekers are directly tied to gendered discourses about families and parenting (Walters 2004). Since the beginning of

the Howard administration (1996), federal government officials and media had constructed images of asylum seekers as irresponsible, even dangerous parents, similar to how Aboriginal parents were being discussed in the Australian media. In 2001, government officials accused refugees of throwing children overboard in an attempt to persuade Navy officials to allow their boat to stay in Australian waters (Maclellan 2002: 147). The 'children overboard affair' was almost immediately proven to be false, yet the message that asylum seekers were irresponsible parents with an unnatural detachment to their children continued to be perpetuated (Every and Augoustinos 2008). During that same time period, the then Minister for Immigration, Phillip Ruddock, appeared on national television blaming the parents of a deeply traumatized six-year old asylum seeker in detention for his suicide attempt (Dever and Curtin 2007: 51).

Suggestions that asylum seeker parents were incapable of caring for their children continue both nationally and within the Northern Territory. In the 2012 Parliamentary debate to reopen detention centers on Nauru and Manus Islands, for example, Labor MP Kate Lundy (quoted in Caldwell 2012: 1) claimed that giving unaccompanied minors differential treatment would be the "height of irresponsibility" because asylum seeker parents would send boatloads of children alone to Australia. This was a clearly unthinkable option for Australian parents, she implied. Asylum seeker families were pathologized even as the state simultaneously proved to be a completely inadequate guardian for children in detention. For example, in February 2012 DASSAN received a letter from a ten-year-old girl detained in the Darwin Airport Lodge (DAL), who wrote that "our lives in this place is [sic] extremely depressing, we are suffering, and lack any sense of a future. We don't know who will help us" (DASSAN 2012a). In a strategy deeply aware of the irony of holding the state

accountable for the treatment of the children at the DAL, who had been in detention over a year at that point, DASSAN encouraged supporters to demand the NT Child Protection Department and the NT Children's Commissioner investigate their situation (see also Martin and Hutchinson 2005).

Attacks on parenting are part of broader assumptions infantilizing asylum seeker families. Asylum seekers are heavily surveilled within detention facilities, signaling the assumption of Australian authorities that given the opportunity, asylum seekers *will* behave in uncontrollable or inappropriate ways (Wilder 2007; McLoughlin and Warin 2008a; Larsen and Piche 2009). The underlying assumption of detention is that asylum seekers are incapable and undeserving of living within Australian communities as safe, responsible, temporary residents, a suspicion exacerbated by media coverage equating refugees and terrorists (Oberoi 2009; Vas Dev 2009; Welch 2012).

An example of how these infantilizing assumptions play out within detention centers is the practice of requiring the Australia Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) to conduct security assessments on refugees who have proved their status. There was no recourse to challenge negative assessments because all the information about the decision was considered classified (Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) 2012: 9). Asylum seekers waited up to a year, in some cases, for ASIO assessments, exacerbating mental-health issues and in some cases, ending in the suicide of the asylum seeker (Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) 2012: 7). Only in October 2012 did the High Court rule that asylum seekers found to be national security risks by ASIO and thus facing indefinite detention could challenge these decisions (Kelly and Wilson 2012). One asylum seeker I met who is currently in this position, Yogachandran Rahavan (Rahavan 2012), wrote an article

highlighting the infantilizing position of being negatively assessed and languishing in indefinite detention. He wrote that “I am left not even able to explain to my children why we remained locked up... Sometimes it is hard to remember that I am a 35 year old man with a family.”

Another example of the infantilization of asylum seekers in detention is the practice by contractors of referring to people by their boat number, rather than name. In Darwin, advocates have raised the issue of boat numbers repeatedly since 2010, yet it continues to be pervasive at all three local detention facilities, the Northern Immigration Detention Centre (NIDC), the Darwin Airport Lodge (DAL), and the Wickham Point Detention Centre (WPIDC). Asylum seekers were referred to by boat numbers at every one of my visits to Darwin-area detention centers (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 23, 2012), an experience seconded by reports from Fletcher (2011) and the non-governmental organization Chil-Out (Australian Lawyers Alliance 2011). One asylum seeker told me that only one detention center staff person had called him by his name in over two years in detention, an experience that he said made him “feel like a thing” (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 10, 2012). The Darwin Asylum Seeker Support and Advocacy Network (DASSAN) attempted to distribute gifts to children in the DAL for Christmas in 2011 and were informed that the gifts would have to be distributed using boat numbers rather than names, as “they are easier to tick off that way” (DASSAN 2012b). Despite assurances from the Managing Director of Serco Australia [the contractor operating detention centers in Australia] that “It is explicit in our policy to always address clients by their names” (DASSAN 2012), it is clear that classifying asylum seekers by boat numbers continues to be standard practice within detention centers. Assumptions that asylum seekers are unimportant, unrecognizable, and

just another number underscore this practice, a profoundly disempowering experience for people in detention.

Assumptions about asylum seekers' ability to participate in Australian economic life also frame debates over their potential capacity for citizenship. Frequent media and government portrayals attested that asylum seekers represent a drain on public funds. For example, a December 2011 article with a Darwin byline in Brisbane's *Courier Mail* (Jones 2011a) was headlined, "Where is my visa and my house?—The first question asylum seekers ask." Asylum seekers are commonly perceived as a drain on Australia's public benefits systems, despite the documented economic contributions of long-term studies of recent refugee populations in Australia (e.g., Stevenson 2005). Just as in the case of Aboriginal residents of the Northern Territory, neoliberal models of economic citizenship shape these expectations: public opinion maintains that appropriate behavior for citizens involves supporting oneself without government assistance.

The enormous expense of Australia's immigration enforcement and detention policies, while clearly not under the control of refugees themselves, is also framed as removing resources from other spending priorities. Refugees themselves are often blamed for the expense. For example, the 15 October 2009 *Northern Territory News* (2009) titled its article on Christmas Island Detention Center's demountable (trailer) housing "Boat people 'pilfering' from Aborigines: Scullion." An NT Member of Parliament was quoted (2009: 5) as saying, "So now we are taking from our real first Australians to give to our new Australians." Such portrayals help to cement asylum seekers as being drains on the economy both while in detention and after they are released. These perceptions lead to dehumanizing treatment, such as the response to the deadly December 2011 asylum seeker

boat crash on Christmas Island. As one commenter on the *NT News* website wrote, “That’s more illegals the taxpayer doesn’t have to pay for now” (Hainke 2011: 15).

As for Aboriginal Australians, appropriate behavior becomes a central axis upon which constructions of asylum seekers’ political subjectivity hinge. In general, appropriate behavior is framed by media and government narratives as appropriate mobility: asylum seekers are blamed for their ‘illegal’ methods of entry and depicted as irresponsible or unworthy of citizenship (Haggis 2012: 7; Vas Dev 2009). For example, the *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) of 26 November 2011 contained an article about asylum seekers with the headline: “Open the floodgates—Exclusive: thousands of boat people to invade NSW.” While the inflammatory use of the words ‘invade’ and ‘floodgates’ prompted an official admonition by the Australian Press Council, such media coverage is common in Australia (Daily Telegraph 2012). These depictions often feature discussion of the ‘queue’ that ‘genuine’ refugees would (theoretically, because no such queue in reality exists) join to request protection in an orderly fashion. Asylum seekers, primarily those arriving by boat, which make up only a very small fraction of people seeking protection in Australia, are depicted as unruly, threatening, and violating ideas of fairness in comparison to the idea of the queue (Welch 2012: 327; Gelber 2003; Pedersen et al. 2006; Every and Augoustinos 2007; Oberoi 2009).

Specifically, asylum seekers in detention in the NT find themselves disciplined for what are considered inappropriate protest behaviors. For example, in 2011 the Immigration Minister decided to change the Migration Act to automatically deny protection for any detainee convicted of a crime on grounds of ‘bad’ character (Refugee Council of Australia 2012). Instead, those convicted would be issued a Bridging Pending Removal Visa

under which they could be sent back to their country of origin as soon as conditions improved (Coorey 2011). The announcement publicly shamed asylum seekers perceived to be cheating the system: Home Affairs Minister Brendan O’Conner was quoted (2011: 1) as saying, “If people are wanting to have their applications for asylum properly processed this is not the approach you take.”

The case of Rohingya refugee Habiburrahman (Habib), whom I met while in detention at the NIDC in Darwin, illustrates how contingent the enforcement of such policies can be. After a rooftop protest, Habib and another asylum seeker who had organized the protest claimed to be “bashed” by guards and removed to isolation rooms, where their injuries were photographed but not investigated (as later trial testimony revealed) (Rintoul 2012: 1). In what refugee advocates called a “vindictive” disciplinary response, Habib and the other man were taken to trial on charges of assault. SERCO guards claimed that they had been hit by a rock during the protest. The refugees were detained eleven months after their protection status and security clearances had been finalized. The court found them not guilty after multiple SERCO employee witnesses contradicted or changed their testimony, finally admitting they could not see who threw the rock at the guards (Arnost 2012; Rintoul 2012). This was not Habib’s first experience being disciplined for protests while in detention; after a five-day hunger strike in early 2011, he was placed in an isolation ward, without telephone, internet, personal contact with other detainees, or medicine, with three to four guards at a time to observe his behaviors (Habiburrahman and Ansel 2012: 356). Habib’s experiences of beatings, isolation, and being charged with assault show the everyday attempts by immigration department contractors to discipline behavior inside the center, mirroring depictions of ‘inappropriate’ behaviors on the outside as well.

The majority of asylum seekers subject to mandatory detention are incarcerated based on their method of entry: detention is not required for asylum seekers who arrive by plane. Entering by boat subjects asylum seekers to immediate suspicion, blame, and cascading expectations about appropriate parenting, use of state resources, and behavior both in- and outside detention facilities. Asylum seekers who behave according to Australian norms, demonstrating conventional family values and refraining from objecting to the conditions of their detention, are offered the potential of citizenship, yet they, like Aboriginal Australians in the NT, are also set up to fail. From the moment they enter the country by boat, these asylum seekers are assumed to *already* embody recklessness, danger, and illegality. Even if eventually granted formal citizenship, discrimination and public anger toward asylum seekers deny them membership in the Australian social body. The promise of citizenship in exchange for appropriate behaviors is an illusory one. Instead, the possibility of belonging sets asylum seekers up on a course of ever-increasing self-discipline toward a goal they may never fully achieve.

State and public expectations about asylum seekers sets up an implicit bargain similar to that presented to wards of the state: belonging for constant and appropriate self-discipline. This bargain echoes wider underlying assumptions of contemporary neoliberal governments that increasingly atomized populations will govern or discipline themselves according to individual, competitive economic rationalities. In *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2008), Foucault (quoting Röpke , 2008: 148) writes that neoliberalism is a process of “shifting the center of gravity of governmental action downwards.” Neoliberal state actors want to “make the market possible” and facilitate the emergence of a new governing rationality among individual citizens (Foucault 2008: 146). As governing shifts downwards,

from the social body to the individual body, the goal is to replicate the enterprise body throughout society (Foucault 2008: 148).

The system works best when the enterprise form becomes the method through which individuals begin to envision and discipline themselves (Roberts 2008). Indeed, as Lazzarato (2009: 120) writes, “for neoliberal social policy, the problem is to transform society into an ‘enterprise society’ and to constitute the worker as a ‘kind of enterprise.’” Foucault (2008: 147) notes that such governing (and self-governing) mechanisms produce “not the man of exchange or man the consumer; he is the man of enterprise and production” whose “grid of intelligibility”—the way he sees the world—is that of economic risks and rewards (252). Both asylum seekers and Aboriginal Australians are encouraged through the implicit assumptions governing state policies to discipline themselves as neoliberal subjects. Their lives, just as Foucault (2008: 241) writes, with their “relationship to [their] private property, for example, with [their] family, household, insurance, and retirement—must make [them] into a sort of permanent and multiple enterprise.” In the cases of Aboriginal Territorians and asylum seekers, the reward for such self-discipline and appropriate behaviors is citizenship, and the sense of genuine belonging in the Australian nation. And in both cases, these populations face uphill battles.

The promise of citizenship

Throughout this chapter, I have explored the anticipatory form of citizenship I call ‘wardship.’ The category of ‘ward of the state’ was initially used to categorize Aboriginal Australian populations during the 1950s and 1960s, and it was characterized by an implicit bargain. Aboriginal people would obtain eventual citizenship if their behavior adhered to assumptions about appropriate family and economic life, yet the constraints of wardship

guaranteed citizenship remained firmly out of reach. Wardship, I argue, reemerges as the promise of citizenship in two different contemporary cases in the Northern Territory. Aboriginal Australians impacted by the Northern Territory Intervention and asylum seekers in mandatory detention are both offered the possible citizenship if they can demonstrate appropriate behavior. Again, gendered and neoliberal assumptions about acceptable family life and economic activity govern the terms of this deal, and in both cases, the affected populations act without a level playing field. Aboriginal and asylum seekers construct political subjectivities through self-discipline, adhering to or contesting the implicit bargain offered by the state. In each case, their capacity for self-governance becomes *contained* by the terms of these deals. Both groups encounter the promises of citizenship, but not its full embrace.

Wardship thus underscores containment logics and legitimates containment practices. It creates and perpetuates assumptions about Aboriginal and asylum seekers' capacities for self-governance and authorizes containment practices that continue to constrain these capacities. Wardship's set of assumptions have very embodied consequences, such as Habib's bruises, Aboriginal men's unemployment, Rahavan's precarious authority over his family, and Aboriginal women's shame in using their Basics Cards. Wardship limits the ability for these political subjects to govern themselves, even as it promotes increasingly amounts of neoliberal self-discipline. Aboriginal Territorians and asylum seekers are by no means powerless, however. Recent scholarship has documented the incredible resilience and political engagement of asylum seekers in detention (e.g., Evans 2003; Browning 2007; Briskman et al. 2008) and of Aboriginal community activists who challenge Intervention policies (e.g., Kacha 2009; Walter 2010; Watson 2010; Cox

2011). Indeed, theoretical work on citizenship is just beginning to catch up to the remarkable projects of resistance and activism occurring in different places.

Demands for citizenship navigate a challenging arena. Citizenship acts both as an idea with potential for oppression—as the promise of wardship suggests—and space of “redress and communal expression” (Jeffrey et al. 2012: 1254). Contesting unequal citizenship promises through state legal channels risks engaging the law as a method of continued colonial violence even as it also offers a means toward reparation. In Australia, the increasing limitations to full citizenship enacted through the legal system, including increased voter identification laws, prisoner disenfranchisement, and the stricter residency rules of the Citizenship Act 2007, suggest that Australian law may not be capable of fully addressing containment logics and practices. (Stratton 2011: 307). Perhaps conceptions of citizenship not bounded by the terms of the nation-state offer more potential for activism and contestation.

Jones (2012) questions whether a binary framework of resistance or cooption, exception or inclusion always fits emergent political subjectivities. He proposes using the term ‘spaces of refusal’ to describe citizenship acts that are not overt resistance but instead a *dismissal* of the state’s claims over subjects and activities in certain spaces, refusing an all-encompassing understanding of state power (Jones 2012). Similarly, de Genova (2010: 104) argues that migrant activism in the US challenges frameworks of citizenship that divide citizens from non-citizens in terms of their ability to make rights claims. Activism thus positions “officially rightless non-citizens” where they can “authorize themselves to speak.” Such a politics of refusal—although he does not use this term—highlights the cracks in the state apparatus. They create instead “a politics of *migration* that exceeded the

prescribed ‘politics’ of ‘immigration,’ a global politics of transnational mobility, an *excess* that could not be domesticated and refused to be incarcerated within the space of the U.S. nation-state” (De Genova 2010a: 115).

These radical reworkings of citizenship demonstrate its continued promise as a theoretical concept and suggest why studies of citizenship continue to be important rejoinders and challenges to dominant state framings. Citizenship can be reimagined as a more radical sense of belonging. Aboriginal Australians and asylum seekers in Australia are beginning to explore ideas of citizenship that transcend state borders, contesting the logics of containment limiting their capacity as political subjects. For example, in 2012, Aboriginal activists issued 200 Aboriginal Land Passports in the Redfern neighborhood of Sydney to migrants and asylum seekers. Activist Rahib Charida (quoted in *Aboriginalnationspassport* 2012: 1), explicitly connected the NT Intervention, migration, and sovereignty, articulating a different conception of citizenship and belonging:

The picture that the government paints is that Australia is the “lucky country”. But when we look at the Apartheid being practiced in the Northern Territory and the number of Black Deaths in Custody, among hundreds of other injustices aimed solely at the ATSI [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander] peoples, we know that that picture couldn’t be further from the truth. As the beneficiaries of these injustices, this event is a chance for us to express that we do not recognize Australia’s legitimacy as a sovereign power of this land and that it does not act in our name.

The challenge of these spaces of refusal is a radical reimagining of citizenship that extends beyond the Australian state, even as policies of containment work to hem in Aboriginal and asylum seeker populations in the Northern Territory. The threat, as Aboriginal activist and scholar Watson writes, is that, “Aboriginal laws, or sovereignty, simply exist” (Giannacopoulos 2011: 14). Perhaps the political subjectivity of existing will become a significant challenge to anticipatory citizenship and the corrosive logics and assumptions it perpetuates.

Chapter 5. Tired advocacy: Contagious trauma, embodied effects, and imaginative containment

I have dreams where it is hard to breathe, where I have lost my voice. I wake up to myself calling out, breathing heavily. The noise of the air conditioner blocks out most outside sounds but still sometimes I hear groups of Aboriginal people walking at night, calling out on the street, or the sounds of someone vomiting outside. A true story: in the afternoon, the bus pulls up to Causarina and I have 20 minutes before the next bus arrives. We are outside the busiest shopping mall in the Northern Territory and there is just enough time to want to go inside, to feel the air conditioner, but I know I don't really have time so I sit on a bench outside, breathing in the air, humid and stale with the smells of body odor and cigarette smoke. I read, trying my best to shut out the chaos around me. Bus riders here are like bus riders where I grew up, the mentally ill, the poor, but also because we are in Darwin, they are the tourists, the drunk, the homeless, all of us smelling like mildew and sweat, with tinges of the sweet smells of cheap alcohol and vomit. I am mentally preparing for another trip to the detention center, trying to center my mind and body to absorb the rage and despair I feel once inside, trying to feel compassion for the foreign workers who take the jobs, trying to not carry the weight of the afternoon into my sleep later that night. Shouting begins, from a group of Aboriginal men and one woman. They are drunk, sloppy, waving hands. I peer above the line of my book, watching. The men evidently think the woman has taken their money, but don't seem to know what to do. One shouts, "I'm no woman-basher!" Mall security comes over, a white man in a cheap uniform, and asks the woman to empty her pockets. She does. There is nothing. The men are not satisfied, gesture at the woman's chest and erupt into angry discussion, none of it in English. Their gestures finally become legible to the security man: they believe she has put the money under her shirt. She stands back, rips up her shirt and bra. An explosion: her lighter falls to the ground, sparks, burns. Bits of paper and trash rain out over the sidewalk, maybe with a few coins. Her breasts hang down, exposed, narrow, mimicking the folds of her stomach as they buckle over a mid-stomach scar: two bags of flesh on each side, naked. There is no money anywhere. I dream that night of scarred flesh, the raised scars on the Sri Lankan refugee's arm in the Melbourne detention center, the folds of the Aboriginal woman's skin hanging down over her waistband, scars, scars, everywhere.

Your scars tell a story. I fold inward where your flesh mends outwards. These scars of yours, they push into me. They live inside me.

Your scars tell a story. Now it is also my story. How do I write this story? Your scars tell a truth, as Cathy Caruth (1995: viii) writes. How can we express this truth, the truth of you and me, of scars and folds, beyond simply repeating your suffering?

Scholars of trauma based in the health sciences argue about the relationship between trauma and brain chemistry. Some (e.g., van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995) believe that traumatic incidents become lodged in the brain in a biologically different manner than do non-traumatic memories: the molecules attach differently, the synapses fire differently, and thus do the traumatized repeat their suffering without ever fully functionally absorbing it. Others (e.g., Leys 2000) claim that traumatic memories may *feel* different but are not biological abnormalities. These arguments in theory position the embodied nature of trauma suffering centrally within trauma studies, but the clinical details of brain chemistry remain curiously remote from the pain and suffering that your scars indicate. I see your scars. Lots of people do, in fact. Whereas some trauma scholars focus on the psychological and neurological mechanisms through which suffering becomes lodged in the brain—biologically or otherwise—many others focus on your pain. They rate it, categorize it, survey it. On a scale from one to ten, they ask, how often do you want to hurt yourself? Where is your pain? Do you sleep? Do you eat? You are tired of these questions. I am too. What I want to know is how your scars move, how they take up residence inside me, causing the hitch in my breath, the dull ache behind my eyes. I need a way of writing this contagious suffering differently.

Your misfiring brain chemistry, violent flashbacks, insomnia, or pain: they are well documented within trauma studies, mostly from a clinical or practitioner perspective (see a long list including van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995; Wise 2004; Walters 2011). Indeed, psychologists and trauma scholars have also tried to corral the movement of trauma from you to me, to categorize its mobility from body to body, using a variety of interrelated concepts: vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, secondary transmission of trauma, or

burnout. Yet these terms do not fully *embody* the contagion of trauma, how it moves from you to me during my night wakings or through the headaches and exhaustion I feel after seeing you. Your trauma has taken hold within my body. My stress and sleeplessness limit what I imagine possible.

In my work with advocates, I found I was not alone in my exhaustion: other advocates felt the same way. This chapter explores the two central issues that constitute the dissertation—the mandatory detention of asylum seekers and the 2007 legislation affecting Aboriginal Australian communities—from the perspective of the advocates who work in these areas. The national prominence of Aboriginal community dysfunction and asylum seeker detention magnifies practices in the Northern Territory that limit citizenship rights, and the panicked furor around these issues focuses attention on the people who work toward justice for Aboriginal populations and asylum seekers in detention. In Darwin, I worked together with advocates for Aboriginal rights as well as for asylum seeker justice, and their individual experiences, together with my own, provide the stories for this chapter. Shared confessions of sleeplessness, anxiety, and exhaustion demonstrated that *your* trauma was seeping into other advocates' bodies the way it had mine. How had this happened?

I begin the story of trauma's debilitating effects on advocacy work by examining the story of trauma itself. How do we make sense of the traumatized memories that people carry? I explore scholarship on Aboriginal people, asylum seekers and trauma, and then turn to scholarship about the mobility of trauma through space and time. How does trauma move from you to me? And finally, how can we situate this movement geographically? How can we *embody* this contagion? Next, I work through four examples of asylum seeker and

Aboriginal advocates experiencing embodied effects of trauma in Darwin, and the decisions they made as a consequence of their experiences. I use these four examples because they demonstrated the range of effects of infectious trauma and its transformative effects on advocacy projects. At its heart, this is an analysis of what *does not happen*. To stitch together a narrative of untapped possibilities and foreclosed decisions and how they relate to the embodied effects of trauma, I cobble together a jagged-edged sampler of small decisions, persistent headaches, and community hostility. I explore how stress, burnout, exhaustion, and fatigue limited advocates' involvement in their work. I draw from fieldnotes to reconstruct nightmares I experienced while conducting fieldwork, using these episodes to force uncomfortable proximity to the reader, so that *you too* become caught up in this traumatic narrative. In conclusion, I pull together my nightmares and the stories of the advocates to argue for contagious trauma as a form of imaginative containment, constraining the possibilities that advocates can imagine.

The advocate's role has a particular context within Australia. Advocacy and activism are considered separate, yet related, concepts. While both are concerned with action on the part of people sympathetic for social justice of various types, advocacy is considered both broader and less confrontational. Advocates incorporate many tactics in their work but eschew direct protest. Zion et al. (2010) describe several roles of advocates, including being conduits to a wider community by collecting and disseminating information about injustice, supporting affected people, and lobbying for legal or political reform. In my experience in Australia, advocates and activists self-identify as such. As Kleist (2013) also describes, activists often occupy the fringes of social movements in Australia. In the case of asylum seekers, Kleist (2013) suggests that activists are radical not only in terms of

methods, such as direct protests at detention centers and rallies blocking traffic in urban areas, but also in terms of philosophy. Activists draw on Socialist political traditions, locating policies such as Australia's indefinite detention of asylum seekers within underlying social, political, and economic structures (Kleist 2013).

I use the term advocate to incorporate a spectrum of people broadly sympathetic to asylum seekers and Aboriginal justice efforts. I provide four examples of advocacy work within this broader umbrella definition. The two groups I profile debate their roles as advocacy or activist organizations. Through their attempts to portray asylum seeker issues with balance and compassion, journalists become enmeshed within advocacy work. The mental-health professional becomes professionally allied with advocates through her support of asylum seekers as well. Together, the voices of individual advocates and activists also contribute to the portrayal of people sympathetic to justice for Aboriginal and asylum seeker populations. As a researcher, I too am concerned with justice and ally myself with both of these advocacy movements within Australia.

Advocates' stress and fatigue cannot fully be attributed to the traumatic nature of the causes for which they seek justice. Furthermore, the decisions to limit advocacy work are inevitable; advocacy always involves choices about the best ways to allocate limited time, energy, and finances. Yet when people limit their advocacy because of persistent fatigue, hostile community reactions, or reoccurring nightmares, future advocacy strategies change. Advocates protect themselves through distance or through curtailing their actions. Thus, I argue, they become individual agents of *containment*, constructing a geography of advocacy characterized by barriers, distance, and self-protection. Contagious trauma, the

transfer of stress, fatigue, or burnout, thus becomes instrumental in containing advocacy and foreclosing the possibilities people can imagine.

This chapter builds on previous chapters by fleshing out containment. Containment works discursively, through the panicked narratives of asylum seeker and Aboriginal policies. It works through practices of imprisonment and anticipatory citizenship. And, as this chapter illustrates, containment becomes an imaginative practice as well, working through the transmission of trauma and its embodied effects to constrain the everyday decisions of advocates. Containment thus becomes a practice imprinted on the body, the cautionary limits of our decisions, the urge to say: well, then again, maybe this time, I won't. As it works its way from narratives to material practices to individual imaginations, the argument shifts down in scale as well, from the national scale of the panic narratives to the Northern Territory focus of the wardship practices to the scale of the body itself, mine as well as advocates I encountered in Darwin.

The other night I had a nightmare where my ex-husband was chasing me around the bed, arm outstretched and bitterly angry, trying to hit me. I haven't dreamed of such rage in a long time, but it still happens, occasionally. I used to have violent, angry dreams often. There was such a stretch of angry dreams during the time I visited Ahmad at the detention center in Darwin. By the time I was escorted onto the military base, x-rayed—often twice—and buzzed through the double set of secure doors, I was already struggling to balance my own frustration and anxiety with the bottled-up emotions I knew Ahmad would allude to, the casual way violence, terror, death and despair would creep into the conversation, like when he told me that Hazaras don't tell you to 'have fun' when you travel, they tell you: 'don't get killed.' Or when we discussed the construction of the new detention center 40 miles from town, and his first concern was the distance between the facility and the nearest police: people get angry, they pick fights with each other. He didn't have to say the other part that we both knew: that people also needed the police because they strung themselves up in the stairwells, swallowed glass, or cut their veins. One time, Ahmad started describing the meeting with immigration that had led to an unspecified 'disturbance,' cutting our time short. "But this makes you and I too angry," he said, "so we should talk of things that don't scare you." He later told me he didn't want to open his heart to me because I might get too upset. That strategy didn't work. I didn't have another way to deal with his emotions other than lean into them, pull them into my heart and body and into my dreams, night after night. My soft body became

a weekly cushion for all the anxiety his pacing or nervous tremors revealed, the rage and terror he described, the numbness and hopelessness his friends shared, and I became fatigued. December 27th, I wrote: "I wish sometimes he would go to Tasmania because coming here exhausts me." Two months later, another refugee in detention would barrage me with two hours of non-stop horrors, from terror at home and death in detention to lies and fraud in the refugee process. I emerged pummeled, unable to take in his emotions. I wrote, "I am tired of detention, of signing in, of rage and depression and stories... Enough. I am exhausted." But the anger settled in my pores at night, toxically combined with the violence surrounding my divorce and the deaths of friends, replayed again and again as I slept. I would wake up more tired than before I'd fallen asleep.

Trauma, mobility, and geography: situating the contagion

How have theorists of trauma made sense of the reoccurring nightmares and scarred memories that people carry with them? Trauma originally referred to a physical wound on the body from an external source but since the definition of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in 1980, has come to mean a body of suffering of an entirely different variety (Leys 2000: 19). Modern psychological understandings of trauma are heavily based on the description of PTSD published by the American Psychiatric Association in their *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* in 1980 (Caruth 1995b; Degloma 2009). A diverse coalition of activists, Vietnam veterans, Holocaust survivors, and feminists concerned with child sexual assault had pushed for the creation of a category that would incorporate the continued trauma they suffered based on past experiences (Leys 2000; Degloma 2009). Indeed, even before the creation of PTSD in the 1980 *DSM*, feminist psychologists focused on what they called 'Rape Traumatic Syndrome' among their patients (Webster and Dunn 2005). PTSD became defined not by the initial event or experiences but rather by the reception of the event or experiences in the traumatized person; as Caruth writes, "to be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" (Caruth 1995b: 4-5). PTSD emphasizes *repeated* experiencing of a

fundamentally *incomprehensible* event or experience, which refuses attempts at meaning-making, dooming the traumatized person to relive the experiences again and again (Caruth 1995b; Leys 2000). “The experience of the trauma, fixed or frozen in time, refuses to be represented *as* past, but is perpetually reexperienced in a painful, disassociated, traumatic present” (Leys 2000: 2).

In the following section, I first examine how scholarship on asylum seekers and Aboriginal populations has incorporated insights from theories of trauma. While the theoretical utility of trauma scholarship for asylum seeker populations has been questioned by advocates, it continues to be central for Aboriginal struggles for justice. Next, I turn to the central claims of my argument: the mobility of trauma, and the importance of situating that mobility geographically. To understand how these types of traumatic experiences could move between people, across space and time, I bring together interdisciplinary scholarship about trauma and its mobility. Finally, I examine how trauma’s contagious nature is nevertheless geographically situated in places, bodies, and psyches. I extend the insights of these scholars with the empirical sections that follow, arguing that contagious trauma creates a geography of containment for advocates, limiting their future work.

Asylum seekers, Aboriginal Australians, and trauma scholarship

Advocates and scholars who work with refugees have criticized the trauma framework even as its use has become nearly ubiquitous. Pupavac (2008) traces the evolution of refugees from Cold-War-era political dissidents to the depoliticized, traumatized women and children generally portrayed in advocacy, human rights, and legal literatures today. Trauma became a signifier of community-wide suffering beginning in the

1990s, when scholarship and advocacy connecting trauma and refugee experiences “exploded” (Pupavac 2008: 278). Pupavac (2008: 283), like others, critiques the medicalized framework of trauma for implying dependence and notes that refugees’ claims to universal human rights are “frail” in comparison with past claims to civil or political rights, diminished claims to rights that are met in turn with diminished efforts at protection. For the refugees themselves, Marlowe (2010) argues, their traumatized, dysfunctional pathology dominates their public portrayals. Victim-hood, in the case of the Sundanese refugees to Australia profiled, implies potentially risky employees with highly medicalized lives (Marlowe 2010). In another example, Munt (2012) examines emotional geographies of refugee women, whose need for multiple identities and ambiguous ways of framing their experience do not align well with the linear focus of trauma therapies. Trauma becomes a kind of currency for protection in the refugee claims process but also offers cautionary benefits: Sinnerbrink and Silove (1997) note that performing traumatic past experiences retraumatizes refugee survivors; Pupavac (2008: 272) argues that refugees surrender their welfare to others under medicalized frameworks that equate suffering with limited reasoning capacities; and Rosseau and Foxen (2010) warn that trauma transmitted in power-laden courtrooms may for the refugee judges evoke desires to blame the victim, rather than more empathetic responses.

Despite the variety of problems with the medicalization of refugee experiences, the trauma framework can also serve different kinds of collective purposes for refugee communities. Rees and Silove (2006) describe how East Timorese asylum seekers to Australia were empowered through granting interviews describing their trauma, despite arguments that they would only be re-victimized through the process. Skilbeck (2010)

notes similar results for refugee trauma survivors whose experiences were reworked through the writing they did while in Australian immigration detention. Wise (2004) also examines the East Timorese refugee community in Australia, noting that traumatic experiences in East Timor, the isolation and displacement of forced migration, and refugees' guilt over fleeing compounded feelings of suspicion and distrust in the refugee community as a whole. Protest events became sites, however, where traumatic memories could be reworked and made meaningful to the exile community. Through drama, singing, dance, and public relating of traumatic stories, refugees who participated at protest events channeled their individualized experiences of trauma into a larger community of suffering, and the community was able to share in the experiences of being in exile and feel "more Timorese" (Wise 2004: 31). These more celebratory stories of working through trauma demonstrate both the current preoccupation with the trauma framework within the refugee advocacy and scholarship communities, and the potential for individualized experiences to differ wildly from person to person, community to community.

Literature about Australian Aboriginal people and trauma tends to follow different patterns: rather than a critique of trauma theory and its applicability, most of the literature argues that the effects of trauma are widespread, serious, and long-lasting. Some scholarship attempts to measure the extent of trauma in Aboriginal populations; for example, Atkinson-Ryan (in Wild and Anderson 2007: 67) interviewed 58 Aboriginal prisoners convicted of sexual or physical assaults and determined that 22 of those prisoners (38 percent) were themselves victims of rape or sexual abuse, and 19 of those 22 suffered extensive symptoms of PTSD. In the Darwin area, Holmes and McRae-Williams (2008: vii) used the Australian Aboriginal version of the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire to

assess lifetime exposure to trauma of Aboriginal people living in the longgrass (homeless). They found that individuals had personally experienced, witnessed, or heard 12 traumatic events in their lifetime, and over half of those surveyed had been exposed to every type of trauma listed on the questionnaire (Holmes and McRae-Williams 2008: vi). Atkinson and Woods (Atkinson and Woods 2008: 12) write about Atkinson's experiences working with traumatized Aboriginal people in central Queensland, noting that all her acquaintances would begin their stories at the point of their most severe pain, *all* having been sexually abused as children, mostly by non-Aboriginal men. Atkinson details how drug abuse, violence, and attempts of suicide often followed these initial traumas (Atkinson and Woods 2008: 12). The 2008 *Social Justice Report* issued by the Australian Human Rights Commission focused on Aboriginal people's experiences with trauma. This report described different types of trauma experienced by Aboriginal people, including situational trauma from specific events, cumulative trauma that builds over time, and intergenerational trauma, transmitted from generation to generation. Internalized racism is characterized as a form of cumulative trauma, and the effects of colonization and forced removal of children affects families and communities as intergenerational trauma (Australian Human Rights Commission 2011: 55).

Scholarship on Aboriginal trauma focuses on the role of intergenerational trauma in Aboriginal communities and families. Atkinson, Nelson, and Atkinson (2010: 137) cite the applicability of Blanco's model of a five-generation transmission of violence for Aboriginal communities: the first generation is decimated through colonial violence; the second generation attempts to cope by overuse of alcohol and drugs; the third generation becomes riddled with family violence, including child abuse—and often subsequent child removal;

the fourth generation reenacts spousal violence and violence against children; and the fifth generation increases the severity of the cycles of violence and accelerates the breakdown of family and communal ties. By tracing one family's path across six generations, Atkinson (2010) found a similar pattern of accelerating intergenerational violence and trauma. Parents floundered without role models, mental illness soared, and grief and loss through early deaths continued to stress and traumatize family members (Atkinson et al. 2010: 138). The well-known *Little Children Are Sacred* report detailing Aboriginal child sexual abuse noted that oftentimes, perpetrators of violence were themselves victims of childhood sexual abuse and that intergenerational trauma and family breakdowns helped to explain why so many of the perpetrators were young people (Wild and Anderson 2007: 60-63). Wild and Anderson (2007: 67) cite research indicating that the rate of traumatic events and behaviors is accelerating and "will continue to increase across successive generations without effective intervention."

Recent work about Australian Aboriginal trauma explicitly connects these past traumatic experiences with recent legislation. Depictions of intergenerational trauma stress the continuity of traumatic experiences suffered by Aboriginal Australians, from the dispossession and violence of colonization and the Stolen Generation to the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) of 2007. As Mills (2008: 38) writes, "self-destruction born of futility and powerlessness attaches itself to a traumatized culture like a parasite." The NTER legislation, as Stringer (2007: 10) notes, focuses on the contemporary suffering inflicted within Aboriginal communities—child sexual abuse—and in so doing minimizes the ongoing processes of historical suffering that have led communities and families to this point. Individuals become pathologized, and the relationship of trauma to

past government policies is ignored (Stringer 2007). The forceful implementation of NTER policies, detailed in Chapter 3 and 4, also reenacts past traumas upon Aboriginal populations, Tedmanson and Wadiwel (2010: 16) argue. “Trauma, humiliation, and loss of dignity are echoed in the quotes from Aboriginal people contained in the recent NTER Review Board report,” they (2010: 16) write. “The NTER had ‘shamed everybody’; ‘bombarded ... yarded up, locked in a cycle, [and caused] despair.” As Atkinson and Woods (2008: 16) write, these most recent state policies suggest that “the state continues to be implicated in the violence—the nightmares—it has created for its Indigenous subjects.”

The movement of trauma through space and time

PTSD and current understandings of trauma focus on an essential temporal delay: the traumatized experience their sufferings *belatedly*, and the incomprehensibility and repetition of trauma derives, psychologists argue, from the way that traumatic experiences pass directly into the psyche without being consciously experienced and made meaningful from an appropriate mental distance (Caruth 1995b: 9; Leys 2000: 9; Yusin 2009: 456). The same event could be traumatic to some but not others, psychologists argue, and experiences become traumatic only in the way that they “haunt” survivors after passing into the psyche (Caruth quoted in Yusin 2009: 259). Traumatic experiences lodged into the psyche are corrosive; without meaning, they represent a void or an unrepresentable anxiety, what Cavalli (2012: 601) calls “the deadly.” PTSD and these framings of trauma attempt to frame “survival itself,” as Caruth (1995: 9) writes, as a potential “crisis.”

The importance of the temporal delay between experience and trauma is key not only to defining PTSD-inspired theories of trauma, but also to treating the traumatized. Psychologists derive the importance of the temporal delay from Freud’s ideas of

nachtraeglichkeit, or afterward-ness, where he posits that memories can be reworked to fit later experiences (Yusin 2009). Treating trauma thus becomes a process of making meaning out of “the deadly,” as the traumatic memory becomes reappropriated and reworked within the psyche (Caruth 1995b). The experience of trauma is often perceived as creating a split or doubled self within the survivor, what Lifton calls “doubling in the traumatized person,” and therapy involves trying to pull together these warring selves (Caruth and Lifton 1995: 137). Yet like much of trauma theory, the split selves idea is contested by psychologists who argue that treatment presupposes a coherent subject capable of sorting out the selves at war with one another (Leys 2000: 33-37).

Theorists and practitioners have pushed the concept to embrace a wide range of suffering: trauma could represent the result of multiple incidents rather than just one, collective reactions rather than simply individual ones, and physical suffering rather than just mental distress (Webster and Dunn 2005). Root (1991) argues that trauma can apply to those “spiritually” or “psychologically” wounded by race, ethnic, religious, or sexual marginalization (in Webster and Dunn 2005: 132), what she calls “insidious trauma” (Brown 1995: 107). Trauma theories have expanded so rapidly and embraced such a variety of situations and experiences since the definition of PTSD that they now play a key role in the “memoro-politics” of the present (also see Degloma 2009: 106 Hacking quoted in (Leys 2000: 7). Indeed, Nguyen (2011) calls the 21st century the century of trauma studies, as trauma has become a theoretical orientation, a specialized clinical area, an academic discipline, as well as a collective, social “epidemic.”

Expanded understandings of trauma have accompanied ideas about trauma’s mobility. Whereas some theorists believe that trauma memories, unlike normal memories,

are inherently asocial and static (van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995: 163), many more theorists have begun exploring the spread of trauma through communities, space, and time. Trauma becomes both a means of social affiliation, where victims of different events become connected through similar stories of trauma (Degloma 2009: 114), and social disruption, where entire communities become traumatized through damage to social fibers that hold the group intact (Erikson 1995: 190). Degloma (2009) explores the role of “trauma carrier groups,” advocacy organizations, social movement groups, or mental health associations, that use the vocabulary of trauma to connect disparate causes, identifying spread through space as well as time.

Trauma’s movement through space works in a variety of ways. Witnesses—rescue workers, children, or news watchers—become traumatized by hearing or seeing the traumatic event, whereas those who work or live with traumatized people may experience “secondary traumatization” through their proximity (Degloma 2009: 109). Trauma thus becomes imagined like a germ, Degloma (1002: 110) writes, “suggesting rather directly that it operates and can be transmitted like a social pathogen.” Clinicians have used several terms to identify the spread of trauma through space, terms that are often used interchangeably. Vicarious tramatization was defined by McCann and Pearlman (1990) as the disruption of the clinician’s worldview, sense of meaning, and identify through exposure to traumatized people (Craig and Sprang 2010: 320; McCann and Pearlman 1990). Compassion fatigue, coined by Figley (1995) accounts for changes providers face from indirect exposure to trauma survivors (Craig and Sprang 2010: 320), whereas secondary traumatic stress (again from Figley 1995) is based on the symptoms of PTSD (Craig and Sprang 2010: 320). Finally, vicarious trauma is defined as the “painful and disruptive

psychological effects of trauma-based work” (quoted in Barrington and Shakespeare-Finch 2013: 90), pervasive and cumulative emotional repercussions from engaging with trauma survivors (Barrington and Shakespeare-Finch 2013: 90). Vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout are all references to similar phenomena describing the spread of symptoms resulting from exposure to traumatized people.

Psychologists continue to examine the factors that lead service providers to experience any of these related forms of trauma, as well as burnout (a term developed first by Freudenberger and Richelson 1980). Studies show that the spread of these secondary forms of traumatization in clinical settings is affected by individual characteristics such as age or gender as well as workplace stressors, like increased exposure to traumatized clients (Craig and Sprang 2010: 321; Salston and Figley 2003; Perron and Hiltz 2006). Craig and Sprang (2010: 320-21) note that these experiences of secondary traumatization are extremely common in clinical settings and cite studies where between 27 and 100 percent of those caregivers surveyed suffered from compassion fatigue. In one study of Australian service providers working with asylum seekers, the entire sample reported vicarious trauma (Barrington and Shakespeare-Finch 2013).

The contagion of trauma is also characterized by its movement through time. The development of theories of transgenerational transmission of trauma emerged primarily from studies of the children of Holocaust survivors, although the concept is also now used to trace the spread of traumatic experiences and memories through social or family ties in situations as diverse as slavery, war, or family violence (Degloma 2009: 112; Cavalli 2012). Transgenerational trauma is transmitted through time, theorists believe, despite the fundamentally ahistorical nature of the repeated, traumatic memory. The traumatic event

becomes associated with a “nameless dread,” hypothesizes Cavalli (2012: 597), which becomes a void or a sense of not-knowing for members of the first generation. The ability to order and make meaning from the traumatic thoughts becomes lost, yet the next generation forms a kind of attachment to the void, a sense of attachment to the lingering “nameless dread,” an attachment that later becomes imprinted into the third generation’s sense of self (de Viñar 2012: 98; Cavalli 2012: 597-598). Children are understood to be particularly vulnerable to incorporating these disturbed and disordered senses of reality into how they order and make meaning from the world (Degloma 2009). For example, studies of trauma survivors in South America (Gordon 2008a; Stockwell 2011; de Viñar 2012) explore how state terror imprints itself upon the psyche and how the emotional knowledge of these marks becomes passed to future generations. In these cases, theorists believe that not only does “our memory repea[t] to us what we haven’t yet come to terms with, what still haunts us,” so too do the memories of those generations who have come before us (Erikson 1995: 184).

Summarizing theories of trauma transmission as well as the basic psychological understandings of what traumatic memories and experiences *are* gives the impression that these theories represent consensus as to how the body experiences and deals with terror and pain: they should not. Trauma theories are remarkably contested; Leys (2000) describes trauma theories from the entire twentieth century as belonging to a cycle of remembering and forgetting, forgetting and remembering, each one eventually collapsing under the weight of its own contradictions. She directs critique especially toward trauma theorist Caruth, whose work on the unrepresentability of trauma experiences has been widely influential. She notes that Caruth both argues for the literal-ness of traumatic

memory—it cannot be represented because the memories have not been processed and made meaningful—yet at the same time conveys that the essence of trauma *can* be passed down to witnesses, family members, and future generations (Leys 2000). Which is it? The very ability of trauma to be ‘contagious’ and transmittable becomes precisely what is at stake.

Similarly, Leys (2000: 262) argues that influential psychologist van der Kolk’s understanding of trauma as being beyond speech, memories that become “burned into the brain,” likewise contradicts his insistence that trauma be performed, witnessed, and passed through time and space. The profusion of trauma across disciplinary, clinical, and especially pop cultural boundaries also troubles critics. Nguyen (2011: 30-31) notes that traumatic events are likely to become both commodified and exploited by news audiences. People draw problematic conclusions when clinicians rush to ‘empower’ traumatized survivors with grief counseling, creating the perception that recovery from such traumatic events is simply a matter of medical attention. The problem with such fetishized understandings of trauma and recovery is that they grossly oversimplify recovery, Nguyen (2011) argues. Reducing trauma to PTSD, and PTSD to questionnaires and surveys, creates an industry manufactured to gloss over trauma, reproducing the violence and erasure of the initial traumatic event (Nguyen 2011). Thinking of trauma as a fixable medical condition, Nguyen (2011: 39) writes, does not “speak to the burden of how to continue living.” The stories of trauma—and the theories that imagine it—are perhaps better framed as “oscillations,” as Caruth (in Nguyen 2011: 44) writes, the movement “between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival.” Even as trauma

swings between event and survival, it also ripples outwards, traversing space, lingering through time.

Toward a geographical understanding of trauma

The relationship between trauma theories and geography is paradoxical, and the connections to geographic scholarship have only recently begun to be explored (see Micieli-Voutsinas forthcoming; Till 2005; Till 2012). On the one hand, the incomprehensibility and lack of ability to make meaning out of traumatic experiences means that the traumatized experience their suffering in ways that are both timeless and literally difficult to place. Caruth (1995: 153) writes that trauma represents “a history that literally *has no place*, neither in the past, in which it was not fully experienced, nor in the present, in which its precise images and enactments are not fully understood.” Flashbacks occur in different times and places than the traumatic event itself; the traumatized psyche repeats its pain, refocusing upon a place that cannot be located (Walker 2010). Yet critics have also rejoined that these ‘placeless’ and ‘timeless’ theories of trauma discredit its situated nature: trauma theories presuppose in many ways, as Leys (2000) also remarked above, a fully constituted subject. Yet theorists have not often considered how the traumatized person and his or her suffering become constituted within raced, gendered, sexualized, and geopoliticized processes, as well as in relation to particular places (Perera 2010; Walker 2010).

Walker (2010) thus calls for a ‘spatial turn’ within trauma studies, linking their insights to theories of the subject developed by critical human geographers, who emphasize the relationship between place, identity, and subject formation. Subjects draw on their ‘situatedness’ even during the most traumatizing experiences, even as time and

location become erased through traumatic repetition (Perera 2010; Walker 2010). For example, Perera (2010: 40) describes the specificity of the traumatic responses to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, as people were devastated by the aid industry and disaster capitalist complex in addition to the effects of the wave; she writes that the experiences of rebuilding created a blank slate “far more difficult to survive than a 30-foot wave.” Geography, economic possibilities, and global inequality created a specific form of traumatic experience for survivors. Similarly, Sonntag (2011) describes the case of the child of traumatized parents, whose body becomes the site on which their nameless trauma is played out. Mitchell (2011) examines the role of air as a metaphorical and material site of traumatic transmission, describing how the contagion of ideas and epidemics is related to the moral geographies of air itself. In all these cases, there are clearly material sites, geographical locations of suffering, and the trauma that results depends very much on the situation of the traumatized, as well as her site of suffering.

Even as trauma theorists have begun to incorporate geographical insights into their work, the coexistence of theories rooted in the psyche and those based in the landscape, even the landscape of the body, remains uneasy. The belatedness of the trauma reaction uproots the connections between people and places: even if the traumatized return to the site of their suffering, the places will always be other than what they once were (Walker 2010: 53). Geographies of the psyche are fundamentally not mappable; they may resemble topologies, Blum and Secor (2011) argue, but never topographies. Mental and material spaces become enmeshed in counterintuitive ways; trauma becomes the linkage of individual psychological detours, repetitions, and locatable sites (Walker 2010; Blum and Secor 2011).

This complex combination of psychological and material spaces represents, in part, trauma's fundamental incomprehensibility: if it were mappable, it would have already been made meaningful. Yusin (2009) discusses the "geography of trauma" represented by the 1948 Indian-Pakistani Partition, noting that partition becomes both a divided geographical, national reality and the split selves of the traumatized survivors, themselves permanently partitioned like the national boundaries. Murphy (2011) summarizes the similar psychic and material sites of trauma in Australian national archives of the Stolen Generation. The archive represents suffering and sorrow that remains, often unrecognized by the colonial state, as well as the site where trauma experienced by Aboriginal people that they live and know daily comes to be contained: a material place characterized by embodied loss (Murphy 2011). Geographical sites and psychological suffering overlap, but not neatly or completely.

Even as scholars have begun to examine the relationship between geography and the traumatized psyche, this literature has remained curiously separate from the embodied effects of trauma that so clearly mark bodies beyond their brain cells—whether the initially traumatized or those suffering from vicarious trauma. The 'spatial turn' within trauma studies must also incorporate the situated, particular suffering body into its understanding of geography: *particular people* are traumatized at particular places, and their bodily pain and anguish is an important *geographic* piece of their traumatic experience.

A useful connection between geography and trauma studies that has been underused in research thus far is between feminist geographers' understandings of embodiment and the experience of the trauma sufferer. For feminist geographers, embodiment represents a strategic methodological, theoretical, and *geographically situated*

positioning that foregrounds the scale of the body (Mountz 2004; Coddington et al. 2012). The “particularist, place-bound body” becomes an important counter to the generalized psyche often imagined by trauma scholars (Mitchell 2006: 98). Indeed, the move from the psyche to the embodied *person* foregrounds how different people inhabit the world differently (Weiss and Haber 1999: xiv). Understanding trauma as occupying the connected psychological and physical spaces of the body is key to envisioning trauma as a geographic phenomenon.

There is yelling in the street outside. I am awake, startled from another intense dream. Living on the road between a neighborhood park and the Woolworth liquor store, we hear the night traffic, the bottles smashing on the pavement, the loud voices speaking other languages I do not know. Probably most of the night traffic is quiet, just some of the many activities in this divided place I cannot see, or know, or understand. We live in parallel worlds, but take the same bus. One of our first nights in Darwin we attend the launch of a book containing Aboriginal experiences of the Northern Territory Intervention legislation, and I begin to put names to places I had only seen through the windows of the bus, the places in between the cul-de-sacs, where the grass grows long and the roads turn to dirt and mud. I don't understand, at first, that there are Aboriginal land claim areas in the middle of Darwin itself, that these remnants are the last holdouts of land struggles begun in the 1970s, that these homes with busted out windows looking out like toothless mouths towards the highway, that these are the hard-fought claims to country. At the book launch, we are invited by the speaker to come to Bagot Community, “the little dark place... [where] there's no lights at night.” It's true, I realize: Bagot has no streetlights. Bagot has no properly maintained roads. Bagot's homes are open to the elements; from the street I see mattresses on floors, TV's flickering, small children on beat up bikes in the driveways. “Have a look,” she tells us, “we are right here in Darwin yet we are treated like little children.” Later, I attend meetings in Bagot. Everyone else drives, but I have to walk from the nearest bus stop, a half mile away, a distance that makes no sense as Bagot's residents are nearly all bus riders too. I walk through the streets, edged by tall grass, stared at by children, their bikes stopped. I think it's the walking, not the whiteness, that is the strange part, but it's hard to know. I am less than a mile from home. I could be thousands of miles from home. It is hard to ignore the divisions in this city. On the bus to Bagot I pass the bare ground where the Retta Dixon Children's Home once stood, the place where ‘half-caste’ children were imprisoned and educated. The woman at the book launch explains that living in Bagot, “We are still prisoners of our own country... They will always find a way to keep us captive.” Indeed, there is an empty guard post where the community meets the highway. I pass by, walking faster than normal, anxious to pass through the darkening streets of Bagot, anxious to head towards the light. Later, that night, my sleep is restless. I wake often to the sounds of the night traffic.

Advocates' embodied experiences

In this section, I describe four examples from my field research in Darwin that illuminate aspects of contagious trauma. In each case, the trauma and stress of Aboriginal or refugee issues puts pressure on the people involved. I argue that their reactions demonstrate the spatiality of trauma and stress: trauma becomes situated within bodies and sited at certain geographic locations, even as it also exceeds those bodies and sites. Specific embodied reactions and places become associated with the trauma and stress of advocacy work. The embodied and sited reactions to trauma and stress, I argue, become forms of imaginative containment, psychological barriers that constrain the possibilities people can imagine for advocacy and healing. Advocacy becomes limited by the ongoing stress and contagious trauma, as well as their embodied effects.

The advocacy organizations

The first example involves the advocacy performed by two Darwin-area groups whose meetings and public events I attended and many of whose members I interviewed as part of my field research. The Darwin Asylum Seeker Support and Advocacy Network (DASSAN) was established in 2009 as both a support group for asylum seekers and a group that promotes “fearless advocacy” without being formally affiliated with government or non-governmental service providers.¹⁸ DASSAN members visit people in detention in the

¹⁸ Service providers who are directly contracted to work with asylum seekers in detention facilities in Australia are often contractually prevented from speaking publicly about asylum seeker issues by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. For example, because of service contracts or memoranda of understanding, agencies such as the Australian Red Cross and St. Vincent de Paul do not often publicly comment about conditions in detention facilities. Members of DASSAN refused to enter into contractual agreements with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) (now Department of Immigration and Border Protection) or with their contractor, SERCO. Indeed, while details of these organizations' contracts are not publicly available, details of SERCO's contract with DIAC state that, “The Service Provider must not, and will ensure that its officers, employees, directors, contractors and agents do not: Make any

Darwin area; write letters; meet with nongovernmental organizations, service providers, politicians, and media representatives; and organize public events to raise awareness of asylum seeker issues (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 21, 2012). The Darwin Aboriginal Rights Coalition (D-ARC) is a group that became reenergized around the Northern Territory Intervention legislation of 2007 and its renewal as the Stronger Futures legislative package in 2012. D-ARC works together with indigenous leaders and other advocacy groups throughout Australia that advocate against the measures of the Intervention/ Stronger Futures legislation as well as for indigenous rights more broadly. Indeed, the group named itself after the Sydney-based Aboriginal Rights Coalition that later became known as Stop the Intervention Collective Sydney. D-ARC hosts public events promoting awareness of indigenous rights; works with local Aboriginal community leaders to represent local voices at public meetings and hearings; and builds public awareness of indigenous issues through protests, commemorations, concerts, and films.

In each group, members embody and discuss the stressful and traumatic content of their advocacy work. The following descriptions are from fieldnotes collected during participant observation at meetings and group events, as well as personal conversations with individual members about the group (all quotations and observations from Coddington, fieldnotes, November 15, 2011-March 1, 2012). During my participation with DASSAN, the stress and burnout associated with working with asylum seekers was a constant topic of discussion. Several members echoed the comments of one person, who told me it was “hard to keep up motivation.” Pursuing diverse individual projects was a

public statement; Release any information to, make any statement to, deal with any inquiry from or otherwise advise the media; Publish distribute or otherwise make available any information or material to third parties.” (Cordell et al. 2011: 1).

strategy to allow the few extremely active members to work around their areas of stress and burnout, as opposed to conducting more centralized, collective work. Motivation issues meant that individuals “were each trucking along,” as one member told me, on separate tracks rather than uniting under common projects. For example, debates I witnessed at the strategic planning meeting for 2012 centered on issues of stress and burnout, and different members grappled with how to restructure the organization to maintain the energy of founding members yet were unable to reach conclusions as to how to make permanent change. There was tension in the group as DASSAN struggled with “trying to be everything,” as several people summarized the situation, and they cited exhaustion, fatigue, and burnout as consequences of their advocacy work. Members especially worried—privately and during strategic planning—about the effects of visiting traumatized asylum seekers in detention for new advocates. They were concerned that being exposed to the traumas of detention would scare off interested residents and tried to brainstorm ways to combat the effects of the stress of visiting, including peer support and debriefing, meeting with trauma counselors, and organized visitor drinks sessions where visitors could exchange experiences (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 21, 2012).

In DASSAN’s case, members embodied the stress of advocacy work through increased fatigue, exhaustion, and burnout yet located the *site* of that stress less in the content of the work itself and more in the organizational structure of the advocacy group. In both private conversations and wider group settings, such as the strategic planning meeting, members circled repeatedly around institutional or structural forms of change that would transform the nature of the work for the most active members: finding funding sources, restructuring the ‘chain of command,’ creating new committee chairs, or limiting

the organization's mission. Below, I discuss how trauma and stress led to *individuals'* curtailing forms of advocacy, but the effects of stress, trauma, and burnout on the group also changed their perspective on advocacy work. Meetings I attended became occasions for consciously limiting the work of the organization—limiting, in other words, what members believed was possible for the group. For example, during a conference call with southern advocacy groups, the DASSAN members repeatedly stressed their preference to commit to organizing one event within a multi-day convergence (to be located in Darwin). “We’re the detention capital of Australia but we can only do so much,” one member said (Coddington, fieldnotes, December 3, 2011). Another member agreed: “We can’t do much more” (Coddington, fieldnotes, December 3, 2011). The constant specter of overwork and exhaustion repeatedly worked to contain DASSAN’s advocacy.

While DASSAN members embodied the stress and trauma of advocacy work through their frequent discussions and located the source of that stress within the framework of the organization itself, the embodiment of stress and trauma within the D-ARC membership manifested itself quite differently. Transience and widely differing agendas characterized D-ARC meetings; rarely did more than two or three of the same people attend two meetings in a row, and every meeting provided a new platform for whatever occurred to the membership of the day, encompassing a range of topics from legislative hearings to fire safety. Members privately expressed frustration to me at the difficulty of constructing collective projects from these fragmented pieces. Many of the members who attended most regularly had long-term experience—and, often, disillusionment—with non-governmental organizations that worked with Aboriginal communities and were often loath to organize collectively with other local groups.

An unmistakable embodiment of the stress and discomfort of Aboriginal issues was the racial makeup of the group: despite meetings being held within the community room of one local Aboriginal community and despite the personal connections between members of the group and local Aboriginal leaders, the meetings at the time I attended were entirely white. Historically, the group included both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, but due to burnout, exhaustion, and family responsibilities, D-ARC's Aboriginal allies did not attend meetings during the time of my field research. The contrast between the blackness of the neighborhood and the whiteness of the meeting table offered a stark display of the toll of advocacy work; as one member explained, "The [local Aboriginal] community is exhausted. The five women who have all their shit together get pulled in every direction, they have to keep their families running, they get exhausted. Also, no one listens. Why bother?" (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 26, 2012) Stress and exhaustion kept Aboriginal leaders from the table—as, probably too, did the unfamiliar cultural aspects of white Australian advocacy work. Racial tensions also prevented D-ARC from collaborating with local refugee groups like DASSAN for anti-racism events; "bad incidents" between Aboriginal and refugee youths and impressions that DASSAN members were "all lawyers" meant that cross-racial collaboration would be "tricky;" the potential difficulty of this work, as well as some of the political differences between group strategies, led both groups to limit their collaboration (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 23, 2012).

In contrast to DASSAN, where exhaustion, fatigue, and burnout were embodied through constant conversation, at D-ARC, these same issues brought about by the difficulties of cross-racial advocacy and the stress and trauma of Aboriginal community lives were instead characterized by absence. The whiteness of meetings communicated

both the stress of making cross-racial advocacy happen, and the trauma and burnout of Aboriginal leaders. Limiting collaboration with other advocacy groups became one method of circumscribing the stress of Aboriginal advocacy work; another became the more frequent references to strategic changes that the group might make after the Stronger Futures legislation passed. Again, the structure of the group itself became the focus of conversation. Various group members worried in both meetings and privately to me about motivation, purpose, and the point of their efforts; after its passage, one member pondered, “will we have a talk about will it sort of change what we do?” (Coddington, fieldnotes, March 1, 2012)

The journalists

The next example describes the experiences of two journalists who cover asylum seeker issues in the Darwin area for local and national media. In both cases, the stressful and traumatic content they report puts pressure on the journalists, either from supervisors and management, immigration and detention center bureaucracy, or from hostile community members. Reporting is inherently embodied: the journalists’ faces become associated with their publications, and their names are attached in print or television to the work they produce. While these journalists do not identify personally as advocates, in conversations with me they both spoke to the connections their work made with advocacy and public awareness of asylum seekers (all quotations and observations from Coddington, fieldnotes, February 24, 2012).

One journalist explained that she is able to cover asylum issues because the management allows reporters to select their own topics and they “don’t have to make pitches,” due to the small size of the newsroom. National news will only pick up the most

sensational stories—the riots, the fires—but she prides herself on choosing a variety of stories that cover asylum seeker detention and related issues more broadly and objectively. Yet such journalism comes with embodied costs. For one piece, she and her editors made the “brave” decision, she told me, to run the story on the front page, but they were very worried about the tone of online comments. The online editors published a balanced selection of comments that were 50 percent in agreement with and 50 percent opposed to the article but had to hold back over 200 racist, offensive, and threatening comments. Such decisions produce a great deal of stress and “frustration” in the newsroom as well as for the journalists whose byline accompanies the piece.

As this journalist became locally known for her coverage of asylum seeker issues, her face and body became the target of additional surveillance. Once a regular visitor to the detention center, she was now prohibited by SERCO staff from even making personal visits to asylum seekers in detention. Prohibiting her own visits added to the difficulty and stressful nature of information gathering for stories about asylum seekers. Other local media found getting information, statistics, and photographs of asylum seekers extremely difficult, several people told me, and had to turn to smuggled mobile phones within detention facilities and freedom of information requests to obtain information. In this case, the stress of covering asylum seeker issues became both embodied—in the journalists’ byline and in the prohibition of her personal visits—and a source of tension in her workplace, where online editors and other journalists had to go to increasing lengths to obtain information and maintain a secure and safe work environment. These stressors impacted local advocacy as well; activist groups that had once “written off” local media sources, the journalist explained, realized that they could obtain “sympathetic and diverse”

views on asylum seeker issues. At the same time, however, coverage was swayed within the newsroom and by individual journalists to appeal to the more hostile readers “outside the choir.” The journalist said, “We have to be balanced. If we’re too bleeding heart the readers don’t respond.”

The second journalist faced a more uphill battle from her national media counterparts, who preferred to focus on, as she put it, “riots and fires” rather than broader coverage of asylum seeker issues. There was not a lot of internal support for reporting on asylum seekers from management. In our conversations, she confirmed the difficulties and traumatic nature of covering asylum seeker issues, noting that the combination of difficult access, wrenching content, and hostile community reactions made the work stressful. To combat issues with access, she had turned to refugee Facebook and email networks to obtain information. Some “distraught” doctors and psychologists breached their contracts with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to provide her with information because they “feel so powerless and want to make some noise,” she explained. Issues with coverage similarly became embodied, through both manager frustration and prohibitions on personal visits within the detention center. Ironically, she noted, journalists get refused visits because they can be personally identified, whereas DIAC had begun to prohibit photography of asylum seekers’ faces ostensibly to protect them from harm. The journalist argued that these actions further encouraged their dehumanization, ironically, she noted, to “reduce trauma.” The hostile community reaction seemed to wear on this journalist especially. Darwin was a “tough market for people to care,” she explained. Despite its claims to multiculturalism, it was the type of place where “people go to Asian stalls to buy crispy buns but wouldn’t invite the same people around for tea.” The vitriol

from talk-back radio was particularly stressful. Because of these reactions to her stories, this journalist noted that the Darwin advocate community was less able to provide asylum seeker support; when she needed quick information about someone in detention, she would turn to refugee advocates based in Sydney or Melbourne because they would have information—even about people in Darwin—faster than the local advocacy groups.

The mental health professional

The third example features a mental-health professional, one of many in a similar position whom I spoke with throughout my time in Darwin (Coddington, fieldnotes, March 2, 2012). The stress and trauma she described facing every day within her work with asylum seekers became embodied through the physical symptoms she experienced and the ripple effects of trauma she witnessed throughout the immigration detention system. The common experiences of suffering embodied by mental-health professionals and other staff are individualized to the point of invisibility, and these professionals rarely engage with advocacy efforts as a result.

Now employed at a community-based trauma therapy center in Darwin, the mental-health professional had also spent months working on Christmas Island as part of the detention center mental-health team. Her experience on Christmas Island was negative, she explained to me; the mental health team “didn’t count” when crises occurred, and the management contractor, SERCO, “trashed” the island, both literally and figuratively, leaving a divided community in its wake, and “didn’t care.” Trauma counselors saw eight patients per day, yet patients were often only referred to therapy after 18 months of steadily worsening mental health. She described how SERCO guards waited around the corner within eyesight of patients, limiting their ability to receive private counseling.

Yet as bad as Christmas Island was, she referred to the Northern Immigration Detention Center (NIDC) in Darwin as “hell on a stick.” This was largely due to the traumatized asylum seekers detained there: people were on drugs, delusional, in need of psychiatric hospitalization. Individuals would believe they were going crazy, and after six months in detention, she said, they did; the same timeframe applied to asylum seekers detained on Christmas Island. It was “hard enough to be a refugee,” but asylum seekers were then further traumatized in detention and were “not healthy people anymore,” unable to function in mainstream community life after release. Torture and trauma make physical changes to brain function, she said, and what detention centers did was “manufacture mental illness.” Exposure to self-harm was common, “not a new story.” In addition to the conditions of work with asylum seekers and the constant exposure to their trauma, self-harm, and mental illness, her work also was made more difficult by the constant hostility from the wider community. She named ignorance and stigma within the general public as well as the “very negative” coverage of asylum seekers in the media as conditions that exacerbated the stress and difficulty of her work. Most Australians did not understand that “being a refugee is an experience not an identity.” “We are a really scared little country,” she noted. “What we are missing is that if the Australian government does this [mandatory detention] to refugees, it could do it to anybody. We are not safe.”

The combination of work environment, exposure to traumatized people, and community hostility produced a variety of embodied symptoms. She and other mental health professionals, I learned from interviews, suffered symptoms of vicarious trauma, including high stress levels, burnout, nightmares, and insomnia. Trauma also “rippled out” throughout the immigration detention system, several interviews confirmed. Health staff

disappeared. Interpreters required trauma therapy. One of the mental-health professional's DIAC managers "broke down like a baby." Staff suffered from similar symptoms: night terrors, burnout, stress, and high levels of drug and alcohol use. Stress, burnout, and exposure to trauma become located within the bodies of staff and service providers, and thus embodied, are too often invisible at the level of the system. "Immigration knows [about the trauma] at an individual level," the mental-health professional said. "We are human beings, we know humanity here in Darwin."

Individual choices

The fourth example brings together a variety of scattered anecdotes about individual advocates making deliberate choices to limit their advocacy as a result of the stress or trauma of working with asylum seeker and Aboriginal issues. I had many of these conversations while driving in cars or at the edges of interviews after the more formal questions were finished: despite the widely differing times and places, similar stories emerged (all observations and quotations from Coddington, fieldnotes, November 15-March 15, 2012). I brought these individual stories together because they formed a powerful collective voice about the weariness of advocates working for different causes and in different situations. In each case, stress and trauma become embodied through numbness, hopeless questioning, and lack of energy or through physical illness and manifest themselves in personal decisions to enact boundaries around their advocacy. These embodied aspects of advocacy become forms of imaginative containment, constraining the possibilities people can envision for different kinds or increased amounts of advocacy work. Advocacy thus becomes limited by the stress and trauma of the work.

An older advocate working on asylum seeker issues tells over coffee me that, “we’ve had a decade of horror. Horror gets old.” The general public is tired of hearing about the suffering of people in detention, and their trauma—he refers specifically to their suicide attempts—has become “normalized.” Yet at the same time he told me that he “can’t be sending first time visitors to failed security clearance people [who have been in detention upwards of 12 months], because visitors are unable to cope with their trauma.” He has become numb to this type of suffering, though; it has become routine (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 27, 2012). Another day, another advocate makes the same case. He no longer makes individual visits to asylum seekers in detention. He has become “overloaded” and says his visits made him “lose the big picture.” Really, he asked, “does an untrained person visiting do any good?” (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 27, 2012) While driving together to an event, a third advocate echoed the same sentiments. She stopped making personal visits to detention centers as well: “Something had to give,” she told me. She had lost energy and needed to devote more time to administering advocacy efforts. Race also played a role in her decision. She said more and more she is “not sure what to do as a white Australian” and was not sure visits were making enough of a difference (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 2, 2012).

At a public talk I discussed asylum seeker issues and my visits with people in detention across Australia. One person asked how I supported myself during these traumatic visits. The audience was full of service providers, mental-health professionals, and advocates, and I heard murmurs of agreement across the floor after the question was asked. I sidestepped the question and joked that my partner should answer the question instead (Coddington, fieldnotes, March 6, 2012). Yet I should have met the question head-

on: each of these advocates has made similar compromises and decisions about how to allocate their time and energy and how to cope with the everyday, routinized traumas they encounter with asylum seeker work. Like everyone at that talk, I have nightmares, insomnia, anxiety, occasional panicked reactions, and deep sadness. We have all located the stress of this work in our bodies, in our numbness, our questions of whether it really matters, and our lack of energy. In these individual cases, stress is less sited in places and located more in our bodies and decisions.

Darwin residents shy away from Aboriginal advocacy, a long-time advocate who works closely with the Aboriginal community tells me, because they are apathetic, because of the long-term nature of the problems involved, and because, really, the situation is “too full on.” It is, at least, for her (Coddington, fieldnotes, February 21, 2012). Another older advocate stresses the baseline nature of trauma within Aboriginal communities, that it is ongoing and intergenerational. People today “have the stuffing knocked out of them at rock bottom.” Witnessing and advocating in these circumstances are more than many can bear; advocates, several people mention, are at a low point. “I personally have less optimism than I’ve ever had,” said one person, reflecting on Aboriginal advocacy efforts over the years (Coddington, fieldnotes, March 5, 2012). Yet another younger advocate tells me in the midst of preparations for a major event that she has to do something, despite all the issues. She refuses to be another white person doing nothing. Yet the racial divisions wear her down; she asks, “what is the role of the white activist?” (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 26, 2012) Another advocate deeply committed to Aboriginal justice who works for an Aboriginal advocacy organization becomes ill from the stress of hearing about Aboriginal

women's sexual trauma and eventually has to find other work (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 14, 2012).

Advocates and Aboriginal leaders repeatedly cite within broader literatures the compounded trauma of Aboriginal experiences as a primary cause of the suffering Aboriginal communities face, yet these explanations are often glossed over. One Aboriginal woman testifying at a federal hearing I attended stressed the ongoing effects of sexual abuse and trauma for community members, saying, "we have to learn empire speak and empire culture, plus we've been through everyday trauma." The chair responded, "I don't want to be rude, but I'm going to step in and stop you. Can we go back to the main issue?" (Coddington, fieldnotes, February 24, 2012) As in the other examples, advocates made individual decisions in response to the stress and trauma of advocacy work. Stress becomes embodied through lack of optimism, through racial divisions, and through physical illness.

When transcribing field notes and interviews about detention became a daily task, I started taking Ambien to sleep. I needed to black out my dreams, to hide the memories, to prevent their flashing back while I slept. Ambien during the night, painkillers during the day. This regime worked for a time, until it gave me an ulcer. Now as I write about trauma, I revisit those once silenced dreams, the pieces running through my 3:00 am brain in stop motion. The uncontrollably shaking legs. Stop. The hand tremors. Stop. The fresh scars on arms, the places visible to me, the scars that were not there at the last visit. Stop. The triple fences, the sound of the buzzer of the gates, the x-ray wand, the knock of the guard on the window. Stop. The tropical rainstorm pouring down, causing the window to cover in condensation, the attempts not to look at my watch. Stop. The relief and guilt of release, of pulling my things from the locker and walking unescorted out the front door, past the pacing bodies at the fenceline, past the military guardpost, to the freedom and anonymity of the highway. Stop. My memories of asylum seekers in detention in Darwin mix and become intertwined in my sleep with other detention centers in other places, in Perth, on Christmas Island, in Melbourne, in Sydney. I transpose x-ray machines and waiting areas, each equally banal and transitory, each filled with the bustle of incomprehensible bureaucracy, of arbitrarily changing rules and procedures, of my temporary helplessness, stripped of passport, wallet, and phone. I have the sense every time that I am at the mercy of an exquisitely bland and prosaic system, that the only thing I wield in these moments is a more heart more vulnerable, skin less calloused, that the only thing I have to offer is my ability to absorb this pain, and relive it. And that is indeed what I then do. I have half a bottle of Ambien on my nightstand, but I can't take it. Sometimes

I look at it and wish I could, every night. I do not have the energy to wake up from these freeze-framed images forever.

Tired advocacy

In each of the examples I outline above, stress and trauma become embodied in different ways. In each case, however, advocates enact barriers to advocacy efforts. Both DASSAN and D-ARC turned inward in response to the stresses of advocacy, locating these stressors in the local organizational structure rather than within larger national political frameworks or as part of the inherently stressful nature of the traumatic work they engaged in. Yet both groups then engaged in self-protective mechanisms to limit their exposure to stress and burnout, refusing additional projects or limiting collaboration as a result.

In the case of the journalists, the embodied stress of journalism, from the public reaction and hostile comments to the refusal of visits for certain journalists, shapes the type of coverage they can provide. Stress and trauma become located in certain places: in the hierarchy of newsroom management, within online comments, or over the airwaves of talk-back radio. These sites become places where coverage becomes contained, the possibilities of what to address become limited, and the tone of journalism becomes more sensational or less “bleeding heart” to please national affiliates or local readers. These constraints, in turn, limit local advocacy in small ways: journalists strive for more “balance” and less sympathy with asylum seeker issues and increasingly turn to national sources for information because of the limits to Darwin locals’ knowledge and support of asylum seeker issues. What becomes newsworthy, and thus readable, is therefore contained.

For the mental-health professional, embodied stress and burnout cause people throughout the system of asylum seeker detention, from her own co-workers to

immigration staff, to leave, quit, or become hardened to the suffering they witness. Their humanity becomes obscured, and thus these experiences are often made invisible. The suffering of individuals throughout the system is contained, and the burned-out or hardened professionals rarely engaged with the advocacy community in Darwin as a result. The individual choices advocates make—to avoid the ‘full on’ nature of Aboriginal issues, to question or leave their work—likewise constrain the types of advocacy they choose to engage in. Each of these little decisions becomes part of a larger story of faltering energy and of slowly becoming numb to the suffering of others, factors that affect the success of advocacy efforts at the community level.

I, too, became weary of visiting asylum seekers in detention and lost patience at a federal hearing I attended to document the progress of Aboriginal communities since the 2007 NTER legislation. I had increasing numbers of nightmares, of stress headaches, of episodes of fatigue. I was exhausted, and something had to give. I made some small choices—skipping a visit to an asylum seeker here, choosing not to become active in a community project there—and so too did my advocacy efforts change. Of course, I also knew I was leaving Darwin and would eventually not have to manufacture my own distance from the advocacy efforts. Time and many thousands of miles did it for me. Yet the trauma of the advocacy work that I absorbed stays with me, revisiting my dreams. Your scars are still there, located somewhere beyond my peripheral vision, in a sideline glance, in a buried memory. They resurrect themselves while I sleep.

The mobile traumas of advocacy work become embedded within us, and we take measures to protect ourselves. Just as these traumatic effects become geographically locatable, in our bodies, in our bylines, in the very structure of the organizations we form,

so too do the efforts we make in self-protection. We construct barriers to limit our advocacy in certain ways, we create distance from traumatic events and people, and we thus become agents of containment, each striving to mitigate the contagion of trauma. This does not make for better advocacy, but one cannot automatically assume it makes for worse advocacy either. In cases where we place our strongest selves in positions to advocate for justice, perhaps our efforts will be stronger as well. Yet what I argue is that the geography of advocacy that becomes created through individual acts of containment is more likely *tired* advocacy. Contagious trauma exhausts people; it creates more limits, more constraints, and requires more energy to overcome. Advocates may shift their energy accordingly—perhaps it is no loss that Sydney and Melbourne advocacy efforts provide quotes for Darwin journalists, for example—but possibilities become foreclosed. The next time a local source is needed, will it be there?

Throughout the dissertation, I argue that a logic of containment underscores policies directed toward Aboriginal Australians and asylum seekers. Containment generally suggests enclosure, and through practices of imprisonment and detention these populations are, literally, enclosed. Yet logics of enclosure are not always so literal. Tired advocacy becomes a form of imaginative containment, fueled by contagious stress and trauma and their embodied effects. In this case, logics of enclosure are enacted in the movement of trauma through spaces and bodies. As the epidemic spreads, so too do the barriers, the distance, and the exhaustion. In response to the *geographical* nature of contagious trauma and its location within sites and bodies, advocates construct a mirrored geography of self-protection, of barriers, limits, and distance. This, too, is containment, but a containment of our own making.

Containment is not simply, in this case, a policy directive, but an infectious offspring of policies directed toward perceived threatening populations. Toxic policies of mandatory detention and the Emergency Response legislation, based on logics of enclosure and control, create their own poisonous fallout, re-traumatizing already-disturbed populations and unleashing contagious trauma on those closest to them. Paradoxically, those most committed to social-justice efforts are those who are forced to enact the most intricate psychological barriers. Containment thus becomes its own side effect: logics of enclosure underscoring policies beget mirrored forms of enclosure within advocacy efforts, constraining the types of advocacy that might occur. Thus do we hold your scars at arms' distance. Thus do we write the story of your scars, of my folds, of our joined suffering.

Chapter 6. Why Darwin?

I entered this research with the hypothesis that containment logics were present in policies directed at both Aboriginal populations and asylum seekers in the Northern Territory. I knew the broadest outlines of the Intervention policies and had already wondered about the concentration of detention facilities in and around Darwin: clearly these policies were affecting the Darwin community. What ethnographic research allowed me to tease out were the specific manifestations of containment logics in different spheres of social life: that *panic* produced containment within public discourse, that *racialized violence* solidified practices of bordering, that incomplete *citizenship* allowed for material containment practices to take hold across the NT, and that *trauma* created the conditions for imaginative containment. Containment logics manifest themselves distinctly in different places and times. While the essential underpinning strategy of enclosure as a response to threatening populations might ‘travel’ geographically and temporally, its specific manifestations would change depending on the situation. In that way, containment is a mobile political strategy, connected to the increasing global mobility of practices of incarceration and immigration detention (Flynn and Cannon 2009).

In the introduction I posed two research questions: how have logics of containment been constituted? What is their significance, and impact especially for advocacy and activism? In the following four chapters, I argued that these logics of containment manifest themselves differently at different scales. Perceptions of panic surrounding controversial instances of policy development in 2001 and 2007 contained national public debate over asylum seeker and Aboriginal issues. Logics of containment are threaded through racialized bordering practices and forms of incarceration in the Northern Territory. These

practices have racialized and violent consequences for Aboriginal people and asylum seekers, confining their bodies and minds. Logics of containment are also expressed through less tangible forms of enclosure, as the re-emergence of the 'ward of the state' relationship in contemporary Northern Territory political life suggests. Aboriginal and asylum seeker policies promote the benefits of citizenship in exchange for changes in family life, economic activity, and appropriate behaviors, but these promises go unfulfilled. Unable to participate as full Australian citizens, Aboriginal people and asylum seekers are shut out of political community. Finally, logics of containment also have embodied effects for the advocates working for justice in these two communities. The traumatic experiences of working with Aboriginal communities and asylum seekers result in advocates restricting their own engagement with their work, enforcing logics of containment on themselves and ultimately limiting what they imagine possible. Containment logics manifest themselves in practices of enclosure that range from imprisonment to disillusionment.

Each chapter also demonstrates that containment logics operate geographically. Logics of containment are embedded within public policies that have geographical effects. As I argue throughout the dissertation, these policies confine people in sites of incarceration, assign acceptable behaviors to particular places, establish appropriate arenas of public debate, and authorize permissible advocacy strategies. Containment logics are also geographically situated within a global historical and geopolitical context, more deeply rooted in certain communities than in others.

By 2011, Darwin had become *both* the urban epicenter of NTER policies affecting the Aboriginal populations of the Northern Territory *and* Australia's asylum seeker 'Detention Capital.' Was there something in particular about Darwin that made the

community more vulnerable to containment logics? In this concluding chapter, I explore some of the reasons why containment logics have become more pervasively established in Darwin than elsewhere, focusing on Darwin's geographic location, its jurisdictional ambiguity, and its proclivity toward erasure. I conclude that while these factors increase Darwin's susceptibility toward containment logics, they also reveal a wider tendency in Australian policymaking to jeopardize *human* security in the attempt to promote a secure sense of national identity.

Darwin: another world

One of the reasons Darwin is more vulnerable, perhaps, to containment logics is its geographical location. Darwin is isolated within Australia, far from population centers in southern Australia. Many people I interviewed agreed that Darwin was isolated within Australia. "For people down south, Darwin is another world," one resident told me (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 16, 2012). "People don't notice Darwin: out of sight, out of mind!" another confirmed (Coddington, fieldnotes, March 2, 2012). Geographic isolation from other parts of Australia is attractive to many residents of Darwin, who noted that Darwin became an 'end of the road' destination—where Australians who did not fit in elsewhere settled (Coddington, fieldnotes, February 15, 2012).

Yet the isolation also, to many, explained the centrality of containment logics in policies affecting life in Darwin. For example, detention centers were located in Darwin because it is an "isolated community that won't give trouble," one advocate told me (Coddington, fieldnotes, December 29, 2011). Indeed, as Wickham Point Detention Center opened in late 2011, government officials giving advocates a tour of the facility acknowledged its isolation, saying, "the government has had facilities in very remote

locations before” and “we’ve nothing to hide out here” (Coddington, fieldnotes, November 30, 2011). Aboriginal policies such as the NTER stem from a long tradition of a “north/south cultural divide” in Australia, another researcher I interviewed proposed, and a history of “outsiders telling people what to do” (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 21, 2012). The divide plays out in everyday ways, exemplified by how advocates justified their differing positions regarding Aboriginal and asylum seeker issues. One advocate expressed frustration that down south, “lefties think everyone is up here holding hands.” In reality, the advocate argued, different issues in Darwin like Aboriginal rights and asylum seeker detention actually attracted very different advocate constituencies (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 27, 2012). The advocate argued that geographic distance from southern advocates and isolation within the country minimized the very real political differences of these two justice struggles (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 27, 2012).

Many different residents of Darwin I interviewed measured the community’s attributes by its *differences* from southern Australian cities. The climate extremes, natural disasters, defense and resource industries, and the indigenous population all contrasted greatly with population centers like Melbourne and Sydney. Part of Darwin’s ‘otherness’ stems also from its historical and geographic proximity to Asia. Darwin represented Australia’s earliest ‘Gateway’ to Asia. Various events throughout Darwin’s history reinforced connections between Australia and Asia, such as the Chinese migrant labor population influx of the late 1800s, the attack on Darwin’s harbor by Japanese bombers during World War Two, the landing of Vietnamese refugee boats in the mid-1970s, and the groundswell of resident support for their “neighbors” in East Timor during that nation’s civil war in the 1990s. Many Australians fear and resent these historical connections to Asia.

For example, residents of Darwin raised throughout Australia had never learned about the bombing of Darwin during World War Two (Coddington, fieldnotes, February 17, 2012). A public commemoration of the bombing in 2011 in Darwin was the first of its kind in the city's (and country's) history, a symbolic confirmation of Darwin's differences, and its often-dangerous proximity to Asia.

Jurisdictional ambiguities

Darwin's susceptibility to containment logics may also derive from its jurisdictional ambiguity. Lacking statehood, the Northern Territory is more heavily influenced by the federal government than other areas of the country. Despite its literal distance from Australia's political centers and symbolic connections to Asia, containment logics persist in Darwin because of its political connections to federal government institutions. The city may be remote, but, as advocates pointed out, it is also particularly "well-resourced" and "serviceable" for a community so far from most Australians' thoughts (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 27, 2012). Darwin was unique, an advocate explained, because of its reliance on federal funding and the history of federal decision-making taking priority within the Territory, especially in the case of Aboriginal policies, military operations, and mining concessions (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 16, 2012). Even as Darwin appears psychologically distant from southern Australia, it retains practical closeness with federal government operations in Canberra. Disproportionate federal influence in the Territory leads to disproportionate federal intervention. Containment logics thus flourish in places where sovereignty influence converges, where threatening populations face "a concentration of executive powers and heightened surveillance" (Billings 2011: 272; Ong 2006; Gregory 2007; Reid-Henry 2007). Such places—like Darwin—become more

susceptible to containment logics and less likely to contest the embeddedness of containment practices.

The federal government's power is accompanied by the powerlessness of local and regional governance. The history of federal control over Aboriginal, military and mining issues sets precedents for the Territory's relative powerlessness. As one resident told me, the federal government can "override all our decisions, like create a nuclear waste dump whether we like it or not" (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 16, 2012). Similarly, another advocate explained that immigration detention centers in the Territory neglected to do environmental impact assessments or similarly mandated tasks because the Northern Territory government "posed no opposition" (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 27, 2012). He indicated that the Northern Territory government actually benefited from their perceived powerlessness; because they were assumed to be overrun by federal government projects, they assumed "no political liability" for unpopular projects like detention centers (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 27, 2012). In addition, local governments throughout the Northern Territory have long suffered from accusations of incompetence, cronyism, and scandals, according to many people I spoke with (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 16, 2012).

Contradictory and overlapping levels of governance lead to jurisdictional ambiguity. Layers of jurisdictions litter the Northern Territory, making it extremely difficult to determine exact responsibilities for projects like those established by the NTER. Aboriginal Development Corporations, Land Councils, newly-proposed Territory 'hub towns,' NTER-installed 'government business managers,' the Northern Territory government, and the federal government all assume different responsibilities in overlapping territories.

Jurisdictional ambiguity erodes protections from the legal system. For Peter Billings (2011:

272), geographical and legal sites of exception—detention centers, offshore excised places, and prescribed areas in the Northern Territory—are created through exactly such processes. As the government suspends, withdraws, or erodes the rule of law, it results in concentrated federal power over and surveillance of asylum seekers and Aboriginal populations.

Ambiguous authority is exacerbated by weak constitutional protections for those on the margins of Australian society. Australia lacks constitutional recognition for Aboriginal residents, as well as a functioning Bill of Rights, circumstances that legal scholars I interviewed suggest lead to weakened protection for human rights, although other scholars contest this interpretation (The Australian 2009). These various overlapping political and legal jurisdictions within the Northern Territory lend ambiguity to political projects like mandatory detention or the NTER, allowing containment logics to flourish in their uncertain margins.

Processes of erasure

Another factor increasing the Darwin community's vulnerability to containment logics is the process of historical erasure that impacts Darwin's built landscape as much as the commonly held memories of residents. As one resident told me, "Darwin wipes out its history, that's what it does" (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 12 and February 21, 2012). The Japanese bombing of Darwin during World War Two as well as the devastating Cyclone Tracy in 1974 destroyed swathes of historic structures in Darwin, and quick rebuilding reshaped the city for successive generations. Rebuilding occurs even without a disaster to prompt it. Residents told me about prominent buildings—the Darwin Hotel, the former

hospital—that were razed to the ground without recognition (Coddington, fieldnotes, February 21, 2012).

The trend toward erasure is particularly exacerbated in sites important to the Aboriginal history of the area: the former hospital, now bare ground, once was the Kahlin Compound, the area where Aboriginal ‘half-caste’ children were separated from parents and confined; the former Retta Dixon Home, a later incarnation of an Aboriginal housing and educational facility, now is an untended piece of bare earth alongside a busy thoroughfare. Neither of these sites was publicly commemorated in any form in 2012. Similar exercises of erasure take place in Darwin’s archives, local historians told me (Coddington, fieldnotes, February 21, 2012). There are “archival silences about Aboriginal people, who are still being written out of the story” of Darwin (Coddington, fieldnotes, February 21, 2012). The long-term use of Lamaroo Beach by Aboriginal residents throughout the 20th century as well as the influx of counterculture campers in the 1960s and 1970s becomes overshadowed by depictions of a largely invented group of ‘stable’ Darwin residents.

Part of the process of erasure comes about because of newer residents with different goals than past groups, as one city employee explained (Coddington, fieldnotes, February 15, 2012). People arriving in Darwin after the 1970s came with high salaries, temporary positions, and little interest in the background or history of the community, and these populations have only risen with the influx of oil and gas industrial activity in recent years. As these recent populations put pressure on policy-makers to accomplish their goals, the interests of longer-term residents fade in comparison. Recent changes to the built landscape, exemplified by the new Darwin waterfront, and the expensive housing ringing

Myilly Point adjacent to the bare grounds of the former hospital and Kahlin Compound, are physical reminders of the community's priorities.

Transient populations exacerbate the process of erasing Darwin's history. For example, many residents described Darwin community life as "transitory" due to the turnover in government jobs, many of which require people to move every certain number of years (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 27, 2012). "Career progress [in these type of jobs] means not being caught in local issues," one advocate told me (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 27, 2012). "We're a military town," another advocate suggested, and less likely to engage in social activism because of it (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 27, 2012).

Employees of the mining, oil, and gas industries, other key employers in Darwin, are similarly transient and unlikely to press for policy changes in their temporary new home.

The process of historical erasure also affects advocate efforts in Darwin. While strong advocacy occurred around refugee issues in the past, for example, lack of historical memory means that advocates cannot draw from these past experiences in their current activities. One long-time community activist demonstrated the erasure of these movements by showing me a poignant collection of his old advocacy t-shirts, which ranged from support for Vietnamese refugees arriving in Darwin in 1975 to Aboriginal land claims and legal battles throughout the 1970s and 1980s to promoting the causes of East Timorese refugees in the 1990s (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 19, 2012). In each case, the Darwin community had undertaken more vigorous and concerted advocacy efforts than appear possible today; in each case, the memories of these successes were disappearing as rapidly as the t-shirts disintegrated in the moist tropical air. A community with silenced archives, razed structures, and forgotten movements is a community that has greater difficulty

drawing on histories of difference and resistance to combat containment logics. If people in Darwin do not feel compelled to memorialize past injustices or acknowledge forgotten populations, I wonder, how are they to address such issues in the present?

The costs of containment logics

Because of all of these factors—remote geography, jurisdictional ambiguity, ease of historical erasure, and transient populations heavily invested in government projects—activism in Darwin is, according to local advocates, more subdued than elsewhere. Activism in Darwin, one advocate said, “has never been a story” (Coddington, fieldnotes, December 29, 2011). Darwin has neither a strong student community nor an active branch of the national Green party, two groups that strengthen advocacy movements in southern Australia. “The pool [of advocates] is so small and people who are ambitious just leave,” another advocate explained (Coddington, fieldnotes, December 29, 2011). “What is the rationale for people in advocacy here?”, another asked (Coddington, fieldnotes, December 29, 2011). “People aren’t going to make trouble” (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 2, 2012). Fewer potential advocates make for less protest and less advocacy in the community, and the long-term nature of social issues in Darwin such as Aboriginal justice encourage “apathy to protest,” a local historian suggested (Coddington, fieldnotes, February 21, 2012). Historical advocacy movements tend to be forgotten, such as the galvanizing community movements supporting East Timorese refugees in the 1990s; one advocate from that time said that activism was “smooshed” by local authorities after that point, while others suggested Darwin was unable to retain dedicated advocates due to the high cost of living (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 11, 2012). Do previous shows of support for social justice causes indicate, as some people suggested, a “loss of fervor” for activism? Or has activism

instead been as transient as other parts of the Darwin community, attracting visitors rather than local residents? Whatever the case, residents attributed part of the embeddedness of containment to the lack of widespread community advocacy in opposition to these policies.

Containment logics proliferate without opposition in places like Darwin because they address Australian fears about national identity. While processes of historical erasure, ambiguous sovereignty, and remoteness may exacerbate the embeddedness of containment logics in the policy landscape around Darwin, they represent an intensification, rather than a contrast, from the rest of Australia. Darwin should not be held in opposition to the imagined tolerance of difference in the rest of Australia; the logics of containment exist everywhere. Darwin represents a microcosm of the fear of difference within Australia, fear that advocates I spoke with traced back to “old fears” from the time of colonization (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 27, 2012). “Australia never came to terms with indigenous people,” one advocate explained, and “the repeated patterns of oppression” sit heavily on Australians’ consciousness (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 31, 2012). Policies toward asylum seekers and Aboriginal populations are so contentious, another resident of Darwin suggested, because “people are all afraid that Australia is going to turn into a foreign place” (Coddington, fieldnotes, February 13, 2012). Indeed, the twenty-first century fears about ‘border protection’ and ‘terrorism’ meld—as they did during the aftermath of the *Tampa* arrival in 2001—with older fears about difference and belonging in Australia. As another advocate argued, “People in Australia are not filled with hate, but fear mongering policies are attractive to people who get frightened easily” (Coddington, fieldnotes, March 2, 2012).

Fearfulness creates *insecurity* around Australians' feelings of national identity. Yet in their search for a more secure national identity, Australians jeopardize the *human* security of many (see Hyndman 2004; Hyndman and Mountz 2007; Hiemstra 2011). As I have argued throughout this dissertation, logics of containment trap Aboriginal Australians, asylum seekers, and advocates seeking justice, confining their minds and bodies, limiting the possibilities for their futures, and reveal the precariousness of their lives within the national body. Yet Aboriginal Australians and asylum seekers are not the only people harmed through policies based on logics of containment. Insecurity ripples throughout Australian public life, manifesting itself as limits to public debate, practices of imprisonment, restrictions to citizenship, or constraints for advocacy.

The damage wrought by containment logics to human security reflects larger issues about belonging and national identity in Australia. Issues of belonging surface again and again in Australia's tense relationship with its Aboriginal populations, where the importance of land and the uncertainty of its occupation take center stage. Fears of Aboriginal populations are fears about race and legitimacy, shot through with present-day guilt about the ongoing violence of colonization. Aboriginal issues force Australians to ask, "Who has a legitimate claim to Australian lands and identity?" one local historian posited in an interview (Coddington, fieldnotes, February 21, 2012). Similarly, asylum seeker issues may force an engagement with current Australian policies overseas, such as Australia's participation in the American-led Iraq and Afghanistan wars, as well as questions of race, integration, and difference (Coddington, fieldnotes, March 2, 2012). "Asylum becomes a lens through which you can view democratic attitudes in Australia," one advocate suggested (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 31, 2012). "It is a stage on which democracy

takes place” (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 27, 2012). Both issues force an uncomfortable reckoning with the extent of government control over marginalized lives as well; “what we are missing,” an advocate said, “is that if the government does it to them [asylum seekers and Aboriginal populations], they could do it to us” (Coddington, fieldnotes, March 2, 2012).

Yet if Darwin represents more of a microcosm of conflicted Australian attitudes towards difference, belonging, and Australian identity, it also symbolizes some of the hope and pride in Australia’s future potential. An activist described to me a ‘welcome to country’ ceremony performed at the Northern Immigration Detention Center. Welcome to country ceremonies have become common throughout Darwin’s public culture and are rituals where local Aboriginal leaders use language and song to welcome people to their traditional homelands. A prominent Aboriginal community leader led the welcome to country ceremony inside Darwin’s most notorious detention center, singing songs of welcome in Larrakia language. Asylum seekers who witnessed the ceremony were “really interested” in the event, the activist recounted, because they “came from extended family cultures and understood how much land ownership means to people here.” It was the also first time, the activist said, that anyone had welcomed the asylum seekers to Australia (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 11, 2012). The activist was clearly proud of the Darwin community in that moment, and her hopefulness contrasted sharply with the ongoing policies of containment that continue to shape these issues in Darwin and throughout Australia.

Many people I met with throughout my work echoed her pride, even as the daily work of advocating for justice proved wearying. A local advocacy leader summed up the contrasting hope and despair that marks the fight against the proliferation of containment

logics throughout Australia. We were leaving an immigration detention center in Darwin after a frustrating encounter with center bureaucracy, and she turned to me and said with a shrug, "It's bloody hopeless, isn't it?" But I knew also that she would be back again the next day, not yet willing to give up (Coddington, fieldnotes, January 2, 2012).

The perseverance of advocacy efforts to promote Aboriginal justice and fair treatment for asylum seekers in Darwin demonstrates that resistance to the proliferation of containment logics, while difficult, is by no means impossible. As Rev. Dr. Djiniyini Gondarra OAM wrote regarding the Intervention legislation,

Don't let the other people, the First People of this country, be rejected! Being seen as the second class citizen! Being seen as an outcast! We have lived in this country as a foreigner! We invite you brothers and sisters, walk with us, then fight a system that victimizes people (Concerned Australians 2011: 45).

Even as containment logics multiply, so too do the people who decide to walk, then fight.

Such individual decisions give hope that difference need not lead to fear, that fear need not lead to enclosure, that other strategies toward belonging can eventually triumph.

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