

Acknowledgment of country

- I acknowledge the *Mouheneenner* people as the Traditional Owners of this land and waters. I recognise present day Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the continuing Custodians of this land and waters and pay respect to their Elders past and present, and their emerging leaders.

White space and urban belonging: a scoping review

IAG Conference 2019, 9-12 July, Hobart, Tasmania

Dr Iris Levin, Centre for Urban Transitions, Swinburne University of Technology, Dr Tracy Castelino, ShantiWorks Consulting, Victoria



SWINBURNE
UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY

Outline

- Context: what is white space?
- Research question
- Methods: search, inclusion/exclusion criteria, screening
- Data analytics
- Findings: conceptualisations of white space
- Conclusions

Global events

- Northern England town riots (2001);
- 9/11 (2001);
- The Tampa crisis (2001);
- Cronulla riots (2005);
- ...
- Refugee crisis (2011-ongoing);
- Black Life Matters (2014);
- Sydney Lindt Cafe siege (2014);
- Bourke street attacks (2017, 2018);
- St Kilda beach brawl (2018).

Context

Super-
diversity

Securitisation
of public
space

Urban
belonging

Urban belonging in a white space



Source: YTravel

What is a white space?

- How can we think of a white public space?
- Is it to do with people? Planning and governance?
- Who is made to feel they belong or not, and how?

Is this a white
space?



Source: Adobe Creative Cloud

A white space

“The wider society is still replete with overwhelmingly white neighbourhoods, restaurants, schools, universities, workplaces, churches and other associations, courthouses, and cemeteries, a situation that reinforces a normative sensibility in settings in which black people are typically absent, not expected, or marginalised when present.” (Anderson 2015: 10)

Research question

- How do scholars conceptualise **white public space** and belonging of diverse ethnic groups in the western city?

Keywords, time frame and databases

"public space*", (race or white*), belonging

1.1.2002 – 1.3.2019

(Arksey & O'Malley 2005)

Database	Number of hits
Scopus	22
ESBChost	16
ProQuest Central	13 (39 including 26 duplicates)
Social Science database	4
Arts & Humanities	0 (2 duplicates)
Sociology database	0 (3 duplicates)
Google Scholar	17,900 hits, first 10 pages all. From page 11 to 20 selective choice = 129
Other personal libraries and references	28
Total	212

Publications

- Published in refereed journals
- No books, book chapters, book reviews
- No conference papers, dissertations
- No introductions to special issues

Content

- Focus on western cities/societies
- Focus on race and space
- No focus on other aspect of the city (e.g. gender, sustainability, sexuality)

Inclusion /
exclusion
criteria

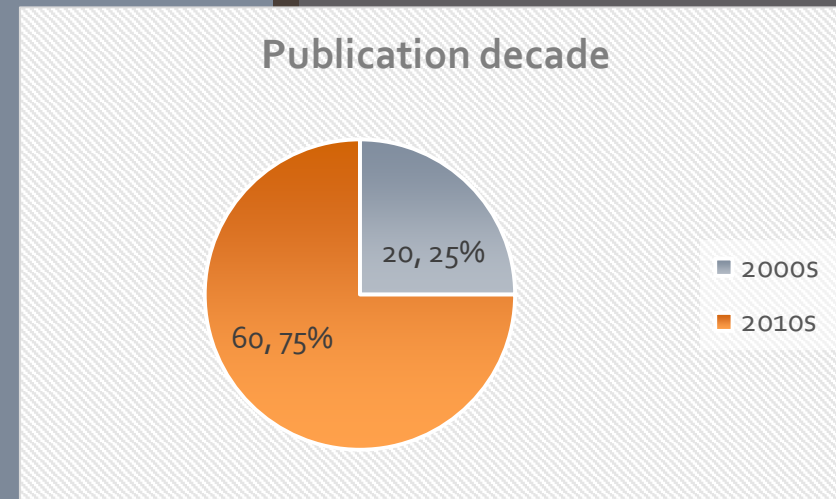
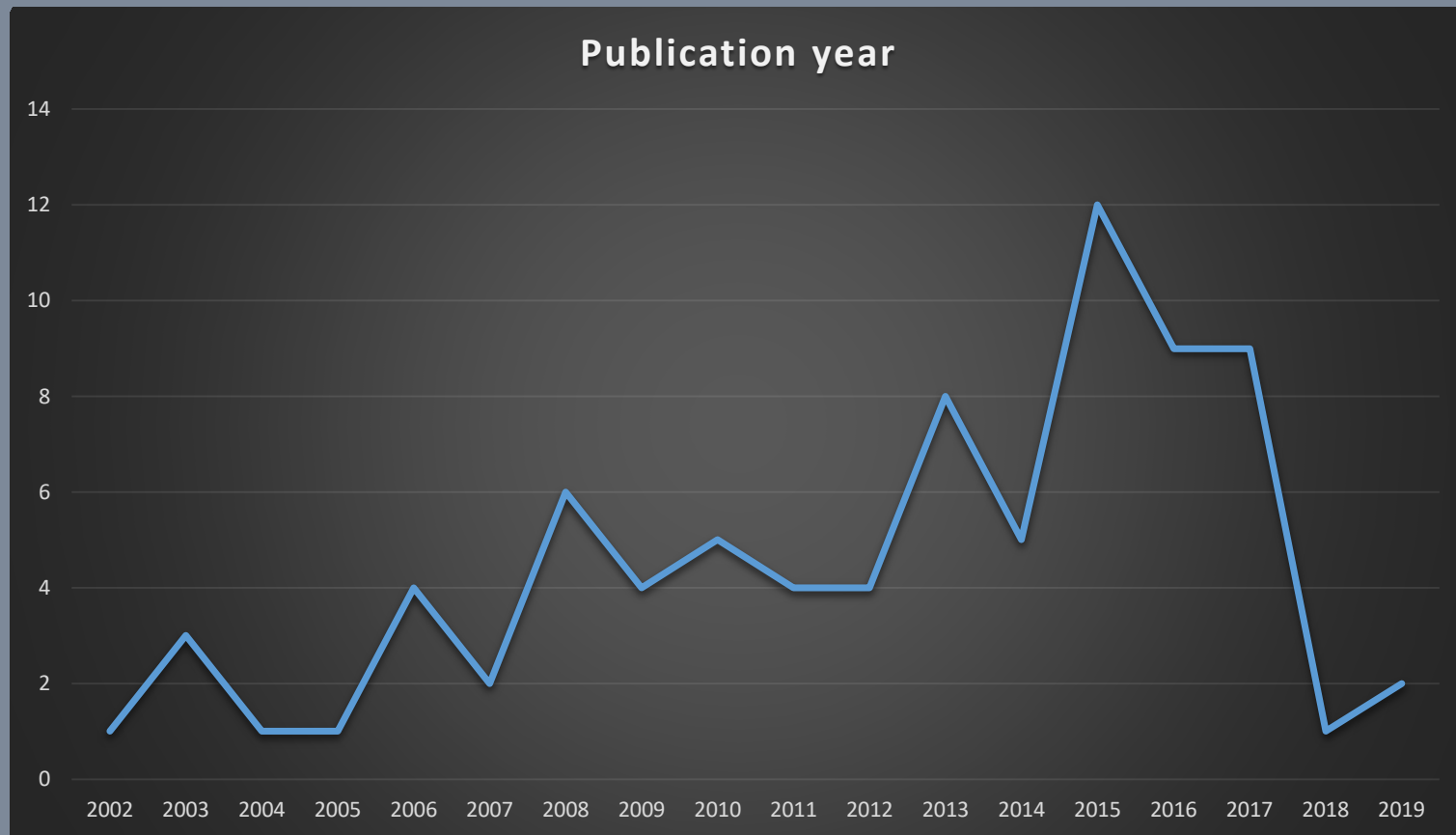
Two level screening

$$184 + 28 = 212$$


```
graph TD; A[184 + 28 = 212] --> B[103 relevant, 94 not relevant, 15 unsure]; B --> C[80];
```

103 relevant, 94 not
relevant, 15 unsure

80



Publication date

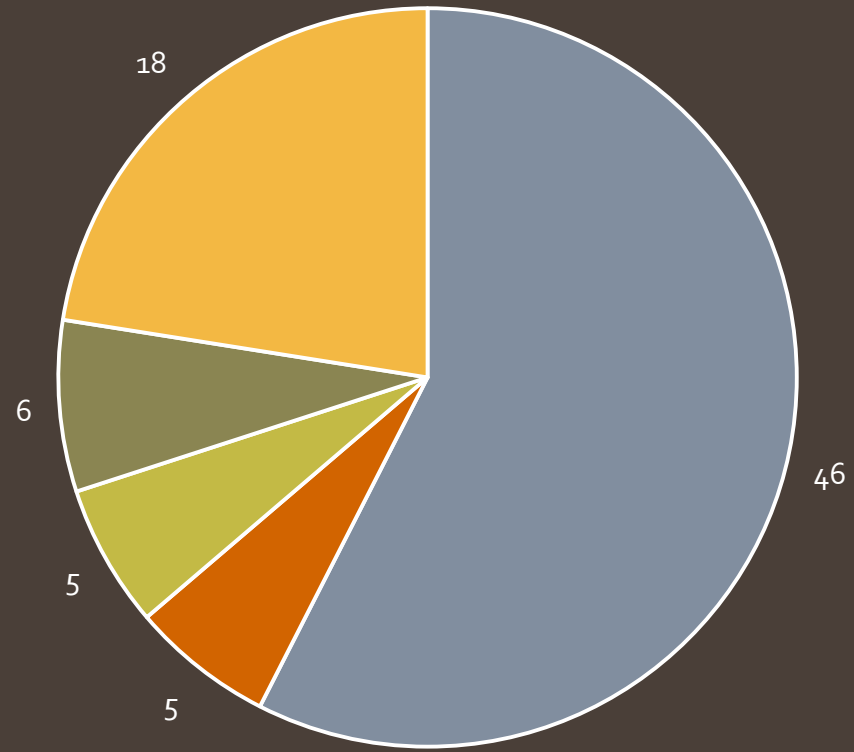
Research disciplines



Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed methods	Theoretical	Total
71	1	2	6	80
88%	1.3%	2.6%	8%	100%

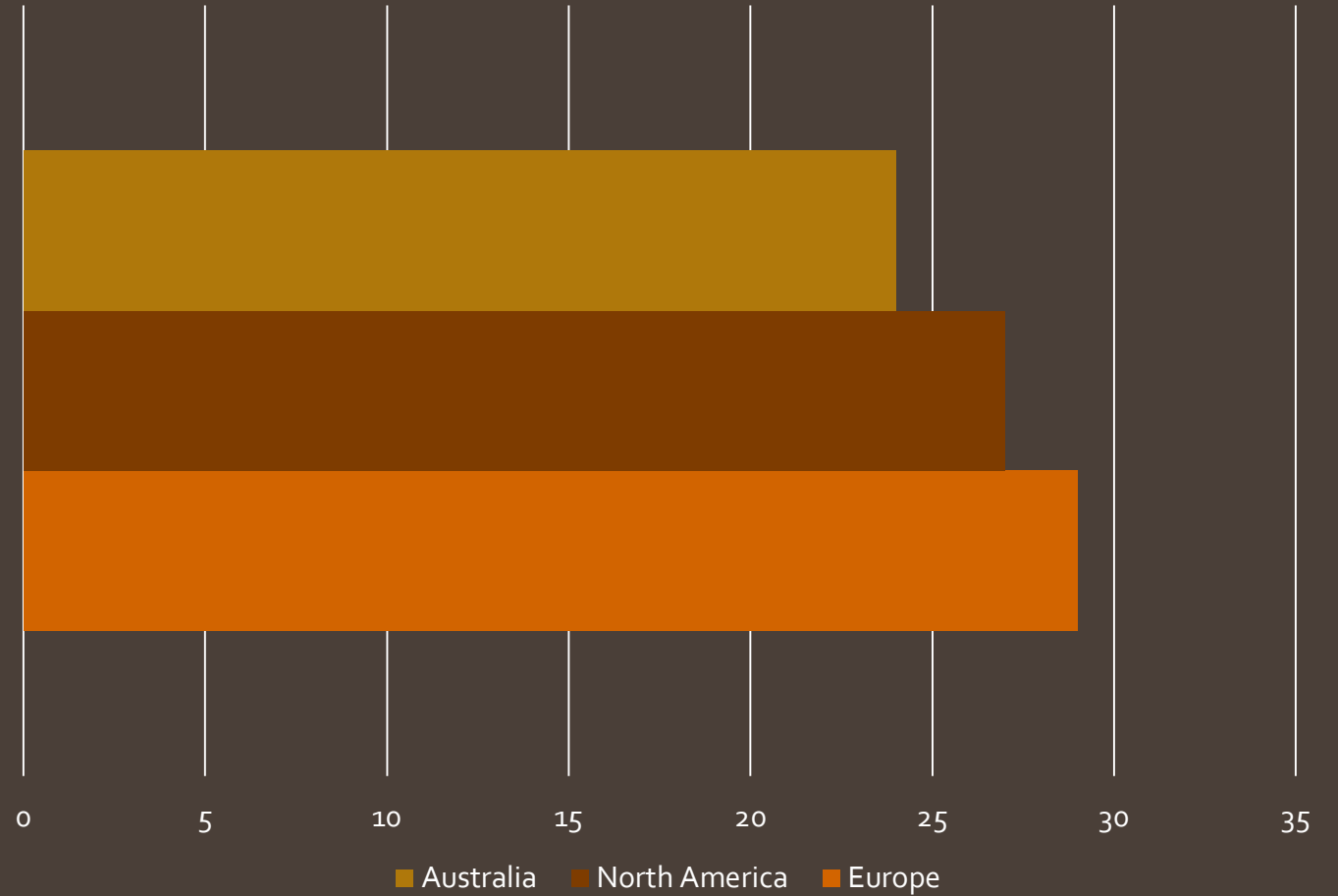
Research methods used in studies

Population focus



- Migrants
- Refugees, assylum seekers, illigalised migrants
- Indigenous
- Indigenous and migrants
- Blacks and whites

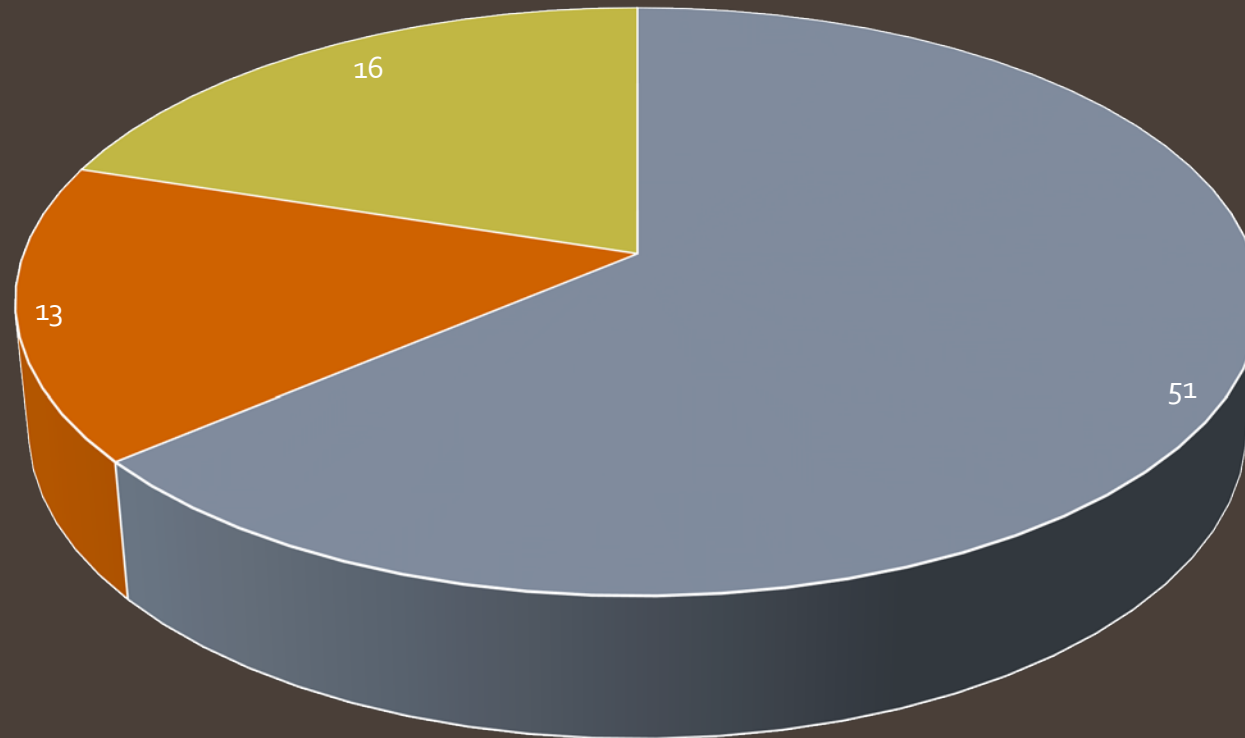
Country of focus



Regions/cities
of focus



The use of white space



■ No ■ Yes ■ Similar meaning



Individual-focused: White body, white ethnicity, white skin, white youth, white man's gaze.



National focus: White nationalism, white supremacy, white fantasy, white settlement, white settler society.



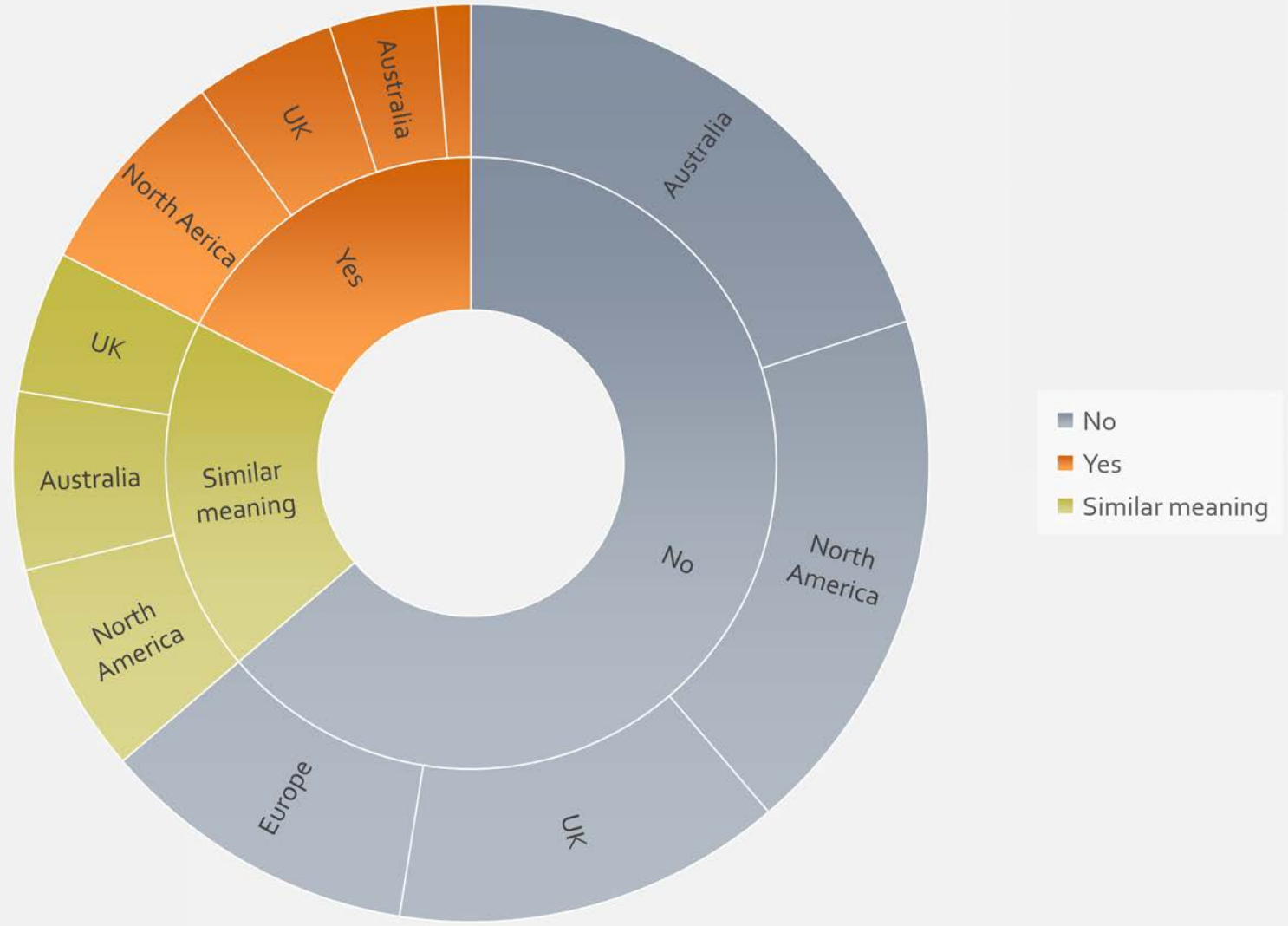
Abstract ideas: White values, white discourse, white culture, white privilege.



Geographical focus: White Britain, white Europe, white Southern heritage, white world.

Which other concepts were used?

Who used
which term?



How was the term used?

- In Europe and the UK, all studies referred to migrants.
- In the USA, most studies referred to blacks and whites.
- In the USA, Canada and Australia, only a few studies focused on Indigenous peoples.
- There were no studies from New Zealand.

Other similar concepts



Spatial concepts

- White environment, white landscape, white area, white national space, white city, white town, white neighbourhood, white suburb



Other concepts: Black-white

- Racial territoriality
- White-fication of black space



Other concepts: migrants

- Islamophobic space, Islamising space
- Brown space

How do scholars conceptualise white space?

- A USA example
- A UK example
- An Australian example

A USA example

- The ability to create and maintain public and private white space has been one of **the most powerful expressions of white privilege** over the past century in the United States. [...] Despite this significant role, white space remains understudied. (Reitman 2006: 268)
- What distinguishes white places from those associated with oppressed racial groups is that they are constructed through a denial of identity rather than its explicit portrayal. It is this denial that makes these places so important to reveal. (Reitman 2006: 279)

Reitman, M. (2006). Uncovering the white place: whitewashing at work. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 7(2), 267-282.

A UK example

- I argue that the bringing-into-being of race in these encounters signals the management of white space and delineates the borders of citizenship and belonging. In doing so, an idea of the white nation is produced through the conjoining of racism, nationalism and whiteness. (Nayak 2017: 293)

Nayak, A. (2017). Purging the nation: race, conviviality and embodied encounters in the lives of British Bangladeshi Muslim young women. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 42(2), 289-302.

An Australian example

- An appreciation of the vitality of things enables us to think of how events unfold in ways that place less of a burden on the racially differentiated body which desires to be ethical in encounters with strangers. It contributes to anti-racist agendas by showing how such bodies can develop new habits of living with difference without accumulating whiteness or inhabiting white space. (Lobo 2014: 726)
- Lobo, M. (2014). "Everyday multiculturalism: catching the bus in Darwin, Australia." *Social & Cultural Geography* 15(7): 714-729.

Thank God for
the gap!
(Spinney 2019)

GAP

Source: Snopes

Conclusions

- White space in the US is part of everyday, taken for granted, reality.
- White space is a non-space, a denial of identity.
- White space delineates the borders of belonging.
- Inhabiting white space may mean engaging in racial practices.
- There needs to be more discussion, exploration and exposure of white spaces and white practices in the western city.

Thank you

- Iris Levin ilevin@swin.edu.au.