All the women are white, all the Blacks are men, but what about the greens? – an intersectional analysis of modern environmentalism in Britain

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Abstract

In recent years, environmentalists have been capturing the attention of the popular press and the general public in Britain – but not without controversy. Since 2019 in particular, the movement has received heavy criticisms both internally and externally for centring particular forms of middle-class whiteness. In light of these criticisms, this doctoral project uses political ethnographic methods to examine discourses, strategies, and theories of environmentalism in Britain today through the lens of intersectionality.

Using the empirical data collected for this project, this thesis argues that the ways in which intersectionality is conceptualised profoundly shapes the way in which it can be operationalised within environmentalist organising. It shows how the way that social movement actors understand intersectionality (if at all) impacts both how they shape and communicate their political demands as environmentalists, as well as the literal spaces in which they do. And fundamentally, it reaffirms the importance of intersectionality for environmentalist organising in Britain.

The findings are divided thematically into *intersectional absences* and *presences*, analysing the different ways in which intersectionality can be conceptualised, operationalised, and/or precluded. Finally, the thesis uses its primary qualitative data and findings proposes several questions which seek to contribute to the building of 'a billion green Black feminisms'. It offers reflections on building of environmentalisms which are radically curious and energetic about responding to the challenging but crucial questions around how we address inequality, power, and marginality on a warming planet. Using the theoretical and empirical explorations, this thesis argues that it is vital to filter environmentalist problematics through intersectional lenses to recognise how power and inequality frame climate and environmental issues, and therefore the organising strategies and demands that we devise to address these issues.

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Introduction

The ecological crisis we face today is one of the most pressing issues of our time and a growing environmentalist movement is responding to it. The climate is changing and our ecologies degrading. Human activity is driving this – and this is practically no longer up for debate (Mukherji *et al.*, 2023, p. 4). A majority of people in Britain – across diverse backgrounds and political beliefs – believe, at least, that climate change is happening, that it matters, and that something should be done about it (Poortinga *et al.*, 2019; Kenward and Brick, 2021). The 'something' that should be done and how we should get there, however, varies wildly according to who you ask. Diverse, too, are the causes that people use to explain why we are facing ecological and climate breakdown in the first place. This is true even within the environmentalist movement in Britain – a large movement made up of numerous, heterogenous groups that range from ultra-conservative to techno-optimistic, green capitalist to liberal, to revolutionary, anarchist, and anti-capitalist. This doctoral thesis proposes a Black feminist inquiry into environmentalism. But neither Black feminism nor environmentalism should be taken for granted.

In this work, I use intersectionality to reflect on different discourses, strategies, and theories from environmentalisms in Britain. Intersectionality is a Black feminist framework which is most commonly associated with African American women's organising across the USA. Formally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality analyses the structural relationships between what we often conceive of as discrete structures of oppression, such as racism, sexism, and classism. This has become a critical, though not uncontested (Nash, 2008, 2013, 2017), framework to examine and respond to how unequal expressions of power materialise in the ways that legal systems operate, how wealth is distributed, and how ideas and ideologies are produced and spread (Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectionality situates marginality in webs of relational power that operate across structures of power – drawing our attention to the intersections between those structures for groups like working-class Black women who cannot choose between class and race struggles, for example. This dynamic is captured in the title of the key landmark anthology, *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* (Hull, Scott and Smith, 1982) which illuminates the silences faced by groups caught at the intersections of injustices which are too often conceived as disparate. It takes the experiences of Black and other global majority women as a serious site for theorising and organising. This doctoral thesis pays homage to Akasha Gloria Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith's anthology – using the learnings and theories from the intersectional margins for thinking broadly about how to map and build power, contestation, and resistance in social struggles against climate and ecological breakdown.

This chapter proceeds as follows. The first parts of this chapter reflect on this study's engagement with both Black feminism and environmentalism. The following sections set out the research questions which should be understood within the motivations of this work to build and reach for new social, ecological futures. These research questions are contextualised within the geographical and citational politics that frame the undertaking of this work. The chapter then goes on to clarify the use of terminology throughout this study – particularly with reference to the terms 'Global South' and 'global majority'. Finally, the chapter closes with an outline of the entire thesis.

1.1 Intersectional inquiry

Intersectionality is useful not only for undertaking a political analysis that is able to speak to the practices and discourses of imperial, white supremacist, heteropatriarchal racial capitalism. It also disrupts social movement organising that takes a single-axis approach to resisting interlocking articulations of power and oppression. Audre Lorde writes that, '[t]here is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives' (Lorde, 2007, p. 138). This study thus uses intersectionality to respond to the strategies, discourses, and demands of environmentalists. In doing so, I problematise the notion that there is a single issue called the 'environment' (which excludes human affairs), around which the environmentalist movement can or should coalesce. In conversation with others, I disrupt the idea that environmentalists should be 'focusing on saving the planet first'[1] and addressing social injustice as a secondary exercise. This work and the conversations that it feeds into are particularly important given that environmentalists have come under fire for the ways in which their discourses and strategies reproduce patterns of social marginalisation. Indeed, environmentalists in Britain have been strongly critiqued for silencing and undermining groups who are often already minoritised and organising along the axes of race, gender, dis/ability, age, nationality, and other lines (Bowman, Bell and Alexis-Martin, 2021; Foster, 2021; Greed, 2021; Griffith and Bevan, 2021; Haq, 2021; Larrington-Spencer *et al.*, 2021; Satheesh, 2021).

The primary line of argument in this thesis affirms that intersectionality is a useful lens through which to explore patterns of marginalisation, oppression, resistance, and contestation within social movement organising. This argument reaffirms intersectionality's relevance for addressing climate and environmental issues. Additionally, I argue that the ways in which social movement actors relate to intersectionality impacts both how they shape and communicate their political demands, as well as their practical tactical repertoires. This line of argumentation echoes calls to take up intersectional approaches to social movement studies more broadly within the social sciences and humanities

[1] This is an actual quote from an environmentalist I encountered during participant observation at a Green Party of England and Wales conference.

(Watkins Liu, 2017; Roth, 2021). Whilst this argument is frequently made in relation to 'identity' based movements like feminist, disability rights, and anti-racist movements (noting that these can, do, and should overlap, of course), this thesis encourages us to think about intersectionality in the context of environmentalism – which does not match the characteristics of 'identity' based or oriented social movements. In the scholarly literature, mainstream public discourse, and in some social movement organising spaces in Britain, Black feminists struggle to catch our breath and to be heard over '[North] American domination and European silence about Black feminism' (Emejulu and Sobande, 2019, p. 6) and intersectionality. From this perspective, this doctoral thesis sees intersectionality 'applied' in Britain, as a space which has historically been little studied in relation to intersectionality and environmentalism.

Though I take intersectionality as one of the key starting points that animates this research, I see this work as engaging in a broader conversation with Black feminist, Afro-feminist, and Indigenous scholarship addressing the politics and problematics of building social movements that strive for healthy, sustainable, regenerative, and radically different ecologies. There is no unified consensus on what Black feminism is or does – because, like environmentalism, Black feminism is heterogenous, diverse, and contains contradictory elements. It can be useful to clarify my engagement and situatedness within Black feminism as a careful reading and response to the work of scholars, thinkers, and activists including but not only Akwugo Emejulu, bell hooks, Francesca Sobande, Françoise Vergès, Gail Lewis, Kathryn Yusoff, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Kishi Animashaun Ducre, Patricia Hill Collins, Romy Opperman, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Sylvia Wynter, and Wangari Maathai. The work of these women and our ancestors address and respond to the ways in which the imperial-colonial echoes of race, class, gender, intersectionality, articulate themselves across time and space. Their work – and this study – seek to name and resist these complex, tentacled articulations of power by drawing from Black and Indigenous feminist toolkits that value: reciprocal research practices, a politics of care, an emphasis on solidaristic organising, and an interrogation of how, where, and by whom knowledge can be (un)made as we en/counter imperialism, heteropatriarchy, and racial capitalism. This is fundamentally how I understand Black feminism. Reflections on the (often hidden) work that makes the latter possible are crucial. My own engagement with the thought and praxis of these women is always filtered, through my own locatedness as an Ivorian-Japanese woman living and thinking in England. I provide greater detail on my engagement with and situatedness in Black feminism in the following chapter, which gives an overview of intersectionality as the framework which forms the bedrock for this doctoral study.

1.2 A focus on environmentalism

It is important to dedicate a few words to what I mean by 'environmentalism' – which, like Black feminism, is not an uncontested term. Indeed, Malcom Ferdinand – whose thinking about decolonial ecology has been important in shaping this work – makes an explicit distinction between environmentalism and ecologism. This distinction is both descriptive and normative. For Ferdinand, 'environmentalism' describes an apolitical posture which valorises and seeks to 'save' nature (which is conceived of as a distinct and separate sphere from humans). This happens without calling into question the articulations of power and domination which manifest in human social relations with each other and other forms of life (Ferdinand, 2019, p. 18). Ecologism, however, approaches the question of environmental health and wellbeing from a social justice perspective that explicitly centres issues relating to gender, race, class, and colonialism, and thus strives for political and ecological emancipation (Ferdinand, 2019, p. 19). Ferdinand's distinction speaks to the nature of my own project, which tries to contribute to the building of solidaristic, intersectional versions of ecologism that refuse the narrow purview of what he describes as environmentalism.

Notice, however, that I use the term 'environmentalism' to describe the people and praxis this study focuses on. I need to define this word to provide clarity on which types of organising are included, and which types excluded from the remit of the study. In the context of this study, I use the term 'environmentalism' in an expansive way that allows for the inclusion of a wide range of actors organising around issues that can be understood as environmental, climate, and ecological. I use 'environmentalism' in a way that would *also include* what Ferdinand describes as 'ecologism'. Ecologism is thus understood here as a particular type of environmentalism. I use the term 'environmentalism' to describe the diverse collection of groups, networks, and individuals whose organising activities explicitly seek to remedy harms done to our environments (whether these harms are understood in relation to harms to humans or not) with a view to building futures that value, protect, and sustain the health and wellbeing of 'nature,' 'ecology,' 'climate,' and/or 'the environment' (however conceived). This includes Green parties. As part of a broader movement, these groups and networks act to bring about social change, through collective demands on targeted authorities, institutions, and wider audiences, using a range of tactical repertoires including but not limited to creating associations and coalitions; marches; petitions; performance protests; direct action; standing for election; and public awareness campaigns (Tilly et al, 2020:24).

I am also conscious about attaching labels to people that do not reflect their own interpretation of themselves. Universities have sinister histories of doing this in harmful ways (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). At the same time, however, some organisers whose work is very clearly environmental in nature have been

disregarded and excluded from the category of 'environmentalism' – reinforcing patronising, problematic stereotypes which cast marginalised communities as people who do not care about environmental issues (Bell, 2020c). This stereotype is at the heart of influential theories about environmentalism, such as Ronald Inglehart's post-materialist thesis which argues that environmental values emerge amongst publics who have reached material comfort (Inglehart, 1995). We should be cautious about ascribing labels to others – but we should also reflect on what it means to uphold assumptions that undergird and reinforce exclusions from particular categories like 'environmentalism'. We can observe the reluctance of some to identify as an environmentalist while holding pro-environmental views (Hayhoe and Giemza, 2023). Scholars have compared this with the discomfort that some women might feel about calling themselves feminists despite agreeing with many of the tenets of feminism (Tesch and Kempton, 2004). Indeed, knowledge and awareness of climate issues have changed over the last twenty years. Still, feelings of discomfort can arise from the broader dominant representations and assumptions about who or what a 'feminist' or an 'environmentalist' might or should be. Just as human rights defenders may not necessarily identify themselves as such (Dávila A., 2023), environmentalists do not always call themselves environmentalists. I use the term 'environmentalist' loosely and apply it to all of the participants and contributors to this study. Fundamentally, 'environmentalism' is used here as a way of describing the varied forms of work that different communities are doing to imagine and/or build systems and spaces of ecological/environmental health and wellbeing – however diverse these forms of work are.

1.3 Research questions

Let us turn to the research questions that drive this study's effort to deepen dialogue amongst social movement studies, Black feminist scholarship, and political ecology. Establishing these questions supports us to understand the fundamental goals and motivations that frame this piece of work:

- *How does intersectionality interact with environmentalist discourse, strategy, and praxis more broadly?*
- *How might we build and enact environmentalisms that resist rather than reinforce existing patterns of power and oppression?*

These questions provide the overall framing for the inquiries and argument that the thesis puts forward. Ultimately, I am using the lens of intersectionality to interrogate how environmentalists reproduce and/or resist existing dynamics of power in the specific context of social movement building. It positions intersectionality and environmentalism in explicit conversation with each other – asking what the two can offer to each other; examining the moments and places in Britain where they are already doing so. Political ethnographic methods form the basis of the empirical work in this project and a close attention

to language drawn from literary studies is employed in parts of the political analysis. Taken together, these research questions seek to unpick and feed into some of the debates about power and praxis in the environmentalist movement. Using these questions as a springboard for inquiry, then, this thesis ultimately proposes some reflections on theoretical and speculative perspectives, exploring what intersectionality could suggest for building green Black feminist praxis both in the present and future. In doing so, it echoes calls for greater synthesis between the ecological and intersectional bodies of scholarly thought and activist praxis (Animashaun Ducre, 2018; Mikulewicz *et al.*, 2023) in Britain.

1.4 Reaching for desire

Black and Indigenous feminist futurity reaches for desire and forges 'a future that hasn't yet happened but must' (Campt, 2017, pp. 34–35). Futurity imagines beyond what exists now, without disregarding the present and how we got here. Futurity operates simultaneously in past, present, and future tenses. It opens space for desire. My work tries to respond to calls from Indigenous scholars like Eve Tuck 'to craft our research to capture *desire* instead of damage' (Tuck, 2009, pp. 416–417, emphasis original). This is not to say that we should disregard the loss, pain, violence, and hardship that marginality exposes us to – nor is this what Tuck advocates in her scholarship on moving away from damage centred research. Rather, to capture desire it is to engage in future regarding research that contributes to Black feminist prefiguration ('building a new world in the shell of the old'[2] by aligning our practices as closely as possible to our values and desires). Doing this requires drawing strength from 'the hope, the visions, the wisdom of lived lives and communities' (Tuck, 2009, pp. 416–417, emphasis original). Such work requires crafting reciprocal, caring, and meaningful relationships with others and the lands we live and think in. It requires sharing knowledge and learning from and within these relationships. From this perspective, this thesis attempts to work as much through construction as deconstruction, using its empirical findings to contribute to the building of green Black feminisms which take intersectionality as a key foundation on which to build environmentalist praxis. It relies on methods that reach for reciprocity and are as minimally extractive as possible.

The construction of healing ecologies relies wholly on a reaching for desire. So, this work is future regarding, without forgetting the present and the past. This means that whilst it reaches for desire, it offers critique too. It reaches for desire *through* critique, calling our attention to damaging practices that hegemonic whiteness produces within environmentalism in order to resist, not centre them. To talk about hegemonic whiteness is not to refer to an individual's skin colour, *per se*. Whiteness is a fluid, contextually dependent 'hegemonic racial ideology' (Matias and Boucher, 2023, p. 74) rather than static

[2] This phrase is one of the stated aims of the internationalist union, Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), as written in their constitution first published in 1920. A version of this phrase remains in the 2022 version of their constitution (Industrial Workers of the World, 2022).

racial identity on the individual level. It organises group power relations and produces racialised hierarchies (Green, Sonn and Matsebula, 2007). Whilst this research speaks back to and against ecological narratives that are produced by and for whiteness, I am cautious about focusing exclusively in this study on how whiteness operates and the damages it produces in environmentalist spaces. Although part of this work is mapping power and contestation amongst environmentalists, I am striving towards the broader goal of theorising and encouraging further conversation around what it means to 'do' intersectionality and environmentalism. In other words, this thesis addresses and reaches beyond what Van Jones has termed the 'unbearable whiteness of green' (2007).

1.5 Examining environmentalist epistemologies

As the opening lines of this chapter acknowledged, the environment was once a fringe issue in British politics, but today it consistently tops lists of the public's priorities in national opinion polls (Barasi, 2019; Ipsos MORI, 2019, 2020, 2021; Office for National Statistics, 2021). 'Green' issues are firmly on the agenda – and not just for green parties (Carter, 2006, 2013; Hess and Renner, 2019; Carter and Pearson, 2022). To be clear, I use 'green' as an all-encompassing descriptor which describes ecological issues at large – ranging from climate change and carbon emissions to biodiversity loss and pollution and so on. All of these issues largely relate to the politics and practices of extractivism – a concept emerging from Indigenous groups organising against resource extraction across South America to mean, 'a particular way of thinking and the properties and practices organized towards the goal of maximizing benefit through extraction, which brings in its wake violence and destruction' (Durante, Kröger and LaFleur, 2021, p. 20). In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, a swathe of 'green' recovery plans were issued by governments across Europe (Geels, Pereira and Pinkse, 2021; *Recovery plan for Europe*, no date). This success of climate and environmental issues can be at least partly attributed to the work of the modern environmentalist movement which reached its zenith in the late twentieth century (Norris, 1997; Seel, Paterson and Doherty, 2000; Prendiville, 2014; Rüdig, 2019). But the environmentalist movement did not 'complete' its work and disappear from the European political landscape. In recent years, people organising around the climate and environment have received a renewed wave of attention in the mainstream public sphere. Environmentalism has penetrated public consciousness in Britain and beyond (Carter and Ockwell, 2007; Poortinga *et al.*, 2018; Bacsi, 2020). This is especially true for Britain, which has seen a resurgence of environmentalist activity and interest in it with the emergence of grassroots organisations like Extinction Rebellion (XR) and Just Stop Oil.

As noted above, environmentalists have come under fire for reproducing hegemonic patterns of social marginalisation through their environmentalism – speaking over or undermining the needs and concerns of groups who are often already minoritised along the axes of race, gender, dis/ability, age, nationality,

as well as other social lines (Bowman, Bell and Alexis-Martin, 2021; Foster, 2021; Greed, 2021; Griffith and Bevan, 2021; Haq, 2021; Larrington-Spencer *et al.*, 2021; Satheesh, 2021). The research of scholars such as Karen Bell have shown how working class environmental concerns can and often have been dismissed by mainstream organisations as beyond the scope of their work – this is true for those working on issues around local toxic dumping and pollution, for example (2020c, p. 13). Hence, debates about the exclusions that characterise some forms of environmentalism are even embedded in the fundamental boundaries of how environmentalists define the remit of their organising.

Exclusions within the environmentalist movement are problematic given the disproportionate climate and environmental burdens that these marginalised groups face, despite the fact that they have often contributed the least to the causes of climate and environmental breakdown (Salleh, 1993; Bell, 2020b). Hegemonic green philosophies have historically been dominated by accounts centring the views and experiences of (well to do) white people in the Global North. As noted above, scholars and activists from across the world have called for a more explicit reckoning with the relevance of intersecting social inequalities, injustices, and marginalisation as forces which shape and are shaped by a rapidly changing biosphere (Sultana, 2022a; Mikulewicz *et al.*, 2023). Hence, this thesis thinks *through* and *about* intersectionality to interrogate and theorise forms of environmentalist praxis in Britain today. In doing so, it speaks to debates about intersectionality as marrying theory and practice – to form praxis – in social movements (Collins and Bilge, 2016; Evans and Lépinard, 2019) by providing an analysis of environmentalism in Britain today.

The ways that we understand what we perceive to be issues shapes how we act upon them (Collins, 1989). In other words, theory and action – praxis – are shaped by epistemology. It is necessary to think critically about existing environmental epistemologies, for these epistemologies inform the types of solutions and strategies that movements propose in response to their understanding of the key issues. As scholars of many theoretical backgrounds have shown, green thought, discourse, and praxis are neither necessarily liberatory nor radical by mere virtue of being green (Pierotti and Wildcat, 1997; McGregor, 2004; MacGregor, 2014; Ahuja, 2015; Whyte, 2017). When environmentalists do not account for social inequalities, the types of initiatives that spring from their demands can feed into policies which reinscribe unequal relations of power (Newman, 2011; Berglund and Schmidt, 2020). Hence, it is important to give due critical consideration to the types of demands that environmentalists make, how they make them, and the ways in which they speak to existing power relations. With this in mind, throughout this thesis, I draw on a range of theories and primary empirical data to argue that the ways in which social movement actors relate to intersectionality impacts both how they shape and communicate their political demands, as well as the concrete organising strategies they use.

The body of thought where intersectionality is used as a primary lens to explore issues relating to the climate and environment is growing (de Onís, 2012; Kaijser and Kronsell, 2014; Godfrey and Torres, 2016; Animashaun Ducre, 2018; Clark, Auerbach and Xuan Zhang, 2018; Hathaway, 2020; Alvarez and Evans, 2021). Still, there have been few attempts yet to use it to explore environmentalism as a social movement. This is even truer amongst case studies beyond the United States of America. Given the dynamism of the environmentalist movement across Britain, I stress the importance of having these conversations on *both* sides of the Atlantic (and beyond!). Furthermore, I hope to use this thesis in part to serve as a document for posterity, recording the presence of (marginalised) social movement actors foregrounding and working with intersectionality for social ecological struggles in Britain.

1.6 'Between [North] American domination and European silence'[3]

Existing analyses of environmentalism which foreground issues of social justice (often in a US context) tend to take a single-axis approach when they account for modes of power, such as race or gender, respectively. For example, US based scholars and activists have developed the term 'environmental racism' to focus on the interaction between racialised power structures and environmental damage from a juridical lens (Cutter, 1995; Checker, 2008; Di Chiro, 2008). This has been effective for making legal progress to combat environmental injustices, especially in the lived environments of global majority communities in parts of North America. Nevertheless, as EJ scholars drawing on intersectionality have shown, race-only approaches can erase those whose marginality is produced at the intersections of social structures assumed separate as legal structures often do (II, George and Schatz, 2017; Kohl, 2019; Goodling, 2020). This thesis builds on the knowledge that environmental justice offers us – but it also seeks to trouble its singularity, insisting on the interrelated nature of oppressions. This creates opportunities for greater inclusivity within environmentalism whilst expanding the potential for further coalitional organising with other social movements. There is limited literature on how global majority organisers engage with environmentalism in the Global North outside of the US. By focusing on a European case study, this thesis resists tropes which imagine global majority communities as situated *only* either in the US or in the Global South. Hence, I emphasise again that this study aims to speak to this gap between '[North] American domination and European silence about Black feminism' (Emejulu and Sobande, 2019, p. 6) and environmentalism, taking the British locale as its main focus.

Not only does intersectionality *analytically* reveal the lumpy, uneven, and imbricated nature of power and inequality; it *resists* it (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013; Collins and Bilge, 2016). In a similar vein,

[3] Emejulu and Sobande, 2019, p. 6.

parts of the large field of environmental studies – such as environmental justice (EJ) scholarship – seek not only to *describe* racialised inequalities and exploitation in lived environments, but also to resist them (Schlosberg, 2013). From this perspective, my project seeks to contribute to theory *and* movement building. As someone who has been involved in environmentalist organising in various organisational settings over the past few years, much of this work is informed by the fact that I study a movement that I identify as part of. From this perspective, I have tried to approach this research and the environmentalists I encountered in this research as a 'critical friend' (Earl, 2018). As a critical friend, I have sought to make this research to speak *to* and *with* other environmentalists, as a way of encouraging a critical but constructive reflection on how we can best equip ourselves to address inequality, power, and marginality on a warming planet. To do this, I propose, through this research, that there is some learning we can do as environmentalists from Black feminist thought – from intersectionality in particular (and vice versa). This learning is shared in the pages of this thesis as well as a condensed, digestible report that will be freely accessible online.

This project has been approximately three years in the making. At times, it has been challenging. There have been many moments where I questioned both my ability and the appropriateness of my positionality to undertake this research. But this work speaks to what I would argue are some of the most important questions of our time – about how we live together on a warming planet, how we care for each other and the life that we share the biosphere with, and how we resist violence, domination, and oppression. It asks how intersectionality can help us to understand environmentalist discourse, strategy, and praxis in Britain – and in doing so, interrogates the junctures at which the 'natural' and 'social' meet (Bookchin, 2007; Alaimo, 2008; Canty, 2016).

As already noted, this research takes place in the context of a country with one of the most visible environmentalist movements in the world: Britain. Certainly, it does not seek to provide a singular, authoritative response to the questions it raises. But it seeks to offer a perspective to a conversation which, though already existing, needs to expand; a conversation which centres ecological imaginaries that turn away from hegemonic forms of environmentalism that fail to account for the lumpy and uneven nature of climate change and environmental breakdown (Sultana, 2022b, 2022a). It is a piece of work which builds on my engagement with scholars and activists to whom I am greatly indebted for supporting our collective imagination of futures that are *green* (Barry, 1999; Healy and Barry, 2017; Malm, 2021), *Black* (Frazier, 2016; Animashaun Ducre, 2018; Ferdinand, 2019; Murphy, Weddington and Rio-Glick, 2021), red (Pierotti and Wildcat, 1997; Kimmerer, 2013; Whyte, 2017; Nation, 2021), *abolitionist* (Heynen and Ybarra, 2021; Ranganathan and Bratman, 2021; Vgontzas, 2022), *feminist* (Plumwood, 2002; Alaimo, 2008; Gaard, 2011; Animashaun Ducre, 2018; Salleh, 2018), *anti-colonial*

and *anti-imperialist* (Collins, 2023; Gill, 2023; Perry, 2023; Tilley and Ajl, 2023) – in other words, *socially and ecologically just*. It centres dialogue with environmentalists, (Black) feminists, friends, and interlocutors, to examine some of the ways that intersectionality draws our attention to power and marginality – and how the latter is relevant for addressing climate and environmental issues. If we are to address the planetary damage and breakdown that we are facing (including the breakdowns and violence being done to humans and other life), many of the questions it raises are unavoidable. This thesis thus addresses its research questions in a way that takes Black feminist perspectives seriously, working to respond to the urgent need to expand 'the environment[al] movement to a broader range of images, perspectives and imaginaries that can take hold of the wealth of lived experiences and connections that constitute a planetary ecological movement' (Beuret, 2023, p. 15).

1.7 Citational politics

The theorising and writing up of the research presented here is driven by a feminist politics of citation. Sara Ahmed talks about citation as the way in which, 'we acknowledge our debt to those who came before; those who helped us find our way when the way was obscured because we deviated from the paths we were told to follow' (2017, pp. 15–17). If citations 'can be feminist bricks [...] the materials through which, from which, we create our dwellings (2017, pp. 15–17)', then the dwellings I am building and seeking shelter in are Black, Indigenous, feminist, ecologist... transnational, global, local, and span different mediums. They are borrowed and gifted and co-created.

As a native English speaker and European Afro-Asian feminist who grew up in and currently lives in the south of England, I am aware of the ways that the academy excludes continental European and Global South-based Black feminist scholars and their scholarship. To a certain extent, my Britishness shields me from some of these exclusions. Recognising this makes it necessary to reflect on how to make my research possible without perpetuating the side-lining of wider Black feminist and intersectional scholarship, especially the work that does not get canonised, even within Black feminist circles. I know that some of the work that I ought to engage with is beyond my reach because of the side-lining that is already taking place – because knowledge also circulates with the benefit of resources and influence (which are concentrated in particular universities, regions, and networks...). But in conducting this project, I have worked my best to broaden my intellectual engagement with theories of intersectionality in the context of Europe to include the work of European Black feminists both in Britain and on the European continent. Part of my citational and methodological practice has also relied on engagement with Indigenous scholarship and methodologies from contexts of settler colonialism – across North America and Aotearoa/New Zealand. I have been to the former just twice, and the latter never. Yet, I am connected to both. In reflecting on how we exercise land-based relationality, I am called to notice the

shadows of the colonial connections that one of my own homelands (Britain) holds in relation to both of these spaces. This noticing takes me to other parts of the Global South too – to Kenya and India… lands where people, often women, have dared to imagine and practice ecofeminist principles of care, solidarity, and ecological protection. The fundamentals of this thought and action make themselves seen in my citational bricks.

In more concrete terms, I deliberately include in my citations those whose voices are obscured by Anglophone hegemony in Europe and the hierarchical systems of academia which devalues the scholarship of those further down/outside the chain of academic posts and qualifications. Most of the work I engage with here is in or has been translated into either English or French.

1.8 A note on terminology: Global South, global majority

Before providing an outline of the whole thesis, I want to dedicate some space to clarifying some terms I use throughout this piece of work. Language is always changing – and as a literary studies graduate, this is something I have spent a lot of time reflecting on. Sometimes there are limits to language. The words we have available to us cannot always reliably capture what we want to communicate. The findings of this research echo this insight with regards to intersectionality in particular – but I come back to this in later chapters. First, let us clarify my usage of the terms 'global majority' and 'Global South'.

Throughout this piece of work, I use both the terms 'global majority' and 'Global South', but these terms are not strictly interchangeable. I use the term 'Global South' as *both* a political and geographical term (Grovogu, 2011) to describe the lands and peoples beyond Europe that have been made the objects and targets of extractivist and exploitative practices married to the racialised, transnational processes of European colonialism and imperialism (Mahler, 2017, 2018). More importantly, these lands and peoples have been agents of critique – resisting and rejecting the colonial-imperial world order. They have been forging the path to decolonisation, which has articulated itself in different ways across time and space, such as with the establishment of new independent nation states in the twentieth century. To reiterate, 'Global South' is both a political and geographical term. The South is conceptualised in relation to the 'Global North' – the latter being the lands and peoples that have benefited from hegemonic practices and processes, and which have been critiqued and resisted by Southern peoples.

In *Wretched of the Earth* (2001 [1961]), Frantz Fanon writes that 'Europe is literally the creation of the Third World' (102). I would expand this to say that, today, the Global North (which includes Europe, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia, and parts of North America), is literally the creation of the Global South. The North/South divide maps (rather messily) on to what W.E.B. Dubois framed as the 'problem of the [global] color-line,—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in

America and the islands of the sea' (Du Bois and Edwards, 2007, p. 15). In the context of this research, this North/South divide should be understood in relation to extractivism and relations of unequal ecological exchange (Tilley and Ajl, 2023). In simpler terms, the massive accumulation of wealth and overdevelopment of the North has relied on and still relies on the extraction of resources from Southern lands and the labour of Southern peoples in often very poor conditions (Roberts and Parks, 2009). So, this term 'Global South' encapsulates this divide as a geographical *and* political one. But we should take care – there can be Souths in the North and Norths in the South. Southern diasporas live in many parts of the North. Indeed, people from these diasporas are an important constituent of my interviewee sample. Indigenous lands and communities in North America are in the Northern hemisphere but are part of the political South. Elites and settlers live, work, and play in the geographical South, in places like South Africa. We should note, though, that geography is not the only factor in determining how the global practices and processes of colonialism and coloniality have unfolded and continue to unfold today.

Whilst I am critical and cautious of using the term 'Global South' in a geographically deterministic way, I should note that I use the term Global South as a geographical companion to 'global majority'. When I use the term 'global majority', I am referring to the *people who make up the majority of the world* that do not consider themselves to be white. As with the usage of 'Global South' as a political term, the global majority can be situated anywhere geographically. I, for example, as an Afro-Asian woman, consider myself to be part of the global majority, even if I have only ever lived and worked in Europe. The term 'global majority *world*' is beginning to enjoy greater usage in the literature (e.g., Goodman, 2020). I hesitate to use this term, because it suggests that places like Europe are not part of the *world* inhabited by or linked to global majority people. The work of Olivette Otele, Akwugo Emejulu, Francesca Sobande, and David Olusoga has been extremely important in developing my thinking about Europe as Black, brown, white, red… Why shouldn't Europe also be part of the global majority world when it is literally the creation of the South? Why shouldn't Europe be part of the global majority world when it is home to global majority communities? From this perspective, I talk about global majority *communities* but not the global majority *world*. For the global majority world is Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Middle East, Oceania; and it is Europe too! These are complicated discussions – for the terms we use raise questions about how we define ourselves and the logics on which these self-defining categories are built.

So, in a nutshell, I use the term 'Global South' both geographically and politically, to talk about both lands and people – but I use global majority to talk more specifically about the majority of the world who do not consider themselves to be white. The latter term is less geographically anchored than the former.

I try to be specific and use placenames where I can. Specificity provides greater context and allows us to theorise in relation to the particularities of each land[4] and the relations it encompasses.

Additionally, a note on the terms I use to describe the places I refer to throughout this thesis. I would like to acknowledge that I am using settler placenames to refer to Indigenous lands, including across North America. I recognise that these lands are currently and have long been known by other names. For example, Turtle Island is an Indigenous placename for North America which is linked to several origin stories used by various First Nations communities, including those that tell of a turtle which holds up the island or the world on its back (Kimmerer, 2013; Bowra, Mashford-Pringle and Poland, 2021). Of course, my thesis focuses on Britain primarily. However, it is important to clarify my language around placenames because my citational practices and general thinking about the key themes of this research are meaningfully informed by land-based relations, which stretch through and beyond Britain. Indeed, my thinking – and some of the mobilisation of the organisers I spoke to as part of this project – is in conversation with the action and thought of Indigenous land defenders, ecofeminists, and ecologists across the world.

1.9 Thesis outline

Let us now turn to an outline of how the thesis will proceed.

The first part following this introductory chapter, Chapter 1, presents a review of the academic literature on intersectionality and environmentalism in order to further situate this project within wider academic debates. As the wider body of this thesis will demonstrate, intersectionality is an important framework for thinking about justice which has not yet been fully embedded in environmentalist discourses in Britain. The chapter identifies the body of literature with which this project aims to converse with by bringing together some of the key scholarship around intersectionality and environmentalism in one place. It introduces the Black feminist concept of intersectionality – explaining what it is and how it is useful. The politics of knowledge and its provenance is key to Black feminist thought. To this end, I provide a brief genealogy of intersectionality, tracing the history of the concept before outlining some of its uses within social movement studies in Britain. Though growing in public and scholarly interest,

[4] I follow Styres et. al in their definition of land as follows: '*Land* encompasses all water, earth, and air and is seen simultaneously to be an animate and spiritual being constantly in flux. It refers not only to geographic places and our relationships with urban Aboriginal landscapes but also gestures to the ways that discourses within places inform and are informed by our vision, pedagogies, and teaching practices' (Styres, Haig-Brown and Blimkie, 2013, p. 37). For the most part, I am not conducting this research with reference to urban *Aboriginal* landscapes – but I do relate to and think through the urban landscapes that many of my research participants are organising in, and that I have lived and worked in too.

intersectionality remains contested. Hence, the chapter addresses some of the key limitations and critiques faced by intersectionality and examines them in the context of this study.

Chapter 2 lays out the methods and methodological approach which underpins this project. Simply put, I reflect on the *how* of my research and why I have chosen to do it this way. The chapter explores both the theoretical and methodological challenges and choices which frame the study's process and findings. It outlines some of the epistemological, ontological, and ethical considerations which frame the project's methods, with a specific focus on researcher reflexivity and the value of collaborative knowledge making. It also explains and justifies the qualitative research methods used in this project: semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and content analysis of online and print publications, both historical and contemporary. Additionally, it reflects on these methods in the specific context of a global pandemic and the ensuing increased importance of the digital sphere in many aspects of our lives, including the conducting of research.

Environmentalist organising is not new to Britain. It has been traced as far back as British imperialist expansion in the so-called Age of Enlightenment, where colonialists (paradoxically) justified their pursuits abroad with a concern for the 'natural environment' (Grove, 1990, 2002; Crosby, 2004; Grove, 2010, 2017). Today's environmentalists – like environmentalists of any other era – are operating in a very particular set of circumstances which need to be both accounted from both contemporary and historical perspectives. Therefore, in Chapter 3, I provide some of the important historical background for thinking about intersectionality and environmentalism together in the British context. Drawing on archival research, I examine the role that intersectionality has played in informing environmentalist organising in Britain so far. Whilst this historical discussion shows how environmentalism has changed over time to include a more social account of environmental and climate issues, it highlights and problematises some of the historically exclusionary tendencies that characterise environmentalist organising in Britain – ranging from the types of demands and discourses being made by environmentalists to the practical organising strategies and tactical repertoires mobilised. Certainly, this thesis is not primarily historical in its focus. But this historical analysis places the contemporary theoretical and empirical discussions that form the bulk of the project within the wider contextual history of environmentalism across Britain. This sets us up well for thinking about the ways that intersectionality is (or is not) able to inform how environmentalism operates in Britain today, especially given the extent to which intersectionality is tied up in histories of other new social movements, especially those taking place beyond British borders at the time that environmentalism begins to mature as a movement in Britain. This is examined in greater detail in the following chapters.

The following two chapters are organised around the empirical data which I collected for this research project, which I divide thematically into what I term here *intersectional absences* and *presences*. The chapters argue that the ways in which intersectionality is conceptualised profoundly shapes the way in which it can be operationalised within environmentalist organising. They show how the ways in which social movement actors understand intersectionality (if at all) impacts both how they shape and communicate their political demands, as well as the literal spaces in which they do. And, indeed, they think through these problematics in the very specific context of environmentalist organising in Britain.

The first of these two chapters, titled *Problematising intersectional absences*, examines how intersectionality's absences can take a variety of forms for environmentalists: ignorance, resistance, as well as a more ambivalent absence which draws on it conceptually whilst avoiding the word 'intersectionality.' The chapter examines these three broad types of absence to think through the silences that British environmentalism produces in relation to intersectionality, and the implications that these silences have for intersectionality and movement organising more broadly.

In the subsequent chapter (*Navigating intersectional presences*), we shift the focus to thinking about the *presences* of intersectionality in the organising strategies and discourses of British environmentalists. The chapter exploring presences does not think about *types* of intersectional presences in the same way that the previous chapter treats absences. Rather, it seeks to examine the different conceptual and strategic 'shapes' that intersectionality might take when it can be identified as being 'present'. More concretely, in this chapter, I interrogate how actors talk about intersectionality in relation to individual and structural levels of analysis, the key conceptual and practical challenges they identify in operationalising intersectionality, as well as how these actors explicitly relate intersectionality to the specific context of environmentalist or 'green' organising.

The final discussion chapter before the conclusion (*Questions for a billion green Black feminisms*), builds on the wealth of empirical and theoretical material explored up to this point in the thesis to propose a framework for 'asking the right questions' about how intersectionality can inform environmentalist organising. It argues for the building of environmentalisms which are radically curious and energetic about responding to the challenging but crucial questions around how we address inequality, power, and marginality on a warming planet. Using the theoretical and empirical explorations that precede it, this chapter argues that it is vital to filter environmentalist problematics through intersectional lenses to recognise how power and inequality frame climate and environmental issues, and therefore the organising strategies and demands that we devise to address these issues. I offer this chapter as a set of reflections that emerge not only from the encounters with fellow environmentalists and Black feminists that produced and coproduced the empirical data that this research relies on, but

also some of the existing scholarship and my own experiences organising as a Black feminist environmentalist in Britain.

The final concluding chapter ties together the discussions of the previous chapter to provide some closing remarks. It revisits the research questions framing this research project, reaffirming the key line of argument that runs throughout the thesis: that the ways in which social movement actors relate to intersectionality impacts both how they shape and communicate their political demands, as well as their practical tactical repertoires. Having considered the ways that intersectionality draws our attention to power and marginality – and in doing so, provides nuance, texture, and complexity to our understandings of how power functions – I reaffirm its relevance for addressing climate and environmental issues. Indeed, this argument has political, theoretical, and methodological implications for both the study and undertaking of climate and environmental organising in Britain – which are laid out and examined in this closing chapter.

Chapter 1. Literature review: intersectionality

Black feminisms are diverse (Collins, 1996) – and intersectionality is but one idea which emerges out of them (Bliss, 2016). Historically, Black feminisms emerge out of Black women's struggles to speak back to dominant narratives which produce and are produced by white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (hooks, 1994). Though its manifestations are diverse, one current runs throughout all Black feminisms: they are normative. They interrogate and resist gendered and racialised domination (Nash, 2018). As political, intellectual, and cultural movements, Black feminisms reveal and resist 'systems of power [which] are configured around maintaining socially constructed categories of both race and gender' (Taylor, 1998, p. 18). Black feminist thought and action thus offers a mode of political analysis which responds to the insufficiency of identifying how race or gender configure power respectively (Taylor, 2017). Black feminism is unique in the sense that it recognises Black women's lives and lived experiences (both in the USA and beyond) serve as a rich entryway to this analysis; to our general understanding of how systems of power function. These systems of power show up in several arenas of contestation – from the production of knowledge at sites like the academy to the forging of grassroots movements, be they radical or bourgeois. From this perspective, Black feminist thought, and the ideas it proposes lend themselves to interdisciplinary thinking – and, indeed, we have seen Black feminist work in the many disciplines and subdisciplines of the arts, social sciences, natural sciences, and beyond.

In the British context, which this research focuses on, Black feminisms are articulated in a variety of ways. For example, in the context of Black British feminism, there were and continue to be lively discussion and debates amongst African, Caribbean, and South Asian women around what it means to be *politically*, rather than, essentially Black (Brah and Phoenix, 2013) while building solidarity as women. 'Intersectionality' was not a term which would have framed these conversations within Black British or Southern feminisms when groups such as the Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent (OWAAD) were actively organising. But we can think about the articulation of intersectionality as embedded in the calls that such groups made to account for the diverse manifestations of racialised heterosexism under capitalism – and the need to find points of commonality amongst diverse groups to resist them. Though she coined the term 'intersectionality', Kimberlé Crenshaw is not the only scholar, or person more generally, to have used or contributed to the development of intersectionality: her work is key to discussions about intersectionality, though – especially in legal and political terms. At the same time, numerous Black feminist scholars including Crenshaw herself, have emphasised a longer and wider tradition of Black women theorising and practising intersectionality (May, 2012b, 2014; Cooper, 2016; Hancock, 2016).

Amongst other discussions and analyses, Black feminists have used intersectionality to disrupt the dominance of white, middle-class women's concerns within feminist spaces, and of Black men's voices within the civil rights and anti-racist movements, especially but not exclusively in the USA (Collins and Bilge 2016). Given the complex insights intersectionality proposes into how multiplicate forces and modalities of power collude to produce marginality, the framework has been recognised as one of the most transformative concepts for feminist scholarship and has even been described as one of 'the most important' (McCall, 2005, p. 1771) contributions to the literature so far. The number of studies on intersectionality, and its general usage, is increasing at a fast pace (Mügge *et al.*, 2018). This doctoral project seeks to contribute to these expanding conversations about intersectionality with a specific attention to how the framework speaks to environmentalism in Britain.

This chapter presents intersectionality as a Black feminist framework which catalyses and holds this study together. Throughout the chapter, I situate this project within the existing intersectional scholarship by providing a review of the relevant academic literature. The first part introduces intersectionality – explaining what it is and how it is useful. Secondly, I provide a brief genealogy of intersectionality, tracing its history, before moving to outline some of its uses with specific reference to social movement studies in Britain. The third section of the chapter addresses some of the limitations and critiques of intersectionality. And the final part teases out some of the links between intersectionality and environmentalism more specifically.

1.1 Genealogies of intersectionality

The stories and histories we trace around intersectionality centre Black women, defying and speaking back to the erasures that too many anti-racist and white feminist narratives have produced in relation to Black women's experiences as well as their active contributions to social movement organising, particularly in European and European settler societies. Despite the reservations that some express about social movement emphases on 'centring' (Táíwò, 2022), I consider this work of centring is crucial; radical, even. It pulls at the roots of collective knowledge and shared history, by focusing on the margins and exclusions that shape them. In this work, I want to protect and respect this centring. I also want to recognise the trans- and international nature of some of the work undertaken by Black women – and to meaningfully consider the contributions of Indigenous and women living and organising in the Global South in the development of intersectionality.

Black women in white dominated societies on settler and European soils have challenged the narrow political visions of groups organising around the respective interests of white women and Black/global majority men (See for example McDougald, 1925; Combahee River Collective, 1983; Cooper, 1988; Collins, 1989, 2015; Beal, 2008; Truth, 2020). Black women including but not limited to Sojourner Truth,

Ida B. Wells, Paulette Nardal, and Claudia Jones criticised the myopia of white feminist women whose definition of 'woman' did not extend beyond cis, heterosexual, white versions of womanhood, and of Black men who disregarded the specific gendered role and experiences of Black women facing racism and colonialism. It seems obvious to state that Black women are both Black *and* women (amongst other characteristics) – but many movements, legal structures, and parts of public discourse have oftentimes assumed women to be white and Black people to be men (Crenshaw, 1991). This leaves Black women caught at the intersections. Intersectionality has emerged out of Black feminist critique of this. It has informed discussions and some transformation in feminist spaces in parts of Europe, North America, and Australasia, where the interests and needs of white, middle-class, able bodied, heterosexual women have been placed at the forefront of the movement – and represented as the universal interests and needs of all women everywhere (Mohanty, 1988; Vergès, 2017).

Indigenous women, too, of communities such as the Anishinaabe peoples in the US, have built coalitional movements to refuse and resist the re/production of colonial and patriarchal settler states in their ancestral lands (Simpson, Walcott and Coulthard, 2018). In such a way, 'constellations of co-resistance locally and internationally' are built by a diversity of communities who are 'actively building ethical, principled and radical futures in the present' (Simpson, Walcott and Coulthard, 2018, p. 82). These communities have often been held up by Indigenous and Black women – as in recent times through movements like Idle No More (Canada) and Black Lives Matter (USA). Beyond Europe and the Americas, Dalit women in India, such as Sulochanabai Dongre, have talked about and battled intersectional harm and discrimination against the backdrop of British colonialism and imperialism (Paik, 2016; Sinha, 2022). Indeed, Dongre was an important figure in the struggle for women's emancipation in India – advocating for the right to divorce, reproductive rights, political representation at the intersections of caste, religion, gender, and class (Sinha, 2022). To note the actions of such women and their movements is not to revise their stories and histories as thinkers and organisers, especially as women who did not ever use the word 'intersectional' in their work. Nor is it to flatten the diversity of these women's efforts and ideas and rebrand them under this one term retrospectively. My aim here is not to subsume Indigenous and Southern organising under the umbrella of the types of Black feminism that have emerged from North America in recent times. Rather, it is to recognise and appreciate that in their organising, all of these women were already analysing, addressing, and resisting the interconnectedness, and even one-ness, of imperialism, white supremacy, and hetero-patriarchy in the racial capitalist order. Before we used the term 'intersectionality,' there were women talking about and organising around their experiences being caught at and, then, rendered invisible within the 'matrix of domination' (Collins, 1989) in narratives and campaigns that ostensibly sought liberation. These women treated their experiences as both like and unlike the plight of white women and men of the global

majority – but called for solidarity as a way of building and securing liberation for all life (Lynn, 2014). That is part of their theoretical and political contribution to the development of liberatory imaginaries and agendas that we continue to develop today. These are the ancestresses of intersectionality, who challenged assumptions about the disparateness of oppressive practices and systems – showing them to operate simultaneously and porously with and as part of each other.

These challenges have been developed through ecological struggle amongst Black and Indigenous feminists across the globe. The latter parts of the discussion in this chapter focus in more detail on some of the lessons and insights about intersectionality to be gleaned from the environmentalist organising of women in the Global South. But Britain, too, has its own histories and presents of Black and global majority women's ecological organising in ways that can be described as or related to intersectionality. Indeed, Black feminists have problematised certain forms of environmentalism. As Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar write,

> while Black and Third World women are fighting daily battles for survival, for food, land and water, western white women's cries of anguish for concern about preserving the standards of life for their children and preserving the planet for future generations sound hollow. Whose standards of life are they fighting to preserve? ... Many women at Greenham have begun to experience for the first time the brutality of the British police and some are slowly realizing why many Black women are not willing to deliberately expose themselves to it when it is an everyday occurrence for them, anyway. (1984, p. 17)

This critique, made four decades ago, resonates with current debates about the strategies and techniques of contemporary environmentalist groups such as Extinction Rebellion. Indeed, such parallels are further explored in later chapters of this thesis. Black British feminists call us, then, from both the past and present to consider and respond to the realities of the hostile environments (in every sense of the word) in which we undertake organising, as much as the messaging contained within the organising itself. Black British feminism also demands reflection on the political, social, and material priorities of marginalised communities and organisers. It draws our attention to our ability and obligation to perform *care* – within and beyond our species (Macaulay, 2022; Opperman, 2022) and in ways that hold, and value, difference (Guru, Housee and Joshi, 2020). But what does this look like? In Britain, this has manifested as struggles around breath and air pollution (Hawitt, 2022; Osieyo, 2023), community initiatives for food justice (Institute of Contemporary Arts, 2019; Zuri, 2020; Calliste, Sivapragasam and Mcdonald, 2021), campaigns around housing, green spaces, and poverty (Mama, 1984; Milbourne, 1997), as well as global solidarity struggles against imperialism (Murray-Hudson, 1983; Enloe, 1984). Understanding intersectionality in the context of this study, then, means the continued redrawing of the imagined boundaries around ecological organising (Bell, 2020b). To root an intersectional study of environmentalism in Black feminism is to situate gendered, racialised, and classed problematics of

‘everyday environmentalism’ (like environmental equity and public health) as critical rather than peripheral or even unrelated to the ‘broader’ issues of climate and environmental breakdown.

Intersectionality emphasises the ways that multiple axes or systems of power which produce and organise difference interact to both marginalise and render individuals particular communities and individuals (Ken and Helmuth, 2021). It enables us to better understand how these axes interact and fuse to qualitatively shape different experiences of the same material world (Reece, 2018, p. 5). Black women, Indigenous women, and women of the global majority more widely do not experience the sum of white women’s experiences of patriarchy or global majority men’s experiences of racism. Intersectionality demands specific inquiry into the ways that we experience several, simultaneously fused, and interlocking axes of power as producing our subjecthood and informing our social relations. The goal of intersectionality is not to invite a competition which ‘adds’ different layers of oppression to reveal who is ‘most’ oppressed (Hancock, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2012). It is a tool for critical inquiry that seeks to understand and resist the differential relations of power that are necessary for the historical and continued reproduction of imperialist white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy (hooks, 1994).

In a nutshell, intersectionality invites an understanding that any analysis that attempts to separate categories of difference, such as race and gender, from other axes will not be able to fully capture the specific, complex dynamics that emerge from the interaction between these axes at specific times in particular spaces. It explicitly refuses to conduct analysis or organising on a singular axis whilst disregarding others, such as focusing solely on gender or race respectively (Roth, 2021). This has been an extremely important development for the purposes of decentring whiteness in feminism and hegemonic masculinity in anti-racism (McCall, 2005; May, 2012a). In the context of ecological organising, an emphasis on intersectionality builds on and emerges out of Black feminism, in its insistence on a deeply politicised, historicised, and intergenerational approach to the Anthropocene (Opperman, 2022) which accounts for and critiques white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (hooks, 1994).

1.2 Intersectionality as an academic framework

Intersectionality has many intellectual and political lives. Its development through the academy, and in particular Kimberlé Crenshaw’s work (1989, 1991), is rooted in critical race theory (CRT) as developed in North America. In the wake of the civil rights movement, the CRT movement emerged as a way of interrogating race and racialised inequalities in specific relation to the law. Where the traditional civil rights movement battled for equality, inclusion, and protections under the law, CRT questioned and continues to question the persistence of inequalities and discrimination despite the formal codification

of equal rights in law. CRT questions the capacity of the law to remedy patterns of inequality. It exposes legal mechanisms as instruments that reinforce the subordination of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Middle Eastern, and Asian people in the USA.

The historical context of intersectionality being developed out of CRT – at least within academia – is important. CRT questions how legal structures both reflect and impact social relations and subject formation. That is, how the law reinforces patterns of unequal relations amongst people (it is anthropocentric) and produces the conditions for marginality. Its remit is bound by its focus on the nation state by taking state law and its (individual) subjects as the primary object of study. From this perspective, CRT lends itself to examining group and individual claims and cases. In some ways, CRT's critique of state legal structures resonates with critiques from Indigenous scholarship that warn against relying on legal infrastructures and rights-based claims to dismantle settler colonialism, its echoes, and the types of relationality it produces (Coulthard, 2014). From this perspective, Indigenous feminists focus on theorising and building resurgence and co-resistance (Betasamosake Simpson, 2016) rather than using the 'master's tools' to dismantle the 'master's house' (Lorde, 2007). This reaching and desire for resurgence and co-resistance inspires the focus that I take in this thesis on social movement building and organising rather than, say, state policy or other activity.

Crenshaw proposes intersectionality as a framework which reveals how the collisions and collusions amongst practices and structures of racism and sexism shape the material and cultural lives of Black women in specific ways. This means that, from an analytical perspective, treating sexism or racism separately cannot capture the quality or nature of these experiences (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242). Single axis approaches are not equipped to capture and address the discrimination and violence that working class Black and Latina women face. They effectively erase the insights and experiences of intersectionally marginalised groups. When this erasure occurs, the material and cultural manifestations of racism and sexism as interlocking pillars of racial capitalism go unchecked, even within narratives of resistance. These narratives can produce and are produced by certain forms of white feminism, for example, that secure the interests of middle-class white women at the expense of women of the global majority. Audre Lorde's open letter ([1979] 2007) to radical feminist scholar Mary Daly makes this clear, where Lorde interrogates Daly's limited engagement with the voices and experiences of African American women and women of the global majority in her work. Incidentally, Lorde's critique responds specifically to Daly's book, *Gyn/Ecology* (1978), an ecofeminist text which deals with the links and parallels between violence against both women and 'nature'. Similar critiques colour letters and publications from the women of the Négritude movement in early twentieth century France (Lewis, 2000) such as Paulette Nardal. Nardal (1931) wrote of the gendered nature of the

erasure that she and other Caribbean women faced within the movement – such that she, and other Black women organising and writing throughout history across different geographies, have been described as having 'engaged and theorized intersectionality *avant la lettre*' (Garcia, 2018, p. 216). Intersectionality is not a new idea. These genealogies of intersectionality are spread across time and place because the formation of the framework is rooted in our lives and experiences; lives and experiences which we draw on as sites to produce knowledge. This knowledge calls attention to the multiple, overlapping axes of power and oppression.

The intersections amongst the oft-cited trio of *gender, class,* and *race* have taken particular precedence within the literature on intersectionality. Various studies have shown us, though, that intersectionality is also useful for explaining how these three aspects interact with other relevant axes within a wider 'matrix of domination' (Collins, 1989). Intersectionality is an invitation to 'ask the other question':

> The way I try to understand the interconnection of all forms of subordination is through a method I call "ask the other question." When I see something that looks racist, I ask, "Where is the patriarchy in this?" When I see something that looks sexist, I ask, "Where is the heterosexism in this?" When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, "Where are the class interests in this?" Working in coalition forces us to look for both the obvious and non-obvious relationships of domination, helping us to realize that no form of subordination ever stands alone. *(Matsuda, 1990, p. 1189)*

Black and Latina lesbians bring our attention the simultaneously heterosexist and racialised nature of the hostility to which they were and continue to be subject to in feminist and anti-racist organising spaces (Combahee River Collective, 1983; Swaby, 2014; Trawalé and Poiret, 2017; Bacchetta, 2021; Bhardwaj, 2021). Our disabled sisters and siblings implore us, too, to see and respond to the particular experiences and circumstances that are produced at the intersections of ableism with sexism, racism, and capitalism (Erevelles and Minear, 2010). Not all categories or axes of subordination manifest in the same way everywhere since power is not static. The intersectionality of class, race, and gender look and feel different for disabled people, immigrants, and trans people. It can look and feel different for the same person in London as it might in Berlin, Tokyo, or Cape Town. Different relations in different places shape the experience of intersectionality across time. Power is dynamic; it shifts. It is contextually dependent – and any good analysis of it requires an attention to the politics of location (Rich, 1984). Asking the other question, then, is about staying attentive to the multiplicity of difference, kindling a respectful curiosity and sensitivity to the various potential ways that power can show up across varying contexts, which our own fluid relationalities can make harder or easier to see (Hancock, 2007). It is a tool to help us 'appreciate our different cultures, understand our different experiences and distinguish between the differences and objective political differences,' so that we may 'attack the various forms of oppression which divide us' (Brixton Black Women's Group, 1984, p.89).

My own understanding and engagement with intersectionality relies most heavily on my understanding of it as a Black feminist *theory*, *method*, and *politics*. As a theory, intersectionality serves as the fundamental set of ideas that inform my observation and understanding of power distribution both in the strategy of environmentalists and the spaces they build and maintain together. It frames my view of the political demands that spring from the physical spaces, intra- and inter-group relations, and strategies that environmentalists organise with. Fundamentally, it contours my understanding that power and subordination materialise in different, specific ways – and the experience of this subordination has an important role in shaping what we (think we) know and how we act. As a method, intersectionality pushes me to be reflexive about what I know and how I know it; it frames the practical style of inquiry and terms of analysis[5]. It emphasises the various and sometimes contradictory (Weber and Parra-Medina, 2003) social locations which individuals occupy within a structural 'matrix of domination' (Collins, 1989). It also forms the ethical considerations of this study. As an Afro-Asian woman researching in a university, I do not foreclose the possibility that the decisions and actions produced at my social locations reinforce the intersectional marginalisation of others.

This doctoral project works with the existing literature to analyse and respond to environmentalist mobilisation in Britain, thinking *about* and *through* intersectionality as 'an analytic strategy and a form of critical political practice' (Roth, 2021, p. 8). There is a strong normative aspect to this work. I seek to enhance our understandings of Black feminist and environmentalist praxis. I use intersectionality as a methodological instrument to 'better understand who is represented by and involved in social movements and what consequences this has for the actions of movements and movement organizations' (Roth, 2021, p. 3). From this perspective, intersectionality serves as a way of studying social movements – a tool for mapping power within them, and the implications of this.

Finally, and importantly, I refer to and work with intersectionality as a politics. That is, I take a normative stance which is not simply about observing and describing environmentalism in Britain – but also proposing and building. This text seeks to tap into existing Black feminist ecological imaginaries to think and re-think the strategies and goals of environmentalism today.

Intersectionality has been conceived of in many ways. The way it is used and understood shapes the outcomes it can produce. At its heart, though, intersectionality should retain a core Black feminist commitment to exposing and resisting the structural interplay amongst multiple axes on which domination and oppression are articulated. This understanding of what intersectionality is and what it

[5] I detail this further in the following chapter on methods.

can do is key to what I am arguing throughout this text. The extent to which this is always achieved, though, has been thoroughly debated, as explored below.

1.2.1 Crenshaw's intersectional typology

Crenshaw's early work on intersectionality offers us a typology which breaks it down into three types: structural, political, and representational (1991). Each of these three types speaks to a different (but interconnected) sphere of articulation where power is at work. I draw on all three types for this study.

Structural intersectionality speaks to the ways in which the constitution of important legal and institutional structures produces the material exclusion and subordination of certain social groups. Crenshaw gives the example of women fleeing domestic violence. Formally, there might exist centres which are designed to protect survivors of domestic violence. Yet, in practice, particular groups of women find themselves excluded from these centres. If such a centre's design and service provision are based on assumptions about the service user as an imagined 'typical' woman who is a white, able-bodied citizen, for example, then this can leave the needs unmet of a woman from the global majority with precarious immigration status living in poverty. The formal provision said to protect women survivors of domestic violence reveals itself to exist to serve only *particular* women. This is what structural intersectionality reveals. Structural intersectionality has been useful for exploring how power plays out in the design and delivery of state policy and NGO work in the environmental and climate space. It also sheds light on the different vulnerabilities that a changing climate produces for communities across the world and the role of states and institutions in this (Kaijser and Kronsell, 2014; Nyantakyi-Frimpong, 2020). Whilst structural intersectionality figures less prominently than political and representational intersectionality in this research, it remains useful for understanding some of the key ecological issues at stake that social movement organisers are responding to.

Political intersectionality illustrates how social movement actors set political agendas in ways that can invisibilise and even run counter to interests of marginalised groups whose interests might span several movements. This is well captured in the title of Akasha Gloria Hull, Patricia Bell-Scott, and Barbara Smith's Black feminist anthology: *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* (1982). The title and content of this landmark text point to the ways in which forms of feminism dominated by white women and anti-racism dominated by men overlook the struggles and concerns of Black women. By no means have Black women responded to this with silence – even if this overlooking produces a silencing effect. Out of this experience, ideas like intersectionality have sprung to effect complex critique. This is rooted in autonomous organising, which Black women have animated in response to the absence of collaboration and solidarity (Carby, 1982), though not without challenges,

especially given that Black women are not a homogenous group (Brixton Black Women's Group, 1984; Swaby, 2014). This is an observation which is echoed in the findings of this research.

The insights of political intersectionality are thus transformative not only from an analytical perspective – but also from a social movement organising perspective. As Audre Lorde tells us, '[t]here is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives' (2007, p. 138). If we take this seriously, then social movements should meaningfully address the complex overlaps and intersections amongst the ever manifold nature of the issues that shape their political agendas. Intersectionality has offered an important intervention in feminist organising and scholarship, where the concerns of middle-class white women have dominated, and the same for anti-racism, where the voices of global majority men have taken precedence over those of global majority women (Hull, Scott and Smith, 1982; Chun, Lipsitz and Shin, 2013; Bruneel and Silva, 2017). In the context of this doctoral study, political intersectionality provides the catalyst and basis from which to explore whose voices, concerns, and needs are prioritised in the setting of environmentalist agendas.

Representational intersectionality points to the ways that intersectionally marginalised groups are demonised and pathologised in cultural public discourses. We can see this, for example, in forms of popular culture media such as films, television broadcasts, and music videos, which are littered with representations of Black and other global majority women as objects (hooks, 1994; West, 1995; Gabriel, 2017). The field of literary and postcolonial studies has undertaken deep inquiry into the roots and effects of these representations – which shape and are shaped by social relations rooted in hierarchy, domination, and inequity. Cultural representations of marginalised groups are important because they can contribute to and reinforce the discourses that legitimise their marginalisation (Said, 2003). In the context of this doctoral thesis, representational intersectionality encourages a reflection on how social movements are represented and discussed. This informs my approach to the historical and archival aspects of this work in particular.

1.3 Intersectionality and identity

As a modern concept, identity has been employed in various ways across feminist, post-, and decolonial scholarship (Adams, 1989; Spivak, 1992; Yan and Spivak, 2007; Hall, 2014; Bliss, 2016). It continues to inspire varying political and intellectual perspectives on its role in thinking about issues relating to social justice, marginality, and resistance. Identity is a process of subjecthood; it is always being made and remade in dialogue between the self and the other (de Beauvoir, 1949; Sartre, 1987; Taylor, 1994). Some identities are 'visible'; they are marked by wider culture in fleshy ways that are sometimes impossible to obscure (Alcoff, 2005). They can carry cultural meanings that are imposed

from without (Taylor, 1994; Althusser, 2014) that can be in tension with how we see our own sense of selfhood and relational experiences. Whilst for some, identity represents some kind of bondage, with true freedom being attained by overcoming our attachments to it (Foucault, 1977) – for others, it represents a vector for the self-definition denied to so many; a route to securing equal recognition amidst difference (Taylor, 1994) and the protection of political rights (Habermas, 1994). For others, still, an excessive focus on identity has the potential to distract from and displace urgent material questions of redistribution (Fraser, 2015). Clearly, identity remains contested both within and beyond academia. But it has been embraced by some new social movements and social movement scholars, notably in the form of 'identity politics' – a phenomena to which Crenshaw's early theorisations of intersectionality respond directly to (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991).

In the late 1970s, the Black feminist Combahee River Collective published a statement which is often described as a key moment laying some of the intellectual groundwork for the academic development of intersectionality (Bilge and Denis, 2010; Dean, 2010; Bowleg and Bauer, 2016; Soto Vega and Chávez, 2018; Ruiz *et al.*, 2021). In that statement, the Collective insist on building their politics on their experiences of racism and heteropatriarchy as Black lesbians and argue that 'focusing upon our own oppression is embodied in the concept of identity politics' (Combahee River Collective, 1983, p. 4). This affirmation of *identity politics* gives rise to reflections on how the particularities of our social locations or 'identities' inform the ways that we arrive at knowledge (standpoint epistemology) and the value of using marginality as a generative site for doing social justice work (hooks, 1989). Since the publication of the Combahee River Collective's statement, the notion of identity politics has received great attention from academics, politicians, journalists, and – crucially to this study – activists and organisers too (Dean, 2010). Like intersectionality, identity politics is contested across and within the political spectrum (Bernstein, 2005) – both in its foundational meaning and in its utility as a new instrument for emancipatory politics. What is important here, however, is that identity and identity politics have been thought about in explicit relation to intersectionality (Anthias, 2008; Gines, 2011; Carroll, 2017; James, 2019). The theme of identity in relation to intersectionality emerged strongly in the interview data for this research project, which we will see shortly.

Since Crenshaw's earlier work on intersectionality during the late 1980s, early 1990s, debates about identity, identity politics, and intersectionality have continued to develop. And indeed, Crenshaw has explicitly pushed back against the idea that intersectionality has become a form of 'identity politics on steroids' (2020) and explicitly problematises the 'elision of difference in identity politics' (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242) as one of the fundamental issues which intersectionality responds to. Instead, I read Crenshaw's development of intersectional theory as a contribution to the building of a 'meaningful

identity politics' in which a 'politics of social location' is 'occup[ied] and defend[ed]' rather than 'vacate[d] and destroy[ed]' (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1297). This necessitates mediating 'the tension between assertions of multiple identity and the ongoing necessity of group politics' (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1296); which she sees as the currently best available strategy to disempowered groups at the time that she is writing. Intersectionality sheds light on how the complexity of identity (or more specifically, how an individual can hold multiple identities simultaneously) demands a rethink of how *identity politics* (in the group sense) is conducted. It is in this space that Crenshaw proposes the notion of political intersectionality (1991), which refers to how single axis approaches to political and policy agendas work to marginalise those whose interests and experiences cut across several identity groups. With this in mind, this subsection takes a deeper dive into how the notion of identity (and to a lesser extent, identity politics) is drawn on by my interlocutors to think through and operationalise intersectionality in environmentalist contexts.

1.4 Limitations and critiques of intersectionality

There has been lively and, at times, strained debate amongst scholars concerning the meaning and utility of intersectionality as an intellectual framework. It is important to acknowledge and recognise these ongoing conversations, appreciating intersectional studies as a field of research which is very much alive and growing. Overall, gender and sexuality scholars have engaged with intersectionality to a greater extent than other fields of political studies. Whilst the critiques of intersectionality are numerous – and some made in bad faith – I pay particular attention to those which emerge out of feminist scholarship, which is by no means a homogenous, unified field. This is a deliberate choice which also reflects the citational politics upon which this thesis rests.

Here, I review some of the limitations and critiques of intersectionality which are specifically pertinent to this study. These include the following points: that intersectionality fragments groups which could and should otherwise find unity in commonality; and that intersectionality is insufficient in its tackling of issues related to class and capitalism. I also review some of the critiques which rebuff the neoliberal logics which frame some of the ways in which intersectionality has been taken up within academe – an important reflection for this study which is being conducted within the context of a European university.

Intersectionality speaks to the complexity of power, and when used effectively, moves us away from binary characterisations of people as either powerless or powerful. Rather, it insists on the complex and heterogenous ways in which power is articulated in different contexts. Thus, even within marginalised groups, people are able to exercise power in ways that marginalise others (McCall, 2005; Samuels and Ross-Sheriff, 2008) – an important observation for those studying social movements. Additionally,

intersectional studies elucidate how varying intersections of power and domination work for both those who are experiencing marginality and those who are exercising power or holding advantage/'privilege', with a recognition that these positions are not static or immovable, but are malleable and context-dependent (Yuval-Davis, 2015). Hence, as a theory domination, it invites an interrogation of power from multiple perspectives, examining how it is exercised and who exercises it, as well as who is consequently marginalised and how.

The roots of intersectionality are intimately linked to the lived experiences and standpoints of Black women, thus contributing to the development of feminist standpoint theory more broadly (Yuval-Davis, 2015). This is not to imply, however, that intersectional research can or should be conducted only by or about Black or global majority women (Yuval-Davis, 2015; Bilge, 2020a). This study interrogates the perspectives of groups and individuals who are not intersectionally marginalised, as well as those who are. Doing so is useful because 'every social movement and social movement organization is shaped by multiple intersecting inequalities and power dynamics,' (Roth, 2021, p. 2) including both those who are advantaged within intersectional schemas of power and those who are marginalised. If intersectionality works to marginalise some, it privileges others (Garry, 2011). Intersectionality invites a discussion on how and where power functions (Evans and Lépinard, 2019) which means that 'our analytical intersectional gaze has to be directed also towards the powerful and not just the powerless' (Yuval-Davis, 2015, p. 638). Hence, whilst I foreground voices speaking from the margins, I also use this study to engage in conversation with those who are intersectionally advantaged or 'privileged'. Having said that, there are problems with conceptualising groups as either wholly subordinated or powerful. Power is not static. And even those who are marginalised can exercise it (Weber and Parra-Medina, 2003)[6]. Social movement actors fighting against their oppression can and do exercise power within their organising spaces (Evans and Lépinard, 2019). Intersectionality thus draws our attention to the nature and dynamics of power, resisting the reification of particular groups/identities as pure victim/oppressors and drawing our attention to how power is articulated in different relationalities.

Amongst the many existing critiques of intersectionality, the argument that it erodes solidarity and unity (Zack, 2005, 2007) is extremely important for this study. Focusing on its take-up within feminist movements in the Global North, 'post-intersectional' legal scholar Naomi Zack takes issue with intersectionality, arguing that it 'leads to a fragmentation of women that precludes common goals as well as basic empathy' (Zack, 2005, p. 7). She argues that intersectionality lends to an endless multiplication of identities which distract from the commonality of women's experiences. This impedes

[6] As literary works like John Steinbeck's *Of Mice And Men* (1938) and more contemporary theatrical pieces like *Is God Is* (2018) remind us.

feminist capabilities of capitalising on common ground to build effective moments, especially because it encourages global majority women to splinter away from a wider unified movement, which Zack presumes to exist in the first place. For Zack, intersectionality fragments movements. But, as intersectional, Black, post-colonial, de-colonial, and Indigenous feminists make clear, there never has been a united feminist movement revolving around a singular conception of womanhood (Carby, 1982; Combahee River Collective, 1983; Mohanty, 1988; Lorde, 2007; Carastathis, 2014; Suzack, 2015; Vergès, 2017). Intersectionality comes precisely out of a failure to recognise and appreciate how the intersections of power and difference work for varying groups in social movement spaces in the first place.

Black and other global majority women have highlighted how men in anti-racist and anti-colonial movements have peripheralised what they deemed to be 'women's issues' (Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe, 2018; Joseph-Gabriel, 2020; Yakubu and Adeyeri, 2021). In the British context, autonomously organised Black women's groups such as the Organization of Women of Asian and Africa (OWAAD) have emphasised that 'women's oppression is inextricably bound up with the issues of race and class; and that it is right and necessary to tackle all three simultaneously, and with equal determination' (Brixton Black Women's Group, 1984, p. 89). Global majority lesbians have highlighted the simultaneously heterosexist and racialised nature of the hostility to which they were subject in both feminist and anti-racist organising spaces (Combahee River Collective, 1983; Swaby, 2014; Trawalé and Poiret, 2017; Bacchetta, 2021; Bhardwaj, 2021). In Britain, Black and Asian lesbians have drawn attention to their experiences of this both historically (Carmen *et al.*, 1984) and today (Bonane, 2019), reminding us that movement spaces are always heterogenous – even when organised by and for Black women. And if we think about environmental movements, research has demonstrated how white, middle-class environmentalists' hostility to recognising the intersections of power at work within environmental issues has led to the exclusion and alienation of working-class communities from green organising in the British context and beyond (Bell, 2020b; Berglund and Schmidt, 2020; Bell, 2021; Malm, 2021). These examples lend themselves to the plausible conclusion that it is precisely a lack of attention to intersectionality in social movements that causes the erosion of unity and solidarity because of the exclusion that is produced when groups are minoritised within groups. Hence, this study uses an intersectional approach to interrogate these exclusions might occur and what they mean for crafting a genuinely liberatory and intersectional environmentalism in Britain.

Despite these critiques, intersectionality has emerged as a key site of discussion and organising, particularly in feminist and anti-racist circles, although not exclusively. In early 2022, a Google Scholar search for academic publications which contained the word 'intersectionality' either in the title or body

of the text returned around 181,000 results[7]. In the summer of 2023, this number reaches 295,000[8]. Google Scholar searches cannot capture the total extent of academic engagement intersectionality has elicited. It is nonetheless interesting to make this superficial comparison of these results with the results returned for earlier articulations of intersectionality's intellectual cousins, such as 'triple oppression' (approx. 2,990 results in 2022[9], and 3,770 in 2023[10]) and 'interlocking oppression' (approx. 620 results in 2022[11], 901 in 2023[12]). Superficial comparisons aside, it is clear that intersectionality has been taken up with particular force amongst scholars of politics and other disciplines (Carbado et al., 2013; Moradi et al., 2020). Indeed, more rigorous studies have shown a steady increase of publications discussing intersectionality in 'top-tier' North American political science journals (Mügge *et al.*, 2018). Yet, this trend is not reflected in European academia (*ibid*). And so, intersectionality might have become a 'buzzword' (Davis, 2008) in some parts of academia (and other spaces). But not everywhere, and especially not in Europe, where the study and 'grammar of race is less available, [despite] race [being] omnipresent in continental political discourses' (Mügge *et al.*, 2018, p. 4). This disavowal of race enables issues surrounding racism and intersectionality to be considered foreign (more associated with places like North America and not Europe) which are simply to be observed, and not addressed, from the fantasy lands of post- or even un-racial Europe.

As it has become more popular in some places, intersectionality has undergone transformation and rescripting in its travels across different contexts (Salem, 2018). If it can travel, so too can it unravel. Both within and outside of academia, its meaning and focus is shaped differently in different contexts – sometimes in ways that actually reinforce and reinscribe the marginalisation of Black women (Jordan-Zachery, 2012; May, 2014; Collins and Bilge, 2016; Salem, 2018; Bilge, 2020a, 2020b; Kupupika, 2021). At the same time, the growth of awareness about intersectionality within some parts of academia and

[7] Google Scholar. https://scholar.google.com/scholar?as_vis=1&q=%22intersectionality%22&hl=en&as_sdt=0,5 (Accessed Wed 6 Apr 2022)

[8]Google Scholar. https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=intersectionality&btnG= (Accessed Thu 13 Jul 2023)

[9] Google Scholar. https://scholar.google.com/scholar?as_vis=1&q=%22triple+oppression%22&hl=en&as_sdt=0,5 (Accessed Wed 6 Apr 2022)

[10] Google Scholar. https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=%22triple+oppression%22&btnG= (Accessed 13 Jul 2023)

[11] Google Scholar. https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&as_vis=1&q=%22interlocking+oppression%22&btnG= (Accessed Wed 6 Apr 2022)

[12] Google Scholar. https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=%22interlocking+oppression%22&btnG= (Accessed 13 Jul 2023)

elsewhere has also provided social movements with opportunities for internal reflection on how to practise forms of intersectional praxis and intersectional solidarity that supports the practice of liberatory, coalitional, social movement building (Townsend-Bell, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2012; Ayoub, 2019; Irvine, Lang and Montoya, 2019; Tormos-Aponte *et al.*, 2019; Einwohner *et al.*, 2021). Indeed, thinking about how intersectionality moves in different ways in different spaces is central to this study which focuses on the journeys taken and bridges built by intersectionality, specifically in the context of environmentalism in Britain.

There are substantial critiques of intersectionality which propose an inspection and revision of how intersectionality has and might be operationalised: critiques of its use and journeys rather than the intellectual basis upon which it is built. Sara Salem (2018) argues that in its current usage, intersectionality is insufficiently radical and should be more explicitly tied to Marxist feminist analysis coming out of the Global South. Salem writes against the co-optation rather than the idea of intersectionality, warning against is use by (neo)liberal feminists as a catch-all stand-in for an ahistorical 'diversity' which is divorced from a critique of capitalism.

Other scholars of intersectionality have also raised urgent concerns about the exclusion of Black women from the academic spaces in which Black feminist thought is talked about, often by non-Black scholars (Jordan-Zachery, 2012; May, 2012a; Bilge, 2015, 2020a; Collins and Bilge, 2016; Mügge et al., 2018; Salem, 2018). These critiques rarely emerge out of a rejection of or hostility towards the idea of intersectionality itself. Rather, they object to how intersectionality has been taken up in ways that are incompatible with commitments to social justice, and therefore anti-capitalism, that are at the heart of Black feminist normativity. In effect, intersectionality has been repurposed, repackaged, and appropriated to the needs and desires of non-Black people (both white and of the global majority), despite the Black feminist roots of the framework. Much work has emphatically noted the problematic stretching and reconfiguring of intersectionality as a catch-all stand-in for neoliberal forms of corporate 'diversity' (Ferree, 2009, 2018; Choo and Ferree, 2010; Christoffersen, 2019, 2022).

Not only are Black women physically excluded from many academic spaces in which conversations about intersectionality take place, especially those in Europe (Carbado et al., 2013; Tomlinson, 2013; Cruel Ironies Collective, 2019; Emejulu and Sobande, 2019; Howse, 2019; Midtvåge Diallo, 2019; Bilge, 2020a) but many scholarly publications which claim to take an intersectional approach to the study of politics have also failed to include the experiences and perspectives of Black women as part of their studies (Jordan-Zachery, 2007; Bilge, 2020b). In European contexts, there are complex layers to how some Black women come to be included or excluded in these spaces, as (non-Black) intellectuals organise academic events or publish on intersectionality in ways that 'include famous Black feminists

from US or à la rigueur from UK, while excluding Black feminists from continental Europe' (Bilge, 2020a, p. 2316). The institutional whiteness and neoliberal white feminism which frames much of the academic engagement with intersectionality pose serious challenges for integrating intersectionality into academic work without stripping it of its politics. In the context of hierarchical, neoliberal academia, it can be challenging to imagine what it means to 'do' intersectionality in academia in ways that remains true to its original Black feminist normative commitments to redressing social, material, and cultural domination and exploitation.

These challenges serve as an encouragement to think carefully about how we approach intersectionality in research – that is: whose voices we make (in)visible when we are talking about and through intersectionality (Matsuda, 1990; May, 2012a, 2012b, 2014; Collins, 2015; Collins and Bilge, 2016), how we historicise the framework (Hancock, 2016), where and how we 'apply' it to empirical case studies (Jordan-Zachery, 2012; Yuval-Davis, 2012), and which specific steps we are taking to resist the further erasure of Black women from these discussions as we 'travel' the learnings of this useful framework into different locations, especially those which are institutional (Lewis, 2009, 2013; Bilge, 2015; Cruel Ironies Collective, 2019). This study on environmentalism weaves in reflections on each of these points throughout the dissertation, framed by a citational politics which seeks to engage directly with scholarship from North America, the UK, continental Europe, and Global South lands.

1.5 Studies of intersectionality on Britain

Structural and political intersectionality inform thinking in Britain about how institutions talk about and use intersectionality, especially for the purposes of building equality and diversity policy and initiatives designed to address inequalities and discrimination (Conaghan, 2007; Bagilhole, 2010; Bassel and Emejulu, 2010; Hermanin and Squires, 2012; Walby, Armstrong and Strid, 2012). At the parliamentary level, political intersectionality has been used to scrutinise, for example, parliamentary and political party efforts (or lack thereof) to increase diverse political representation (Evans, 2016a; Ward, 2017). British universities have also been taken as an object of intersectional studies, which have emphasised how structural intersectionality informs first-generation immigrant women's access to adequate support, resources, and opportunities as both students and faculty (Sang, Al-Dajani and Özbilgin, 2013; Johansson and Śliwa, 2014; Sang, 2018).

Scholars have pointed to the flaws in institutionalised processes of mobilising intersectionality, such as where policy actors lack a fully integrated approach to intersectionality and focus excessively on the site of the individual (Monro, 2010) or where intersectionality is depoliticised by being made a 'generic' concept which benefits a 'monolithic, white "everyone"' (Christoffersen, 2022, p. 410). This dislocation

of race within intersectionality echoes through European academia as well as British public institutions. In a European context, intersectionality is often thought and written about (by activists, scholars, and even policymakers) in ways that obscure the role of race and racialisation (Bilge, 2015; Mügge *et al.*, 2018; Christoffersen, 2022). Intersectionality – as a term – can and actually has been used to reinforce the material and employment inequalities for global majority women and minoritised genders in Europe (Domaas, 2023). An attention to how processes of racialisation play out is key to understanding European contexts and the role that intersectionality holds in them.

Engagement with intersectionality from studies on social movements is still relatively limited both generally (Roth, 2021) and in the British context. Intersectionality has been used to study a variety of social movements in Britain – however, a focus on environmentalist mobilising remains limited. Some studies focused on environmentalist organising across the US draw our attention to the historical, existing, and potential relationships between ecological and Black feminist thought (e.g., Animashaun Ducre, 2018; Malin and Ryder, 2018; McKane et al., 2018). Overall, however, very little attention has been given to environmental movements from an intersectional perspective (Jamison, 2010; Kaijser and Kronsell, 2014). This is especially true in Britain. Let us turn to the literature that *does* exist, on intersectionality and studies of environmental movements which are pertinent to this project in greater detail below.

1.6 Intersectionality and the environment

1.6.1 Global majority environmentalisms, the Global South, and intersectionality

There is a long history of environmentalist mobilisation led by global majority organisers in the Global South. As they fought (and continue to fight) against European colonialism, global majority and Indigenous peoples have always centred matters of land, air, and water as crucial components of their struggles (Betasamosake Simpson, 2017). These anti-colonial struggles can be read as forms of environmentalism (Guha and Alier, 2013; Clapperton, 2019; Shqair and Soliman, 2022). In contemporary struggles of this kind, Indigenous and decolonial action pushes back against the representation of climate and environmental crises as unique to our era. They excavate a dirty pipeline from the first colonial encounter between white Europeans and the Indigenous peoples of North and South America to contemporary social-ecological breakdown (Chaplin, 2015; Whyte, 2017). In this respect, conversations about how we relate to each other and the wider biosphere are nothing new.

Scaled up to the global level, the unequal impacts of climate change are organised along existing lines of inequality deriving from histories of imperial conquest and the extractivist relations derived from it (Salleh, 1993; Gaard, 2011). As a result, today, the peoples and ecologies of the Global South carry the

heavy burdens of 'climate coloniality' (Sultana, 2022b). That is, they are hit first and worst by the impacts of climate change and ecological breakdown. Climate and environmental inequalities manifest not only along these global lines; but also within regions and countries along axes such as indigeneity (Clark, 2002; McGregor, 2004, 2018; Vinyeta, Whyte and Lynn, 2016; Domínguez and Luoma, 2020), gender (Salleh, 1993; Ruether, 1997; Leahy, 2003; Hunt, 2014; Mies and Shiva, 2014; Sultana, 2014; MacGregor, 2020), disability (Lewis, Ballard and Matters, 2011; Belser, 2015; Johnson, 2017; Jampel, 2018; Saxton and Ghenis, 2018; Bell, Tabe and Bell, 2020; Mörchen *et al.*, 2021; King and Gregg, 2022), and class (Salleh, 1993, 2018; Bell, 2020b). Moreover, the communities being hit the first and worst by these issues often lack the resources and opportunities to mitigate the harms caused by environmental and climate breakdown (Cameron et al., 2016; Ivanova et al., 2020; Yawson, 2020).

In *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (2018), Kathryn Yusoff argues for the development and foregrounding of more politicised, historicised geological narratives that are equipped to deal with these colonial foundations of the 'Anthropocene'. She calls for us to foreground the colonial histories and develop racial reckoning with regards to ecology. In doing so, we may create space 'to think about encountering the coming storm in ways that do not facilitate its permanent renewal' (Yusoff, 2018, p. 108). In this context, it becomes even more urgent to think about how Southern environmental praxes inform how and what we know about environmentalisms.

Within much of the 'mainstream' literature about environmentalism and environmental movements, Southern movements are at best, side-lined, and at worst, completely discounted. The result is a hegemonic account of environmentalism, which is conceived of through 'a singular and monolithic characterisation of environmentalism as a middle-class phenomenon grounded in post-materialist value orientations' (Satheesh, 2021, p. 51). This view of environmentalism shows up in influential ideas such as Ronald Inglehart's theory of post-materialism (1977). Inglehart's thesis, whilst interesting, is contestable and in many ways, problematic. His theory frames concern and mobilisation for the environment as a phenomenon made only possible by the levels of affluence seen across Europe, North America, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and Australia. It is unable to account for the emergence of environmentalist movements in the Global South, in which many people did not experience the same exposure to new wealth (Guha, 2001; Sims, 2016). This effectively discounts the materially grounded environmentalisms which Southern scholars and activists have mobilised around for years. This theory has been fiercely contested by scholars of Southern environmentalisms, who have illustrated the numerous ways in which environmental mobilisation is fully embedded in conditions of poverty and material inequalities across several Southern contexts (Guha, 2001; Baabereyir, Jewitt and O'Hara, 2012; Dunlap and Jacques, 2013; Martinez-Alier, 2014; Satheesh, 2021; Thaker, 2021). Further, I would

argue that the environment is an extremely material issue. I refer back to the organising of Indigenous women in the pacific against the very material threats to their personal and ecological health and wellbeing. Mortality and cancer are material. So are contaminated waters and nuclear radiation. Hence, Southern scholarship provides us with an opportunity to also rethink the ways and the material conditions in which people of the Global North engage with environmental action, especially as not all Northern environmentalists are affluent (Bell, 2020c), including some of the people who took part in interviews for this specific study.

In his work on the organising of Kenyan feminist environmentalist, Wangari Maathai, Rob Nixon uses the term intersectional environmentalism (2006, 2011). This is a term which was later picked up by Leah Thomas, a young African-American environmentalist based in the US, who has published a book by the title *The Intersectional Environmentalist* (Thomas, 2022). For Nixon, intersectional environmentalism describes how movement actors, such as Maathai, foster cross-movement mobilisation by organising across several issues and movements, such as women's rights, worker's rights, and environmental degradation under the umbrella of the Green Belt movement. Indeed, Maathai's intersectional and coalitional approach to organising has captured the attention of multiple scholars studying environmentalism, likely due to Green Belt's success in putting pressure on the Kenyan state (Muthuki, 2006; Ngunjiri, 2014; Ochieng Omedi, 2017). This success was evident in the Kenyan government's response to Green Belt activities, demanding that environmental and women's rights campaigns split from each other. Taking an intersectional coalitional building strategy posed a threat to the state apparatus and status quo. Intersectional environmentalisms articulate political demands by bringing together different strands of struggle. As an example of intersectional environmentalism, Maathai's case points to the strategic value in organising through and across difference (Evans and Lépinard, 2019). From this view, we can think about the value of intersectionality for social movements as an instrument for mobilisation, a 'powerful tool to build more effective alliances between movements to make them more effective at organizing for social change' (Roberts and Jesudason, 2013, p. 313).

As is generally the case with intersectional social movement scholarship, the literature which addresses intersectionality and social movements in Southern contexts focuses largely on gender. This manifests as a concentration on ecofeminist ethics and women's organising. Within this scholarship, the work of global majority women is recognised in a way that places them as 'the central actors and concern of intersectionality' (Emejulu, 2014, p. 1923). Southern environmental movements frequently foreground social categories and conditions, such as gender and poverty, as key shapers of and concerns within environmental praxis. This focus has been contrasted against the movements of more affluent countries, like in parts of North America, with long histories of movements that can be

described both as conservative and conservationist (Guha, 2001). Moreover, the praxes of Southern environmental movements have been extremely important for locating environmental issues within a wider global context as environmentalists comment on and resist the inequalities which play out both between countries and within them. Southern movements thus provide the intellectual and praxiological foundations for forms of environmentalism embedded in ideas of equity, justice, and liberation; thus rejecting conservationist or 'green imperialist' (Grove, 2010) approaches which are heavily inflected through European colonial histories (Dowie, 2011; Grove, 2017; Domínguez and Luoma, 2020).

I gather this existing knowledge in order to examine European green activism, specifically in Britain. Building on the above scholarship, this project thinks through the specificities of European contexts in order to reflect on opportunities for coalitional movement building. It imagines and observes intersectionality in different social and political contexts, emphasising what the framework can offer to movements which are not necessarily overtly feminist or anti-racist at their conception.

1.6.2 Intersectionality, environmental justice, and the US

In addition to the valuable knowledge about environmentalisms in the Global South, accounts of ecological issues and environmental movements which are embedded in concerns for social justice have also emerged out of the US, particularly amongst its Indigenous, African-American, Latinx, and other global majority communities (Cole and Foster, 2001; McGregor, 2004; Anguiano et al., 2012; Whyte, 2017). The environmental justice movement brings together scholarship and concerns around social movements, ecological issues, and social justice are concerned. The movement speaks to the key concerns of intersectionality because of the ways in which its organisers have braided analyses of inequality, inequity, justice, and ecology together in the work that they do.

Following the twentieth-century movement for civil rights against racism in the US, the EJ movement emerged in the early 1980s as African American, Indigenous, and Latinx communities resisted toxic chemical dumping in the ancestral lands of the Haliwa-Saponi People, also known as Warren County, North Carolina, which was also home to the highest proportion of African-Americans across the US states (Mohai, Pellow and Roberts, 2009). Beyond this case, the US saw more communities fighting against their differential exposure and vulnerability to environmental hazards such as pollution and toxic waste dumping (e.g., Cutter, 1995; Pulido, Sidawi and Vos, 1996; Pulido, 2000; Cole and Foster, 2001; Holifield, 2001a; Di Chiro, 2008; Dunn, 2009; Anguiano *et al.*, 2012; Pulido, 2016; Carter, 2016; Clark, Auerbach and Xuan Zhang, 2018; Gabrielson, 2019). The white middle-class proponents of the fast growing mainstream environmental movement in the US had largely failed to consider the issues around which EJ activists were organising (Mohai, Pellow and Roberts, 2009). By focusing on local hazards and

highlighting their public health implications, the EJ movement challenged the boundaries of how we define environmentalism. Recognising that the remit of environmentalism stretches beyond conservationism and that it also includes environmental hazards in urban landscapes such as in British cities brings our attention to working class movements that are often disregarded by 'mainstream' environmentalisms and scholarship about environmentalism (Bell, 2020c).

Both EJ scholarship and social movement organising (which are intimately connected) demonstrate a clear disciplinary affinity, if not explicit identification, with human geography and critical race legal studies. Much of the EJ work takes a quantitative approach, producing robust numeric data to document how communities are differentially exposed to environmental hazards along racialised lines (Cutter, 1995; McKane et al., 2018). The EJ movement has been successful in putting pressure on government officials in the USA, leading to several national commissions and reports on the issues in the lands that we refer to as the United States. One of the most influential reports to come out of this work was conducted by the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice. Titled 'Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States', the national study concluded that '[r]ace proved to be the most significant among variables tested in association with the location of commercial hazardous waste facilities' (United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, 1987, p. xiii). This concentration on race as a key analytical category is echoed throughout the wider EJ literature.

Stephanie Malin and Stacia Ryder call for a 'deeply intersectional' approach to EJ, which entails 'approaches to environmental justice scholarship that explicitly recognize and iteratively analyze the contextual/historical, often mutually reinforcing, inseparable, and multiply oppressive structures that intersect to control and dominate marginalized individuals and communities while simultaneously privileging powerful actors' (2018, p. 4). Some of the literature which mobilises this approach includes the work of Kishi Animashaun Ducre (2018), who uses an intersectional framework in order to explore the spatial dimensions of environmental inequalities as experienced by Black women in the US in particular. She moves to reconcile the intersections of class, race, and gender as key forces framing how Black women environmentalists move through and respond to the spaces in which they live. Catherine Jampel (2018) also encourages an intersectional turn towards EJ work which accounts for the ways that dis/ability intersects with other categories of salience, highlighting the significant role of the public health component which undergirds environmental inequalities. She reminds us that whilst race and gender feature as primary vectors of analysis within much of the EJ literature, they are not the only categories of salience.

To summarise, the literature shows how intersectionality proves useful for thinking about cross-movement coalition building. It reveals how depoliticised accounts of environmental issues can

perpetuate existing inequalities. And it interrogates the politics of knowledge: how we produce and disseminate ecological and environmentalist knowledges. Part of the impetus of my own project is a response to the relatively limited body of scholarship which addresses similar themes in Britain. This comparable lacuna of knowledge in Europe speaks to the specific contours of racism in the US out of which the EJ movement emerged. Practicing land-based relationality as a method requires us to stay sensitive to the specificities that place produces (Starblanket and Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, 2018). This also means thinking through the echoes of power and politics through and across borders. The racism we see in North America does not exist without Europe!

As we think through and across borders to address the key themes of this thesis, the existing EJ literature is useful for thinking about how questions of ecology interact can and must be refracted through the inequitable entanglements that racism and colonialism tie us into. However, there is a simultaneous need to go beyond the US to think about intersectionality and environmentalism. This requires a process of careful reflection about the challenges of writing and researching intersectionality within a paradigm of the cultural and intellectual hegemony exercised by the US state. Such a process calls us to perform a careful dance in which we learn to move sensitively through spaces beyond this hegemonic place, displacing its centrality in the production of knowledge; all whilst taking care not to erase opportunities for the types of learning that transatlantic conversations make possible, especially from the global majority communities situated in North America.

1.6.3 Intersectionality, environmentalism, and Europe

There remains an extremely limited literature which draws together intersectionality, environmentalism, and Europe – and, more specifically, Britain. This is not to say that such studies do not exist. As this thesis attempts to show, scholars and social movement actors are working to build on the knowledge and praxis that emerges from other parts of the world to articulate concerns about intersectionality and environmental issues in European environmentalist landscapes.

European studies draw on the EJ scholarship/activism explored above to pose quantitative questions about the differential quality of air and water for particular communities organised by race and class across the UK and in other European countries. They examine and deconstruct the discourses in which these questions intervene (Mitchell and Dorling, 2003; Agyeman and Evans, 2004a; Laurent, 2011). Gunnhildur Lily Magnusdottir and Annica Kronsell (2015) have used an intersectional framework to analyse climate change policies in Scandinavia, finding that although women are represented in policymaking bodies and processes, climate policy documents did not reflect a sensitivity to the gendered or intersectional impacts of climate change or climate policy. Turning to Britain, Anna Wilson and Andrew Chu (2020) have used intersectionality to analyse UK climate policy, revealing the

intersectional silences of policymakers' approaches to climate solutions. The latter rely on masculinist discourses of a 'green economy', obscuring how environmental labour is apportioned in an unequal society.

These studies reflect a wider trend within the literature on intersectionality in that they focus on institutionalised spaces and policy. This work shows how proposed solutions to environmental issues can perpetuate and reinscribe existing social inequalities in the absence of an intersectional framework. These learnings are useful when exploring the types of analyses and solutions proposed by grassroots environmentalists as social movements occur within a context of existing power relations. Additionally, the ideas of social movement actors can also feed into and inform how policymakers frame and approach policy (Giugni, McAdam and Tilly, 1999).

Anna Kaijser and Annica Kronsell (2014) note the policy and institution oriented nature of research exploring intersectionality and the environment, arguing that whilst it is important, more space should be made for intersectional environmental research. They call for thinkers and researchers to draw on intersectionality to pose key questions about which social categories are considered salient as grounds for political action; whether and how categories are understood in relation to each other; whether and how any categories are neglected; how human-human and human-environment relationships are represented; which forms of knowledge are appreciated and/or devalued; and how environmental norms for behaviour are constructed, contested, and promoted. These questions lie at the crux of my own research, framing a context-specific examination of how and where intersectionality informs some of the strategies and discourses employed by environmentalists in Britain.

Karen Bell's edited collection, *Diversity and Inclusion in Environmentalism* (2021) is a particularly significant piece of work which crystallises some of the key issues I explore in my own research. Bell's collection begins to reflect on some of the above questions posed by Kaijser and Kronsell, bringing together a selection of chapters which reflect on intersectionality, inequality, and environmentalism in social movement contexts. This collection builds on Bell's previous work, which has shown how working class communities carry disproportionately environmental burdens in the UK, and that their voices are underrepresented and sometimes even rejected with hostility in environmentalist spaces (Bell, 2020b). Contributions to this book disrupt the idea that marginalised communities do not care about environmental issues whilst underlining the intersectional barriers that many individuals from such communities face in entering 'mainstream' environmentalist spaces. This is largely because these spaces (unwittingly or not) perpetuate ageism (Bowman, Bell and Alexis-Martin, 2021; Haq, 2021), racism (Griffith and Bevan, 2021), ableism (Larrington-Spencer et al., 2021), heterosexism (Foster, 2021; Greed, 2021) in their organising practices and their political discourses. This is also reflected in

our knowledge about climate and environmental activism which has often side-lined and ignored the environmentalist contributions of marginalised communities (Satheesh, 2021). The debates which this book contributes are echoed in wider concerns which have been expressed by activists, academics, and journalists alike about how some environmentalist groups are centring forms of whiteness and middle-classness in ways that work to exclude minoritised and marginalised people (Out of the Woods, 2019; Wretched of the Earth, 2019; Berglund and Schmidt, 2020; Malm, 2021). My study provides empirical insights into intersectionality and environmentalism in Britain today. It builds on this data to ask what we might learn from the interaction between environmentalism and intersectionality, and how we might use this to continue developing and animating green Black feminist praxis.

Whilst this literature is currently limited in its size, intersectional research on European (and more specifically, British) environmentalisms shows the potential for using intersectionality to create knowledge about the politics of environmental praxis against the backdrop of existing social inequalities. And, of course, this study seeks to contribute to these urgent conversations by providing an in-depth empirically grounded reflection on intersectionality as a tool for both understanding and 'doing' environmentalism in Britain.

1.7 Coda

In considering both intersectionality's roots and routes, I have emphasised that intersectional praxis is part of a long history and tradition of Black feminism spearheaded by African-American women in and beyond the US (Collins, 2015; Hancock, 2016). Indeed, intersectionality has been articulated through the lived experience of Black women in the US – but the majority of Black women are born and live outside of North America! As I have tried to show, intersectionality is not exclusive to the US, nor Anglo-European spaces more broadly. Black, Indigenous, and wider global majority feminists encourage us to reject a geographically myopic view of by pointing out intersectionality's relevance beyond the state borders of the US (Verschuur, 2011; Grosfoguel and Cohen, 2012; Lmadani and Moujoud, 2012; Escoda, Fassa and Lépinard, 2016; Emejulu and Sobande, 2019; Joseph-Gabriel, 2020; Mestiri, 2020; 'Penser l'intersectionnalité avec Mame-Fatou Niang', 2020; de Sousa and Chamberland, 2021). This study thus invites us to reflect deeply on intersectionality in a Western European context – engaging with its relevance for environmental actors of diverse backgrounds in Britain.

Chapter 2. Research Methods and Methodology

This chapter sets out the methodological approach and methods employed in this research, detailing the challenges and choices which frame the study's process and findings. Firstly, the chapter outlines the epistemological groundings of this research in Black feminist thought. It then moves on to discuss the methodological approaches it takes (qualitative). Following, the chapter surveys the methods employed to collect data (semi-structured interviews, participant observation, content analysis) before diving deeper into how sampling, recruitment, data selection, and data analysis were conducted. Then, the discussion turns to examining the ethical considerations which guide this work, situating this in the specific context of having undertaken this work during a global pandemic. Following, I spend some time reflecting on researcher reflexivity, trustworthiness, and credibility and situating my approaches to this very specifically within a feminist approach. Finally, the chapter explains and justifies the case study selected for this research (Britain) before concluding.

Though I undertook this doctoral project in a Politics department, and I consider political studies to be, by and large, my disciplinary home, this doctoral thesis is transdisciplinary in its approach. Interestingly, intersectionality itself has been described as transdisciplinary (Tamale, 2020, p. 70). That is, it has made itself available to a variety of discussions across and between disciplines: from (re)framing international human rights law (Davis, 2015) to examining the representation of particular groups in popular culture (Meyer, 2020) to understanding the functioning and accessibility of public transport and the built environment (Yuan *et al.*, 2023). Intersectionality offers a way of understanding articulations of power and exploitation, advantage and disadvantage, domination, and oppression – which can materialise in different ways in different spaces. From this perspective, its take-up has crossed disciplines and subdisciplines (as we saw in the previous chapter) and there are multiple potential in-roads to studying and using it.

This project serves in part as an ode to Black feminism as an indispensable force for imagining alternative futures beyond oppression, exploitation, and marginalisation. In taking the Black feminist concept of intersectionality as the fundamental point of departure for this research, I underline the vitality of concepts Black feminism has produced (specifically intersectionality here); contributing to existing calls to reflect on their relevance and importance for thinking about ecological problematics (Craig, 2014; Opperman, 2022).

2 Epistemology

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge. It asks what can be counted as knowledge and how such knowledge can be produced/accessed. Black feminist epistemology asserts that gendered and racialised dynamics shape our locations as knowers. These locations inform our understandings and perceptions of how power manifests in the cultural, material, and social worlds we inhabit (Collins, 1989). The research presented here is fundamentally underpinned by concepts, ideas, and courage drawn from Black, Southern, and Indigenous feminisms, among other feminisms (Collins, 1989, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Patterson *et al.*, 2016; Ahmed, 2017; Burkhard, 2019). What ties together the different bodies of thought and methods that I draw from to undertake this work is a normative concern with and desire to reshape the uneven ways in which power is materially and culturally articulated (liberatory politics[13]) – as well as how we (can refuse to) see and understand these articulations (politics of knowledge). My engagement with these bodies of thought and the methodological instruments and approaches they offer is articulated through the influence of narrative and storytelling in this empirical inquiry, a close attention to the ethics and power dynamics that frame my inquiry, and, therefore, deep reflections on researcher reflexivity.

The transdisciplinary nature of this work lends itself to a mixed methods approach. Largely speaking, the work presented here is qualitative. The methodological tools that I use most closely align with political ethnographic approaches in social sciences, which I see in close relationship with narrative and storytelling from sociological and literary studies. The latter resonates very strongly with decolonial, Black feminist, queer, (and) Indigenous ways of knowing. As I examine theories of social movement organising and environmentalism/ecologism, the final discussion chapter before the conclusion proposes questions to move towards 'a billion green Black feminisms', which contribute to and complicate the narratives, concepts, and ideas that environmentalists themselves rely on and produce in their organising. From this perspective, this research can be understood as future regarding work which is embedded in empirical inquiry.

2.1.1 Situated knowledge

When it comes to doing social research, we must recognise the particularities of our standpoints which arise from the wider social and political frames in which each person is embedded. Therefore, this research is deeply shaped by the feminist literature on situatedness, standpoints, and subjectivity to think about how our worldviews are mediated by our local experiences which cannot be exculpated

[13] I use the term 'liberatory politics' and not 'social justice' here intentionally, to capture the urgency of attending to not just the social, but the wider political ecologies at stake too. Additionally, 'justice' itself is a contested concept especially amongst some decolonial, Indigenous, and anarchist approaches (Betasamosake Simpson, 2016).

from the wider political structural frames. The situatedness of diverse standpoints have been heavily emphasised by feminist thinkers of various philosophical traditions. I return to thinking about situated knowledge and positionality in greater detail later in the chapter – but first, I provide a brief overview of situated knowledge as rooted in Black feminist epistemology.

Black feminism has given us a rich pool of analytical resources to reflect on the different ways that everyone is situated within wider constellations of power dynamics. Patricia Hill Collins emphasises Black women's standpoints as the foundation of Black feminist thought. She writes:

> Black women's political and economic status provides them with a distinctive set of experiences that offers a different view of material reality than that available to other groups. The unpaid and paid work that Black women perform, the types of communities in which they live, and the kinds of relationships they have with others suggest that African-American women, as a group, experience a different world than those who are not Black and female. … these experiences stimulate a distinctive Black feminist consciousness concerning that material reality. (1989, pp. 747–748)

Starting from the experiences of African-American women, Hill Collins shows us how the local contexts of politics and economics shapes their lives. This is further underlined by Hill Collins when she makes a distinction between knowledge and wisdom; positing that the latter cannot be transmitted via mainstream largely institutional pedagogies (1989). Put otherwise, the local material contexts in which Black women live as individuals and as communities significantly shape our identities and worldviews, or to use the feminist terminology, our unique 'standpoints.'

The above observations are not limited in its relevance to African-American women. For Hill Collins, 'a subordinate group not only experiences a different reality than a group that rules, but a subordinate group may interpret that reality differently than a dominant group' (1989, p. 748). Hence, we see that there are differences between standpoints according to whether one is situated in a subordinate or dominant group or in the dynamic and messy interstices that intersectionality reveals. The material reality of both power are embedded in wider global histories and contemporary inheritances of colonialism, racism, imperialism, capitalism. Each group and person is simultaneously situated within local *and* global contexts in which power relations (manifested in material forms and otherwise) are produced. It is thus impossible to divorce the local experience of the individual from forces which are grander in scale. And in the context of social research, this is extremely important.

As we have seen, Hill Collins's insistence on the ways that lived experiences shape our perspectives and ways of knowing. This argument has consequences for the ways in which we value the voices of participants in social research as rich sources of knowledge – rejecting the reproduction of traditions which objectify the subjects of research and assume that the process of knowledge making is consigned

to the all-knowing, objective, and neutral ivory tower. This is not to say, however, that critical examinations of how research participants define themselves and their experiences cannot take place. I am thus drawn here to Haraway's assertion that 'positionings of the subjugated are not exempt from critical re-examination, decoding, deconstruction, and interpretation [...] The standpoints of the subjugated are not "innocent" positions' (1988, p. 584). Haraway's argument carries a lot of weight here. By stressing that there are no 'innocent' positions, she demands that continuous spirited and critical discussion may take place. Her proposition also allows us to navigate the complex dynamics amongst structures, individuals, and identities. This is important, for example, to give us the space to identify how structures and cultures can be internalised by the very communities to whom those structures and cultures do violence to[14]. Put differently, this insight permits the recognition that marginalised individuals can be subsumed into dominant cultures (Pierotti and Wildcat, 1997) and thus avoids blindly valorising particular positions simply by virtue of their being subjugated in some form.

So, the idea that there are no 'innocent' positions facilitates challenging critiques about the ways in which cultures and structures operate to shape self-definition whilst turning away from the temptation to essentialise identities/positionings. We can and must recognise the complex and sometimes insidious ways in which dominant cultures/structures permeate social relationships and understandings of the self without chastising or patronising certain individuals/communities. This means critically and sensitively deconstructing the ways in which, through our cultures and standpoints, come to define ourselves and experiences at specific moments, whether we are reflecting on ourselves as researchers or the participants of our research. Doing Black feminist research is not about simply speaking *to*, or worse, *over* marginalised communities. Conversely, it is about radically listening to and speaking *with* such communities.

3 Methodology

3.1.1 Qualitative inquiry

In the context of political studies, qualitative research concerns itself with the social world. It seeks to understand social phenomena at individual and/or group levels. The same holds true of much quantitative research, however. Thus, what distinguishes qualitative from quantitative research is the way in which it seeks to 'preserve and analyze the situated form, content, and experience of social action, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations' (Lindlof, 1995, p. 18). Conceived differently, it is a type of research that is concerned more often with 'words rather than numbers' (Frey *et al.*, 1992, p. 7). We should note that qualitative research can also include the analysis

[14] This insight is informed by Michel Foucault's extensive body of work, particularly the notions of self-discipline and governmentality.

of image, film/video, audio, and other nonstatistical sources too. In political science, qualitative research has been described as its own tradition (Mahoney and Goertz, 2006) – which is accompanied by both advantages and disadvantages. The two traditions are not necessarily entirely at odds with each other; they can be used complementarily (Mahoney and Goertz, 2006). Having considered the above, however, this study has elected to rely primarily on qualitative research methods such as semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and content analysis of archival and digital material.

Quantitative approaches to political research rely heavily on statistical methods. They are often undertaken through the use of controlled experiments which seek to identify cause and effect relating to particular variables across a (large) spread of cases (Mahoney and Goertz, 2006). In other words, quantitative research is advantageous to studies seeking to identify generalisable patterns across large samples. Even so, it can be challenging to distinguish causation and correlation in quantitative studies (Barrowman, 2014). Nonetheless, its empirically generalisable orientation makes it a useful research approach for studies which seek to make predictions about the future. Additionally, quantitative research can produce large amounts of easily mineable data with relative ease. Much quantitative research, however, is rooted in a positivist doctrine and portrays itself as distance, detached, and 'objective' in a bid to emulate the natural sciences (Pierce, 2008, p. 44). However, the natural sciences are, too, shaped by bias, values, and contexts, even if they are not always explicit about it (Fausto-Sterling, 2000). Feminists have critiqued the idea of 'value-free' research and revealing that, often, 'objectivity … is male subjectivity' (Hekman, 2007, p. 536). My research, which takes a qualitative approach, is rather oriented towards understanding, interpretation, and meaning making in a specific context. It is explicitly normative and highly contextualised; and I argue, as we see further in this chapter, that this does not compromise its reliability or value.

Qualitative research is not without its limitations either. It has been subject to various criticisms, including that the results it produces are neither empirically generalisable, reproducible, nor reliable. However, as Selen Ercan and David Marsh (2016) note, qualitative research does not necessarily seek to make empirically generalisable, causal, or reproducible claims – and it should be judged by its own objectives. Its ontological basis orients it towards 'developing understandings rather than discovering 'truth'' (Ercan and Marsh, 2016, p. 319) – and its methods, which are grounded in context-specific interaction and interpretation, are suited to this objective. As regards the reliability of findings from qualitative research, scholars have emphasised a rigorous approach to specifically selected methods with the need for reflexivity. As such, qualitative researchers should be explicit about 'how her values/ experiences may have affected her interpretation and, crucially, … give the reader (sometimes another researcher) information with which to assess that interpretation' (*ibid*). Notably, however, qualitative

research can be extremely time consuming and labour intensive. When researching sensitive topics or exploring issues that are embedded in people's personal experiences, researchers can be faced with undertaking unexpected emotional labour as much as intellectual labour in the data collection stage of their work (Dickson-Swift *et al.*, 2009). As an embodied experience, this emotive aspect of research can be challenging to navigate and reflect on.

Despite its limitations, qualitative research has been described as 'the dominant approach' adopted within UK Politics scholarship (Pierce, 2008, p.45). A key advantage of qualitative research is that it lends itself well to understanding specific outcomes in particular cases. It is well suited to the 'understanding and explanation of the complexities of social and political life' as it thoroughly interrogates the 'underlying values of individuals and groups' (*ibid*). My own study seeks to contribute to in-depth understandings about intersectionality and environmentalism in the British context – a case study which has hitherto been understudied in relation to these themes. I outline in greater detail later in this chapter why this specific case study is worthy of inquiry. Qualitative research has often been described as a process which is 'inductive, theory-generating, subjective, and nonpositivist' as opposed to the 'deductive, theory-testing, objective, and positivist processes' which quantitative research is built on (Lee, 1999, p. 10). Such an approach is suitable for studies that seek to produce and analyse interpretations of meaning in contextualised ways (McNabb, 2010, p. 225). Such contextualisation makes visible the position of the researcher as much as the 'researched' – it recognises and leans into the subjectivity of both researcher and researched and acknowledges the interaction between them (Ercan and Marsh, 2016). Reaching beyond positivism, it interrogates the assumptions and prejudgments which underlie the insights produced from the research process thus *situating* the knowledge (Haraway, 1988).

This study seeks to contribute to theory building and meaning interpretation around these themes – it contributes to developing ecological praxis grounded in Black feminist frameworks while reflecting on what it *means* to do so from an intersectional basis. I have opted for a qualitative approach to this work to allow a flexible, iterative research process which is developed in conversation with, rather than at a distance to the phenomena I am studying. Like this, my work of interpretation and theory building is undertaken through interaction with (rather than distant observation of) others, whether direct (e.g., interviews) or indirect (e.g., archival research). Another way of thinking about this interpretation and theory building process is in an emphasis on narrative and storytelling, as I detail below.

3.1.2 Narratives and storytelling

In discussions about epistemology, Black feminist scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins have argued that marginalised groups, such as African-American women, have 'not only developed a distinctive

Black women's standpoint, but have done so by using alternative ways of producing and validating knowledge' (Hill Collins, 1990, p. 202). Julia S. Jordan-Zachery (2017) has conceived these Black feminist alternative ways of knowing through stories and storytelling. As a study which draws heavily on Black, Indigenous, feminist, queer, and decolonising methodologies, I frame the qualitative nature of this research as embedded in traditions of narrative and storytelling. Stories range widely in subject and in style. They can be mythical or personal (Kovach, 2009). They can even be scientific (Bickmore and Grandy, 2014). Stories are narratives that tell us about and invite reflection on who we are, and how we relate to each other in our worlds as individuals, communities, ecologies, and cosmologies (Kovach *et al.*, 2013).

Personal stories appear in the work of people like Audre Lorde. Lorde's *The Cancer Journals* ([1980] 2020) narrates her life as a Black lesbian feminist living with cancer in the settler state we call the USA. In the stories she tells of her lived experience, Lorde directs her own narrative with agency; she resists being represented from without – resisting the grain of representational intersectionality. We could think about Lorde's journals as speaking across time and space to the journals of English artist, Derek Jarman. In *Modern Nature* (1992) Jarman narrates his life as he discovers that he is HIV positive and decides to channel his energies into nurturing his cottage garden on the harsh coasts of Dungeness.

The Indigenous scientist, Robin Wall Kimmerer's, *Braiding Sweetgrass* (2013), also uses stories from personal experiences, as well as those passed from ancestors by oral tradition. In doing so, her work serves to build critical dialogues about how we understand ecology, sciences, and Indigenous knowledges. The text opens with a story from oral tradition, which tells how Turtle Island came to be. In the story, a pregnant Skywoman falls from her home, Skyworld, down to the waters of Earth. Her fall is broken by a flock of conscientious geese who support her with their wings. With difficulty, and eventually some sacrifice, fellow non-human animals seek mud at the bottom of the water, which they use form an island on the back of a generous turtle. The retelling of this origin story draws our attention to the historical and possible relationships amongst species. It invites us to reflect on how gender and life are configured in our imaginaries, in the ways we envision our collective beginnings (Kimmerer compares Skywoman's story with Christian origin stories about Eve and the Garden of Eden). And it reminds us that these critical, analytical questions and explorations can take place through storytelling. Whether we believe these stories to have actually taken place or not is not so important as the invitation these stories extend to us for reflection on how we relate to each other and our surroundings, and the spaces we cultivate for reflection and change to manifest (Iseke, 2013). As literary studies have stressed, stories also invite a certain playfulness and capacity for imagination – two characteristics that Black

feminist and Indigenous futurity make use of as resources that bolster liberatory praxis (Animashaun Ducre, 2018; Erincin, 2021).

As I noted above, I think about narrative and storytelling as a way of framing the political ethnographic tools that have helped me to collect the data that is at the heart of this thesis. This runs through the stories that my interlocutors told me – and some of the stories that I try to tell here too. Let us study this connection in more concrete terms.

Political ethnography includes a wide array of qualitative tools for capturing first-hand empirical insights. These tools include, but are not limited to: in-depth interviews, focus groups, and various forms of observation which may include direct participation or not (Tilly, 2007; Rhodes, 2016; Schatz, 2021). As a method, political ethnography brings researchers into 'direct contact with political processes' as opposed to a sole reliance on the secondary – or even tertiary – retelling and documenting of 'knowledge through other people's testimony, written records, and artifacts of political interaction' (Tilly, 2007, p. 410). This primary empirical research complements the secondary and tertiary sources and resources that help to colour my understanding of the key themes at hand. It also contributes to the empirical data and analyses we share collectively in relation to intersectionality and environmentalism in Britain.

I think of this research as both a storytelling and story building effort. It is invested in asking how ecological praxes are constructed, communicated, and developed. There is a literary component to this work. I draw on literary approaches in order to think about the types of language through which political claims are articulated in environmentalist discourse. This takes the form of a textual approach to content analysis. My multi-pronged approach supports the triangulation of this study's findings, thereby reinforcing the robustness of this research.

4 Methods

4.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are conversational in nature and are conducted using 'a blend of closed- and open-ended questions, often accompanied by follow-up *why* or *how* questions' (Adams, 2015, emphasis original). I thus devised an interview schedule with a selection of questions which I drew upon to frame the conversation (see Appendix). I made participants aware that this was the case, though I also explicitly invited them to take the conversation into new directions which they might find interesting or useful. When contacting potential participants for this research, I shared an informed consent document with each of them which explicitly framed this research as a project exploring the notion of intersectionality. During the conversations, I asked questions to ascertain how my interlocutors understand and respond to the separation (or marriage) between 'social' and 'environmental' issues in

their organising. These questions included but were not limited to: Do you think social issues like poverty, racism, and sexism are related to the issues surrounding climate change and environmental damage? Are issues like poverty, racism, and sexism discussed within your environmentalist group? Some people describe environmentalist movements as not inclusive – what do you think about that? I also asked specific and explicit questions *about* intersectionality. These questions were designed to observe whether participants were familiar with it, and if so, to understand how they interpret and use it.

The 35 interviews were mostly conducted online, with each interview lasting on average between 30 and 45 minutes, though there were two interviews which lasted much longer (over two hours). Most of the interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis, though there were two interviews which included young people under the age of eighteen, where the respondents were interviewed in pairs (one of the pairs were siblings, and the other pair was an adult parent and child). Every interview but two was audio recorded and transcribed by the interviewer afterwards. Each participant completed an informed consent form and before participating were fully informed of the project's working title, main themes, and my background as both researcher and environmentalist campaigner in London. The interview data is stored securely on an encrypted USB pen drive[15].

The semi-structured interview is a significant and popular research method for researchers in the social sciences (Leech, 2002; Gray, 2004; Jenner *et al.*, 2004; Savage, 2010; Mosley, 2013; Brinkmann and Kvale, 2018), though it is not without critique (Gunaratnam, 2003; Atkinson and Silverman, 2016).

Indeed, there are challenges and disadvantages to conducting a large number of semi-structured interviews, not least the time, preparation, and attention which each interview requires (Adams, 2015). Because of the intensity of time and preparation required for each one, semi-structured interviews (especially when employed by solo researchers) often do not yield large samples. However, unlike large surveys, semi-structured interviews do allow researchers to ask several open-ended questions with follow-ups or 'probes' (*ibid*). They differ from tightly structured interviews in that they also create space for exploring uncharted territory and useful leads which can be further pursued – allowing the research to take on a flexible, iterative character. They nonetheless provide enough structure to support analytical comparison across a number of interviews. Additionally, what an individual may feel comfortable or inspired to share with one researcher may be totally different in another situation with another researcher. The feelings of dis/comfort and the level of disclosure which the respondents offer will directly affect the data produced as the shape of the data is, in effect, tied to what respondents are

[15] This data is also secured on the Goldsmiths cloud. All data storage complies with the College's data security policies.

willing to share with us. Discomfort is not just a banal social occurrence; its presence can often be linked to the deeper dynamics of power relations (Limerick, Burgess-Limerick and Grace, 1996; Reinharz and Chase, 2001; Vähäsantanen and Saarinen, 2013) which may echo wider structures of power and violence, such as racism. We thus need to examine the dynamics of power which are produced and reproduced through the interactions and intersections of different positionalities in social research.

As a method, the semi structured interview is an extremely valuable one. It has the potential to provide in-depth research insights which are punctuated with feelings to an extent that is near impossible to capture with other qualitative methods such as surveys and questionnaires. As a conversation taking place in 'real time', semi structured interviews allow for meanings not only to be further probed but also immediately clarified. This goes some way to mitigating issues relating to whether interviewees understand the questions being posed or researchers understand the following responses. Moreover, the semi-structured interview permits the interview to visit routes, places, ideas that the researcher herself did not plan for or envision (Gray, 2004, p. 217). Whilst the interviews conducted for this study broadly included the same set of questions, the semi-structured format meant that some interviews had different focuses than others. The interviews were shaped by the interests and experiences of the interviewees, who offered reflections that opened paths to discussing a diversity of topics. For example, some interviews focused more on electoral politics, whilst others explored the challenges which schoolchildren face in engaging in climate action. I deliberately conducted each interview using similar interview schedules in order to ensure replicability and comparability amongst the interviews. But the possibility to digress from this schedule also generated valuable space for those contributing to this project to feed into the shaping of the project's overall research.

Interestingly, the etymological roots of the word interview lie in the French *s'entrevoir*, a reflexive word which means 'to see each other.' The idea of *seeing each other* resonates with the broad methodological commitments of this project. The notion of seeing each other grounds social interaction in existing social contexts. No social interaction takes place in a vacuum. Even (and perhaps especially) university research. The interview as an encounter in which we *see each other* goes some way to recognising the agency of all those involved in the research – an important normative goal for feminist and post/decolonial researchers (Bar On, 1993; Noxolo, 2017). The positionality of the interviewer is as important as the interviewee. That is to say, as people participating in a social interaction, our respective positionalities interact to produce forms of *situated knowledge* (Haraway, 1988) which are dependent on both the interviewer and interviewee. To talk about situated knowledge is to recognise that since knowers are always located in specific temporal, spatial, and cultural contexts, so is the knowledge that

they produce. Rather than shying away from the situatedness of knowledge, feminists encourage us to admit and reflect upon how these contexts shape the knowledge produced.

By insisting on the mutual nature of the interview, we resist taking on the voyeuristic academic gaze which perpetuates the historic imbalances of power between researcher and 'researched'. The effort to adequately address power imbalances in the process of producing knowledge is one that has been of major concern to feminist and post/decolonial scholars who aim to salvage (and repurpose) the practice of social research from its historical colonial entanglements (e.g., Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Cahill, Quijada Cerecer and Bradley, 2010; Janes, 2016; Felner, 2020). But efforts to diffuse this epistemic power are complicated. Power can be exercised by the interviewee, depending on how the respective individuals are socially, culturally, and even economically situated in a broader societal context (Boucher, 2017). My experience is that the intersections of race, gender, and age, for example, coloured some of the dynamics of the conversations that I engaged in as part of this research – and did so in ways that made me feel uncomfortable and awkward. This felt like an unpleasant surprise – as much of the literature assumes the power of the interviewer over the interviewee.

4.1.2 Ethnographic participant observation

In addition to the 35 semi-structured interviews conducted, this study also draws on participant observational data which I collected whilst attending Green Party of England and Wales conferences between 2021 and 2022. I attended the GPEW conferences in my capacity as a member of the party, participating in internal processes and interacting with other conference attendees, and wrote ethnographic fieldnotes at the end of each day, which I analyse in the fourth and fifth chapters of this dissertation. I also attended one of the days of a large Extinction Rebellion march in the spring of 2023 (called 'The Big One') and the Black Ecofeminist Summit in London (October 2022). Alongside my involvement with the Green Party of England and Wales, I am also a member of other more grassroots level groups and networks – in particular, BP or Not BP?.

Participant observation is a political ethnographic tool wherein the researcher is 'immersed' in the 'field,' simultaneously directly engaging in and observing day to day activities of the political actors or groups of interest (Gillespie and Michelson, 2011; Schatz, 2021). For anthropologists and sociologists, participant observation has been mobilised as a useful tool for addressing some of the ethical challenges around extractive modes of research on/with social movement groups with whom the researcher shares political commitments in common. Participant observation has been a popular method amongst political scientists who have used it to produce insightful research in alliance with charities, NGOs, and politicians (Gillespie and Michelson, 2011). Similarly to semi-structured

interviews, participant observation is time and energy intensive. It can also raise challenging questions about insider/outsider status in the contexts of observation (Bengry, 2018) – which can be both an advantage and a disadvantage for the data produced and how it is interpreted. Insider access can lead to novel empirical insights into spaces that are otherwise hard to access (but require careful navigation of ethics in doing so). Outsiders can provide critical reflections on that which might be taken for granted by an insider – but they can also face barriers to undertaking their ethnographic work at all. In any case, distinctions between insider/outsider status are not always clear and can shift across time and space (Uldam and McCurdy, 2013).

Nonetheless, participant observation has proved a useful tool for the study of social movements (McCurdy and Uldam, 2014). It supports researchers to understand some of the foundational motivations, processes, and assumptions upon which social movement organising is built (Uldam and McCurdy, 2013). Feminist and post/decolonial anthropologists have described *activist ethnography* as a particular form of participant observation which is 'based on the personal situating of the researcher within the field *to avoid a replication of colonialist research dynamics*' (Deschner *et al.*, 2020, p. 206, emphasis added). For activist ethnographers, the lines between participating and observing are blurred, therefore challenging hierarchical distinctions between 'the knower' and 'the known'.

Within political studies, forms of participant observation have been favoured by some social movement scholars who see the method as an alternative way to produce types of knowledge that give an insight into the everyday processes and interactions that frame big-picture political claims and discourses (Tilly, 2007). More specifically, researching at such close proximity enables the 'researcher to "see" differently,' and thus, from new vantage points may lead the ethnographer to 're-envision her path to knowledge construction' (Schatz, 2021, p. 11). Moreover, knowledge produced through participant observation can partly be described as experiential knowledge; and thus parallels the types of knowledge and theory which are often produced by and useful to social movement actors (Choudry, 2020; Deschner *et al.*, 2020). The method thus contributes to improved empirical analysis and theory-building (Gillespie and Michelson, 2011).

4.1.3 Content analysis

Content analysis requires a 'slow' textual approach. This materialised as close readings of the recurrent and changing tones, languages, and themes that environmentalists make use of across time and space. Content analysis facilitated an exploration of how discourses and strategies have developed over time in relation to intersectionality *through* an intersectional lens. This textual approach is no doubt influenced by my positionality as a researcher trained in both literary and political studies, but it also

flows from a post/decolonial, feminist insistence on the importance of text and language as nuanced instruments through which meaning is created, resisted, and negotiated with concrete political implications (hooks, 1989; Butler, 2009; Ngũgĩ, 2011). Below, I survey each of the types of sources and outline how exactly I approached the content analysis aspect of this research.

5 Sampling, recruitment, data selection and analysis

5.1.1 Sampling and recruitment

A substantial part of the empirical data consists of 35 in-depth semi-structured interviews that I conducted with grassroots environmentalists, Green Party activists and politicians, youth climate strikers, faith leaders, and individuals working in environmentalist NGOs. A full list of the organisations which these participants are associated with is available in the appendix. Many of the interviewees were recruited from my existing networks whilst I recruited others by emailing them, speaking to them at events, or through the connections I made in the interviews (snowballing effect). The snowball sampling effect refers to a process in which a small number of initial interviewees or contacts agree to take part in the research and are then asked to recommend other appropriate contacts who take part in the research (Parker, Scott and Geddes, 2019). This process of participant recruitment continues until the saturation point.

The sample is not intended to be a universally representative of the environmentalist movement in Britain. Rather, the specific interviews and other materials which make up the data for this research are understood as opportunities to keep reflecting at depth on the key problematics of the relationships between intersectionality and ecology. The primary empirical components of this research can be described as 'highly contextualised' (Schreier, 2018, p. 85). Situated in this deeply qualitative work, the data and analysis reach towards theoretical generalisation (Lewis *et al.*, 2003). This seeks to contribute to the building of theory (as opposed to the types of statistical generalisation that much quantitative work seeks). Each encounter in the study builds on and relates to each other encounter (Schreier, 2018); they are compared and put into dialogue with each other in order to identify emerging themes, ideas, and resonances with existing theories.

As I note later in this chapter, my sample is affected by material conditions such as access to internet. The internet has the potential to provide accessible platforms which democratise discourse, giving space to previously unheard voices (Darroch, 2010, p. 31; Miller, 2018). However, many remain excluded from digital conversations. Some actively resist entering the digital space whereas others may lack access to the skills or material resources necessary to get online. These barriers to the online sphere, whether self-imposed or not, can be strongly linked to factors such as geography, age, and/or

social class (Gebremichael and Jackson, 2006; Hargittai and Hinnant, 2008; van Deursen, van Dijk and Peters, 2011; Seah, 2020); elements which are frequently cross hatched with racialisation and gender in significant ways. I emphasise this to illustrate that the demographic makeup of those attending the online activities with which I have engaged will have been skewed by participants' access to digital skills and resources. A transparent acknowledgement of this limitation is all that can be offered in these circumstances.

Finally, participants entered this research with informed consent. This already sets up a kind of self-selection process. Those who would oppose or feel indifferent to my research topic and/or university research more broadly were already unlikely to be part of my interview sample. I have acknowledged this limitation and have sought to supplement the silences in my interview sample with participant observation and content analysis.

5.1.2 Data selection and analysis

There is a wealth of text and image-based sources (both historical and contemporary) that feed into this research project. The sources I co-created and consulted for this research are diverse and multitextured. These sources include archival material, websites, social media, and online publications, and party manifestoes. To a certain extent, I also consider the textual data from the semi-structured interviews and participant observation that I undertook to form textual sources of content analysis. I wrote notes and reflected on each interview and instance of participant observation as soon as possible after the fact. I also revisited audio recordings of my interviews many times. However, my written transcripts of interviews and ethnographic fieldnotes were useful for identifying recurrent themes and ideas in what had become text. My analysis of these sources can be described as content analysis.

Below, I survey the different sources which served as data for my content analysis – detailing and describing exactly how I undertook this content analysis for each type of source.

Semi-structured interviews and participant observation

As mentioned previously, the 35 interviews were mostly conducted online, with each interview lasting on average between 30 and 45 minutes, though there were two interviews which lasted much longer (over two hours). Most of the interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis, though there were two interviews which included young people under the age of eighteen, where the respondents were interviewed in pairs (one of the pairs were siblings, and the other pair was an adult parent and child). Every interview but two was audio recorded and transcribed by the interviewer afterwards. In addition to the 35 semi-structured interviews conducted, I also undertook participant observation and took ethnographic field notes after each instance of observation.

Using content analysis, I was interested in how environmentalists explicitly or implicitly engaged with or rejected intersectionality and discussions of difference. Gathering the transcripts and ethnographic fieldnotes, I noted all references to intersectionality and discussions around difference. I analysed each of these instances, paying close attention to framing processes (Benford and Snow, 2000), and the relevant practical strategies referred to as organising tools. I examined each explicit reference to understand how intersectionality was deployed (or not), in what context it was being used (or not), and whether they shaped the overall aims and objectives of the groups/individuals involved in this research. I also reflected on what seems to remain 'unsaid' in the texts; whether deliberately or not, signalled in the text or not (McCormack, 2004). This meant reflecting on what might have been left out, such as the moments where intersectionality was *not* mentioned or where it was obscured. From this overall process, two key themes emerged which structured my discussion in Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis: absence and presence.

Approaching the archives

Chapter three of this thesis ('*Environmentalist histories and intersectional trajectories*) uses archival material from several collections (both physical and digital) to trace themes and ideas relating to intersectionality and ecology throughout time. The dates of the material in these archives stretch from the 1920s to 2023. The third chapter of the thesis provides greater detail about the exact archives, how I identified and interacted with them, as well as the actual content in the material consulted from them. I undertook textual and image-based analysis of the archival material that I identified as relevant in order to draw out key themes which support a historical tracing of contemporary environmentalist discourses in relation to intersectionality.

The archive is a rich – but complicated place – which incites several questions of its own. Archives, of course, are curated by individuals and institutions – people with personal histories, values, experiences, and ideas that will shape what they see as worthy of a place in the archive, and what they choose to stay off the record (Mbembe, 2002). The debate about how archives are constructed and by whom is a debate of its own – one to which whole bodies of scholarship and entire doctoral theses are dedicated. I will not rehash these debates or contribute to them in this piece of work as such. Still, these debates have framed my interaction with the archive in a significant way. They have prompted me to reflect on the extent to which archives can be fully representative of a period, their capacity to capture the complex and multiple textures of a time. This is not only a question of what is selected as 'archivable' material and who judges it so, but also the subtle grain of movement organising that simply *cannot* be captured in conference proceedings, meeting minutes, posters, videos, audio recordings or even personal diaries. A look, a feeling, an awkward silence or laughter, a sigh, a rolling of the eyes, a change

in the nature of a relationship, a decision not to be present at a meeting… These are small moments, often personal, where power is at work. These moments, too, are places from which political thought and action can be conceived – something that Black feminist and other traditions of feminist scholarship urge us to see (hooks, 1987; Collins, 1989; Jackson and Jones, 1998; Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe, 2018; Lewis, 2020). This cannot be easily recorded. It does not and even cannot always make it into the archive. Accepting this, however, I have tried to think carefully about what it is that the archive can help us to see and understand, and the specific purposes it can serve in the context of this research.

The archive can offer us insights into a particular moment in a specific place. These insights need to be contextualised. What can the archives tell us about intersectionality and environmentalism? How present and explicit are the connections between the two? How can intersectional solidarities manifest through and beyond the actual use of the word 'intersectionality'? How can we think about the continuities and chasms between environmentalism and other forms of social movement organising in Britain? To what extent were these cross-movement synergies already present in the period preceding today? This part of my research uses archives to respond to some of these questions, helping us to reflect on the historical relationship of environmentalism in Britain with intersectionality and Black feminist thought/praxis at large. The archival aspect of this research offers the opportunity to think about the extent to which the object of this study is already rooted in the history of environmentalist praxis in Britain. This exercise helps to identify different strands of environmentalist attitudes and praxis. It acknowledges feminists organising around the environment (as one of many other issues under their remit) and environmentalists responding to issues around intersectionality – thus troubling the borders of several new social movements, and assumptions we might hold about 'issue ownership'.

This study largely focuses on the contemporary period, examining environmentalist praxis through and in relation to intersectionality in the twenty-first century. So, why turn to the archive? Archives have been especially important for social movement scholars for they support the provision of 'a sense about the embeddedness of single past protests and movements in time and place' (Bosi and Reiter, 2014, p. 132) which is important, since every social movement – like other political phenomena – 'lives in history, and [therefore] requires historically grounded analysis for its explanation' (Tilly, 2006, p. 433). Archives thus provide social movement scholars with the material possibility to ground knowledge about contemporary social movements within the foundations of historical repertoires, circumstances, and perspectives. This helps us not only to situate contemporary insights into specific time and place, but also to do the important epistemic work of recognising and acknowledging 'the intellectual debts to so much knowledge produced in earlier and contemporary phases of struggle' (Choudry, 2020, p. 30).

Like all forms of knowledge production and narrative construction, archives are never neutral (Schwartz and Cook, 2002). The very makeup of an archive is the result of choices made by an individual or team of people who themselves are or were embedded in a specific context informed by specific cultural norms and values. The archive is thus, itself, a form of *situated knowledge* which can only ever present a fragment of a wider reality (Bosi and Reiter, 2014). This does not, however, render the archive useless.

After looking through their online catalogues, I initially contacted several archives (Women's Library at LSE, Glasgow Women's Library, Feminist Library, Green Archives at Teesside, Black Cultural Archives) to inquire about any material they may hold that relates to 'intersectionality' and 'environmentalism'. Of the archives that I received responses from (Black Cultural Archives, Women's Library at LSE, and Glasgow Women's Library), all of them confirmed that they either did not hold or were not aware of any material which contains the word 'intersectionality' which are also relevant to environmental organising. This is a finding in itself. The archive is as much what it is as what it isn't.

The first part of the research process included a systematic overview of the archives to see mentions of intersectionality, environment, or adjacent themes. Initially, though the archivists I contacted informed me that there was not likely any material containing the term 'intersectionality' *and* relevant to the environment/climate, I searched the terms 'intersectional', 'intersectionality', 'environment', as well as other relevant terms in the available catalogues for the archives I selected. As expected, my searches did not return any results that featured both 'intersectionality' and 'environment' or 'climate' in any of the archives. Most of the archives did not return any results for 'intersectional' or 'intersectionality' at all.

I thus conducted a systematic keyword search of relevant terms in the selected archives (Appendix B) to examine the material these searches returned. Examining the titles of collections and items in the archives, I selected those that indicated potential relevance to the environment and environmentalist mobilisation in particular. For example, a keyword search for 'intersectional' in the *gal*-dem archives returned an article about rap artist, Cardi B titled 'Cardi B: stripper hoe and feminist icon' (Francis, 2012), which talked about intersectionality – but this was not *relevant* to the environmental themes that I was looking for. The same keyword search returned an article titled 'Are Extinction Rebellion whitewashing climate justice?' (Cowan, 2019) which I identified as relevant to this study because of its explicit engagement with environmentalism, social movement organising, intersectionality, and climate justice. This meant adjusting the search terms several times to identify materials which simultaneously spoke to *both* Black feminist thought (intersectionality) as well as environmentalist mobilisation and/or related issues.

Where it was not possible to use the above method, I used a slightly slower, more manual method: I systematically studied the magazines held in the British Library's archival collection of *Spare Rib*, an important feminist periodical which ran from 1972 to 1993. Since a keyword search did not return any results on the British Library's website holdings of *Spare Rib*, I manually scanned all of the digitised images for the magazine on the website to identify thematic relevance. I procured all 239 editions of *Spare Rib* and manually scanned the front and content pages to identify relevance with themes. I also manually scanned the digital repositories of the online Green Women Everywhere archive and the Feminist Library Google Arts and Culture collection[16] to identify relevant themes.

The second part of the process involved interaction with the archival material itself. Once I identified the relevant archival material, I conducted content analysis in which I looked closely at the types of language and images in the material to identify whether and how they spoke to themes of intersectionality and ecology. As we saw in the previous chapter on methods, this study takes an overall inductive approach to analysis. Whilst the research questions frame what I am 'looking for' in the research process - the findings are built up from the data. There is no testing of a hypothesis as such. Rather, I seek to make meaning from the stories and experiences that make up the data in order to identify the key themes and overall findings (Vanover et al., 2021). This approach resonates with grounded theory – gathering data to develop theoretical insights derived directly from this data (Dey, 1999; Walker and Myrick, 2006).

Websites, social media, and online publications

The digital sphere is an increasingly useful and relevant space for social movement actors (Knappe and Lang, 2014; Williams, 2015, 2016; Veilleux and Parent, 2016; Mann, 2018; Pearson, 2020). A group's website or social media pages also often serve as an important entry point to their ideas and strategies to audiences of potential new group members, media actors, and to the wider public. Indeed, many social movement groups and organisations have a dedicated external communications team or individual whose job it is to manage a group's online presence. As such, the internet serves as a sort of rich digital archive, hosting websites and social media posts that provide insight into some of the inner workings, strategic goals, and practices of social movement groups and organisations.

This research makes use of various Britain based social movement groups' and organisations' websites, campaign literature, press releases/public statements, social media posts, and events postings as sources for content analysis, explored through an intersectional framework. It is challenging to choose

[16] Google Arts and Culture, The Feminist Library. Collections. https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/the-feminist-library. (Accessed May 25th, 2023)

what to analyse because there is so simply so much data flowing through digital spaces, especially on social media platforms; much of it ephemeral, especially given the ability for users to post and delete with great ease. Moreover, this data is curated for its audiences through selective algorithms, which makes it challenging to generalise or draw conclusions about the wider state of social media discourses (Peruzzi *et al.*, 2019). Nonetheless, several interviewees noted the importance of digital spaces and specifically social media in their organising. As such, these sources provide some useful insight into whether and how environmentalists explicitly engage with intersectionality.

Through close analysis of the sources' use of language and key themes which I identified throughout them, I was able to gain insight into whether and how environmentalists mobilised intersectional vocabularies (or some variant of them) in their materials. Such an analysis poses challenges because it is certainly possible to cite the language of intersectionality superficially. Put crudely, a group could describe itself as intersectional or engaging with intersectionality without any further reflection or action beyond such a declaration. Nonetheless, the sources provide the space to examine *how* intersectional language might be mobilised in the spaces in which it appears, and therefore, what this might reveal about the structures and strategies of social movement actors. But just as a group might be using the language of intersectionality without any genuine engagement with the framework at all, the absence of the word does not necessarily reveal a rejection of ideas which can be related strongly to the conceptual framework of intersectionality. Recognising this, I also used the source material to explore the extent and the nature of social movement actors' attention to human difference in environmentalist contexts at all. In doing so, I paid close attention to both the groups' framing processes (Benford and Snow, 2000), and their practical organising tools/strategies.

Party manifestoes

Since this research includes an exploration of the green parties of England and Wales, and Scotland, I also use political party manifestoes as a source for textual analysis. Focusing on environmentalist movements, I have included green parties within my analysis, as significant environmentalist actors in the selected case studies. Whilst these parties often employ more institutionalised strategies to advance their political claims and goals, as 'movement parties' (McAdam and Tarrow, 2010; Della Porta *et al.*, 2017), they play a significant role in influencing environmentalist discourses and politics (Barber, 2005; Carter, 2013). Given that the Green parties are minor parties which have never formed part of central government in the UK, I examine campaign promises and discourses in their party manifestoes as opposed to implemented policies. The analytical approach and process to the party manifestoes that I took largely mirrors my approach to the groups' online content outlined above. This means a largely textual analysis of the key themes and language threaded throughout party manifestoes from 1997 to

2019. The year 1997 marked a significant moment for many reasons, not least the end of eighteen consecutive years of Conservative rule. The 1997 general election saw the Conservative Party publish their first ever 'Green Manifesto,' and the post-victory promise of the Labour Party to become the 'greenest government yet' (Carter and Rootes, 2006). Though the GPEW's electoral returns remained dismal, the salience of environmental issues – which would only increase from 1997 onwards – speaks to 'some influence, albeit indirect, of the Green movement' (Barber, 2005, p. 179).

Indeed, tensions can exist between what parties promise in their campaigns and what comes to be delivered in government (Rose, 1984). Party promises made in manifestoes are not always fulfilled (Nakakita, 2016) but they can be and frequently are (Bara, 2005; Brouard *et al.*, 2018). This makes the documents important framings of policies parties hope to implement when elected to government. Moreover, the importance of manifestoes lies in their ability to raise awareness of specific issues and contribute to the framing of mediatic debates during and between election periods – this is especially true for smaller parties like the two green parties. Crucially, manifestoes can also influence the development of policy (Laver and Staff, 2001). Furthermore, manifestoes are often forged in ways that seek to appeal to specific groups within society, such as women (Childs, 2008) or disabled people (Evans, 2022). This is interesting from an intersectional perspective since the manifestoes shed light on how such groups are constructed, perceived, and responded to by environmentalist actors, especially given the ways that social groups can and do cut across each other.

6 Ethics

Many ethical considerations have cropped up throughout the duration of conducting this study, some of which have related to more practical concerns around activities such as data storage and informed consent, whilst others have provoked more challenging reflections on the politics of knowledge production. This section offers some of the many ongoing ethical considerations have been necessary to conduct this project in a safe, equitable, and ethical manner.

6.1.1 Safe participation and ethical approval

This project has passed the university's ethics approval process. In order to ensure the safe participation for all those involved in this research, as part of the ethical approval process, I have reflected on the necessity for informed consent, anonymisation, secure data storage, and COVID related adjustments. I have taken the necessary steps to ensure that the appropriate and relevant measures have been in place to ensure the safety and legality of this project at every stage. In practical terms, this means that before participating in this project, I provided each participant with a cover sheet detailing the project title and its broad contours as well as an informed consent form that confirmed that they were happy to participate in this project without any pressure.

All participants agreed to take part in this research on an anonymous basis. This means that any names referred to throughout this dissertation are pseudonyms which I randomly selected using an online automated name generator[17] and other information which could be used to identify participants in any quotes has been removed. Certainly, questions arise about the politics of knowledge production, authorship, and attribution, and even the *possibility* of anonymous research especially in the new digital era (Kelly, 2009; van der Velde, Williamson and Ogilvie, 2009; Tilley and Woodthorpe, 2011; Moore, 2012; Walford, 2018; Godfrey-Faussett, 2022). But anonymisation of research participants remains a strong ethical norm within social research; namely because it protects the privacy of the participant and supports a relationship of trust between researcher and participant. Anonymisation has been presented by some, though, as an 'ongoing working compromise' where data integrity must sometimes be sacrificed to ensure anonymity is respected, and vice versa (Saunders, Kitzinger and Kitzinger, 2015, p. 627). The process of anonymisation thus proves a careful and important balancing act. It requires researchers to honour our commitments to our research as well as to our research participants, many of whom we may hold important personal relationships with (Burkhard, 2021). At the suggestion of one of the research participants, I am engaging in continuing dialogue with interviewees about writing that includes quotes from them to ensure that they feel confident that they will not be identified from the quote.

Additionally, as I will explore in greater detail below, this research was conducted within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant that, at times, meeting physically in person was illegal. Even when meeting in person was legal, the threat of viral infection remained a live one. Certainly, this threat was, and continues to be, even more pronounced for those who either have underlying health conditions themselves or live with people who do, and/or those in precarious work who cannot afford to take time off to quarantine or are not able to work from home. In this context, the majority of my interviews were conducted online and the conversations which did take place in person were conducted outdoors.

6.1.2 *Researching in a pandemic: the digitalisation of social research*

Seeing as I first embarked on this project during a full-blown global pandemic, it would be impossible to avoid discussion of the difficulties that this newly challenging backdrop have brought with regards to method and methodology. In the context of a virus that thrives on human-to-human contact, the digital space has undoubtedly emerged as one of the most viable alternatives to in-person interaction. Of course, the increasing digitalisation of our everyday lives was taking place before the Coronavirus pandemic but it has vastly accelerated since early 2020 (De', Pandey and Pal, 2020; Hantrais *et al.*,

[17] Behind the Name. https://www.behindthename.com/random/ (Accessed 20 May 2023)

2021). Since then, we have needed to think more creatively about how to keep working and interacting whilst navigating and mitigating health risks. In immediate response to the blanket local and national lockdowns to which there has been no opt out choice, an impressive number of events and meetings which were previously conducted face to face were taken online. Despite the later easing of national and local restrictions, however, many organisations and individuals continue to meet online. Certainly, this has been my experience as an active member of the Green Party of England and Wales and the campaigning against fossil fuel sponsorship in galleries and museums which I have been part of.

The digitalisation of our lives has remoulded the temporal and spatial dimensions of research. At a few clicks of virtual buttons, I have been able to sign up for and attend Extinction Rebellion's activist training events, Green Party open seminars and committee meetings, as well as topical university hosted open lectures with live Q&As, all from the comfort of my living room. This barrage of information brings both opportunities and difficulties. The amount of information available on the internet can be simply overwhelming and ascertaining the utility and/or relevance of each webpage is challenging. Conversely, the increase in general digital activity caused by the pandemic has been, in many ways, useful for recruiting interview participants. For example, I have been able to attend activist events taking place on Zoom, and post calls for interest using the chat box function (with the permission of the event organisers, of course). The rise of internet organising has thus connected me to interview participants to whom I may not otherwise have been able to contact.

The internet has the potential to provide accessible platforms which democratise discourse, giving space to historically marginalised voices (Darroch, 2010; Veilleux and Parent, 2016; Miller, 2017; Sobande, Fearfull and Brownlie, 2020). Yet, many are still excluded from digital conversations. Some actively resist entering the digital space (Helsper, 2009) whilst others may lack access to the skills or resources necessary to get online. Barriers to the online sphere, whether self-imposed or not, can be strongly linked to factors such as geography, age, and/or social class (Gebremichael and Jackson, 2006; Hargittai and Hinnant, 2008; van Deursen, van Dijk and Peters, 2011; Seah, 2020); elements which are frequently linked to wider existing social inequalities.

In my case, access to a personal laptop device and a relatively strong, reliable home internet has given me the possibility to engage digitally, as I imagine is the case for a majority of the other participants in the online activities and interviews I have attended/arranged. I emphasise this to illustrate that the demographic makeup of those attending the online activities with which I have engaged will have been skewed by participants' access to digital skills and resources. In my email invitations to potential interviewees, I offered telephone calls as an alternative format and encouraged participants to inform

me on how I could make calls accessible to them. Nonetheless, I recognise that my sample does not include people who would not have had the resources to receive my email invitations in the first place.

Sampling is not the only challenge that interviewing online presents. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, qualitative researchers have begun to reflect on what it means to conduct synchronous interviews online using platforms such as Zoom (e.g., Archibald *et al.*, 2019; Gray *et al.*, 2020; Oliffe *et al.*, 2021; Chia and Chew, 2022; Howlett, 2022; Kostas, 2022). The internet differently configures the spatiality and temporality of human interaction, and how it shapes the nature, quality, and depth of our interactions. Conversations are affected, for example, when there is a time lag in the broadband connection meaning that conversation partners repeatedly end up speaking over each other. Traditional speaking cues, such as an intake of breath before speaking, are not always perceptible via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Sometimes participants have to turn their cameras off because of internet bandwidth.

But for those who do have access to the internet, online interviewing can offer the benefits of 'convenience, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and flexibility' (Archibald *et al.*, 2019, p. 2). It enables in-time communication across different geographical spaces and also has the capacity to reduce participant burden, as an interaction that take place from the comfort of one's own home without safety concerns (Oliffe *et al.*, 2021). It is clear that interviewing online poses many challenges for qualitative researchers. Nevertheless, the increasing significance of these online meeting platforms in many parts of our lives – and not just within research – clearly points to some advantages and opportunities of these communication technologies.

7 Reflexivity

Although Patricia Hill Collins and Donna Haraway provide us with differing insights into the way that situatedness informs the ways that we understand ourselves and each other, they both point towards a common ground. That is, everybody has a standpoint, and everybody is situated somewhere. These 'somewheres' are simultaneously informed by the local, which is, in turn, shaped by the global and historical. Because of the 'lumpiness' of these global, historical forces (Cooper, 2001), each standpoint manifests in different ways according to the ways that privilege and marginality shapes one's proximity to power. This has multiple consequences for thinking about research more widely as well as what exactly our obligations as researchers are in conducting ethical and rigorous research. I echo qualitative researchers who have stressed the importance of reflexivity to both ethical and rigorous research for it can 'help researchers explore how their theoretical positions and biographies shape what they choose to be studied and the approach to studying it. Reflexivity is also a communal process that requires attentiveness to how the structural, political, and cultural environments of the researcher, the

participants, and the nature of the study affect the research process and product' (Hesse-Biber, 2012, p. 496).

7.1.1 Between researcher and researched: knowledge as coproduced

I ground this research in its specific context as a *situated knowledge* (Haraway, 1988). To do so, I draw upon some of the questions proposed by Linda Tuhiwai Smith in *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999). She insists that we ask of ourselves and our research: 'Whose research is it? Who owns it? Whose interests does it serve? Who will benefit from it? Who has designed its questions and framed its scope? Who will carry it out? Who will write it up? How will its results be disseminated?' (1999: 10). Though these questions are originally posed with a view to interrogating research on/with Indigenous communities in Aotearoa, these questions have informed many different types of studies, including within political studies (Kral, 2014; Michelitch, 2018; Sherwin, 2022). The questions encourage us to reflect on the role we play as researchers, not only within the academic discipline of political studies or amongst those who participate in our research, but also within a wider social setting where the knowledge we create has the potential to shape power relations.

As the questions above point to, ethical social research requires a reflection on the traditional binary opposition set up in academic practices between 'researcher' and 'researched,' a binary which carries significant historical baggage. The history of this binary reverberates everywhere within the academy – as we see, for example, on the official crest of my own alma mater, SOAS, University of London: 'Knowledge is Power.' SOAS was explicitly founded to assist the British colonial-imperial project by training colonial administrators in the languages of colonised peoples as a means to controlling them (Brown, 2016). SOAS's specific origin story does not reflect the histories of all universities in the UK or other former European colonial powers. But it does speak to wider colonial entanglements between European modernity and Western academia (Bennett 2007) from which white, often wealthy, Europeans journeyed to 'exotic' lands and faraway colonies to subject Indigenous peoples to invasive observation and violent experimentation (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Not only has the act of research often been an act of violence in its method, its 'output' has often been violent too, serving the needs of colonial violence and subjugation (Said, 2003; Spivak, 2012).

For those of us invested in diffusing the power of the 'ivory tower,' this troubling history of academia prompts deep contemplations on how to set up the terms of our research in the most horizontal and non-extractive manner possible. This is particularly pertinent when it comes to social movement studies, especially where the researcher's academic work is somewhat fused to a normative commitment to the goals of the social movement being studied. Yet, the extent and the nature of overlap

between academia and activism remain hotly contested (Croteau, Hoynes and Ryan, 2005; Flood, Martin and Dreher, 2013; Choudry, 2014, 2020; Russell, 2015; Wells, 2018; Baird, 2020; Pillay, 2020). Nonetheless, many have asserted that both knowledge and change can be produced by both activists and academics[18], whether respectively or in partnership with each other (Arribas Lozano, 2018). Within environmentalist and climate movements, there is a significant historical relationship between activists and researchers co-producing both social movement and environmental sciences scholarship. This is especially true of the environmental justice movements in the US, to the extent that activist-academic relationships are considered to form the foundations of EJ scholarship in particular (Schlosberg, 2013). Though I do not situate this thesis within the body of (the often US-specific) EJ scholarship, it is heavily inspired by the emphasis EJ scholarship places on co-production and reciprocity.

Exploring how climate science knowledge is produced, Alison M. Meadow *et al.* (2015) offer a view from which three general principles of coproduction can be extracted: (1) underlining the value of constructing long-term relationships between researchers and other stakeholders, (2) assuring a two-or-more-way stream of communication amongst those involved in the researcher, and (3) focusing on producing knowledge that has value and is 'useful' for everyone. By emphasising the value of collaboration, coproduction, and reciprocity to social research, the traditional separation between 'researcher' and 'researched' is challenged. Moreover, such collaborative models are desirable for a move beyond extractive and traditionally hierarchical methods of academic investigation. This means thinking not only about the process of the research as an ethical, beneficial experience for all of those practically involved but also, the epistemic implications of foregrounding collaboration. That is to say, a recognition of the variety of spaces, places, and ways in which knowledge can be produced both within and beyond academia (Choudry, 2014, 2020).

To move towards an understanding of knowledge as coproduced, I think about this research as a collaborative project with multiple voices feeding into the knowledge produced as part of this project, whether through archives, semi-structured interviews, online and print publications, engagement with wider scholarship, or even passing conversations with friends and acquaintances. This is not to excuse myself from taking responsibility as the author of this dissertation, for which I accept full responsibility as it stands. Rather, the project aims to value collaboration and a dynamic engagement with a range of knowledges and wisdom which both include and go beyond formats that are traditionally recognised as (legitimate) knowledge (Collins, 1989; Choudry, 2020). This attention to finding and creating

[18] Of course, I recognise that many people are both of these things!

opportunities for participation and collaboration with the social movements which I am researching forms part of an approach where,

> [c]ollaboration means shifting from working on social movements to working and thinking together with social movement activists as co-researchers. Working with social movements requires considering research subjects as active agents of knowledge production, taking their epistemic and political locations, their questions and concerns, as well as their reflexivity and expertise – not solely academic interests or disciplinary considerations – as the departure point for research. The goal is to produce knowledge meaningful in scholarly terms, advancing our understanding of contemporary collective action, as well as relevant for the activist groups, so that they can use it as they see fit in the struggles they are involved in. (Arribas Lozano, 2018, p. 455)

In order to achieve this collaborative move towards co-producing knowledge, this research draws on some of the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR) which is an approach that aims to reduce inequality in research processes whilst driving social change through the knowledge it produces. Whilst widely used in disciplines such as development studies (e.g., Boothroyd, Fawcett and Foster-Fishman, 2004; Kindon, Pain and Kesby, 2007; Swantz, 2008; Keahey, 2021) and health studies (e.g., Wang, 1999; Baum, MacDougall and Smith, 2006; Koch and Kralik, 2009; Felner, 2020), PAR is still a relatively under-utilised approach in politics research. PAR intends to cultivate 'the development of equitable, mutually beneficial academic–community collaborations' (Felner, 2020, p. 549) and seeks to craft this mutually beneficial relationship by firmly planting the key questions and 'findings' of research within the needs and interests of the communities where the research is conducted. It emphasises a desire to resist traditions of extractive models of research which hastily mine participants for citable quotes and insights merely for the sake of career-inducing publication (Michelitch, 2018).

PAR pushes back against traditional binary models which separate the 'knower' from the 'known' and reify the subject/object divide. But it must be approached – as with any methodological framework – carefully and critically (Felner, 2020). For those engaged in PAR or PAR-adjacent work, the research encounter is rarely singular. It is characterised by a continued communicative process in which the researcher and participants are constantly engaged in dialogues about the key concerns of the research whilst iteratively moulding it in such a way that it becomes of 'use' to all involved (Maiter *et al.*, 2008). From this view, I embed my methods in a model of exchange where I seek to engage in these conversations with research participants about the ways in which I can contribute directly to the activists projects that they are engaged in. Given that this project is not a PAR study but rather draws from PAR's principles, several key considerations emerged from the specific context of embedding an ethic of reciprocity and collaboration into my research on environmentalist social movements and intersectionality in Britain. How do you measure and effect reciprocity? Must it take place on an individual-to-individual basis? How can we navigate the tensions that the time and resources available

to the researcher pose? What happens where the researcher's own normative commitments are not fully compatible with the research participants'?

One of the main challenges is the constantly shifting dynamic of power between researchers and the people that we encounter during research. Researchers do not necessarily assume static positions of power vis-à-vis the participant, especially if we take into account the interactions between the *visible identities* (Alcoff, 2005) which already always frame the research interaction. For the most part, the PAR literature appears to assume that power lies almost exclusively with the researcher for which they are responsible for diffusing more equitably in the research processes. This is very valuable, given that much of the PAR literature is concerned with research that takes place in marginalised communities where the power imbalance between the researcher and the community members is extremely palpable. But an assumption that power always or mostly lies with the researcher produced methodological blind spots for me, as I began to conduct this research.

Prior to one of the earlier interviews conducted for this study, I had not foreseen the potential for the participant to exercise his own power. I was left in an uncomfortable position where I felt torn between collaborating with a (white, male) participant on one of his environmentalist projects in order to help improve his group's diversity optics and honouring my commitments to research based on reciprocity and exchange. This encounter highlighted some of the complexities of doing such research since no two research encounters are ever the same and the positionalities of every participant in the research are significant, including the researcher; a stark reminder that '[r]eciprocity requires reflexivity' (Maiter *et al.*, 2008, p. 321).

Such experiences demand a return to the fundamental reasoning and normative logic of PAR as a mode of social research: flattening out the power hierarchies which frame researchers' engagements with people from marginalised and 'over-researched' communities; moving beyond extractive or exploitative models of doing academic research. With specific regard to what this means for this study as being framed by an ethic of reciprocity, though, reciprocity and/or exchange needs to be considered within its specific context. It looks different in different times and different spaces. Reciprocity thus takes the form of an invitation to think together about what it might mean to collaborate together beyond the duration of the interview – a question I posed to some participants throughout this study.

7.1.2 Navel-gazing? Notes on researcher reflexivity

If theory is always for someone and for some purpose (Cox, 1981), then it is also 'always produced from a specific standpoint, a specific place within society' (Deschner *et al.*, 2020, p. 219). Feminist standpoint epistemologies therefore situate producers of knowledge within their explicit social, cultural,

and political location. Not only is the knowledge itself shaped substantively by the knower's standpoint, but so too is their epistemic authority and therefore the perceived legitimacy of their claims (Janack, 1997). Hence, feminist standpoint epistemologies call attention to the ways in which some standpoints are subject to marginalisation and academic disregard, arguing for the active inclusion of and engagement with these standpoints in academic and political discourse (Collins, 1989; Harding, 2004; hooks, 2014). This does not, however, compromise the rigour of the research. Qualitative research which is situated and embedded in reflexivity can provide important contextual information; rich insight into assumptions, choices, and behaviours; and a thoughtful recognition of the ways that findings are produced *through* the interactive process of undertaking research (rather than through 'objective observation' of a singular truth) (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

If knowledge is shaped by standpoints, it is also true that some particular standpoints have been historically marginalised, silenced, and excluded from political studies and other disciplines (Collins, 1989). Black feminist thought seeks to redress this by asserting the value and significance of interrogating and theorising from these marginalised standpoints (Simien, 2006). They yield unique insights about the social world which have hitherto been excluded from mainstream social sciences. They should be accounted for. At the same time, scholars also warn against the uncritical romanticisation of these (heterogenous) marginalised standpoints (Bar On, 1993) which, rather than being intrinsic or essential, are constructed. Marginalised standpoints – like any standpoints – are 'not exempt from critical reexamination, decoding, deconstruction, and interpretation,' since the 'standpoints of the subjugated are not "innocent" positions' (Haraway, 1988, p. 584). Certainly, those of marginalised positionalities can exhibit views which reflect values from dominant cultures which are hostile to themselves and their communities, such as heterosexism, racism, ableism, and so on (Freire, 1970; Pierotti and Wildcat, 1997; Fanon, 2001; Capodilupo, 2017; Memmi, 2021). Whilst it is essential that marginality is embraced as a generative space from which to produce counterhegemonic theory (hooks, 2014), this should be done with critical care.

Though some standpoints are marginalised, power is not static (Foucault, 1977), and we can sometimes find ourselves exercising power in some contexts but not in others (Collins, 1986, 1989). Since standpoints are constructed to have certain social meanings in structural contexts, our locations within various configurations of power can shift based on context. I write these words as a body which is gendered, racialised, and classed in particular ways – specifically, as an Afro-Asian woman of working-class origin. As such, I carry with me the baggage of experiencing heterosexism, racism, classism, *etcetera*. But I also write from the spatial context of one of the wealthiest countries in the world: England, UK. Having been born and growing up here means that I would have consumed

approximately fifteen times more material resources than if I had been born in a country in the Global South (Salleh, 1993, p. 232)[19]. This kind of detail contextualises my approach to climate issues against the background of a relative lack of experiential encounters with the climate crisis as yet. So, there are multiple layers to thinking about standpoint epistemologies, especially when adopting an intersectional approach. Examining and reflecting upon the standpoints of those producing knowledge, whether as activists or researchers or both, is thus messy work. Standpoints and their meanings are continuously being constructed and altered based on shifts in time and space, but recognising the settings from which we think, know, and speak is important nonetheless, for we cannot divorce what we know from the location at which we come to know it.

8 Case study selection

As transnational movement building and knowledge exchange intensifies (della Porta, 2002), it is increasingly vital to place analyses of national contexts within global perspectives. From this perspective, this section of the chapter builds on the work of the literature review of the previous chapter which places this research on Britain within a wider global context. It does so from a more explicitly methodological perspective, laying out the reasoning behind selecting Britain as the principal case study for this research in the first place – and thinking through what this case study selection offers to the relevant existing literatures.

The previous chapter provided a review of the literature on intersectionality and showed that there is a significant body of literature which examines ecological organising in Southern countries. Southern movements have organised in ways that illuminate and respond to the exploitation, damage, and disregard for forms of human and more-than-human life. Amongst this scholarship, cases which have succeeded in capturing the attention of these scholars include the women's Chipko forest conservation movement in India (e.g., Warren and Erkal, 1997; Sturgeon, 1999; Warren, 2000; Salman and Iqbal, 2007; Dechamma, 2009; Gaard, 2011; Pandey, 2013; Shiva and Mies, 2014) and the Green Belt Movement for environmental conservation in Kenya (e.g., Ruether, 1997, 2004; Muthuki, 2006; Salman and Iqbal, 2007; Boyer-Rechlin, 2010; Hunt, 2014; Carroll, 2015) in particular, with both movements peaking in activity during the 1970s. Using this scholarship as a foundation, this project explores similar themes and issues, but is undertaken in Britain.

[19] Of course, there are disparities *within* the UK amongst households of different income/social class as regards carbon emissions/resource consumption. A paper commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation did conclude that 'emissions are strongly correlated with income and that in general lower income, more vulnerable households tend to have lower than average CO2 emissions' (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2013, p. 1).

Other parts of the literature focus on North America. They pay particular attention to the environmental justice movements built by racialised communities in the US and Canada (Cole and Foster, 2001; Debbané and Keil, 2004; Harter, 2004; Haluza-Delay, 2007; Mascarenhas, 2007; Agyeman *et al.*, 2010; Anguiano *et al.*, 2012; Schlosberg, 2013; Carter, 2016; Animashaun Ducre, 2018). EJ scholars and activists developed the term 'environmental racism' and make use of juridical frameworks and vocabularies to illustrate and resist the racial contours of environmental inequities (e.g., Cutter, 1995; Sturgeon, 1996; Bullard, 1999; Pulido, 2000; Holifield, 2001b; Checker, 2008; Di Chiro, 2008). Compared to the literature on the US and its EJ movements, there is a relatively limited literature which explores relationships of power, domination, human (as part of ecological) exploitation, and intersectionality in European environmentalist movements. This, of course, is true for Britain in particular.

This project thus aims to unsettle some of the tendencies for the dominant streams of scholarship to concentrate excessively on the US as a representative case for the Global North, whilst highlighting the erasure of the global majority communities which form a vibrant component of European environmentalism. The erasures of these individuals and communities reflect a wider tradition of excluding certain (racially defined) groups from dominant narratives about Europe as idea/identity (Hall, 1991; Gilroy, 1993, 1999; Benson and Lewis, 2019). Taking a Black feminist approach to environmentalism and intersectionality in Britain, this moves to embed a Black feminist politic into environmentalist praxis by taking on a case study analysis of Britain.

I emphasise the need to diversify the geographies of intersectional (and) ecological knowledge beyond the US and have thus thought carefully about the challenges of writing and researching intersectionally within a paradigm in which that space holds cultural and intellectual hegemony worldwide. Navigating this paradigm is a careful dance, as we learn to move sensitively through spaces that extend beyond the US, moving to displace its centrality in the production of knowledge; all whilst taking care not to erase opportunities for deep learning that a transatlantic conversation can offer us. In the context of intersectional research and praxis, the exchange of knowledge and ideas across the Atlantic is fruitful and enables us to continue building on counterhegemonic ideas on multiple scales which incorporate both local and global perspectives (Gilroy, 1993); an approach which also mirrors the local and global character of climate and environmental crises.

8.1.1 Selecting and situating Britain as case study

There are several reasons for which to think about the themes of ecology, social movement organising, and intersectionality in Britain.

By thinking through and about intersectionality in this study, I implicitly examine what it means to 'travel' the concept across different contexts. Thinking about intersectionality in Britain is an opportunity to explore intersectionality beyond the associations it normally has with Black feminisms led by African-American women and other minoritised genders in the US – which, as key forces in the development of intersectionality, should remain actively present but not exclusive in our intersectional imaginaries. The 'travelling' that I am interested in gives us an opportunity to consider how intersectionality can be understood beyond feminism (read: environmentalism) as well as beyond the borders of the US (in Europe). Britain, in particular, provides an interesting place from which to think about this. In the context of this thesis, this is not only because I am British, and educated in Britain. But because of the vehement denial of ideas from the US as an alien invasive species; a term I borrow as a metaphor from the natural sciences. In ecology, a species (often of a plant) is designated an alien invasive species when it has been introduced by humans into one region or country from another, damaging and threatening an existing 'native' ecosystem. However, ethnobotanists have challenged the definition and usage of this idea, questioning whether 'alien invasive species' are as common as represented, or whether they are generally fundamentally dangerous or detrimental to 'native' ecosystems at all (Thompson, Hodgson and Rich, 1995; Thompson and Davis, 2011).

As the previous chapter which reviewed the literature on intersectionality showed us, the idea that intersectionality is an alien invasive species in Europe has emerged in parts of our continent including Britain and neighbouring countries like France (Le Dem, 2017) – and is one that European Black feminists and Afro-feminists are working to resist ('Penser l'intersectionnalité avec Mame-Fatou Niang', 2020). My focus on Britain is a contribution to this resistance. It is an affirmation that to deny the relevance of intersectionality in Europe, and more specifically in Britain, by casting it as an idea from and for the US is to deny the primal ringing of race, class, and gender across our continent as the place at which racial capitalism unfolded into being (Robinson, 2000; Césaire, 2004).

Britain lends itself as an interesting case study for this research because of its historical and contemporary profile as a site which is home to an incredibly vibrant and active scene of environmentalist organising. Indeed, Britain is where Extinction Rebellion (XR) was founded, one of the largest and most well-known networks of environmentalists which has now reached a global scale. But, of course, XR is not the only highly visible component of the environmentalist movement in Britain. The country has seen very active grassroots organising around environmental issues for over a century and has also played significant roles at the state level in the international realm of environmental and climate politics.

Five years after the landmark COP21 which was held in Paris, the UK hosted the COP26 in Glasgow. The hosting of this international event in Britain attracted a large wave of protest and grassroots organising in various parts of the country. This included a protest march and various offshoots of organising (which I took part in) on the Global Day of Action (6 Nov 2021) by an alliance of social movement groups (Wretched of the Earth, Stop the Maangamizi, London Renters Union, No More Exclusions, Platform, Tipping Point, Decolonising Economics, Land in Our Names, Black Lives Matter UK, Migrants Organise, Disabled People Against Cuts, Women of Colour in the Global Women's Strike, BP or Not BP?, Revoke, Brazil Matters, Feminist Assembly of Latin America, XR Unify for Racial, Social, and Climate Justice, The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, South Asia Solidarity Group, Anti Oppression Circle, Feed Back, and Revolutionary Reparations) who form the Climate Reparations Bloc. Such instances of cross-movement mobilisation speak directly to the themes and findings of this research. And we should note, too, that Britain has seen vibrant and dynamic organising from feminists, anti-racists and anti-imperialists, trade unionists and those fighting for workers' rights, disability rights activists – many of whom are and have been internationalists in their approaches. The British context thus invites us to examine the links and chasms amongst a variety of groups and movements – whose organising has been well documented in numerous archives. The following chapter excavates these relationships in further detail by presenting findings from research at various archives.

9 Coda

In this chapter, I have shown that the research presented here is fundamentally underpinned by concepts, ideas, and courage drawn from Black, Southern, and Indigenous feminisms, among other feminisms (Collins, 1989, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Patterson *et al.*, 2016; Ahmed, 2017; Burkhard, 2019). I have outlined the ethical and epistemological groundings of this research in Black feminist thought and justified the qualitative methodological approach it takes. My research, which takes a qualitative approach, is oriented towards understanding, interpretation, and meaning making in a specific context. It is explicitly normative and highly contextualised; and I have argued that this does not compromise its reliability or value. This study seeks to contribute to theory building and meaning interpretation; it contributes to developing ecological praxis grounded in Black feminist frameworks while reflecting on what it *means* to do so from an intersectional basis. I have surveyed the methods employed to collect data (semi-structured interviews, participant observation, content analysis) and explained how sampling, recruitment, data selection, and data analysis were conducted. Moreover, I justified the selection of the case study and began to discuss the importance of historicising this case – which I achieve using archival research.

As I have noted, Britain is a space within which conversations about the climate and environment are being actively undertaken at various levels in society today. And, indeed, there is a strong history of environmentalism and environmentalist social movements in Britain (Grove, 1990; Pincetl, 1993; Seel, Paterson and Doherty, 2000; Dryzek, 2003; Locher, Quenet and Bishop, 2009; Armiero and Sedrez, 2014; Prendiville, 2014). This history is important for understanding the roots and routes of environmentalist ideas and strategies – from conservation to climate justice as ideas that materialise and shift in specific spatial and temporal circumstances. From this perspective, using archival material and other historical documentation, the following chapter examines some of the continuities and gaps amongst environmentalist and social justice movements in Britain over time. It plunges into an exploration of historical approaches to social and ecological issues, tracing intersectionality, solidaristic organising, and wider questions of visibility and/or erasure in terms of which types of environmentalism and environmentalists even come to be documented.

Chapter 3. Environmentalist histories and intersectional trajectories

The modern environmentalist movement in Britain is a relatively new social movement, really taking hold in the period following the Second World War. That said, scholars have traced some of the theoretical and ideological origins of the movement far beyond the last century (Grove, 1990). There is an interesting body of scholarship that examines the ways in which British imperialism both gave birth to and was justified by nascent forms of environmentalism. Taking this historical perspective, we are able to see that environmental questions have long contained questions relating to humans: about articulations of power through categories like race, gender, class, and so on. Thinking about intersectionality, then, in the context of environmentalism requires that we fully understand how tensions around these issues have manifested and continue to develop. With this in mind, this chapter lingers on some of the environmentalist histories that precede our current moment, embedding today's movements in a wider context. This tracing of historical narratives helps us to clarify the context and parameters of the movement which is being studied in this thesis.

Though it was conspicuous in its absence *as a term* in the archives, intersectionality is not a new *idea* to the feminist or anti-racist organising with which we most commonly associate it. Nor is it new to environmentalism. The material studied here demonstrates an acute awareness of feminists, anti-racists, and environmentalists in Britain to issues around white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy – as they relate to the organisation of internal group dynamics amongst various social movement organisations, as well as the *types* of organising that groups engage in. Some of the criticisms levelled against groups like Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) in the archival material resonate very strongly with critiques of contemporary groups like XR, indicating that the issues faced by the environmentalist movement in relation to intersectionality remain live. today.

The first half of this chapter takes a more general historical approach to thinking about modern environmentalism in Britain. Drawing on a wide range of scholarship that documents and analyses different aspects of British environmentalism across time. The history of environmentalist organising in Britain is often designated into three key periods: from the mid-nineteenth century until 1960, from 1960 to the late '80s, and from the 1990s to the present (Thiele, 1999; Prendiville, 2020; Saunders, 2020). Whilst I spend some time reflecting on the nineteenth century (and even older) roots of environmentalism in my discussion of imperialist conservation efforts and green imperialism, this chapter directs more attention to the post-WWII moment which has often been described as the moment at which the *modern* environmentalist movement emerges. The history preceding 1945 is not to be disregarded (and is thus discussed in this chapter); today's organising directly inherits ideas and

concepts from forms of environmentalism preceding 1945. However, my focus on the theories and literature around *new social movements* (detailed below) means that I dedicate more space to the discussion of historical environmentalism from the mid-twentieth century onwards, when it can be understood as a 'new social movement'. From this perspective, I focus on three more recent periods to read the development of environmentalism with reference to intersectionality: (1) 1945 – 1959, (2) 1960 – 1979, and (3) 1980 to the present day. The first period follows the changing conditions that framed environmental issues and organising in Britain following WWII. The second period characterises the emergence of more radical approaches to environmentalism as the movement emerges as a 'new' social movement. And the third period follows the emergence of direct action and changing priorities for environmentalists.

The borders of a movement are always murky – social movement actors can and often do operate within and across several movements which we consider to be discrete for purely analytical reasons. By examining some of the historical roots and routes of the parts of the movement which are relevant to the discussion, how environmentalisms are defined in this thesis becomes clearer. This first half of the chapter is thus dedicated to examining the broader historical context for the emergence of the modern environmental movement and, specifically, its relationship with questions relating to power, inequality, and intersectionality.

The second half of this chapter takes a slightly different historical approach by bringing the key research questions of the thesis into some archives: The Women's Library at the London School of Economics, Glasgow Women's Library, the Black Cultural Archives, the Greenham Women Everywhere digital archive, the Feminist Library, and the archives for *Spare Rib* and *gal-dem*. By looking to these archives, I ask how intersectionality does or does not manifest across time and place – exploring the connections and tensions between current and historical forms of environmentalism. I selected these archives as spaces from which to identify and explore the overlaps and gaps across environmentalist and other forms of social movement organising which speak to intersectionality across time. Additionally, it seems that, materially, the archives documenting women's, disability rights, LGBTQIA+, and anti-racist organising are more readily available than those dedicated to environmental organising.

3.1 Environmentalism's imperialist roots

Although environmental issues have arguably become more urgent in recent decades, environmentalist ideas are by no means particular to our time. For example, Mohd Yaseen Gada (2014) has traced back eco-ethical principles to as far back as the seventh century with environmental readings of the Koran. Others have examined the role of environmental discourses in European imperial endeavours as violent

expansion was undertaken under the guise of 'saving' and 'protecting' natural lands from its Indigenous human stewards (Nelson, 2003; Crosby, 2004; Ferdinand, 2019). Whilst historical environmentalisms are of great relevance to this study, the birth of the modern environmentalist movement as we know it today is often situated within the more recent context of the post-WWII period (della Porta and Diani, 2009). Therefore, I focus here largely on the twentieth century moment at which the foundations for this 'new social movement' were laid in the European context. But first, a note on the deeper imperial roots of the modern environmentalist movement. As I mentioned above, the environmentalist movement carries a strong heritage which stretches as far back as the nineteenth, and even seventeenth, centuries (Prendiville, 2020), in association with the development of modern European imperialism and colonialism.

It is often difficult to identify an exact moment in time as the point of origination for a social movement. That said, many have traced the movement's history back through the legacies of colonial and imperial conquest abroad as mentioned above. The intellectual and political foundation and manifestation of these projects are therefore deeply implicated with the politics of race, class, gender, disability, climate, and environment, amongst other issues. And so, to forge a fuller understanding of the themes framing this thesis, we should keep in mind the environmentalist interlinkages and historical connections to British imperialism and colonialism. Acknowledging these imperial roots supports our understanding of the contemporary routes and issues at stake in this study of modern environmentalism in Britain today.

Richard Grove's extensive body of work has illustrated the extent to which contemporary concerns about the environment are rooted in earlier conceptualisations of ecology that stretch back beyond the previous century into the period of emergent modern British imperialism (1990, p. 47). Not only have scientists been aware of the detrimental ecological impacts of colonial endeavours for a very long time (Grove, 2002), but practices of 'green imperialism' (Grove, 2010) were also being developed in the form of the conservationist movement. We should note that there remains a clear distinction between the early conservation movement and the modern environmentalist movement – but the two movements hold a meaningful relationship in many contexts, including in Britain[20]. Firstly, environmentalism can be understood as emerging *out of* conservationism historically. And, in the contemporary context, not all

[20] As Stewart Udall notes in the film *Earth Days* (PBS, 2009), 'the environmental movement that grew out of Rachel Carson's book was built on the foundation of the conservation movement. […] The environmental movement enlarged the conservation movement. It enlarged it beyond concern for the management of the United States resources to the future of the planet itself.' Stewart Udall was a politician and federal government official in the state of the US who served as Secretary of the Interior from 1961 to 1969, under John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. Udall was an extremely influential figure within environmentalist organising in the US. He played a significant role in enacting a number of domestic environmental laws and oversaw the expansion of the number of national parks in the US.

environmentalists are conservationists – but, arguably, all conservationists are environmentalists. Conservationist practices and ideas remain at the historical foundation and contemporary heart of some of Britain's largest organisations active on environmental issues. We can think of organisations like the National Trust (founded in 1895) which is the biggest conservation charity in Europe, with 5.37 million members, more than 50,000 volunteers, and 10,000 staff (National Trust, no date). Similar organisations include the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (founded in 1889), and the more recently established Woodland Trust (founded 1972).

Earlier (and to some extent, contemporary) conservationist practices were heavily preoccupied with the aesthetic of 'nature' and the protection of more-than-human life (Grove, 2002, p. 54). These practices were supported domestically, and exported abroad by white Europeans invested in the protection of 'untouched' wildernesses, 'Edens,' and 'authentic' natural 'paradises' (Pincetl, 1993; Grove, 2010, 2017; Ross, 2015; Kelly, 2023) in the lands that they were colonising. These lands were mythologised as places of natural purity beyond Europe's borders, at a time of industrialisation in Europe. However, these nature-based imaginaries relied on an abstract conceptualisation and idealisation of places *without* their human inhabitants, who were violently racialised, and whose Indigenous ways of life devalued. This disregard was central to green imperialist practice and ideology. The deleterious effects of these ideas and practices materialised in places like North America, India, and across Africa, with the forced displacement, cultural dispossession, and impoverishment of local communities by European conservationists who justified their actions under the guise of protecting so-called wilderness and nature (Ross, 2015). Once these communities were displaced, green imperialists transformed the spaces which these communities once called home into national parks and projects for conservation (Nelson, 2003, p. 65).

An intersectional approach to environmental issues is evidently totally incompatible with the concerns and interests of colonial environmentalism or conservationism. But acknowledging the colonial and imperial roots of the movement indicates how deeply environmentalism is tied up in issues of race, gender, class – though these interlinkages have not always historically been foregrounded in the types of environmentalism being advanced in Britain, particularly in the immediate post-WWII moment.

3.1.1 Prelude to a new social movement (1945 – 1959)

The 1960s are a period often cited as the key moment at which the modern environmentalist movement and its politics are born as a *new* social movement (Touraine, 1978; McCormick, 1995; della Porta and Diani, 2009). Whilst this is a turning point for the development of environmental politics, it is necessary to understand the periods preceding this decade as I have demonstrated briefly in the discussion on green imperialism above (Beeman, 1995; Giugni, 1998; Sims, 2016). Let us now turn our attention to the

post-war period from 1945 – 1959 as a period in Britain where the more immediate political and intellectual ancestors of environmentalism as a new social movement were being laid.

In the 1950s, England saw a series of domestic incidents which would come to shape the terms of the environmental debate both in and outside of formal British politics. In a particularly striking incident in 1952, the 'Great Smog of London' choked the capital with a lethal black smog for five days. The smog was caused by a mixture of coal powered industrial pollution and unfavourable weather conditions. Indeed, London smog was nothing new. The 1952 incident, however, is considered to have been 'one of the worst air-pollution events in the history of the UK' (Akyüz, 2021, p. 219) during which the smog was so thick that in parts of central London, people could not even see their own feet (Chauhan and Johnston, 2003). Aprpxoimately between 4,000 and 12,000 people died as a direct result of the smog (Bell and Davis, 2001; Mosley, 2014). The severity of the Great Smog, and other such events, thus helped to define the 1950s as a period in which environmental crisis was recognised as a particularly fatal threat to human beings (Akyüz, 2021, p. 219).

This period thus marked the beginning of an increased consciousness which would only swell in the following decades, leading to government action on such issues in numerous countries and the largest ever mobilisations on the issue in the twenty-first century. This period was important for framing the action and debate to come in the following decades. At this time in Britain, the political landscape was shifting dramatically: the state was taking on a greater role in managing the 'environment' which took hold as a relevant concept in matters of governance (Sims, 2016, p. 34). In 1956, for example, following the Great Smog, the Clean Air Act was introduced. Environmental issues had taken a new foothold within the realm of institutionalised politics. Moreover, there was a transformation of environmental discourses from a conservationism concerned with a 'nature' external to humans and humanity towards a more anthropocentric account which privileged the health and wellbeing of humans (newly conceived as rights pertaining to individuals and duties of the state). Indeed, the immediate post-war period heralded a new era in which environmental issues would play a greater role in shaping public debates and even entertainment. The language of justice and injustice, however, had not yet been integrated into this connection of environmental issues with public health and would not yet be for a while into the history of the environmental movement. Certainly, this was not the case in mediatised discourses in which the 'natural' environment (and environmental issues) figured as sources of entertainment.

The post-war mediatisation of environmental issues

The immediate post-war period heralded a new era in which intense mediatisation started to play a larger role in daily life. In the 1950s, British broadcasters began to show a number of popular environmentally themed television programmes, particularly nature and travel documentaries which

allowed audiences to see and engage with natural environments from their homes for the first time (Attenborough, 2020).

Still popular today, such television programmes and films are thought to increase public environmental consciousness (Janpol and Dilts, 2016; Bondi *et al.*, 2020; Hynes *et al.*, 2020; Onyekuru *et al.*, 2020), although they do not necessarily directly result in pro-environmental behaviours or mobilisation (Shanahan, Morgan and Stenbjerre, 1997; Bonner, 2020). The documentaries of the '50s simultaneously redefined notions of geographical space and nature, as romanticised portrayals of far-away lands, oceans, and other-than-human animals entered the living rooms of ordinary people through their television sets. Many of these broadcasts were (and to some extent, still are) framed in such a way that echoed the dominant conservationist tendencies of the nineteenth century: emphasising the importance of preserving 'nature', the marvels of natural landscapes, and the protection of more-than-human life more generally. These documentaries complemented conservationist environmental discourses which were predicated on masculine voyage and adventure which would save 'nature' from the menace of (often global majority) humans (Torma, 2012).

The popular debates sparked by the broadcasts of the mid (and even late) twentieth century did not immediately venture into the terrain of more radical and politically grounded engagements with environmental ideas which were already beginning to find some expression outside of Europe, notably in the struggles over land that characterised much of the anti-colonial resistance across the Global South (Nixon, 2011).

The 1950s also marked the beginning of natural historian David Attenborough's TV career – a figure within the environmental movement who remains extremely visible and popular today. Attenborough continues to be a present persona who embodies, for many, an authoritative (but crucially, not overtly radical) environmentalism. As part of the legacy of this period, today, 'environmental celebrities' continue to influence the framing of popular narratives about the environment (Abidin *et al.*, 2020, p. 403). This is extremely important given that environmental celebrities frequently practice and 'privilege forms of environmentalism and advocacy that typically—albeit inadvertently—reproduce structures of inequality' (Abidin *et al.*, 2020, p. 388). This is an observation which we will return to in later chapters, when thinking about how intersectional praxis comes to manifest (or not) in contemporary environmentalisms. For now, let us turn back to the concrete emergence of environmentalist mobilisation which accompanies and responds to the memorable incidents and events of the mid-twentieth-century that triggered increased public attention to environmentalism and environmental issues.

At the end of WWII, the mushroom clouds of the nuclear bombs hanging over Japan left much of the world in existential shock. Yet, the anti-nuclear movement in Europe did not emerge until some years after the end of WWII, in the early 1950s.

The increased nuclear testing which characterised the Cold War era was met with outrage and opposition across a number of regions and countries. To place this resistance into context, between 1946 and 1958, the US state undertook 23 nuclear bomb tests on Bikini Atoll, an island in the Marshall Islands (Keown, 2018). Between 1952 and 1957, the UK government conducted 12 nuclear weapons tests in Australia (Gun *et al.*, 2008). In the later period of 1966 to 1986, the French state performed at least 122 nuclear tests in the Pacific region (Cordonnery, 2010). Overall, in the fifty years between 1946 and 1996, the US state, France, and the UK conducted at least 315 nuclear tests in the Pacific islands (Firth, 2020). These figures, of course, cannot capture the full texture and significance of nuclear weapons testing which took place after the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 (See Figure 1). Clearly, military nuclear activity has not been without extremely serious effects for local people and their ecosystems.

For Indigenous communities who were (and still are) directly affected by state-led nuclear testing in the Pacific, resistance has taken many forms, from publishing literary works to conducting sit-ins at local law courts. There are many instances of resistance – often efforts headed by women – that brought together a resistance against racialism, colonialism, anti-ecologism, and masculinist militarism. For example, as early as 1946, activists such as Bill Ferguson, who was the leader of the Aboriginal Progressives Association, and Nana Bennett, an Aboriginal pacifist, organised against nuclear and rocket bomb testing in Australia – collecting thousands of signatures for petitions to the settler government against the threats such testing would pose (Speck, 2020). In 1947, the newly formed Council for Aboriginal Rights in Australia organised public meetings, radio broadcasts, and disseminated information

Figure 1: Devastation on Bikini Atoll

(Operation Crossroads, Test Baker as seen from Bikini Atoll, July 25, 1946)

leaflets against nuclear and wider military infrastructure testing in Aboriginal lands. In Kanaky (also known as New Caledonia), the work of Indigenous Kanak woman, Déwé Gorodé, has contributed significantly to the transoceanic anti-nuclear movement. Gorodé was the founder of the Groupe 1878[21] and was also involved in the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Movements. In 1974, she was jailed after taking part in a sit-in at local law courts. From jail, and later in political exile, she wrote poems of resistance (Gorodé *et al.*, 2004). The legacy of her resistance continues today in the work of activists like Kathy Jetñil Kijiner, whose video poems write against the social, cultural, and ecological damage and dispossession wrought by colonialism and nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands (Jetñil-Kijiner, 2018). With Indigenous women at their frontlines, many groups have combined their resistance against colonialism with their opposition to the ecological and health risks posed by a nuclear presence in their lived environments (Keown, 2019) – demonstrating an intersectional layering of issues which did not as heavily characterise the movement in its earlier forms in Western Europe.

To come back to a slightly earlier time period in Britain, the grassroots organisation CND began organising in 1958. CND was characterised by a sort of 'middle class radicalism' (Parkin, 1968) which placed more emphasis on morality than materiality in its messaging. Very often, the anti-nuclear movement prioritised peace and non-violence in its messaging over a more environmentally and intersectionally oriented analysis of nuclear weapons. But the latter remained important. Indeed, Holger Nehring traces the apocalyptic and catastrophic narratives that characterise environmentalist discourses from the 1980s onwards back to the efforts of the anti-nuclear movement in the '50s into

[21] Groupe 1878 was an anti-colonial group fighting for the restoration of Indigenous lands in Kanaky. It is named after the Indigenous uprising that took place in Kanaky against French colonisers in 1878.

the ‘60s (2004, p. 152). Moreover, the anti-nuclear movement mobilised around concerns for the Earth which was conceptualised as a ‘a single living organism which encompasses humanity’, thus contributing to a ‘shift in dominance from anthropocentric to ecocentric views’ (Burkett, 2012, p. 626) from the late 1960s onwards. However, this view of the singular Earth also encompassed a tendency to characterise humanity as one amorphous and undifferentiated Anthropos, missing an opportunity to for more politicised, historically situated discussions around the gendered, racialised, and classed aspects of the threats posed by nuclear power and warfare.

In many ways, though, the early anti-nuclear movement, even in its early European iterations, constructed a more radical approach to environmental politics than the traditional conservationist organisations of the time. Crucially, too, the anti-nuclear movement would grow and develop alongside, and sometimes in collaboration with, the dynamism of feminism and anti-racism throughout the ‘60s and ‘70s (Eschle, 2013). Anti-nuclear movement organisers in Britain would later come to engage with issues around gender in particular as part of their organising (Burkett, 2016) – but, as the archival material that I consulted suggests, there would remain a refusal or inability to forge stronger convergences between anti-nuclear activities and internationalist types of organising against colonialism, racialism, and intersectional domination.

3.1.2 A new social movement is born (1960 – 1979)

Hopefully it is clear by now that I am not concerned with arguing for a causal explanation of the environmental movement’s development. Rather, I am tracing this history to draw out some of significant conjunctures in the development of the movement in local, national, and international contexts with a concentration on how intersectionality might colour the picture.

From this perspective, let us focus more explicitly on the modern environmentalist movement in Britain as a ‘new social movement’ existing in an ecosystem of other new social movements.

According to Ronald Inglehart (1995), the birth of new social movements after the end of WWII was partly due to a (largely middle class) shift towards postmaterialist values. These values placed greater emphasis on the quality of life as opposed to economic growth and consumption (postmaterialist thesis). This took place as (Western) European countries and the ‘neo-Europes’ (Crosby, 2004) made in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia, and North America restructured and rebuilt in such a way that large sections of their populations were newly exposed to greater levels of affluence. For Inglehart, the emergence of the environmentalist movement is proof of a move towards postmaterialism. Environmental ideals are one of the many postmaterialist values which he understands as coming to define the social movements of the late twentieth century. Though problematic, Inglehart’s

postmaterialist thesis invites reflection on the burst of growth and economic development that followed WWII and how the material conditions for the affluence that he focuses on affected the ways that people would engage with issues such as the environment. In the political ecology literature, this post-war period is sometimes referred to as the 'Great Acceleration' (Steffen *et al.*, 2015): an explosion in carbon emissions that begin to rise exponentially with rapid industrialisation and growing consumerism.

From 1960 onwards, the environmentalist movement in Britain (and beyond) begins to rapidly snowball in size and dynamism, developing a more popular character (Hays, 1981, p. 221), which both includes and stretches beyond the interests of academic expertise and policy as in the earlier conservationist articulations of the movement (Conn, 2010, p. 835). The increased momentum enjoyed by the environmentalist movement from the 1960s onwards coincides with that of other new social movements such as the feminist and anti-racist movements (which also historically precede the 1960s). The period 1960 – 1979 is thus extremely rich for thinking about the conditions for potential intersectional solidarity, collaboration, and cross-movement conversation amongst these movements.

Whilst the focus here remains on Britain, it is necessary to remain sensitive to the transnational ripple effects of significant happenings elsewhere (and the way that the rise of mass media has partly enabled this transportation of ideas and information across borders). One such particular 'elsewhere', for example, is the US. There, the modern environmentalist movement mobilised in the masses, establishing Earth Day in 1970 – an annual event which is now globally celebrated. With this in mind, we continue to build this historical narrative drawing on both domestic, international, and transnational contexts in order to understand the historical place of (intersectional) social critique within environmental praxes.

Continued mediatisation

The initial natural history documentaries of the 1950s were forerunners to the later popular television dramas and situational comedies of the 1960s and 1970s when television sets would take a more prominent place in the homes of ordinary people. Such dramas centred the perspectives of fictional characters navigating issues around the environment, environmental practices, and sustainability, such as *Doomwatch* (1970 – 1974) and *The Good Life* (1975 – 1978). Evidently, the development of the environmental movement cannot be attributed to television broadcasts. However, such programmes had palpable influence in shaping public environmental consciousness (2018, p. 2). The lasting effect of the 20th century televisation of environmental issues is that mass media has come to play an enormous role in the propagation and management of environmental values and politics today.

Broadcasters, journalists, and other media actors thus need to be taken seriously as significant actors who contribute to the influencing, framing, and shaping of the terms of the wider environmental debate, the conditions in which environmental activism takes place, as well as how environmental activists are portrayed and responded to. It is worth noting here, however, that the digital sphere has since come to serve as a counterpoint to the power and influence of media outlets as a space which facilitates practically unmoderated debate, discussion, and organising amongst environmental actors in ways that challenge conventions around whose voices are heard, how conversations take place, and the trans/supranational spatiality of these conversations. I come back to this discussion in later chapters.

Emergence of direct action in 1970s and the birth of a movement

Indeed, the 1960s and '70s continued to see a number of environmental crisis events which would contribute to further, and eventually mobilise, public concern. Particularly striking disasters which marked public imagination in Britain include the 1967 Torrey Canyon oil spill off the English coast. Such disasters, well covered by media outlets at the time, contributed to a widespread feeling of concern and anxiety about the environment (Gillham, 2008). Where such disasters were considered to be provoked by human behaviour rather than by mere chance or natural accident, they were met with greater public outrage (Segalla, 2020).

The oil spills and toxic leaks of the 1960s and '70s fed into student protest movements and countercultural resistance (Gillham, 2008) which married up a politicisation of environmental issues with concerns about social and economic injustices. Masses mobilised not only *for* the protection of the environment but *against* the particular human behaviours which were perceived to be triggering these ecological threats. This historical period would thus see dynamic campaigns from groups such as Friends of the Earth (created in 1969), as well as the establishment in 1972 of the first green party in Europe, the PEOPLE party, which would go on to eventually become the Green Party of England and Wales (Wall, 2010). These environmental actors framed ecological issues in a decidedly social and political context in which capitalist modes of production were deemed to be the responsible forces for the damage and destruction of ecosystems.

We should note, however, that professional organisations such as the UK's Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the National Trust – generally more conservative and formally constituted organisations with nineteenth century origins also saw an enormous increase in public interest and support in this period (Sims, 2016). We should thus be reminded of the plurality of environmental positions at any one time (Larrère, 2009).

To say that there was a greater shift towards a more politicised approach to environmental issues at, however, is not to say that intersectionality was at the heart of the movement. If we look at examples of direct action, many environmentalists' acts drew on symbolism which tended to focus on the damage and destruction of 'nature' and more-than-human animals:

> FOE's [Friends of the Earth] first public action in September 1971 when it dumped hundreds of empty bottles outside the London headquarters of Cadbury-Schweppes as a protest against the company's refusal to recycle their bottles. With the arrival of Greenpeace-UK in 1977, direct action tactics became even more spectacular as environmentalists took to the seas to attempt to prevent such things as whaling, the dumping of nuclear waste in the ocean or the sinking of an oil platform in the North Sea. (Brent Spar, 1995) (Prendiville, 2014, unpaginated)

Less present in the action of such groups are internationalist narratives which explicitly place ecological damage and destruction in relationship to white supremacist imperialist capitalist heteropatriarchy. Dynamic debates around issues of race and gender that were taking place in this context were being publicly mounted elsewhere by other movements. However, environmental and ecological strategies had clearly not yet demonstrated a simultaneous critique or collaboration around these issues. Environmentalism remained largely mute on the issues under the remit of other movements like the anti-racist and feminist movements in Britain.

Co-emergent 'new social movements'

In Britain and beyond, the 1960s and 1970s saw fervent mobilisation around issues relating to the rights and recognition of groups who were experiencing marginalisation along the multiple axes of gender, disability, race, nation, and so on. Action driven by students, feminists, LGBTQI* people, people subjected to colonialism, workers, amongst other marginalised groups drew media and public attention. However, tensions emerged within and amongst these new social movements in various places. In places such as the US and Britain, these tensions would contribute to the development of formal intersectional critique by Black feminists to speak to the lack of overlap amongst siloed social movements operating on single issue or single axis logics (Carby, 1982; Combahee River Collective, 1983; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). Much of this critique would largely concentrate on the ways in which Black women were specifically marginalised within the new social movements which were organised around single axes of analysis. In their formulation of intersectional critique, Black feminists exposed the ways that white feminist organising prioritised the needs of white women whilst anti-racist mobilisation worked to meet those of Black and other global majority men. Despite its parallel existence alongside the aforementioned new social movements, the environmentalist movement remained largely outside of the explicit purview of this intersectional critique – both in the US, with which the framework is most closely associated, and in Britain, which this thesis focuses on.

As we will see shortly, the environmentalist movement often operated in a way that moved to erase the significance of the politics of human difference and intersectional oppression.

Given the parallel existence of multiple social movements dealing with issues relevant to the broad areas of intersectionality and the environment, it is interesting to think about the opportunities (or lack thereof) for alliances afforded in this era between the environmental movement and other new social movements. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the 1960s and '70s also saw the environmental movement take on an approach to politics which critiqued and accounted for social and political organisation of modern industrial society. In theory, much environmentalist critique which was not incompatible with that of, say, feminists and/or anti-racists. We can ask, therefore, how we can think about these multiple parallel social movements together in their historical context and how intersectional concerns fit into this picture.

Certainly, the new ecologist discourses of the 1960s and '70s had shifted away from the conservationist tendencies which prevailed in the years before 1945. However, the idea of a suprapolitics – being above or beyond politics (an idea which prevails today within some forms of environmentalism) – was present; a strategy which would only alienate those who did not have the privilege of declaring themselves to be above politics. Steven Conn illustrates this well, recounting that, '[w]hen Time magazine wrote in the 1970 issue with Barry Commoner [a biologist and leading figure within environmental organising in the US] on the cover that "water, air and green space know no class or color distinction," the implication, at least for some Left activists, was that the environmental movement thus did not have to confront race or class' (2010, p. 840).

Presenting environmental matters as a problem for all humans everywhere and equally so reinforced an exclusionary universalism which left little space to recognise the specific yet interconnected ecological struggles of marginalised groups in society. By invoking a unified and homogenous humanity, singularly threatened by environmental problems, environmentalists largely failed to engage with the politics of difference, lacking a thorough account and critique of racialism, heterosexism, ableism, etc. as processes of relevance to ecological crisis and an ecological critique of capitalism.

This tension was particularly pronounced in the US context where this manifested in an overt tension between the Black Power and the environmental movements:

> Six months after Earth Day, a reporter for Business Week filed a report headlined "To Blacks, Ecology Is Irrelevant." The story ran under Business Week's "Cities Commentary" section. All of this was summarized in an exchange between a black activist in Chicago and a reporter from Time: "Ecology?" the activist balked, "I don't give a good goddam about ecology!" (Conn, 2010, p. 841)

Whilst this thesis is situated in a specifically British context, these tensions in the US-based articulations of environmentalism can help us to reflect on how and why progressive alliances and cross-movement efforts did not emerge with more force and prescience during this period more generally. For, in the context of the US, it is not simply that the environmental movement and the Black Power movement chose not to collaborate. Significant parts of the two movements actively disapproved of each other and did not see opportunities for convergence.

Yet, later forms of environmental, feminist, and anti-racist organising, from the 1980s onwards did begin to forge a more explicit relationship between (intersectional) social justice and environmental politics, such as with the construction of environmental justice, climate justice, and the mobilisation of women's groups across a number of countries including Britain.

3.1.3 Contemporary environmentalism (1980 – present)

The period following the 1970s is a significant period in which some environmentalists started to take more of a social justice grounded approach to environmental analysis and action. Following the successes of getting environmental politics on the mainstream agenda, I reflect on the institutionalisation and professionalisation of green politics. Secondly, I offer some thoughts about the growth of attention to intersecting structures of power from an ecological perspective, namely within the burgeoning EJ movement in the US (which has today become a model for many activists and scholars concerned with ecological health). Finally, I briefly explore the parallel emergence of more radical environmental critiques which actively problematise ecological crisis through the lens of gender; in particular, ecofeminism.

Increasing institutionalisation of green politics

In the early 1970s, the environment was beginning to enjoy greater attention at the international level. In 1968, a report from the UN Secretary-General calling for the convention of what would become the UN Conference on the Human Environment ('Activities of United Nations Organizations and programmes relevant to the human environment : report of the Secretary-General', 1968). Following this conference, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) was founded in 1972 to respond to the 'the need for prompt and effective implementation by Governments and the international community of measures designed to safeguard and enhance the environment for the benefit of present and future generations of man [sic]' ('UN General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 - Institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental cooperation', 1972). It opened its first headquarters at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi. By the end of the 1970s, environmentalists and their organisations had managed to push green issues onto the mainstream political agenda. The institutionalisation of environmental politics crystallised with the establishment of

the first Green parties, which were operating alongside and in relation to supranational bodies that were beginning to embrace and influence the environmental agenda. Direct elections to the European Parliament, introduced in 1979, saw Greens benefit from the combination of unpopular national government parties at home and heightened awareness and concern about environmental and peace issues across Europe. The second-order nature of European elections and its proportional voting system also made European Parliament a more reachable goal for Green Parties who often had weak electoral records and prospects in national elections across Europe. Studies have shown that vote switching behaviour favours niche parties like Green parties in second order elections as opposed to general elections in the UK as a way for voters to signal the importance of particular issues to their usual mainstream party choices (Lindstam, 2019). Up to today, Green parties have enjoyed continuous representation at the European Parliament since 1984 (Rüdig, 2019).

Around the time that the UNEP was founded, the Green Party of England and Wales (GPEW), was established in 1972/3 as the PEOPLE party. It later renamed to the Ecology Party in 1975 and then to the Green Party in 1985. In 1989, its Scottish chapter split from the group to form the Scottish Greens, leaving behind the English and Welsh branches which would rebrand themselves as the Green Party of England and Wales. GPEW was the first Green party to be established in Europe and was, alongside the Belgian Green Party, the first party to take part in the first European elections in 1979. In the same year, it ran in the 1979 UK general election, drawing attention to its existence and contributing to the raised profile of environmental issues in Britain despite a poor electoral performance (taking about 1% of the vote). Between 1978 and 1980, however, membership rose from just 1,000 to 5,000 (Rüdig, 2019). Today, the GPEW has about 54,000 members and the Scottish Greens, approximately 7,500 (Burton and Tunnicliffe, 2022). Currently, the GPEW has one elected MP (Caroline Lucas) and two appointed peers in the House of Lords (Jenny Jones and Natalie Bennett). The Scottish Greens hold eight Holyrood seats and are part of a cooperation agreement with the Scottish National Party (SNP) government. Green voters are traditionally young, highly educated, urban professionals from non-religious backgrounds (Lowe and Rüdig, 1986; Pattie, Russell and Johnston, 1991; Birch, 2009; Dolezal, 2010; Dennison, 2015).

On an even more international stage, following the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, UNEP was founded in 1972, in Nairobi, Kenya. UNEP brought together 193 UN Member States in an effort to monitor, regulate, and coordinate responses to environmental damage – its primary vehicles: research and international environmental law (Petsonk, 1990). By 1985, UNEP had been successful in facilitating the multi-lateral signing and adoption of several environmental conventions, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (1973),

Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (1973), the Bonn Convention (1979) for the conservation of migratory animals and their habitats, the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (1979), and the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (1985) – the first convention to be ratified by every country and, together with its extension in the Montreal Protocol of 1987, is largely considered to be one of UNEP's greatest environmental successes.

Pro-environmental tendencies had spread far and wide and could be found in the (sometimes purely rhetorical) politics of numerous politicians, who spanned the breadth of the entire political spectrum. In the 1980s, the no longer niche arena of environmental politics came to be embraced by the likes of President Jimmy Carter who would establish the key legal infrastructure to protect the environment in the US. In Britain, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher would briefly embrace a pro-environmental stance, giving several environmental speeches, including a speech to the UN general assembly where she would speak of the 'prospect of irretrievable damage to the atmosphere, to the oceans, to earth itself' which she linked to 'mankind and his activities [as forces] which are changing the environment of our planet in damaging and dangerous ways' (Thatcher, 1989). Thatcher was a populationist. She talked about the main environmental threat worldwide as being 'more and more people, and their activities: The land they cultivate ever more intensively; The forests they cut down and burn; The mountain sides they lay bare; The fossil fuels they burn; The rivers and the seas they pollute' (Thatcher, 1989). The 'more and more people' that she cites are 'they' – and not 'we'. Whilst journalists like John Vidal have cast Thatcher as an 'unlikely green hero,' (Vidal, 2013), I, along with post- and de-colonial feminist scholars, find these types of populationist narratives alarming. For, they contain veiled threats to the reproductive autonomy of global majority women; women who are cast as 'they' and never 'we' – despite the fact that, already in 1993, just one person born in the Global North was likely to consume 15 times the resources of an individual in the South (Salleh, 1993).

Largely speaking, politicians would chiefly focus on continuing to raise the public profile of environmental issues with very minimal concrete action (Audouze, 2011). Few explicitly environmental laws were passed in Britain during the 1980s before the surge of environmental laws introduced in the 1990s.

Within the landscape of institutionalised environmental politics, the place of non-governmental organisations and activist networks began to transform too. Groups such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth had originally been conceived in the late '60s and early '70s out of a growing dissatisfaction with the limits of traditionally conservationist environmentalism. However, these organisations became increasingly professionalised. Other grassroots activists and organisations became disenchanted and dissatisfied with this newly institutionalised movement and, in response to the increasingly reformist

environmental politics which dominated mainstream narratives, more radical iterations of the movement were founded (Rootes, 2004).

Climate and global environmental justice movements

Whilst moderate environmentalist discourses were being embraced by politicians, NGOs, and international organisations, the grassroots environmental movement was seeing a rise in more radical ways of thinking and organising. These alternative perspectives would span the globe, condemning political structural critiques of domestic and international social status quos as neither environmentally nor socially sustainable.

One of the well-known iterations of this new environmental politics, which has become a focus point within Northern anglophone scholarship, is the environmental justice movement in the US. At its nascence, the EJ movement, led by members of the African American, Latinx, and Indigenous communities, held strong links to the Civil Rights tradition. EJ grew the vocabulary of environmental racism, linking up the liaisons between corporate and state interests and the racialisation of differential local, domestic exposure to environmental threats such as toxic waste and pollution (Bullard, 1999). Black women formed the frontlines of the movement (Di Chiro, 1998; Gomez, Shafiei and Johnson, 2011), and often grounded their positions in their lived experiences of intersectionality Though the headlines of the movement oftentimes tended to place a heavier emphasis on race and racism as the focal point of their claims, Black women leaders nuanced EJ analyses with gendered, classed, and spiritual considerations as they centred their concerns about the safety and flourishing of their families, children, and communities.

Springs of ecofeminism

At a time when feminism was resurging in Europe, it comes as no surprise that feminists participated in environmental debates of the time. Ecofeminist perspectives cannot be taken as the zeitgeist of the 1980s – for fundamentally, they represent very particular, minority positions in relation to the wider general public, as well as the wider feminist and environmentalist movements in Britain. However, the birth of ecofeminism brings together environmentalist and feminist praxes in ways that foreground the *gendered* injustices of ecological breakdown – though this does not automatically suppose an *intersectional* view of the issues at stake for ecofeminists.

At the heart of ecofeminism is the premise that patriarchy has detrimental consequences to the environment and that this degradation of the environment, in turn, disproportionately burdens women (Sturgeon, 1999; Goldstein, 2006). The term 'ecofeminism' is often traced back to the work of French feminist and scholar, Françoise d'Eaubonne (Gates, 1996; Laugier, Falquet and Molinier, 2015; Puleo,

2017; Estévez-Saá and Lorenzo-Modia, 2018). The first usage of the term is located in her book, *Le feminisme ou la mort* (1974) the first book she published after founding the Ecology-Feminism (Ecologie-Feminisme) Center in Paris. The book thoroughly weaves human social and political issues into an ecofeminist position which explicitly connects gendered social hierarchies in causational relation to ecologically destructive behaviours and processes. With d'Eaubonne being an ex-Communist Party member, these early theorisations of ecofeminist critique are thoroughly social in nature, as they respond to capitalism as an ecologically destructive force, driven by toxic masculinity.

D'Eaubonne's theorisations of ecofeminism, however, also rely heavily on a critique of overpopulation, which she argues is driven by the masculine appropriation of reproductive processes. Hence, she locates sexual antagonism at the heart of ecologically destructive practices – an argument which places sex and gender at the heart of a social ecological analysis. But, as later ecofeminists would recognise, this singularly tracked interpretation of ecology which places an exclusive emphasis on gender would fail to fully consider the racialised implications for the reproductive rights for women beyond white Europe (Salleh, 1993, 2018; Davis, 2003; Gaard, 2010, 2011, 2015; Shiva and Mies, 2014; Kings, 2017). The mere fact of grounding environmental thought in social and political analysis is not sufficient to achieve an analysis or strategy which accounts for intersectional differences amongst marginalised people; and as d'Eaubonne's work shows us, nor is an ostensibly feminist approach. This is where an intersectional approach intervenes to give us the possibility to acknowledge and address such gaps, in which the needs and concerns of global majority women are often buried.

Perhaps more controversially, d'Eaubonne, amongst other later ecofeminists, also develops an argument which emphasises a particular feminine proximity to nature that renders women the ideal environmental protectors. This aspect of ecofeminism, along with accompanying discourses about Goddess worship, has generated much contention amongst feminists. Many have argued that this is a form of dangerous essentialism (Gaard, 2011) leading some to even call for ecofeminism's abandonment. The idea that women are somehow closer to nature captured the imagination of many ecofeminists who saw their own organising, as well as the mobilisation of others, through this lens. The term 'ecofeminism' remains far less visible in the discourses of social movement actors and academics today than in the 1980s and 1990s (Cambourakis, 2018). Only two of my interview participants explicitly referred to themselves as (Black) 'ecofeminists'. Although there has been a recent resurgence of interest in d'Eaubonne's contributions to feminist ecological thought (Verso recently republished her 'Ecofeminism or Death' for the first time in English), her contribution, and the Francophone ecofeminist literature more broadly tends to fly under the radar (Gates, 1996).

Invoking the existence of a particular feminine concern for the environment, ecofeminist activists such as Petra Kelly drew explicit connections between the struggles of 'global sisters', which included 'the women of Greenham Common, the Western Shoshone women resisting nuclear testing in Nevada, the Pacific Islander women who suffer from nuclear testing fallout, women in the Krim region in then-Soviet Russia who protested a new nuclear power plant, and the Chipko' (Kelly, 1989 cited in Sturgeon, 1999, pp. 259–260). Elsewhere, a number of (mainly Northern) ecofeminists, including Ynestra King (2018), have made frequent, almost mythical reference to women's movements in the South, particularly the peasant women hugging trees in India as part of the Chipko protests (Plant, 1989; Shiva and Mies, 2014). Hailed as uniquely embodied and peaceful 'feminine' form of environmental protest, such women's movements served as model of inspiration for Northern ecofeminists[22].

Others, notably scholars from Southern countries, have approached these movements slightly differently, choosing to emphasise the ways in which Southern materialist ecofeminism, explicitly resists the capitalism-patriarchy nexus and globalisation despite lacking resources for organising (Pandey, 2013). Such a view has been problematised as 'reducing [the Chipko women] to idealized peasant women who are integrated into "nature"' (Sturgeon, 1999, p. 261), a view which is not at total odds with the problematic colonial archetypal view of global majority women. Moreover, these ecofeminist readings lack the necessary intersectional depth to appreciate the complexity and specificity of the ways in which women mobilise around the environment across the world. Gender has been important to ecofeminist praxis in the Global South – but so, too, have the racialised, material histories and legacies of colonialism, and social fractures on the lines of religion and caste. These movements teach us to keep our attention piqued to all of these aspects simultaneously: to take an intersectional view of environmental issues and environmentalist organising.

Up until here, I have offered a retelling and analysis of some of the histories of environmentalism up to the turn of the century. This historical view supports our thinking about modern and contemporary environmentalism in Britain as situated in relation to different temporalities and geographies. The historical narratives presented so far have woven issues relating to human difference and power into those relating to the destruction and damage of the 'natural' world which is often conceived of as parallel to or separate to humans. In any case, we see the historical relationship and dialogue that understands these spheres together (whether conceived of as separate or not). This chapter is therefore an encouragement to use wider histories that cross time and space in order to place intersectionality in

[22] The extensive writings of Indian scholar and ecofeminist activist, Vandana Shiva (Shiva, 1986, 1993, 2003; Shiva and Bandyopadhyay, 1986; Shiva and Mies, 2014), about the Chipko movement also validated and affirmed the attention that Northern feminists gave to the movement.

relation to environmentalism; to identify historical and contemporary relevance and frame the empirical discussions in the following two chapters.

Now we can look to some particulars that help us to understand the ways that we arrive at this historical knowledge about environmentalism (i.e., how we have documented this movement) and how we might see this through an intersectional lens in the context of the movement as articulated in Britain. To achieve this, I have conducted some archival research which focuses our attention on Britain. But as I have stressed up until now and the archival material presented below reveals, this focus on Britain can never be complete without an attention to knowledge and relationship flows across borders. Below, we will see analysis and discussion which understands environmentalism and other new social movements in relation to each other from the 1920s to the present day; a more targeted reflection on how the themes of intersectionality and ecology speak to each other within and across new social movements in Britain.

Let us therefore turn to the archives as a way of forging more specific insights which set the context for the empirical discussions about contemporary environmentalism and intersectionality in the two following chapters.

3.2 Tracing intersectionality through the archives

In the previous part of this chapter, I traced the evolution of the environmental movement as a new social movement growing in Britain from 1945 to the 1990s. The emergence of the modern environmental movement is a pivotal moment in the imagination of social movement studies looking at 'new social movements' – but so, too, is the simultaneous growth and development of 'identity' based social movements such as those fighting for the rights of women, LGBT people, racially minoritised groups, and disabled people. The exploration here thus tries to foreground the places of divergence, converge, and overlap amongst these identity and group rights-based movements in relation to the parallel 'issue' based movement of environmentalism. The archival aspect of this chapter tries to find environmental themes in archives relating to anti-racist, feminist, queer, and disability rights organising. This is qualitatively different to trying to find intersectional themes amongst environmentalists organising (an approach which the majority of the empirical work in this thesis takes). The purpose of this archival exploration is to think about some of the overlaps, opportunities, and examples of convergences (and differences) between Black feminist/intersectional and environmentalist praxes.

There were several challenges in undertaking this archival research, as outlined above. In particular, choosing and using the appropriate search terms was a major challenge. Each of the search terms is singular – but looking at the content of each result, I conducted a thematic analysis to examine whether

the source material spoke to both intersectionality *and* environmentalism in order to determine its relevance. I am addressing the relationship in British contexts between environmentalism and Black feminism more broadly as much as the relationship between environmentalism and intersectionality specifically. This is why the search terms also include 'Black feminism' and 'Black feminist.' If the content of the material spoke thematically to both Black feminism and/or intersectionality *as well as* environmentalism, I marked it as 'relevant'. Since this exercise involved looking in archives that largely documented the ideas and activities of those fighting for the rights of women, LGBT people, racially minoritised groups, and disabled people, I also searched the archives for names of some major environmentalist groups which have been active in Britain over the last three or four decades too (Greenham, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, National Trust, WWF, Green Party). Searching for the residual presences of these groups amongst anti-racist, feminist, queer, and disability rights organisers fosters reflection on intersectional solidarity and cross-movement organising (Tormos, 2017; Einwohner *et al.*, 2021) as harbouring the capacity to produce overlaps between the themes at the heart of this thesis.

Overall, the archival research conducted here reveals that the convergence between intersectional frameworks and environmentalist praxis is minimal. This is especially true for the archival material which dates further back. In a nutshell, the further back in time we go, the more tenuous the links between intersectionality/Black feminism and environmentalism appear to be in the archives. Given that the term 'intersectionality' was coined in 1989, this is not surprising. However, some of the more recent material shows some very explicit intellectual and political links being made between an analysis of interlocking systems oppression in relation to ecological health, wellbeing, sustainability, and justice.

The actual use of the terms 'intersectional' or 'intersectionality' were very rare in the majority of the archival sources consulted for this research. I only found these terms used once each in the archives held by the Glasgow Women's Library in relation to the Lesbians and Policing Project (Lespop) which was formed in 1985 and in testimony collected by Fife Women's Aid from a survivor of domestic abuse. Neither of these documents made any reference to issues relating to ecology, climate change, or the environment. Similarly, the Black Cultural Archives (BCA) did not return any results for 'intersectional/ity' or, surprisingly, 'Black feminis/t/m.' But the archive does hold relevant materials ranging from 1970 to 2009 which explicitly centre issues relating to the environment and wider environmentalist organising. These documents include leaflets for Friends of the Earth (Items 76, 77, 81, 82, 83, 84), Greenpeace (Items 67, 76, 77), and for the Women of Greenham Common (Items 60, 61, 62) amongst other materials.

The presence of these materials from environmentalist groups in the BCA chimes with the literature on intersectional solidarity and cross movement building/solidarity, which emphasises the creation of links and coalitions across difference across different organisations whilst staying sensitive to imbalances in power in doing so (Tormos, 2017; Einwohner *et al.*, 2021). Intersectional solidarity encourages us, then, to appreciate the several possible readings of – not just the content of the materials found in the archives themselves – but their very presences in the archive. Do the Greenpeace and Greenham leaflets indicate collaborative organising and active forms of solidarity? Or an opportunistic attempt to recruit from discrete, separate movements?

Whether one way or the other, the presence of the materials invite us to reflect on the possibilities for opportunistic recruitment practices versus genuinely solidaristic praxis. An important part of intersectional solidarity is to recognise and represent the interests and experiences of marginalised groups when forging coalitions. Intersectional solidarity is an *active* approach to cross movement organising.

gal-dem (2015 – 2023) was the only archival source consulted which returned more than one result for the terms 'intersectional' (102) and 'intersectionality' (78). *gal-dem* is the most recent archival source of all sources consulted here, running from 2015 to 2023. It is also the only source which is specifically dedicated to centring the voices of 'people of colour from marginalised genders' (gal-dem, no date). It is not surprising to see a more explicit engagement with intersectionality in this context – intersectionality grows out of and still speaks very strongly to the experiences of Black and racially minoritised women and other marginalised genders (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins and Bilge, 2016; Thomas, 2020). However, a majority of the search results did not speak directly to environmental themes – but the results for 'intersectional' returned nine articles which explicitly addressed environmental issues. *gal-dem*'s pieces building the overlap between environmental and intersectional reveal a general pattern of approaching environmental issues from a perspective that highlights issues relating to the politics of race, class, gender, dis/ability, North/South relations, and so on. Oftentimes, some or all of these elements were addressed simultaneously in the pieces published in the magazine – indicating a relatively consistent intersectional approach to environmental issues.

Articles in *gal-dem* range addressed both environmental issues *and* environmentalism as a movement – ranging from foregrounding the work of individual environmentalists, criticising and addressing wider environmentalist movement strategy and discourse, and highlighting the broader ecological issues at stake. *gal-dem* is a site at which we can find both celebration and criticisms of various approaches to environmentalist organising. Whilst some pieces foreground the marginalised praxis of minoritised environmentalists, others focus on scrutinising the strategies and practices of the larger, well-known

groups organising around the environment, such as XR. These pieces, focusing on Britain and the wider Global North, tackle issues of inclusive movement building. They do so by highlighting the ways in which environmentalists from minoritised communities are responding to environmentalist practices and discourses that work to uphold existing hierarchies of power with respect to race, class, and North/South relations in particular. In an article titled, 'Who are the climate justice organisers reshaping a very white movement?' (2019), Jannat Hossain problematises the direct action tactics of mass arrest undertaken by XR, arguing that their 'ability to perceive the police and criminal justice system as benign structures who might even join their "rebellion" smacks of race and class privilege.' The article includes criticism from organisers involved with Black Lives Matter and cites an open letter of criticism published by Wretched of the Earth, a 'Grassroots collective of indigenous, black [and] brown p[eo]pl[e] demanding climate justice [and] in solidarity w[ith[our communities, both in the UK [and] in [the] Global South' (Wretched of the Earth, 2023). Other pieces highlight the voices of women and non-binary people of the global majority on the Global Climate Strike (Ivey, 2019) and centre the demands and issues raised by African and Indigenous women at global climate negotiations (Froio, 2022; Ho and Mica, 2022; Longdon, 2022a).

Additionally, other articles in *gal-dem* take a broader, thematic approach to addressing ecological issues from an intersectional perspective. They emphasise the intertwinement of systemic oppressions and ecological breakdown – calling for 'climate reparations' from a decolonising and climate justice perspective (Bhadani, 2021), warning against eco-fascistic discourses rooted in xenophobia and misogyny (Brown, 2020), and drawing attention to the intersections of race, class, and gender as planetary temperatures rise (Longdon, 2022b). Whilst there are examples of pieces which explicitly use the terms 'intersectional' and 'intersectionality' to underscore these issues, this is not the case for the majority of publications in *gal-dem* (none of the three previously cited articles use the terms substantively).

As a recently closed online magazine centring the voices of women and the global majority, *gal-dem* forms an interesting interlocutor with the older print feminist magazine *Spare Rib* (1972 – 1993). Thinking about the two magazines together works to blur temporal boundaries, forging and addressing the rhymes and breaks between past and present tenses.

I did not find the term 'intersectional' or 'intersectionality' used in *Spare Rib* at all – whether in relation to the environment or not. But archival collections holding editions of the magazine indicated that it did publish at least some relevant articles which help us to think about the themes relating to intersectionality and environmentalism.

One article published in *Spare Rib* (Issue 142, May 1984) includes an article written by a Guyanese woman, Amanda Hassan, titled 'A Black woman in the peace movement.' The piece reflects on the failure of white women organisers to recognise the racialised differences that shape their experiences and outlooks as members of the same campaign. These are issues that are not unique to environmentalist or anti-nuclear organising – they echo deeply in the wider feminist literature both in the UK and elsewhere in the Global North. Much of the academic literature documents the struggles of Black and racially minoritised women within feminist movements dominated by white women, both in historical and contemporary contexts (Carby, 1982; Hull, Scott and Smith, 1982; Ortega, 2006; Evans and Lépinard, 2019). After spending time organising with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), Hassan's article in *Spare Rib* describes a

> … growing annoyance towards some of these same women I had been organizing with. When we were together, talking about 'women's problems', it was apparent that they thought that my problems were the same as theirs. OK, so we both were in CND, both came from middle-class backgrounds, but they wouldn't acknowledge that they were white and I was black. They couldn't see that I could and had to split myself in two.

In the same article, Hassan speaks to how issues cut across movements, and her frustration at the lack of cross-movement solidarity and organising within the CND which she notes is dominated by white, middle-class organisers:

> …at first I tried to keep my CND and WPA [Working People's Alliance] work apart. But then I realised that this just wasn't on because my activity in one was so useful to the other and vice-versa … it just seemed a bit silly to keep them apart. It was then I realised that I had made the link between CND and the broader struggle. …there are times that I find CND most frustrating and annoying. I have come from a background of struggle. People who are in CND usually haven't come from any previous political activity. Recently at a meeting discussing holding an action outside the US embassy, the opinion was voiced that this would not be a good thing. No reason was given … I said this would be an opportunity to show solidarity with Central and Latin American and South African groups who would also be demonstrating outside the US Embassy. … [CND] has to stop being frightened of demonstrating with other groups. It has to start making the links or it will never succeed. One example of the links not being made can be seen when members of the WPA Support Group ask me, 'What's happening in CND? Have you got any literature?' But members of CND never ask me, 'What's happening in Guyana? Have you got any literature?'

Hassan's reflections echo across time – chiming with pieces reflecting on similar issues of the time emerging in some material from the Black Cultural Archives (discussed in greater detail below) as well as, more contemporarily, with the concerns about myopic organising within Extinction Rebellion today expressed in articles published in *gal-dem*.

An in-person visit to the Black Cultural Archives confirmed what I had found in prior online searches of their collections: the word 'intersectionality' itself was not used in any of the material. This is unsurprising – given that the term 'intersectionality' did not come into popular usage until the 1990s. The material consulted at the BCA ranged from 1970 to 2009. Nonetheless, I identified 35 relevant items

from the collection, all relating to the environment in some way. The following section offers both a description of those items and situates them in relation to questions of intersectionality.

The items in the collection centred around a range of issues that can be grouped under the broad umbrella of 'environment' and 'ecology'. For example, some item focus on gardening; others on anti-nuclear; and others, still, on issues around animal protection, or the struggles of Indigenous land defenders. This wide range of topics reflects the movement today, as one which is broad, heterogenous, and diverse in the range of issues that environmentalists organise around. Of the 35 items which explicitly refer to environmental issues of some sort, I discovered a wide range in content and form: thirteen of the items were campaign leaflets from pressure groups and non-governmental organisations (no political parties), fourteen contained newspaper or magazine articles, two were letters, and the remaining six included a variety of things: an open statement from CND about their commitment to anti-racism, an information pack about including plants from the Global South in British gardens, a list of projects linking ethnic minorities and the environment, a poster calling for applications to fund such projects, and a statement by Greenham Common women regarding their picket line at the newspaper outlet the *Morning Star*.

All of the fourteen items containing magazine and newspaper articles identified in the collections spoke to the issues of race and ecology or gender and ecology explicitly. They appeared to be written by the same few people – in particular Judy Ling Wong and Julian Agyemen. Agyeman and Wong are prominent organisers who co-founded the Black Environment Network (BEN) in 1987 and continue to be active around environmental and racial issues today. BEN, which became a registered charity in 1995, was established with the goal of encouraging and facilitating the involvement and leadership of global majority communities in environmental decision-making and activities in the UK. Nine of the fourteen items containing newspaper and magazine articles were either solo or co-authored by Wong and Agyeman and/or took a substantial focus on the work of BEN.

Some of the issues and activities written about in relation to BEN and its work relate to greening the built environment, integrating plants from the Global South into 'cultural' gardens, and rural racism. Links are made in the pieces between the environmental degradation experienced by the global majority both in and beyond Britain. Emphasis is placed on cultivating and nourishing positive relationships and experiences for Black and other global majority communities in relation to their surrounding environments. Such issues are not traditionally considered to be priorities for – or even under the scope of – the environmentalist movement, both historically and today. More generally, environmental issues as understood from working class perspectives are often disregarded as local, parochial concerns which do not tally with hegemonic environmentalist narratives often driven by white, middle class

people (Bell, 2019). However, the articles in the archive make links amongst global inequalities and histories of colonialism, youth and generational particularities, processes of race and racialisation, and material conditions and poverty, to understand intersecting dynamics of power that shape our ecological lives and wellbeing in different ways. They do not use the term 'intersectionality' – nor do they engage explicitly with gender, sex, nor other potential axes and intersections that individuals and groups can come to be defined by. They contribute to dialogue about the way we relate to each other and our surroundings and foreground the problematics of race and class in particular to do so.

The campaign leaflets were from a range of organisations and for a variety of specific causes: an open letter styled in a leaflet from the women of Greenham Common and the Women's Peace Movement inviting all trade unionists to support an action to celebrate 'International Women's Day for Disarmament' (24th May, 1983); two Greenpeace leaflets outlining major international campaigns and calling for more recruits; two leaflets calling to 'Free Ida Jimmy' and for 'Solidarity with Namibian Women,' calling for women in Britain to recognise and resist British involvement in extractivism and oppressive practices against women in Namibia; two leaflets from Friends of the Earth calling for new recruits; a leaflet from International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) containing explicit images of Canadian fishermen killing baby seals; five leaflets from BUAV Against All Animal Experiments containing information about animal testing and advice about choosing ethical cosmetic and household products; and a leaflet from Haringey Animal Rights advertising the group's bi-monthly newsletter and calling for new members and organisers.

I found no engagement with ideas relating to intersectionality in the campaign leaflets focusing on the protection and wellbeing of non-human animals in particular. Some of this material contained images of actual violence against non-human animals. I interpret this as a serious lack in terms of the vocabulary and frameworks we have access to that analyse and address our ecological entanglements with other animals under racial capitalism. In these leaflets, non-human animals are rendered passive objects to save from malicious humans. The struggle they are trying to articulate is not made in relation to the problematics of intersectionality, which could be interpreted, of course, as anthropocentric, but still draw attention to the same processes of power, domination, and inequities that expose certain groups of humans and non-human animals to harm. Ultimately, these leaflets invite further reflection on the calls led by Indigenous scholarship (Whyte, 2018) and responded to by the fringes of the intersectional literature (Hovorka, 2015) to seriously consider the relevance of the relationships we hold with more-than-human life to global and local histories of imperialist white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy.

The two letters identified in the collections included a general letter from the London based organisation IFAW to Friends which calls for a United Kingdom-wide boycott of fish products from the state of Canada because of their use of fishing practices that include killing baby seals in international waters. The second letter, which speaks more strongly to the themes of my own project, and to the other materials consulted in the archival part of this research, is a letter from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND letter) titled 'Launching the newsletter of the CND anti-racist working group'. This letter (dated 5th October 1984) resonates with the findings from the archives of *Spare Rib* – specifically the piece mentioned above which was published in the magazine that same year, 'A Black woman in the peace movement'. This piece by Amanda Hassan piece documents her experience of marginalisation as a Guyanese woman in CND and condemns the organisation's failure to organise in coalitional and solidaristic ways.

Additionally, a magazine article from the BCA collections penned by David Polden, titled 'Why so few black faces at CND events?', describes CND's inability to engage with global majority communities in Britain. The piece echoes contemporary critiques of XR: though ONS statistics suggest that environmental issues are important to global majority communities and that these communities are sympathetic to the aims and issues of environmentalist organising, these groups do not identify with groups like XR – because the strategies and discourses of groups like XR (and CND, according to the archives) have failed to communicate their relevance to or meaningfully engage with global majority communities (Cowan, 2019). This chimes with the empirical findings of my own research on contemporary environmentalist organising.

Participants told me that they felt fellow organisers were waiting for people from marginalised communities to appear at their doors because groups announced that they were inclusive without making any tangible changes to their strategy or messaging. The above October letter from CND, which is from over four decades ago, is signed by Tishi Kohli, the co-ordinator of the CND anti-racist working group, and breaks down the makeup of their anti-racist working group as follows: 'Blacks: 70% Whites: 30% (no mere tokenism for the Whites in our Group), Women: 50% Men: 50%. But if you go by validity alone, then there is no equality – women's contribution is by far the greater'. This breakdown might be seen through the lens of what has been referred to as a linear additive model of intersectionality (McCall, 2005) and speaks strongly to debates about how social movement organising labour is distributed internally to groups. Though difference is acknowledged, the intersections amongst and within these categories of difference remains obscured. CND continues to organise today – but this working group appears to no longer exist. I emailed them to ask about the working group but did not hear back – nor could I find any trace of recent activity online or mentions of it in the interviews I conducted.

3.3 Coda

This chapter focused on various historical moments of environmentalist mobilisation in Britain to better situate this study and trace the trajectory of intersectional praxis in concert with environmental problematics. But 'historical' is a somewhat deceiving term. Whilst the discussion above examined environmentalism of the past in some sense, we should remember that many of the activists and organisers mobilising around the environment in the 1980s are still active today. Echoing some of the concerns that have been raised about using the 'wave' narrative to trace feminist mobilisation (Evans and Chamberlain, 2015), the idea that there are distinct 'waves' of environmentalism has also been criticised (Saunders, 2012). I am cautious about setting up temporal divisions or binaries that suggest a break between a 'finished' past and a novel present in the environmentalist movement – or that flatten the heterogeneity of any period of time (organisers could hold differing views at the same time within the movement at any point in history or today). Rather, I have sought here to explore intersectional traces and gaps that materialise across time and space – examining the meaning and action that can be made from this Black feminist framework in the context of environmentalist organising in Britain. Taken together with the political ethnographic research undertaken for this project, the archival research presented above works to trace the continued development of environmentalist praxis through an intersectional lens. This piece of archival research springs from the multi-methods and interdisciplinary approach that frames this thesis. Its historical dimensions mirror Black and other feminist, postcolonial, and decolonial insistences on knowing and tracing our collective histories of resistance as a way of understanding (and continuing to resist) domination today.

Keeping this in mind, the following chapter begins to reflect on how these issues show up as absences and presences of intersectionality in the primary data collected for this research, which spans from the year 1997 to the present day.

Chapter 4. Problematising intersectional absences

The way that intersectionality materialises in environmentalist spaces can be framed as operating as a fluid play between absence and presence. To speak of this *play* is to recognise that intersectionality can be made both absent and present simultaneously. Presence and absence are not static, nor separate (Derrida, 1973, p. 10). They bleed into each other and they co-constitute each other: what we might describe as absolute absence of something in one place, for example, is always already constituted in relation to its presence elsewhere (Derrida, 1967, 1973). Drawing on the themes of *absence* and *presence*, then, this chapter and the one that follows it will present and critically comment on the ethnographic data which I collected during the fieldwork stage of this research project. I draw on this data to closely examine the ways in which intersectionality informs and shapes the organising practices, discourses, and strategies of environmentalists from different parts of Britain. We will see that both within and beyond academic spheres, intersectionality remains contested (Collins and Bilge 2020; Salem 2018; Nash 2017). And we will see more closely in this chapter and the next, that sometimes environmentalists draw on intersectionality conceptually without using the word – whether intentionally or not. Others have never heard of it before – whilst others still, actively resist it.

Based on the 35 semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted for this research project, extended ethnographic participant observation, and textual analysis of various documents including websites and Green Party manifestoes (1997 – 2019), the key themes relating to intersectionality which emerged from this research are loosely organised into absences and presences. This categorisation, at first glance, might suggest a binary opposition between places in which intersectionality could be said to be 'present' and those in which it could be said to be 'absent'. With Derrida's work in mind, I want to resist a binary framing, as the picture is more complicated than this.

Treating absences and presences in two separate chapters does throw up conceptual challenges – especially because, as my proposed typology below shows, there are forms of absence and presence which overlap (i.e., they constitute both presence and absence simultaneously). In order to resist a dimorphic framing, I introduce a fluid typology of multiple types of intersectional absences below (See Table 3). This typology forms the basis from which the discussion will flow in this chapter – whilst the following chapter on presences takes a slightly different inroad to the discussion. The typology of absences below illustrates the diversity of approaches to organising that environmentalists can and do take in relation to intersectionality specifically. I will spend more time setting this out explicitly in relation to the grain of the qualitative data throughout this chapter.

The complexity of intersectionality has been underscored by the work of scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins (2015) and Leslie McCall (2005). Intersectionality's complexity is such that a typology such as the one below cannot be taken as an essential and comprehensive overview of how it can be understood within environmentalist spaces – and, importantly, it does not seek to. I emphasise the *fluid* nature of the typology which proves useful for understanding the varied nuances which characterise how environmentalists do or do not engage with intersectionality. Indeed, environmentalists may demonstrate one or more types of absence or presence at different times and in different spaces. To reiterate, the findings of this research indicate several shades of presence and absence, which are shaped by a multitude of factors, including the biographies of environmentalists, the spatial and temporal contexts in which they are operating, and the political problematics which call environmentalism into being.

As mentioned above, this chapter takes a deeper look at absences in particular – showing how intersectionality's absences can take a variety of forms: ignorance, resistance, as well as a more ambivalent absence which draws on it conceptually whilst avoiding the word 'intersectionality.' The chapter examines these types of absence to think through the silences that British environmentalism produces in relation to intersectionality, and the implications that these silences have for intersectionality and movement organising more broadly. Where does intersectionality *not* speak in the context of British environmentalism? How can we characterise and explain these absences? What effects might these absences have on the ways that British environmentalist discourses are formed and put into practice? What do they say about the relevance of intersectionality to British environmentalism?

Table 1: A fluid typology of intersectional absences

Type	Absence/Presence	Characteristics
Absence as ignorance	Absence	Unaware of the word intersectionality and its potential meaning/relevance to environmentalism
Absence as resistance	Absence	Active rejection of and hostility towards the word intersectionality as well as the notion that it is relevant to environmental organising in any way

Strategic absence	Absence *and* presence	Actors privately express a commitment to intersectionality and use it to shape their organising but consciously avoid using the word in public

The first part of this chapter focuses on *absence as ignorance* – noting where environmentalists demonstrate little to no knowledge of or familiarity with intersectionality. As I explore in greater detail below, this finding suggests that intersectionality has not yet penetrated the dominant environmentalist discourses in Britain overall. In the second part, I examine and comment on intersectionality's *absence as resistance*. Here, I conceptualise absence as active (and often, but not always, explicitly hostile) resistance towards the efforts of (often global majority) environmentalists to introduce intersectionality to frame and shape existing environmentalist agendas and organising practices.

In many ways, both absence as ignorance and resistance are the more obvious forms of intersectional absence. But, as one of the latter discussion points in this chapter on 'strategic absence' will illustrate, being confronted by this absence as resistance can also lead to the *anticipation* of resistance, even when it has not (yet) occurred. Hence, the penultimate empirical discussion section of this chapter examines one of the more ambivalent forms of intersectional absence: *strategic absence*. I use the term strategic absence to refer to and comment on instances where actors privately express a commitment to intersectionality in principle but avoiding using the term 'intersectionality' in public-facing organising. Finally, I provide some broader reflections on some of the political and conceptual implications of intersectionality's absences in contemporary environmentalism in Britain.

4.1 Absence as ignorance

This subsection presents absence as ignorance as one of the significant sub-themes emerging from the data collected for this research whilst beginning to articulate some of the conceptual tensions and problematics that absence as ignorance poses in the context of my research questions. Absence as ignorance describes when environmentalists are either totally or partially unaware of intersectionality as an idea and/or as a term. This ignorance can be partial: 'I think that word intersectionality came up [at an event I went to], but I think-, I don't know. For me, it's kind of quite an academic, technical sort of word that I don't really know much about' (Dechen); 'I have come across it, but I don't quite understand it' (Asher); 'Yes, I've heard it, but I don't it's not something I've used or heard very often, or really understand what, you know-, what lies behind it?' (Ilya) or total: 'I'm not [familiar with it]' (Wu). For some, intersectionality is a familiar term which is in common usage. In one exchange, I asked a respondent if she was familiar with the term intersectionality, to which she responded with exasperation: 'Oh, yes,

the whole world is' (Irena). Yet, as my conversations with other participants as shown above, intersectionality remains a black box for many – whether they had heard of it before or not. The majority of my participants had at least heard the term intersectionality before. Only two participants expressed a total lack of familiarity with intersectionality (both as a term and as an idea).

For example, Wu, who organises in a faith-based environmentalist group tells me that he is not familiar with the word intersectionality at all:

> Lydia
> So, in terms of thinking about other vocabularies that other people might be using, are you familiar with the word intersectionality at all?
>
> Wu
> I'm not, no.

My interaction with Havilah, too, who is active in a local level Friends of the Earth group in Plymouth, suggests that he is unfamiliar with intersectionality, though he does not say so explicitly:

> Lydia
> One of the terms that I've come across is intersectionality. Is that one that you're familiar with?
>
> Havilah
> Tell me what you understand by that.

All of my research participants demonstrated varying degrees of familiarity with intersectionality – which was not a surprise given the limited extent to which intersectionality has explicitly shaped environmentalist discourses in Britain historically (as we saw in the previous chapter). Whilst Havilah and Wu seemed to be totally or near totally unfamiliar with intersectionality, others – like Gray, Constantina, and Morgan – talked about having heard the term somewhere before but not being familiar with what exactly it meant. For example, Gray tells me that he is:

> ...familiar with the word. If you ask me to explain it, I'm not sure that I could really explain what's-, what's meant by intersectionality.
>
> Lydia
> So, it's not a term that is used in terms of the ways that [your local XR group] organise? It's not something that people refer to at all?
>
> Gray
> Not within [my local] group. I mean, I think XR UK communications do-, do sometimes-, have-, do they use the term intersectionality? They might do. Not sure.

Gray has heard the word before but is unsure about what it means. Additionally, Gray's perception of those around him is that 'if you spoke to an average XR supporter in [my local] group, I think quite a few of them probably wouldn't have heard of intersectionality' (Gray). This perhaps suggests that the term intersectionality is not (yet) widespread amongst environmentalists in Britain – for, even if he may have heard it being used before, it is not being used within his local group and he describes being unsure of

what it might mean. Gray is not the only one to have expressed this level of familiarity to me: Constantina, a mother who is active in organising with youth climate strikers in the North of England, explained to me that amongst 'the sort of people that I'm talking to regularly, [intersectionality is] not a word that people sort of use' (Constantina). Incidentally, I had already spoken with two of the young people that organise with Constantina, Mikhal and Matthieu, who had expressed a very strong sense of familiarity with intersectionality from having read about it online and had described it as 'key' to their own organising. Could it be that Mikhal and Matthieu are engaging with intersectionality in their own time and shared spaces without bringing this term to the intergenerational spaces that they are part of? Could they be engaging in 'code-switching' (Gardner-Chloros, 2009) where they either encounter or hold perceptions [23] about generational differences in approaches to and understandings of environmentalism?

These are interesting questions to raise since scholars have emphasised a lack of meaningful engagement with age and generation as components which shape both our experiences and understanding of intersectionality (Collins, 2021). This is especially pertinent in environmentalist contexts where generational differences and relationships are underlined in common narratives that frame climate change and ecological breakdown as issues that will largely be faced by younger and future generations (Roy and Ayalon, 2022) – although, this is a narrative that has been problematised given that these are issues that many are already facing in the Global South, and that Indigenous peoples have been facing for centuries (Whyte, 2017).

In another conversation with Morgan, a white elder, who is active in an XR group based in the North of Britain, she echoed some of the above experiences of unfamiliarity:

> Lydia
> I want to ask you if it's [a term] that you're familiar with. Intersectionality. Is that something that's ever come up in in organising at all?
>
> Morgan
> No, it hasn't. … it's not something that has ever come up within the XR group.

These reflections indicate that in large groups structured as dispersed networks, as XR are, simply using a word like intersectionality in communications from the central 'office' of the network does not necessarily impact the strategies and language which the associated smaller local groups adopt. Rather, the diffusion of frames and tactics within a movement or a particular movement organisation can often

[23] It is important to underscore that these are *perceptions* that young people and older people have different views and approaches to environmentalism and climate change – which I heard being talked about in particular by older environmentalists in my research (Havilah, Wu, Morgan, Ashley). Such perceptions about generational difference and intergenerational tension raise several questions because some recent studies have found little difference in approaches to environmentalism on generational lines in the UK (The Policy Institute, King's College London, 2021).

be lengthy processes (Haydu, 2020). These processes are influenced by a number of factors including the 'catchiness' of an idea; the extent to which a network or movement is homogenously constituted; the agency of movement actors to adopt and adapt new tactics and strategies; and the broader existing political and/or economic contexts (Soule and Roggeband, 2018).

I would suggest here that intersectionality has not yet penetrated the dominant environmentalist discourses in Britain. To argue that intersectionality is not so commonly discussed or recognised amongst environmentalists is supported by research that I have conducted elsewhere, which examines the websites of key environmental organisations in Britain and their discourses (Hiraide and Evans, 2023). This is not to make a generalisable or universal claim for I am interested in the generative, substantive overlaps and chasms between environmentalist and intersectionality; the types of political sutures and ecological futures that these relationships are able to create. Having said that, it *is* useful to observe that whilst intersectionality represents a live node of contention within some organising spaces in Britain, particularly those organising more explicitly around feminist and queer politics (Evans and Lépinard, 2019), it appears that it remains virtually unknown to movement actors in other organising spaces. Given the historical trajectory of environmentalism outlined in the previous chapter, this is not surprising. This brings us to a wider, meta-insight about who intersectionality continues to be associated with more broadly (read: Black feminists rather than environmentalists, with the assumption that the two do not overlap).

Importantly, ignorance does not necessarily mean *resistance* towards intersectionality. As Gray makes clear: 'I'm not against it, obviously, just going by what I know and what I think'. As mentioned above, thinking about the epistemological and political heritage of dominant forms of British environmentalism helps us to understand the marginal place that intersectional politics take in dominant forms of environmentalism in Britain today. And as we will see in the following chapter, there are environmentalist spaces in Britain where the term intersectionality and its politics are mobilised freely and frequently, particularly where Black feminism forms the glue that holds the space together. This is not to excuse environmentalisms which do not engage with intersectional politics of their inaction on the questions that intersectionality raises – especially since exclusionary practices and discourses amongst British environmentalists who have failed to engage with intersectional politics have been well documented and criticised (Akec, 2019; Cowan, 2019; Out of the Woods, 2019; Wretched of the Earth, 2019; *'Climate movement does not represent me'*, 2020; Bell, 2021; Bell and Bevan, 2021; McInnis and Neal-Holder, 2022). In this context, we are beginning to observe (if not actual, then urgent calls for) the increased prominence of frames adjacent to intersectionality which are configured around justice and equity within some forms of environmentalism in Britain. This is especially the case in the era of the

Covid-19 pandemic, which has triggered more conversation about multiple and intersecting crises amongst environmentalists as well as the wider public. This is a trend which has been described by the literature on British youth climate organising in particular (Sloam, 2020; Bell, 2021; Bowman and Pickard, 2021).

On the other hand, this does speak to the questions that some people may raise around the extent to which environmentalists (in Britain) can be expected to explicitly engage with the 'discourse' of intersectionality, which is sometimes presented as either deeply tied to a very academic form of feminism or simply jargon (Gordon, 2016). There is an insight to be drawn here about who intersectionality is largely associated with and how it travels across space (geographical) but also discipline/field (beyond social movements and scholarship which describe themselves as feminist). Intersectionality has Black feminist origins which relate strongly to the context of the US. At best, it is still largely associated with Black feminism, and at worst, with whitewashed versions of feminism. But what is key here is that it remains contained within the study and undertaking of particular types of organising, which are not (explicitly) environmentalist in nature. Given these associations, we might ask, however, whether intersectionality should remain contained within Black feminist conversations amongst Black feminists exclusively? If we take seriously Fannie Lou Hamer's famous affirmation that 'nobody's free until everybody's free' (Brooks *et al.*, 2010); if we have a deep understanding of what the Combahee River Collective were saying when they wrote that 'if Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression' (Combahee River Collective, 1983, p. 278); if we engage meaningfully with Claudia Jones's work which centralises the oppression and resistance of Black women as a catalysing force for securing liberation and equality for all (Lynn, 2014), then shouldn't we conclude that Black feminism's business is everybody's business? These are the questions that the empirical explorations presented here lead us to – and are reflected on in greater detail in Chapter 6.

We could compare intersectionality's absence as ignorance here to other concepts or notions which address structures of domination and power that are more specific to environmentalism. Terms and ideas like 'climate justice' or even 'social justice' (however contested they may be) appear to be far more current and common amongst environmentalists, in general (Griffiths, 2019; Mulholland, 2020). These are terms which about two thirds of my interviewees used with fluency without my prompting (Alex, Ashley, Bai, Bee, Caelan, Chance, Denver, Eden, Ember, Gray, Havilah, Morgan, Shay, Billie, Mikhal and Matthew, Valentina and Liliana, Asher, Nikoleta, Lata, Teodora, Sebastião, Ezra). Indeed, the term 'climate justice' features quite frequently in a lot of the campaigning literature and websites that I consulted as part of this research. Within environmentalist organising, climate justice is an evolving

frame (Gach, 2020), which describes historical and contemporary imbalances with regards to the ways that global contributions to and the burdens of climate change are distributed (Schlosberg and Collins, 2014). This frame has been used by environmentalists to disrupt the construction of climate politics as a 'post-political' issue (Russell, 2012). We can take this as an invitation to reflect in greater depth about how intersectionality and climate justice can and do overlap (de Onís, 2012; Kaijser and Kronsell, 2014; Lakanen, 2019; Amorim-Maia *et al.*, 2022) – a reflection that we will build on in greater detail in the following chapter.

Those of my interlocutors who expressed less familiarity with intersectionality often focused more heavily on themes of sustainability, science, and CO^2 reduction as opposed to more overtly politicised issues relating to the structural intersections of power and domination. When reflecting on their organising, they express that 'fundamentally, it's based on the science' (Teodora) and seek solutions which are based on carbon emissions reduction and focus their efforts on pushing for reform in areas such as 'more sustainable and socially responsible investment' (Lata). These are narratives which have been observed amongst highly visible, prominent environmentalist networks and organisations such as XR (Berglund and Schmidt, 2020) – who explicitly position themselves as going 'beyond' or 'above' politics rather than deeply political and politicised in the types of demands that they are making (Simpson, 2021). Where calls to 'listen to the science' (Extinction Rebellion, 2019a) and reduce carbon emissions take practically exclusive priority in environmentalist narratives, we tend to see less active engagement with the types of explicitly anti-capitalist, feminist, anti-racist discussions that Black feminist praxis has advanced, both historically and presently.

Nonetheless, those I spoke to who *are* focusing on climate science and sustainability initiatives *can* and *do* also reflect on the challenges they face in bringing together the relevance of social issues to their organising around the environment in particular. These challenges materialise in different ways on different spatial scales, from the local to the global. Lata and Teodora – who organise in their respective faith-based networks and charities – do not deny the broader connections in framing issues of social justice and inequities with environmental problematics. Lata's environmentalism takes a hyper-local focus: largely influencing local institutions and businesses to make better choices, such as making their buildings and general activities greener (i.e., less carbon-intensive). She reflects on the difficulties in bringing together an understanding of social justice issues and climate change more broadly:

> So, if you talk to somebody about climate change, I don't think they immediately think of the people. They think you're trying to save trees. And they think you're trying to just protect animals and habitats. But when we bring it back to actually its people, these ecosystems and these trees and everything, that it's people that they're benefiting as well. It's just we've changed the frame framing of the conversation quite a lot. So, when we talk to people, we immediately go to the social side of it. (Lata)

Teodora's organising with XR and other groups which are more faith-based focus on mounting pressure against the UK government to adopt more ecologically sensitive laws and practices – an approach which works on a double-pronged national and global scale. But Teodora reflects on the challenges in making the move from language to action to integrate the notion of climate justice into her organising:

> I think I have, in the past, paid lip service to climate justice. Because I know that talking about climate justice is the right thing to do. But without actually taking the time to understand what does it mean to take that kind of approach to want climate justice as opposed to lower levels of CO^2? (Teodora)

Teodora shares honest reflections about having 'paid lip service to climate justice … without actually taking the time to understand' it because it is the 'right thing to do', which we can read as a form of social desirability bias (Grimm, 2010). Teodora is talking about climate justice and not intersectionality here. But her reflections can translate into reflections on how this fusing of discourse and action (praxis) takes place for intersectionality. What does it mean to understand intersectionality; to reach for it, to desire it, and make it central to our ecological politics beyond merely 'paying lip service' to it? What does that look like? How do we know when it is happening? How do we make it happen? Teodora does not provide a definitive answer to this. I suspect that there is not one. However, her reflections on the contradictions that can appear in engaging with ideas discursively but not operationally speak to ongoing debates about intersectionality (Gordon, 2016; Christoffersen and Emejulu, 2023) – which the final chapter of this thesis, in conversation with the stories told by my participants and the existing scholarly literature, invites us to see as a heuristic, process, and analytic for social movement organising.

We should also think about the types of labour that are undertaken within groups – and how this might shape an environmentalists' relationship with the political and intellectual ideas that drive the work of the group they are part of. Within any given organisation, there are different types of organising labour that individuals might take on and be responsible for. This is highlighted by the distinctions that Dechen makes amongst different roles in her own group. She is very hesitant about her understanding of intersectionality but explains: 'I'm happy to learn more [about intersectionality], but I'm kind of mostly sort of at the moment doing quite a lot of admin for [my group], so yeah, probably need to do a little bit more reading around the subject, but I suppose-, Yeah' (Dechen). That intersectionality is understood as something to *read about* speaks to perceptions about it as a particular type of knowledge (academic) attained in a specific way (textually, not experientially) – but we will come back to this shortly in parts *4.1.1 Too academic? Discursive engagement* and *4.3.1 Too academic?: part II – legibility, context, and access*.

More immediately, we can note that some environmentalists' organising experiences are situated in the connective, often invisible, (Boler *et al.*, 2014) labour that enables the group to run on a practical basis,

whilst others might be more responsible for the intellectual labour in the group, designing and communicating the wider narratives and ideas that frame the work that the group undertakes. There are different roles in groups and social movement actors will have different levels of confidence and influence in the political framing and constitution of the groups they are part of. The designation of roles and levels of influence that individuals are ascribed in a group can be influenced and shaped by existing social hierarchies (Lawson and Barton, 1980; West and Blumberg, 1990; Cable, 1992; Staeheli, Kofman and Peake, 2004; Bell, 2020c). We know, too, that a group could be diverse but the proportion of labour to visibility, influence, and power both within and outside of the group may be imbalanced, unequal even. We saw this in the previous chapter, in a letter from the CND anti racist working group, which acknowledged the greater amount of labour undertaken by the women than the men in the group. If we come back to Dechen's reflections on her role in doing administrative tasks for her group, we might consider that the ways that the intellectual labour and political decision-making power are divided up in a social movement organisation might frame an individual's confidence with and relationship to ideas like intersectionality.

4.1.1 Too academic? Discursive engagement

The total or partial unfamiliarity with the term intersectionality does not automatically mean hostility towards it. What it might speak to is the heritage of British environmentalism and the current state of the key ideas, concepts, and signifiers that shape it presently. As discussed in Chapter 3, environmentalism in Britain emerges out of the conservationism of earlier times. As it shaped up into a new social movement, it did so in a way which remained relatively siloed away from the growing anti-racist and feminist movements that were gaining momentum alongside. From this perspective, there are questions that some may raise around the extent to which British environmentalists can be expected to explicitly engage with the 'discourse' of intersectionality (Gordon, 2016) – a perception which some of my interlocutors also held. The unfamiliarity with intersectionality that I encountered with some interviewees goes some way to indicating the extent to which it is understood and talked about within the environmentalist movement more generally. Interesting, too, are the varying *degrees* of unfamiliarity with intersectionality that I encountered. The level of unfamiliarity that research participants expressed shapes the different ways in which they perceive it to be ir/relevant to environmentalist organising. This gets to the heart of the argument I am crafting in this thesis which affirms some of the links and connections between intersectionality and environmentalism as bodies of thought, action, and politics which are often conceived of as separate to each other.

As discussed in Chapter 2, when contacting potential participants for this research, I shared an informed consent document with each of them which explicitly framed this research as a project exploring the notion of intersectionality. The word 'intersectionality' is even in the title of this thesis. It is

not a secret that my research is about intersectionality. Still, I encountered people who did agree to take part in this project (in good faith, as far as I could tell) that were very unsure and hesitant about their own understanding of intersectionality. In one instance, I spoke to a participant who seemed particularly resistant to intersectionality – but I will come back to this later on in the chapter. Overall, however, to note that participants entered this research with informed consent is to acknowledge the self-selection process which took place in the forging of my sample. Curiously, though, this self-selection did not result in a sample of environmentalists who were all particularly enthusiastic or familiar with the idea of intersectionality. Rather, the research produced a variety of responses to questions about how participants themselves understood and conceptualised intersectionality. As we have already seen, some were not familiar with intersectionality at all.

Dechen, for example, is a woman of global majority and white mixed heritage involved in a local campaign about air pollution in a large city in the South of England. She was vaguely familiar with the term intersectionality. She had heard it used by another environmentalist before – but felt uncertain about its meaning:

> [Someone I know was] talking about, kind of, inequities in exposure to air pollution, or other kinds of pollution and the effects on health inequalities and health. So those might also be... and I think that word intersectionality came up as well, but I think-, I don't know. For me, it's kind of quite an academic, technical sort of word that I don't really know much about.

Dechen also described attending an event at which another one of my research participants from another organisation, Irena, was speaking (by chance!). Dechen mentioned hearing Irena use the term 'intersectionality' but remained intensely hesitant and unsure about what it might mean. Interestingly, when I interviewed Irena, she described intersectionality as being part of 'all these technical terms are useful for people who are technical and but not very useful for ordinary people' (Irena) – an interesting coincidence which reminds us of the complexities in trying to use or avoid particular terms which we find to be inaccessible. We might be using them without realising – or being associated with them despite not using them! In any case, the excerpt from my conversation with Dechen above showed her deep hesitation around intersectionality in the above excerpt, and throughout the interview more broadly. Not only did Dechen express hesitation about understanding intersectionality at all but also felt unsure about whether there might be any relevance between social inequalities more broadly to her campaigning at all[24].

Like Irena, Dechen described intersectionality as an 'academic, technical sort of word' – a perception that was echoed by other participants too. Constantina said:

[24] However, as I note below, she emailed me weeks later thanking me for the conversation we had together, having read a book about race and intersectionality, finding that it was relevant to her organising after all!

> I suppose [intersectionality is] maybe quite an academic sort of-, not in a-, I don't mean that in a kind of-, any kind of derogatory sense. Do you know what I mean? It's not-, it's the people who are reading around things who would use that word.

The perception that intersectionality is an academic notion seemed to contribute to some hesitation about it. This perception that intersectionality is overly academic also feeds into other actors' decisions *not* to use the term intersectionality even when they view intersectional politics as key to their organising (as I discuss later on in this chapter, *4.3 Strategic absence*).

Intersectional absences and presences are not always clear cut. Constantina *had* heard the term intersectionality before, did actually use it once in our conversation before I mentioned it, and was clearly able to give a convincing explanation of her understanding of it – though she prefaced her explanation with a disclaimer that she had 'a feeling that I might not know what [intersectionality] really means, but can say what it feels like' (Constantina).

There were other instances like this in which interviewees had come across intersectionality before. Curiously, they signalled their ignorance of intersectionality: describing their familiarity as purely having heard of it before whilst emphasising their lack of knowledge around what it meant. Despite this, they went on to speak to some of the key debates and ideas that frame current conversations about intersectionality. For example, Sebastião, a white youth striker involved with XR and UKSCN, tells me, 'Yeah, I have [heard of it before but] I can't pin down an exact definition. But it's kind of bringing lots of different causes to the table, like, maybe feminism or LGBT rights or that other thing, integrating it into something else?' (Sebastião). Lata, a South Asian woman based in the Midlands, tells me: 'I kind of have come across' intersectionality before and explains that 'the work that we do is kind of figuring out where are the intersectionalities between the different groups and topics' (Lata), which resonates with Sebastião's ideas. Both Lata and Sebastião profess their own ignorance but capture some of the insights in the scholarship about intersectional solidarity (Tormos, 2017) – likely insights at which they arrived experientially rather than through engagement with the academic literature.

My interviewees' reflections lead us to think about the differences between experiential knowledge and book knowledge (Collins, 1989). This brings us back to epistemological questions about how we come to our knowledge of intersectionality (epistemology more generally) and how this is ultimately mediated by the intersections at which we are situated (feminist standpoint epistemology). Is there a difference between what something 'really means' or what academics say it means, and what it might rather 'feel like'? How does the distinction between book knowledge and experiential knowledge mediate environmentalists' confidence with and interpretation of intersectionality?

4.1.2 Pluralistic interpretations

Any idea or concept is essentially available for multiple interpretation (Berenskoetter, 2016). Moreover, feminist standpoint epistemology emphasises how an individual's social location significantly shapes the lens through which see and relate to the world around them (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002; Harding, 2004; Toole, 2022). How these interpretations materialise and the political implications that they may carry is important for the ways that intersectionality comes to be used; for it might shape the strategies, actions, and choices that environmentalists choose to pursue. It became clear during this research that interpretations about what intersectionality is vary widely. This plurality of interpretation makes itself apparent in the varying interpretations offered by research participants for this project. But also, in the scholarly literature and wider institutional contexts, as both academics and policymakers have interpreted intersectionality in multiple ways for various ends (Ferree, 2009; Christoffersen, 2019). Intersectionality has been conceptualised by some as a 'static list of structural locations and as leading to a problematic form of identity politics' (Ferree, 2009, p. 87), as well as a conceptual tool which lends itself to the naming, analysis, and refusal of the complex webs of power that frame our relationships with each other and the world (*ibid*). These multiple interpretations made themselves present in my research – both in instances of intersectional absence, and as we will see in the following chapter, presence too.

For now, let us turn to environmentalists' own *perceptions that there are multiple interpretations of intersectionality* from a perspective of unfamiliarity with it (absence). Gray – who is a white, middle-class man active in an XR group in a medium sized town in Southern England – explained that not only was he unsure about what intersectionality meant, but also that 'the term [intersectionality] sort of lends itself to quite a lot of interpretation and so could be interpreted in different ways' (Gray). Indeed, for some environmentalists, intersectionality is understood more through a prism of diversity and representation:

> [We] specifically think about it when we recruit new trustees. You know, we have a really good balance between male and female. We're still mostly white. (Xue)
>
> At Greenpeace, we are very aware of that fact [that we are not that diverse]. We are very white, middle class, *Guardian*-reading organisation. Definitely, in London, we are not representative of, like, the population. (Riley)

Riley and Xue appear to be conscious of and sensitive to the criticisms that environmentalists have been subject to in Britain, regarding exclusionary organising practices and homogenous makeup. Indeed, these are issues that many of my research participants raised – whether thinking about intersectionality specifically or not. However, transforming intersectionality into a focus on diversity in some professionalised organisations serves as a counterpoint to what Alex and Cecilia explained to me about the focus on diversity amongst environmentalist groups (and in particular, professional organisations).

Cecilia and Alex – both involved in professionalised organisations – critique the synonymisation of intersectionality with 'EDI', which has become ubiquitous across corporate settings today. The repetition of EDI turns 'equalitydiversityinclusion' into a mantra that risks making intersectionality 'an empty gesture that reaffirms white supremacy' (Christoffersen and Emejulu, 2023, p. 632) within social movement organisations – an outcome which is contrary to the stated desires to do better on these issues. Intersectionality, when understood as diversity, falls short of the structural analysis and interventions necessary to transform existing relations of power more concretely. We see, then, that *how* intersectionality is conceptualised matters. That it is mentioned as a word does not necessarily make it present in a substantive way.

To shift our focus towards other interpretations of intersectionality from positions of ignorance, I want to draw from the reflections provided from parts of the important faith-based constituent of my interview sample. Whilst there is a growing literature which discusses religion and faith as an intersection to study (Lépinard, 2014; Weber, 2015), there is less work interpreting intersectionality from a faith-centred perspective[25]. Some of the insights brought by my interlocutors allow us to think about the spaces available for interpretations of intersectionality through faith-based lenses from people who may not be that familiar with intersectionality in the first place. Ezra, who is a Buddhist, explains to me that although she is not familiar with intersectionality, she thinks that it

> … is similar, I think to my concept of interdependence [which comes from my Buddhist faith]. Right. So, I see it as this affects this affects this affects that… right, you can't isolate anything really, in the natural world, or really anything in a political world. You know, that there are mutually influencing things. Then you might see it as a net or a network. Right.
>
> So, as I was saying about the climate, it is an ecological emergency. It has implications, it connects with poverty in the Global South, which connects with our past: slavery and to industrial colonisation, of our cultures as oppression of other colours, which means they're less resilient, which means they're less… you know, they're poorer. It also connects with extractivism.
>
> So, we've gone into Africa which seems to be the latest kind of playground for companies to go in and extract gas and oil and gas, wholly overriding, you know, local people's rights to their land and even sort of government. So, yeah, obviously, intersectionality is everything being connected? It's interesting because as soon as you said it, I thought, 'Oh, no, I know nothing about intersectionality'. Because it's a new word. But I think I'm right in connecting it with this idea of interdependence. Yeah. What would you say?

There can be multiple interpretations of intersectionality – and even those who are not familiar with it (absence as ignorance) do this work of interpretation, using their existing frameworks like

[25] I do want to acknowledge here that scholars have advanced work on theological interpretations of intersectionality, which are frequently but not exclusively in reference to Christianity (Ramsay, 2014; Perry, 2016; Vuola, 2017; Kim and Shaw, 2018; McCall, 2019; Kim, 2020; See, for example, Carfore, 2021).

'interdependence' and understanding of history and inequality to do this. The multiplicity of intersectionality can produce complications, however. As scholars working with intersectionality have argued, when the single term intersectionality is attributed several (and potentially conflicting) meanings by different actors, its politics can be diluted and ultimately, intersectionality can become depoliticised (Davis, 2008; Erel *et al.*, 2010; Salem, 2018; Buchanan and Wiklund, 2021). This speaks to Ernesto Laclau's conceptualisation of empty signifiers (1996, 2017) which are 'open to contestation and articulation in radically different political projects … [holding] one meaning for a certain group and the opposite meaning for another' (Moraes, 2014, p. 30). Empty signifiers can produce contradictions, confusions, and inconsistencies where the same word is mobilised by several actors whose political projects are, in fact, antithetical to each other.

So, what happens when intersectionality is interpreted in so many ways that it becomes an empty signifier? What happens when it is made to mean everything to everyone? How meaningful is intersectionality as a concept and a politics if it can mean so many things simultaneously? Does it matter that there could be so many different interpretations of intersectionality within environmentalism? Indeed, Ember, who is active in a faith-based climate charity, observed that intersectionality is too often 'talked about without being fleshed out'. His suggestion is that the multiple and fuzzy interpretations of intersectionality reduce the capacity for it to be used concretely and meaningfully.

The debate about the perception that intersectionality is conceptually and politically malleable is urgent for many reasons – and not just within the context of environmentalism. Concerns have already been raised in relation to the ways in which intersectionality has been co-opted by corporate institutions and universities in particular (Alexander-Floyd, 2012; Salem, 2018; Bilge, 2020b), which increasingly overlap in culture and structure in the British context (Vernon, 2018). Co-optation has resulted in an erasure of the fundamental role that race plays in intersectional politics (Alexander-Floyd, 2012; Bilge, 2015), and the term 'intersectionality' has oftentimes been transformed into a synonym for 'diversity' in corporate policies which essentially conserve the status quo thus depoliticising and emptying the term of its meaning (May, 2012b, 2015; Carbado *et al.*, 2013; Christoffersen, 2019, 2022; Christoffersen and Emejulu, 2023).

4.1.3 From ignorance to cognisance?

Some of my interlocutors, especially but not only those who were white, reflected on their experiences of 'learning' and being on a 'journey' as environmentalists encountering issues and ideas relating both to intersectionality and environmentalism/ecology. Gray narrates his own experience in moving towards

ideas and approaches which account better for inequity and difference in relation to environmental and ecological issues:

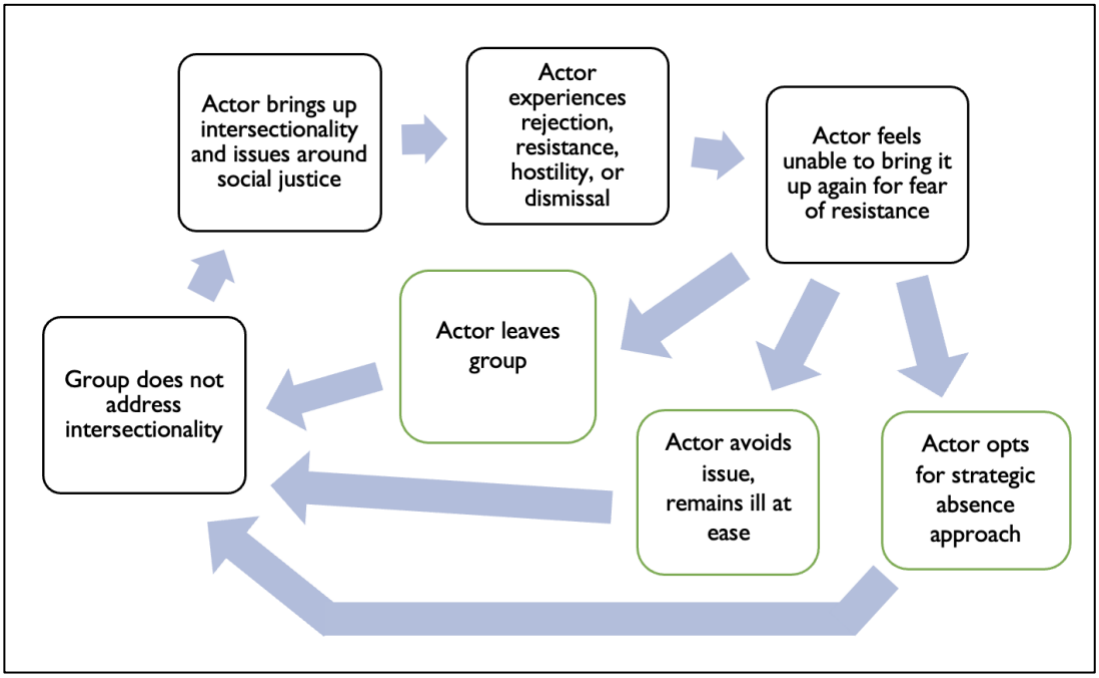
> I think at the point that I joined XR, I was like the classic middle class white male. Not at all aware of climate justice and social-, Well, I've always been maybe slightly left leaning in my politics, but it wasn't on my radar as such. There was an incident that sort of woke me up. I think it was, it was a blog post. .... And basically, it was talking to people like me, that, you know, 'You just don't get it. You've got to widen the movement to be about social justice. Because it's, it's about all these interconnected things.' And initially, I was a little bit resistant, I guess, to that message. But something that has kind of won me over-, well, completely, to that argument really, is a book by Jason Hickel, *Less is More*.

Gray is not talking about embracing intersectionality here, and we should note that Hickel's book, which is about degrowth, does not engage with intersectionality. But what is interesting is that Gray's encounter with different ideas is mediated through his encounter with text, as is Dechen's in the discussion below. As feminist scholars tell us, beginning to engage with the types of politics that intersectionality proposes is as much a process of unlearning as it is *un*learning (Aptheker, 1981; Saavedra and Pérez, 2012; D'Costa, 2021). Whilst I encountered perceptions about intersectionality as an idea which is perhaps 'too academic' to be accessible to most people, Dechen and Gray (as well as Shay, Ember, Gael, and Riley) reflected on how reading books and online lectures formed part of informing their praxis. Some of these interviewees are or have been, themselves, academics (Ember and Gael, for example); from this perspective, engagement with the literature might come more easily to them because of their existing familiarity with and access to academic work. But most of the other people that I spoke to are not academics by profession. Whilst we should acknowledge that there is much published work, which is verbose, inaccessible, and littered with 'academese', there are books and material by academics (and journalists) that movement actors outside of the academy can and do engage with as they reflect on and develop their own politics.

In my conversation with Dechen, who is not an academic, she talked about never having encountered intersectionality at all. As mentioned above, a few weeks after our conversation, I received an email from her in which she wrote that she had read the book *Against White Feminism* (2021), written by feminist journalist Rafia Zakaria. After reading the book, she wrote to me that she now felt that she understood what intersectionality meant. I am not privy to what Dechen has gone on to do with her new understanding of intersectionality, but this interaction can help us to think about the possibilities for intersectional dialogue and engagement with those who are not familiar with it. In terms of generalisability to a wider movement, I do not want to overstate the willingness of environmentalists to engage with intersectionality, especially given the current wider national political climate where hostility is being stoked against Black feminist struggles in Britain today (Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe, 2018) as we witness the emergence/resurgence of the British 'culture wars' (Sobolewska and Ford, 2019; Duffy *et*

al., 2021) and the increasing 'war on woke' (Davies and MacRae, 2023). However – and it might seem fairly obvious to say this – it is not a given that intersectionality's absence as ignorance amongst environmentalists is permanent. As I have already outlined, absence is not *necessarily* resistance; actors may be open and willing to learning about and engaging with intersectionality as a notion they were previously unfamiliar with[26] – though, as I show below, this is not always the case.

Figure 2: Cycles of resistance



4.2 Absence as resistance

In the previous part of this chapter, we saw how ignorance of intersectionality produces intersectional absences within environmentalism in Britain. Let us now turn towards intersectionality's absence as produced through resistance against it. Absence as resistance refers to an active rejection of intersectionality, both as a term and politically. This resistance can be expressed in ways that are either explicitly or implicitly hostile. Using the empirical data collected for this project once again, this part of the chapter will now examine and comment on intersectionality's absence as resistance by drawing on

[26] Though this demands a reflection on whose role it is to initiate these processes of learning and how they should take place.

experiences of active resistance amongst environmentalists in Britain towards intersectionality in organising spaces.

4.2.1 Testimonies of resistance

As noted above, I did not encounter much first-hand hostility towards intersectionality in the interviews I conducted for this study. However, this is not proof that such hostility does not exist anywhere amongst environmentalists in Britain. Participants in this research, especially those who identified as women and with global majority heritage, shared experiences in which they encountered pushback and hostility when trying to advance intersectionality as a way of organising in environmental spaces. These experiences are important testimonies which help us to better understand and explore the state of intersectionality and the potential for intersectional organising in the context of environmentalism in Britain. They have significant meaning, too, for reflections on the burdens of intersectional organising labour. The stories of Eden, Cecilia, and Asher speak to the challenges of doing this work. In our respective conversations, we often joked and commiserated together about being 'that person'; about being, essentially, the killjoy (Ahmed, 2017) in a room full of white, middle-class environmentalists for whom intersectionality is *not* a buzzword and never has been.

Eden, who is a queer Black woman of mixed heritage organising in Wales, explained to me that:

> It is a problem that environmentalism is too white, too middle class, too academic. But when you go into that space where they've had the room all this time and you're saying, 'This needs to be more intersectional,' *they feel like you're accusing them of being something wrong. And you're not.* You're just saying that more people need to have space in this room. And, um, it's almost worse with men. (Laughs) Sometimes. (emphasis added)

Eden's efforts to advance an intersectional agenda in her organising is met with defensiveness – and she notes that this takes place in spaces that are dominated by white, often middle-class, environmentalists; an experience which is echoed in the stories shared with me by many of my research participants (Alex, Bai, Bee, Caelan, Eden, Ember, Asher, Cecilia, Idowu, Irena). I also spoke with Valentina, a South Asian mother, and her young daughter, Liliana, with whom she organises locally in the North of England. Though operating in a different organisational context as an environmentalist in a number of grassroots spaces in Northern England, Valentina shared a similar story to Eden:

> Lydia
> But are those connections [between social justice and environmentalism] contentious in any way? Do you feel like some people might resist the idea that those things are relevant?
>
> Valentina
> … many people are really kind of fired up about the kind of environment and doing something. But when the perspective that is given to us from, say, a white male perspective or white wherever, that means that they're not willing to kind of shift their thinking on that. You know, sometimes, if it's from the white perspective, or it's like, the kind of white saviour perspective. They think, 'Well, at least we do some good or at least there's some, you know, we're talking

> about it.' It's not understanding that you have to take those steps backwards to understand how you've kind of got here.

Like Eden, Valentina also reflects on the defensiveness she observes in her experiences organising as an environmentalist.

The defensiveness that Eden and Valentina describe can be understood as being rooted in privilege. Since 'the benefits afforded to privileged groups typically go unnoticed by those who are privileged' (Evans and Lépinard, 2019, p. 13), pointing out or challenging privileged perspectives can trigger defensiveness – a mechanism which works to uphold, rather than dismantle, racism (Moss, 2001; Adams, Tormala and O'Brien, 2006; Ghorashi, 2014; Michel, 2015; DiAngelo, 2018; Vaught and Castagno, 2020). The experience of hostility and pushback against intersectionality recounted above was a recurring theme amongst environmentalists that I interviewed, especially (but not exclusively) amongst global majority women.

The experience of encountering specific pushback against discussing *anti-racism* specifically was a recurring theme amongst the global majority environmentalists that I interviewed for this research. The haunting absent-presence of race in Europe shows up yet again, revealing itself in environmentalist spaces (M'charek, Schramm and Skinner, 2014). Experiences of racism within grassroots environmentalist groups such as Extinction Rebellion have been well documented (Cowan, 2019; Gil, 2019; McGinn, 2019; Shand-Baptiste, 2019; Wretched of the Earth, 2019; Yassin, 2020). This is an issue which the group has explicitly tried to navigate, running training events such as *Working to eliminate effects of racism in environmental activism* (Extinction Rebellion, 2019b) and talks such as *Racial Justice is Climate Justice* (Extinction Rebellion, 2020). But studies have shown that a failure to take on an anti-racist approach to environmental organising is not only important for those operating *within* these groups but also for their audiences; for the types of organising tactics and discourses employed by groups like XR have also produced feelings of alienation and disconnect amongst communities of colour as audiences/onlookers to environmentalist action (Bell and Bevan, 2021). Concerns about how environmentalists manage and respond to anti-racism was also present in other aspects of the primary research conducted for this study. This was the case during my ethnographic fieldwork which included attendance at Green Party conferences, for example (See Figure 3).

Figure 3: Extract from ethnographic notes
23 October 2021. Participant observation of the Green Party of England and Wales autumn conference in Birmingham.

Background: The Green Party of England and Wales hold their autumn conference every year in a different location. The 2021 autumn conference was the first in-person conference for the party since the COVID-19 pandemic began in late 2019, early 2020. This conference was hosted in a hotel and conference centre on the outskirts of Birmingham, which is a very ethnically diverse part of the West Midlands with about 42% of its population being non-white (Birmingham City Council, 2022).

Observations: I look for … the Greens of Colour meeting …[which] is described on the agenda as a 'safe space' for people of African, Asian, Latin American, Gypsy and Roma Traveller origin. … There are about seven of us in the room and five online. I notice that there is someone sitting at the front. … [In our introductions, he] does not say that he is white, but he says he is here because he is 'interested' in 'international' issues and is keen to talk about them. …

[The convenor] reiterates that allies are welcome and thanks them for their presence. She makes sure to say, however, that this remains a safe space for people from racialised communities. … As the session goes on, she emphasises a focus on coming up with solutions collectively. She encourages us to speak to each other and suggest solutions to the problems we see in the party. …

We are split into small groups … [the convenor] recentres the focus of the room so that we can feed back our conversations to everybody. The white man sitting at the front of the room who was interested in 'international' issues feeds back on behalf of his group. He starts to tell us all that, 'We can talk about these issues forever. But what we really need to be talking about saving the planet.' [The convenor] asks him for solutions. He says, 'None.' Another person from his discussion group, who [is] Black, intervenes. He corrects the white man and explains the topics they had explored in their conversation. I struggle to hear what he is saying because he speaks quietly.

Comments: Despite Birmingham being a very ethnically diverse city, the GPEW conference has not attracted many attendees who are both GPEW members and racially minoritised. White party members attend spaces explicitly labelled as safe spaces for racially minoritised members and insist that the group's attentions to racism and intersectionality are misplaced, specifically because of climate change. The white party member described above (who was one of two white people in the room) seems to take a defeatist approach to issues relating to racism ('We can talk about these issues forever', in relation to solutions, there are 'None') and would rather that this space changes its key topic of conversation away from race and towards 'saving the planet'.

Asher, a disabled woman who immigrated to England from a Global South country, organises with her local XR group. She described feeling extremely 'disappointed' and 'let down' as the group failed to grapple sufficiently with issues relating to social justice, in particular race and colonialism. Rather than aggressive hostility or pushback, she described the resistance she faced as dismissive, with fellow group members 'sweeping [the issue] under the carpet'.

Dismissal has been written about extensively by scholars of Black feminism (Carby, 1982; Alexander-Floyd, 2010; Bliss, 2016; Harris, 2018; Hayes *et al.*, 2021; Oeur and Grundy, 2021). When concerns about social justice are met with dismissive attitudes, the latter operates as a form of erasure. It

undermines the significance of the oppression that marginalised actors are drawing attention to (Cabrera, 2014). By refusing to acknowledge and address the issues raised, those with dismissive attitudes effectively will the continuation of the status quo. Moreover, the experience of facing dismissive attitudes when talking about social justice issues can affect an individual's ability to influence change in the group they are organising in, as Asher, who is a Jewish woman from the Global South, explained to me:

> [My local XR group] asked me to prepare-, They said to me …Can you draw us something? Of what you think-, what it would be like if [our local] XR was committed to social justice. You know, I sat down and made a whole list of things. And then I thought you will probably be accused of being an idealist! Because that's what-, because one of the things that I said in that document is that every action there should be certain questions in the preparation of the action. How will this be impacting on certain communities? How will these communities feel about it? And how will they-, How can you make it so that people feel that they can take part in it? The use of language, the design of them, so that probably, I could have saw individuals in front of me and they are very committed and enthusiastic people in [my local] XR. *And I could see them visually-, them kind of physically looking at me and thinking, she's too much of an idealist, we don't-, you're just bothering us. Go away.* (emphasis added)

The affective quality of Asher's recounting of her experience was compelling. The way she conjures up the image of her peers telling her to go away, to stop bothering them was very moving for me, as an interviewer. Asher was visibly upset as she told me this. Past experiences of encountering actual resistance strengthen the perception that resistance is the likely reaction that this actor's actions will inspire (See Figure 2). We can see how this makes doing the labour to advance intersectional agendas in such spaces difficult. These challenges around organising labour relate to motivations to operate a strategic absence of intersectionality – where actors pre-empt resistance from their peers and potential audiences and thus alter their language, and even the issues they bring to the table, in order to avoid resistance and hostility. I will return to explore strategic absence in greater detail in the following subsection of this chapter.

4.2.2 Affect, labour, and burning out

That the labour of leading action on the concerns of intersectionality, and encountering resistance to when doing so, falls to marginalised actors forces us to reflect on the very concrete consequences for the wellbeing of minoritised environmentalists. These individuals are exposed to the threat of activist burnout, which can take a serious physical and mental toll and cause people to disengage from or decrease their organising (Vaccaro and Mena, 2011; Gorski, 2018, 2019; Gorski, Lopresti-Goodman and dallas rising, 2019). This is even more significant in the case of marginalised actors, since '[s]ystemic oppression is itself [already] traumatizing. To be a member of a disenfranchised race or ethnic group or gender or class or sexual orientation, or to be a child confronted at every turn with an overwhelming system of adult power, is to be bombarded on a daily basis with messages that who you are as a person does not matter in the larger scheme of things' (Wineman, 2003, p. 42). As Cecilia put it, this work is

'draining', 'overwhelming', 'disappointing', and 'disheartening'. Even (and perhaps especially) post-2020, with a more heightened public focus on issues around racism and intersectionality, environmentalists like Cecilia who have been active around these issues since before 2020, 'feel drained by the conversations' where 'There's all the DEI effort… but it's still-, it's still the same, you know' (Cecilia).

These feelings of exhaustion and overwhelm can impact the health and wellbeing of both individuals and movements. Individual environmentalists, like Cecilia, Asher, and Eden experience burnout, exhaustion, and hurt, leading them to reflect on their futures within the wider movement. As Cecilia told me:

> If you're trying to do work around inclusivity and equity in the environmental space I would say that I think [a serious strategy for change would be] being honest or realistic about what is possible when it comes to change. To facilitate intersectionality in a space that is homogenous and consistently homogenous, then you have to assess what is actually possible in that space. If the demographics of the organisation hasn't changed for four or five years, what makes you think that they're going to be open to intersectional approaches to environmentalism? … I would say, to be honest, a strategy for change [in the environmentalist movement], I would say is don't stay too long.

If people exit the environmental movement or turn away from environmental organising because of burnout – and if those people are in large part from marginalised groups in Britain – this has important implications for how green discourses and action continues to evolve in Britain (Bell and Bevan, 2021). But the burden of introducing intersectionality to unchanging spaces of resistance is heavy. It requires emotional labour and time – two forms of labour that women have often been charged with in social movement organising (Lawson and Barton, 1980). As my interlocutors and the existing scholarship affirms, environmentalist discourses and action in Britain benefit greatly from being shaped by various social vantage points or 'standpoints' (Collins, 1989; Janack, 1997; Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002; Harding, 2004); for our different relational experiences of race, indigeneity, class, gender, dis/ability, and other axes of power relations contribute to how we understand and respond to extractivism and ecological breakdown (Bell, 2021).

4.3 Strategic absence

Having examined two forms of intersectional absence in this chapter, I now turn to what I characterise as the *strategic absence of intersectionality*. The strategic absence of intersectionality refers to where actors privately express a commitment to intersectionality in principle but turn away from its language in public. This turn away from using the word 'intersectionality' or language that could be associated with it is a deliberate move, largely designed to avoid alienating the actor's actual and potential peers and audiences. This strategic absence is a conscious effort to either: make intersectionality legible to

those who would not otherwise understand its meaning, and/or to make it palatable and appealing to those who, upon hearing the word (and perhaps recognising its origins) may reject the speaker's claims.

In the context of this research, strategic absence is distinct from the previous types of absence explored above. The strategic absence of intersectionality speaks strongly to the politics of language. Even when environmentalists are keen to embrace an intersectional politics, they are strategically monitoring and shaping their own language in ways that move to obscure the Black feminist locales from which this politics arises – a kind of self-censorship in some instances. As such, strategic absence throws up many questions about a number of live debates amongst (Black) feminists, especially about the politics of citation (Ahmed, 2017) as well as the buzzword-ification (Davis, 2008), co-optation (Salem, 2018), and whitewashing (Collins and Bilge, 2016; Christoffersen, 2019, 2022) of intersectionality. This subsection will examine and comment closely on the complexities of intersectionality's strategic absence in environmentalist discourses.

4.3.1 Too academic?: part II – legibility, context, and access

Around 10% of my research participants described intersectionality as a term which is 'academic' (Dechen, Constantina, Irena) or 'technical' (Chance, Dechen, Irena). Approximately 20% of the remaining respondents described feeling cautious about using the word 'intersectionality' in their organising because they were either unsure how it would land politically (i.e., receive opposition) or were not confident that it would be understood by their audiences who might not be familiar with the term (Bai, Caelan, Ember, Femi, Gray, Gael). Some described opting for a kind of strategic use of intersectionality – which informs their politics ideationally but is never present in the language that they use in terms of political communication. We could describe this as a form of erasure of intersectionality whilst actively drawing on it to inform their organising and/or activism. The relationship between academia and environmental organising is curious for many reasons. In some countries, like in the EJ movements across the US, the intersection of the two spheres has produced fruitful alliances whereby engaged scholars produce credible, scientific data which supports legal environmental justice claims against local and national governments made by aggrieved communities (Cole and Foster, 2001; Chiro, 2008; Bacon *et al.*, 2013; Alvarez and Evans, 2021; Ergas, McKinney and Bell, 2021). In Britain, we have seen similar partnerships emerge in places like London and Bristol, where scholars have worked with marginalised communities to expose the environmental inequalities they experience (Mitchell and Dorling, 2003; Agyeman and Evans, 2004b). We have also witnessed more loosely organised collaborations amongst academic researchers and grassroots organisers, with the emergence of groups such as Scientists for Extinction Rebellion, scholars signing open letters coordinated by activist

groups[27], and indeed, many of the individuals interviewed for this research were organisers/activists as well as academic researchers. So, what is the problem with a concept, theory, or framework being 'too academic'? And *is* intersectionality too academic, or technical?

Whilst some scholars and activists/organisers have found ample opportunity for collaboration with each other, there has also been a historically troubled relationship between political organising and universities/university research; a gap between the two spheres (Martin, 2010; Flood, Martin and Dreher, 2013; Kelley, 2018). Scholars in the Black Radical Tradition have even argued that the two are antithetical to each other, stressing that the intellectual, social, and material foundations upon which modern universities function are already always reliant upon the logics of racial capitalism (Harney and Moten, 2013; Kelley, 2018). I recognise that, for the most part, those who hold the view that universities are antithetical to the interests of Black politics likely would not have engaged with/answered the call to be interviewed for my research – though I did speak with two global majority environmentalists who did express this view of universities and academics quite strongly (Idowu, Irena).

As we will see shortly, some of the interviewees in this study pointed to the perceived gap between theory coming out of academia and political organising as particularly problematic. Moreover, they see this chasm as producing barriers to using vocabulary specifically associated with intersectionality when speaking to fellow environmentalists and audiences who could potentially be recruited into their organisations. But is intersectionality too academic? Yes, intersectionality, as a word, is one which is born in the university. But is it fundamentally *of* the university? This is a discussion to which I will return shortly. For now, let us look more closely at the interview data.

The characterisation of intersectionality as either 'too academic' or too difficult to understand amongst many was particularly (but not exclusively) noticeable amongst environmentalists either already in or seeking elected office or organising in a professionalised setting. Caelan, a locally elected Green in England talked about this:

> Lydia
> And what about this notion of intersectionality? Is that something that you think is a useful vocabulary?
> Caelan
> So, I'm very passionate about the concept… I think there's a lot of work to get it broadly understood. And I think, you know, if you did a poll of 100 people, unfortunately, a quite

[27] 'End BP sponsorship of British Museum': 90 heritage professionals sign open letter against oil giant. The Art Newspaper. 11 November 2021. https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2021/11/11/end-bp-sponsorship-of-british-museum-90-heritage-professionals-sign-open-letter-against-oil-giant (Accessed 21 March 2022)

UCL archaeologists oppose the British Museum seeking new BP sponsorship. 20 February 2022. UCL Institute of Archaeology. https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/news/2022/feb/ucl-archaeologists-oppose-british-museum-seeking-new-bp-sponsorship (Accessed 21 March 2022)

> small minority of people would, would understand it. Now, you know, whether that's about using our platforms to get the word out there and get more people understood, or it's about breaking down what we mean by intersectionality down to its components. And you know, when I think about my day-to-day group campaigning, you know, I write newsletters, talk about issues and I try and break down the language that we use. So that like, an 11- or 12-year-old can understand it.

Gael, also an elected Green in Scotland, reflected:

> I spent 10-, more than 10 years as an academic, so I probably get sucked into theoretical language probably too quickly. But I like it. I like language, and I like what it can do. But I think there's something about recognising difference and recognising where other people are. So, you know, I might not say I'm an intersectional feminist when I'm speaking to people at the food bank or when I'm meeting a Tory, for instance. But I'll talk about, you know, whether they can access the shops that they need to-, ... I talk about class all the time, even if I didn't use the word class.

Here, the interviewees raise concerns which can be understood as problems related to issue framing. Both of my interlocutors here are elected Greens – but this was a view that was also reflected in other professionalised environmentalist organisations, including the Black Environment Network and faith-based climate charities. Issue framing is extremely important in the work of these groups (Rhee, 1997) and this is articulated through the types of language that they choose to use or avoid (Brewer, 2002; Cameron and Shaw, 2016). By using the word 'intersectionality' – which they argue is perceived to be an academic/theoretical word with which many will be unfamiliar – Gael and Caelan talk about the risk of alienating the targets of their campaigning or political organising. Speaking from a charity perspective, both Irena and Chance expressed similar concerns, more in relation to accessibility and, to a certain extent, palatability in politically pluralistic contexts. But as we know from the current political climate, being understood is not the only barrier to using intersectionality. It is hostility as well. This is something that environmentalists organising in faith groups talked about too (explored more below).

We have already touched on some of the issues relating to the use of overly academic language or concepts being transported into other spaces. However, in the context of this specific study, the notion that intersectionality is 'too academic' might be questioned. Intersectionality's origins lie within Black women's community organising for social justice (Collins, 1989; Bilge, 2020b). Intersectionality thus emerges out of taking tangible action to animate the material, social, and cultural redistributions necessary to combat structural inequalities. Indeed, since its inception, intersectionality has been robustly theorised in the academy – hence the existence of the vocabulary to express it today. But Patricia Hill Collins emphasises the real-world implications of intersectionality, arguing that intersectionality is principally about political organising and concrete social justice work (2015, p. 16).

4.3.2 Strategising against alienation and hostility

Whilst some interviewees employed the strategic absence of intersectionality because of concerns about legibility and comprehension, others expressed concerns about the language being met by

hostility. As such, they reflected on their efforts to incorporate intersectionality into their work without using the language as a way of avoiding alienating other environmentalists operating in the same space. Ultimately, these interviewees strategically operationalise intersectionality in ways that intentionally obscure its Black feminist origins. This observation raises many challenging questions. What does it mean to draw on Black feminist ideas whilst actively deciding not to cite them or talk about their origins? What kind of politics does strategic absence produce in the face of hostility towards Black feminism? And how useful is strategic absence in environmentalist contexts specifically? These are questions which many Black feminists have already been discussing extensively, especially in the context of political organising and theorising around the specific issues of racism and heteropatriarchy (e.g., Gines, 2011; Alexander-Floyd, 2012; Carbado *et al.*, 2013; Collins, 2015; Hall, 2016). With the help of their scholarship, we will return to these questions in greater depth towards the end of this chapter and in the final discussion chapter.

As Denver, a young, white Christian man who organises in a local-level faith-based youth climate group told me:

> I love my church, and I know many things that are good about it, but [intersectionality is] probably something that some people would not be comfortable with because they would say that they see-, they see-, they see it as part of a-, kind of, like, a progressive kind of agenda. That kind of thing. They get very worried about it. And because of that, it's seen as something kind of political, that you shouldn't, kind of, engage with. Which is ironic because you know, the-, you can't really, like, remove yourself from politics, whatever you're doing, you know. These more conservative churches are just as political as liberal ones. Yeah. Just in a different way.

Similarly, Chance, who is active in a faith-based climate charity explained:

> I think it's always like, have-, have the three things working as a trinity: race, class, gender, race, class, gender. Always have those and you know-, and add others where appropriate; disability, sexuality… but for me, it's like if I'm not thinking race, class, gender, I'm not doing my job. And of course, I think it's, it's entirely relevant [to environmentalism]. I try not to use the word intersectionality though. I just try and do it. When I'm writing newsletters, or when I'm organising events or whatever I try never to use that word. But again, those three interacting factors I always think about them. [An ex-colleague to] whom I'm still really close to and I really have a lot of time for … was telling me, 'Look, if you say the word intersectionality you're going to turn a lot of people off.'

In these reflections, the interviewees are not questioning whether people would understand what intersectionality means. The issue is not comprehension, although both interviewees raise this at other points in the discussions that I had with them. But here, they raise concerns about active hostility. In pronouncing the word 'intersectionality', they recognise that they face the risk of 'turning people off,' triggering hostility and potential opposition; responses that Black feminists are no strangers to (Alexander-Floyd, 2010). Chance and Denver show an acute sensitivity to the potential hostility or ignorance of their audiences when talking about issues relating to intersectionality. Having experienced

this hostility, and anticipating it in the future, Chance and Denver choose not to use the word intersectionality – even if they describe it as important to their organising, effectively producing its absence whilst trying to maintain traces of its ideational presence.

Caelan, a gay man of the global majority, explained to me, ignorance and hostility can be entangled. As a locally elected Green, he recognised that although some people may genuinely lack an understanding of intersectionality, there remain cases of bad faith. Put simply, people might feign ignorance in order to avoid talking about the issues associated with intersectionality: 'Some of the resistance you get to [intersectionality] is about-, you get the odd one who's 'Oh God, all these complicated terms,' and you think quite clearly that [they] don't want to engage with the idea, really' (Caelan). This feigning of ignorance runs parallel to the mechanisms of defensiveness that we saw earlier in this chapter. Describing intersectionality as a technical or complicated term or idea can function as a strategy in which those who resist intersectionality as a politics relieve themselves of engaging with it. Caelan is therefore cautious about using the word intersectionality in some places and not others – noting instances in which he 'might say it and explain it as well' and generally, 'using it in the right context and making sure that we are taking the time to explain those words …so that people can learn from this' (Caelan). Caelan thus hints at the flexibility of strategic absence – whilst it might be operated in some circumstances, it may not in others. Hostile conditions *within* environmentalist groups (as well as from without) can make using the word intersectionality challenging – especially for environmentalists who are invested in convincing potentially unsympathetic audiences to vote for them or engage with the politics of the environment as a stand-alone issue.

4.4 Coda

Over the course of this chapter, I have tried to show that the ways in which intersectionality is conceptualised shapes the way in which it can be operationalised within environmentalist organising. This might seem like an obvious statement. But what this means in the context of this research is that the ways that social movement actors understand intersectionality (if at all) impacts both how they shape and communicate their political demands, as well as the literal spaces in which they do this. These meanings are further complicated by the ways that ecological problematics move across scale. Indeed, my interlocutors often explicitly situated the issues they organise on both between and within local and global scales.

Examining intersectional absences in their various forms requires sensitivity to the various contexts and conditions in which environmentalists are organising. I have echoed the literature on intersectionality and social movement praxis to argue that simply adopting the term 'intersectionality' into

environmentalist discourses does not necessarily lead to or provide proof of its material operationalisation. Equally, the absence of the word is not necessarily proof of resistance against it.

Intersectional absences manifested as ignorance and resistance are relatively intuitive. Some environmentalists do not know about intersectionality – and others do not approve of it.

Where intersectionality has not penetrated mainstream environmentalist discourse in Britain, we can expect to observe absence as ignorance. As noted, this absence is not *necessarily* indicative of resistance – though the two can, indeed, coalesce. Ignorance as absence raises issues and questions around how we move from absence to cognisance – whose responsibility is it to facilitate this journey? How can it be facilitated? And through what mediums can this learning and unlearning take place? Strategies from groups like UKSCN seem to align with UK based feminist grassroots groups like Sisters Uncut, which place the onus of learning not on marginalised actors, but those who are intersectionally advantaged. Research and reading activities – both in print and digital format – are encouraged. Absence as resistance, however, raises other problematics. As I have emphasised, not all environmentalists are open and amenable to intersectionality or its semblances – just as the same holds true for some feminists and anti-racists. The existence of this resistance, however, can have important implications for how environmentalists who *are* invested in intersectionality navigate their politics and the language they use in organising.

Strategic absence is distinct from the other types of absence explored earlier on in the chapter. It is primarily an absence of the word 'intersectionality' itself, whilst actively trying to engage with the *meaning* of the word in other ways. Strategic absence is thus an effort to orchestrate the 'absence of the object' (Derrida, 1973, p. 90) (which is intersectionality) without compromising its meaning. Strategic absence raises several questions: What does it mean to draw on Black feminist ideas whilst actively deciding not to cite them or talk about their origins? What kind of politics does strategic absence produce in the face of hostility towards Black feminism? And how useful is strategic absence in environmentalist contexts specifically? Even when environmentalists are keen to embrace an intersectional politics, they can be strategically monitoring and shaping their own vocabularies in ways that move to obscure the Black feminist imaginaries which make intersectional environmental organising possible. Strategic absence is a pragmatic approach to ecological politics in the face of hostility and resistance in some instances. For others, it is a response to the perception that intersectionality is an overly academic piece of jargon – a claim which some of my interlocutors approached critically, noting the bad faith critiques that Black feminists can and often have been subject to such that the person advancing the claim is freed from shifting their own praxis. Yet, in these conditions of hostility and resistance, some environmentalists continue to create and build on

ecological spaces that place intersectionality front and centre. This is what the following chapter explores.

Chapter 5. Navigating intersectional presences

The previous chapter showed some of the ways that intersectionality is made absent in the discourses and organising strategies within environmentalism in Britain. This chapter will continue to present and critically comment on this data whilst shifting focus to think more about the *presences* of intersectionality in the organising strategies and discourses of environmentalists. I continue my line of argument – namely, that the ways in which social movement actors understand intersectionality impacts both how they shape and communicate their political demands, as well as the literal spaces in which they do this. To support this argument, this chapter presents an in-depth examination of *how* intersectionality is conceptualised where it is 'present' and a critical reflection on the implications of this. The first part focuses on a more general discussion of a more explicit and visible engagement with intersectionality as understood by my interlocutors, and the latter part grounds this more specifically in their *environmentalist* praxis.

The chapter is organised around the theme of presence – in particular, what I refer to as *explicit presences*. I take a slightly different approach to the previous chapter. The intersectional presences are not presented typologically here. Identifying presences was more challenging than absences. And in many ways, there is some continuity between the absences discussed in the previous chapter and the presences here.

I spend time thinking about intersectionality as being explicitly present, where the word intersectionality is used and, often, its Black feminist origins are explicitly acknowledged by the person or group using it. However, it is not conceptualised or operationalised uniformly in its usage. Noting this, I seek to interrogate how environmentalists talk about intersectionality at different levels of analysis (e.g., structural, individual, global, local), the challenges in using and operationalising intersectionality, as well as how they relate intersectionality to the specific context of environmentalist mobilisation.

Intersectionality's 'explicit presence' serves partly as a counterpoint to the absences we saw in the previous chapter. There are, of course, many continuities between the themes and narratives explored in the previous chapter on absences in this discussion on presences. For example, I circle back to discussions about the pluralistic interpretations of intersectionality that we began to examine in the previous chapter. I also problematise the idea that explicitly naming one's own approach to environmentalism as intersectional *necessarily* indicates a meaningful presence of intersectional thinking (echoing Teodora's insights about social desirability and climate justice in the previous chapter). More broadly, this chapter examines how actors who explicitly draw on intersectionality conceptualise

it and reflects on some of the political and material implications of these conceptualisations. These insights provide a springboard from which to think about what it might mean to move towards green Black feminist thought and praxis, as we will see in greater detail in the following chapter.

Using an affective lens, the first part of this chapter returns to discussions about pluralistic interpretations of intersectionality to provide comment on the limitations of language as we operationalise intersectionality in environmentalist spaces. The second part of the chapter (proposes a grammatology of intersectionality, thinking through the different levels of analysis (i.e., structural, individual, global, local) that environmentalists work between as they draw on intersectionality to frame their politics. Drawing on the insights shared by my interlocutors in whose discourse I identified explicit intersectional presences, I comment on the specific contours of their intersectional analysis as they relate to environmentalist praxis. The third part of the chapter unpacks some of the ways that environmentalists who draw on intersectionality explicitly use it: as a tool to engage in self-reflexivity, as a way to measure and legitimise particular iterations of environmentalism, and an emergent strategy for coalitional organising. Finally, I close this chapter with a coda which pulls together reflections on the arguments presented in this chapter as a bridge to the final discussion chapter of this thesis: *Questions for a billion green Black feminisms.*

5.1 Unease, multiplicity, and presence

As I noted in the previous chapter, both environmentalists who are familiar and unfamiliar with intersectionality offer several interpretations of it, using different frames and language to do so. Hence, this subsection reflects on the language that environmentalists use to talk about intersectionality, as well as the challenges that they face in doing so.

This study started out as a comparative case study, partly with a view to better understanding and thinking through the travels of intersectionality between cultures and languages (French and English). Whilst that comparative project ultimately did not come to pass, the questions about language remain. Unsurprisingly, these questions materialise not in relation to thinking about different languages as in tongues (like French, English, or Spanish), but rather, in terms of the available words which exist *within* languages, how we use them to construct frames, and the limits that they present. Conversations with interviewees and colleagues and in-depth research have shaped my understanding about the ways in which intersectionality is understood and used as being deeply reliant on the vocabularies and frames that we already have available to us. That existing vocabularies and frames can feel insufficient for accurately capturing and articulating our politics can be challenging and even frustrating – especially when we are building a politic which is invested in 'creating a world we have never seen' (brown, 2017, p. 99). Noticing this in the narratives of my interviewees, I use this subsection to reflect on affect and

vocabulary, and the challenges they pose, as they relate to the multiple interpretations of intersectionality I encountered in this research.

In the interview data that I collected, just over a third of the total interviewees either expressed either that they were unfamiliar with intersectionality, were hesitant or unsure in talking about it, or deliberately obscured their engagement with it in their public-facing campaigning (12 out of 35). Additional extensive discourse analysis that I have undertaken elsewhere of key environmentalist groups and organisations with a digital presence across different parts of Britain mirrors these findings (Hiraide and Evans, 2023). In short, it appears that intersectionality is not (yet) a widespread notion amongst environmentalists in Britain (especially in comparison to a notion like 'climate justice' which appears to be more common in environmentalist discourses). As we saw in the previous chapter, many of the conversations that I sought out for this research included hesitation amongst my interlocutors when I asked them how they understand intersectionality and what it means to them, if anything at all. This was particularly the case amongst those who expressed unfamiliarity with intersectionality. But interestingly, this was also the case for those who emphasised that intersectionality was extremely important to their organising.

Just as with intersectional absences, intersectional presences can also be accompanied by feelings of hesitation and unease. I would like to suggest that we can interpret this unease in the context of the conceptual, theoretical, and analytical challenges that intersectionality poses. Rather than trying to accurately identify and capture the exact feelings in the interview data, then, I use unease as an affective lens with which to tap into some of the wider debates about the complications that defining and mobilising intersectionality invites (McCall, 2005; Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013; Collins, 2015; Collins and Bilge, 2016). Qualitative research processes and data is laden with emotions (Ivey, 2023) – to the extent that some scholars have described undertaking such research as 'emotion work' (Dickson-Swift *et al.*, 2009). How we identify and interpret the feelings that we experience and encounter in qualitative ethnographic research, though, is less than straightforward. Not least because it is difficult to systematically identify the feelings caused just by the presence and manner of the researcher as a key shaping component of the research encounter (Coffey, 1999). Nonetheless, thinking through the lens of feelings is fruitful for reflecting on the conceptual and even methodological complications that organising and researching with intersectionality invites.

5.1.1 It 'feels hard to grasp'…

In the following discussion, I focus on how unease and hesitation framed the ways in which participants explained how they understand and use intersectionality. Noticing this unease inspires a reflection on

some of the challenges that working with intersectionality forces us to face. As Billie, a faith-based climate activist in a grassroots network, explains to me:

> I suppose my understanding of intersectionality is when two particular things overlap or cross or there's something that's shared between them. Very closely linked together. So, I suppose like almost like a Venn diagram, of, like, two different things. I have heard of it mostly through talking about social justice or justice issues. But I think that, yeah, intersectionality is a really, really tricky kind of approach, because there's-, just, again, because it's so complex, and so many intricacies within these issues, kind of… I think, conversations about intersectionality can feel a little bit like not reducing those intricacies, all those complexities of each issue. Yeah, sometimes it feels hard to kind of grasp. The real complexity of each issue. I don't think we can talk about them separately.

Billie reflects on how intersectionality 'feels hard to grasp' and is a 'really, really tricky kind of approach' because of the 'intricacies' and 'real complexity of each issue'. This reveals some of the conceptual – and even methodological – concerns that working with intersectionality poses. These are concerns which materialise in relation to environmentalist mobilisation, but also social justice struggles and movements more broadly. That intersectionality can *feel* so difficult to define and work with – even by those who consider it central to their organising efforts – could point to some of the challenges posed by the vocabulary we have available to us. There are limits to our existing shared vocabulary which we have access to in order to conceptualise and address intersectionality (Collins, 2015). In some ways, Billie's reflections echo the work of intersectional scholars which emphasises some of the experientially complex and sometimes even contradictory nature of intersectionality. Talking about structures that are 'very closely linked together' that are '…almost like a Venn diagram' require us to recognise them as already being separate, even if we want to honour '[t]he real complexity of each issue… [and not] talk about them separately'.

Constantina, a white woman organising with youth strikers mirrors some of Billie's thoughts here:

> Yeah, I mean, it's super interesting, isn't it? Because it's so interconnected, but then also it's so complicated, that kind of intersection of when you're trying to talk about something but then it becomes involved in all these other issues. And sometimes it feels only have to concentrate on one thing, but I think the social justice element is obvious, isn't it? You know, it's like, we've plundered the earth and, you know, half the planet, and people on it are suffering because of basically, the white, colonial… what's happened. So, you can't get away from that. It's like you know, it's massive. So, yeah.

Constantina identifies some of the challenges in talking about intersectionality from a mutual constitution perspective. Since structures of oppression and power reinforce each other and are interwoven in ways that cannot be disentangled, it becomes difficult to talk about them as being separate because you try 'to talk about something but then it becomes involved in all these other issues'. At the same time, by naming race/racism and heteropatriarchy as separate structures, or 'issues' as Constantina describes them, that *overlap*, we already assume some sort of discrete boundaries between them exist. From this perspective, we begin to see some of the limits to our shared

vocabularies to examine these phenomena, and, indeed, of language more broadly. To this extent, intersectionality 'participates in the very power relations that it examines' (Collins, 2015, p. 3).

5.1.2 Just a word? 'Looking for' intersectionality

I have used feelings of unease and hesitation to frame participants' responses – but these feelings can be extended to reflect on research processes and outcomes from my own perspective too. Carrying out this research forced me to reflect periodically on the methodological implications and challenges around 'looking for' intersectionality amongst environmentalists. My aim here is not to set myself up as an authoritative arbitrator of intersectionality – especially when varying interpretations co-exist. I am more interested in *thinking about how people think about intersectionality* and understanding what this does politically. This is an effort to deepen our knowledge about what this looks like in a specifically environmentalist context. With the collaborative discussions and insights from my generous research participants, I try to expand what we already know about intersectionality and examine the different forms this takes for environmentalism, a movement which has been hampered by its own inability to politicise itself (Russell, 2012). Hence, this is less about measuring intersectionality and more about trying to understand how, through shades of absence and presence, it contours environmentalist praxis.

As mentioned previously, it has been more challenging to identify and analyse intersectional *presences* than absences – particularly where those presences are more explicit (unlike the more ambivalent articulations of intersectionality where presence and absence pore into each other, such as with strategic absence). Many of my interlocutors seemed unsure of intersectionality even as they talked about it being central and important to their organising – an experience that I sympathise with as an active environmentalist trying to centre intersectionality in my own work too. I also identify with this unease around intersectionality as a researcher. In many ways, it is difficult to think about what intersectionality looks like in action, since it can be conceptualised in various ways and because of its relative newness to most forms of environmentalism in Britain. Normative conceptualisations of intersectionality not only seek to describe power as it is articulated in our lived world, but to intervene in these realities. Such intervention requires visioning, imagining. And to imagine different futures, to engage in futurity is not always easy because it is to regard that which has not yet come to pass – though, any meaningful change requires it (brown, 2017).

With this in mind, the remainder of this chapter looks at how my research participants understood intersectionality as a way of formulating a specifically *environmentalist* politics – arguably the part of the wider discussion that those of us who are active around intersectionality and ecological issues have the most to learn from. The following chapter will build on this discussion even further with a sort of

theory building exercise that asks questions which seek to build green Black feminist praxis in Britain in light of this study's findings.

5.2 Grammars of intersectional presence (from first to third person)

Having noted the unease and hesitation that can frame our relationships with intersectionality, we turn our attention to interrogating the multiplicity of intersectionality in environmentalism; that is, reflecting more deeply on the existing different ways of understanding, interpreting, and using it. This multiplicity has already been observed in a range of settings from state-level policymaking (Christoffersen, 2021) to feminist organising (Ferree, 2009). This subsection echoes the existing literature on intersectional theory and practice in other fields, with specific insights about environmentalism.

Here, we take a closer look at several interpretations and uses of intersectionality, especially amongst environmentalists who draw on it explicitly. I conceptualise some of these varying interpretations through the grammatical person (first person and third person). I propose these grammars as different ways of talking about intersectionality – through the first and third person, and in relation to wider collective conditions too. These grammars relate to existing debates about how we interpret and use intersectionality in feminist and anti-racist movements (Ferree, 2009; Collins and Bilge, 2016) – but owing to the different scales and frames that ecological issues and organising pose, take on particularities, as we will see below. Whilst we will see absences *and* presences in these grammars of intersectionality, I am interested in focusing on the different ways in which intersectionality shows up for those who are consciously working with it as a frame or basis for organising.

Firstly, though, I note that thinking about different interpretations of intersectionality is crucial. Whether we understand it as a way to produce static lists of identity markers for individuals, for example, or as a relational process to expose and overcome the contradictions of the power embedded in such markers will inform the shape and direction that our politics and organising will assume (Ferree, 2009). Given the emphasis on climate justice in the narratives of my interlocutors, I try to use this space to think more about what different interpretations of intersectionality means for environmentalism. This means taking into consideration the different levels of analysis which inform environmentalist organising (e.g., individual, local, national, global, ecosystemic). How do environmentalists hold these different levels in their analysis when thinking about intersectionality – especially given the historical development of intersectionality in the context of organising to abolish the transatlantic slave trade (Truth, 2020), and later, to understand and critique legal systems in settler states (Crenshaw, 1991)? I want to keep in mind the historical context of intersectionality, and what happens to it as it travels. Intersectionality is commonly associated with critical race legal studies, largely because of the influential work that

Kimberlé Crenshaw has undertaken in this sphere. I would argue, however, that *social movements* (in study and practice) are at the heart of the work to develop intersectionality – both in the academy and beyond. Intersectionality's origins in social movement theory and practice ignites the call to think about it in multiple social movement contexts (Roth, 2021) including, as this thesis does, within environmentalism.

I propose two grammars of intersectionality as a way to understand the different relationalities that shape environmentalist engagement with it. These interpretations and debates about intersectionality within environmentalism relate to some parallel debates in feminist and anti-racist organising; similarities which I underline throughout the discussion.

We turn to a brief discussion about the role of *identity* in order to understand what it means to grammarise intersectionality into first and third persons in the context of environmentalism.

5.2.1 Intersectionality and identity

Though intersectionality has often been used as a framework within which to discuss identity, this has not been without contention (Nash, 2008, 2013, 2017). In particular, critics have argued against the stretching of intersectionality to include any and every characteristic imaginable, particularly because of the ways that doing so displaces race as a key modality in which intersectionality was originally conceived (Bilge and Denis, 2010; Tomlinson, 2013; Bilge, 2015; Christoffersen, 2019). Some of these concerns are mirrored in the interview data collected in this study. And secondly, the purpose of this chapter – and indeed, the wider thesis – is not to contribute to the live debates on the legitimacy, validity, or limits of identity politics as such. That the latter remains so contentious today is a testament to the conceptual and political complexity of identity as a political concept and tool. For the purposes of this discussion, I examine how my interlocutors invoked the notion of identity to talk about intersectionality and environmentalism. In doing so, I excavate some of the political tensions and opportunities that can arise from conceptualising intersectionality through the prism of identity in environmentalist contexts.
'Identity' was a recurrent term that my interlocutors used to explain and interpret intersectionality (63 word occurrences). Those who expressed a familiarity and confidence with using intersectionality to formulate their environmentalist politics often starting by talking about their own identities to define intersectionality. As an aside, this means that participants disclosed personal identifying information about themselves to me. I do not include any direct quotes from interviews that list those identities, especially where this would make them easily identifiable, to protect the anonymity of participants.

The emphasis on identity often took place on an individual level of analysis – but does not occlude insights on how structures produce and converse with individual identities. That is, participants

describe intersectionality as the phenomena in which individuals hold multiple identities which lead to experiences of oppression and domination. Alex talks about intersectionality as the

> layers [of] different kinds of identities that some people have and … it can lead to complex identities of just overlapping struggles or oppressions depending on those [identities that] you hold. But to me, intersectionality is really powerful. It is really important to my identity. I think it should be really important to everyone…

Here, Chance describes how he understands intersectionality:

> My understanding of intersectionality is that we all have different facets of how we are categorised, or how we might identify and there are different levels of privilege or lack of privilege that come.

The last quote reflects more on 'how we are categorised' (perhaps from without) and 'how we might identify' (from within) – leading us to think about the interplay between structure and individual as well as the ways in which identities are called into being from perspectives which are both internal and external to the individual subject (Hall, 2014). Throughout the above reflections, and within other interviews not quoted above, there emerge recurring themes of power, privilege, and difference as key components of intersectionality. Such analyses could be said to oscillate between the individual and structural levels as they examine how identities shape the different experiences of power that individuals and groups encounter. Both Alex's and Chance's insights about what intersectionality means would not be misplaced if they were in a study of feminist and anti-racist movements, rather than environmentalist mobilisation. That both Chance and Alex are engaged in responding to the politics of difference and using it to organise politically speak to the ways in which power relations shape *all* social movement organising. No movement organises in a vacuum – and existing hierarchies of power which produce the types of identities that Chance and Alex are talking about are relevant even to movements do not ostensibly coalesce around any particular one of these identities.

Ember shares similar insights on how we interpret intersectionality, emphasising the particularities that individuals experience within larger groups. That is, the necessity to disrupt the idea that those grouped together by particular identity markers are uniform and homogenous:

> So, I think intersectionality means that we may have common experiences, but due to our own particularities, which may be due to different identity, identity markers, are race or sex, sexual orientation. We will have experiences that are unique to those who have those identity markers, which means we will have certain knowledge and certain experience that won't be universally shared. Intersectionality is just about recognising how even within a group of people who may have commonalities have particular experiences that determine the course of our life. (Ember)

I read Ember's claims as a comment on the importance of recognising how the particularities of individual experiences are shaped by wider existing structures that can overlap in different places for different people. This type of analysis resonates strongly with the premises of political intersectionality. The latter takes Black and global majority women as its starting point in order to reveal how individuals

'are differently situated in the economic, social, and political worlds' (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1250) and thus disrupts the idea that there are separate, homogenous identity groups whose interests and experiences are distinct and even contradictory to those of other discrete groups. So, even though the analysis of participants in this research as above may begin at the individual level with a reflection on individual positionality in the first person, we can observe in these reflections an implicit comment on structural arrangements of power and domination in our society.

Whether they emphasised the role of identity or not, participants often highlighted that there are multiple ways of thinking about intersectionality. Caelan reflects on what he interprets as a misreading of intersectionality and offers his own perception of what intersectionality is and *should be*: 'I think some people misconstrue intersectionality as like, a hierarchy of oppression. It's not.' This participant expresses concerns about intersectionality being misinterpreted as a theorisation of a 'hierarchy of oppression' – an apprehension which resonates with some of the academic literature that identifies problematic interpretations of intersectionality. The latter comments on how a focus on 'hierarchies of oppression' tends to think about intersectionality as a quantitative calculation of multiple marginalised identities which serves comparison rather than focusing on the qualitative nature of intersectional social locations (Hancock, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2012; Reece, 2018). That is, the 'hierarchies of oppression' approach attempts to calculate and compare the 'sum' of quantified multiple identities rather than focusing on the *qualitative* nature of what it might mean to be caught at the dynamic, interwoven intersections of racial capitalism and heteropatriarchy (Reece, 2018)..This means that it focuses exclusively on oppression, evading a wider analysis of intersectional power and relationality, or 'privilege' (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Evans and Lépinard, 2019).

Conversations with research participants in this project also raised interesting questions about how identity and intersectionality inform the ways that we produce knowledge. Notably, participants talked about the specificity and particularity of individual identities and experiences of intersectional marginalisation: they position intersectionality as understanding 'what oppression looks like for each individual person … that no one from an externality can [understand]' (Caelan) or that 'we will have experiences that are unique to those who have those identity markers, which means we will have certain knowledge and certain experiences that won't be universally shared' (Ember). Though not so much focused on identity as such, Ember's and Caelan's reflections speak to the complexities around thinking through intersectional politics from the level of the individual. Their insistences on the specific experiences that unique identity locations produce raise several questions. If intersectionality means that individual knowledge and experience are impenetrable and only available to the individual experiencing them, how do we build a collective politics that addresses collective issues, such as

extractivism, racial capitalism, and the climate emergency? How can an intersectional analysis help us to both recognise *and* move beyond the individual as the favoured unit of analysis – especially given the ways in which the individual is fetishised in the neoliberal schema of politics? These are questions which my participants' reflections raise that shape part of the discussions in Chapter 6.

5.2.2 In the first person: intersectionality and 'my' identity/ies

As noted above, some of the environmentalists I spoke to when undertaking this research – particularly those who described being negatively interpellated by white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy (hooks, 1995, p. 29) – would 'list' their multiple marginalised identities when beginning to talk about intersectionality (for example, 'I'm a working class Black woman and I immigrated here from a West African country…' / 'I'm non-binary, neuro-divergent, and my parents are global majority immigrants from working-class backgrounds'…)[28]. These lists are important. They say something about the social relations of power and materiality in which the speakers find themselves entangled. They reveal something about the relations of power within which their experiences are situated. But they also pose problems for how we think about intersectionality on a conceptual level – especially given the criticisms around intersectionality being reduced to a static, endless listing of individually layered identities (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Ferree, 2009; Reece, 2018). Some of the claims made in queer, postcolonial, and post-structuralist literatures problematise the emphasis on individuals holding multiple identities, as this risks reifying or essentialising identities as fixed categories on the individual level (Clough, 1994; Dean, 2010). However, some research participants talked about their multiple identities in ways that acknowledged the wider relational and shifting nature of said identities. Put differently, they conceived the multiplicity of their identities in relation to the identities and experiences of others, recognising that the different entanglements of power in which people find themselves look different in different spaces.

The significance which respondents assigned to their own experiences in relation to intersectionality were not exclusive to those who use and cite intersectionality explicitly in their organising. As we saw earlier in the chapter, in the majority of the interviews, my interlocutors articulated their experiences as being mediated through their own identities and experiences. Even those who were unsure about intersectionality, when thinking through the politics of inequality and social justice in relation to environmentalism, felt the necessity to reflect on their own situatedness. For example, of being 'accused of being privileged by another elderly white woman' within XR (Morgan), or of wanting to

[28] These are not exact direct quotes. In my effort to protect the anonymity of research participants, I do not quote them directly when talking about their own identities – at least, in ways that could make them identifiable. Given the lack of diversity in the environmental sector, sharing full direct quotes in which my interviewees talk about their multiple identities and marginality would make many of them quite easily identifiable.

engage in more ethnically diverse faith-based climate organising whilst being 'self-aware that I am white and middle class' (Billie), or finding it 'hard to separate out the issues [of the environment and social inequalities] really, because I'm of mixed ethnic origin' (Dechen).

Thinking about standpoints and how they mediate knowledge and worldviews (Collins, 1989) is certainly not unique to those who are explicitly engaging with intersectionality. But for those who are engaging with it explicitly and outwardly, there are particular reflections that take place with regard to how intersectional approaches can/should account for the knowledge and action that emerges from these standpoints. Caelan reflects on this:

> I think some people misconstrue intersectionality as like, a hierarchy of oppression. It is absolutely about understanding just how layers of intersection work that no one from an externality can. Obviously, right, you know, what oppression looks like for each individual person. You know, I'm someone of [North African] heritage, who is gay and I've experienced various kind of discriminations in my life, but then also, like, my family are quite wealthy. So, I've seen the way that like, wealth can insulate people from, from oppression. I mean, obviously not entirely. I don't think [intersectionality] is about an Olympics of oppression. It's just about understanding layers and being more aware of them.

Caelan also articulated the above views as being mediated through his experience of often being 'the only person of mixed heritage in the room' within the context of his organising group. Certainly, intersectionality has been critiqued as pushing an excessive focus on counting, adding, and comparing a given individual's multiple identities. As Caelan suggests, this interpretation of intersectionality renders intersectional politics stagnant – weak, lacking in an analysis of structural power and oppression, and unable to mobilise meaningful change. Key theorists of intersectionality such as Patricia Hill Collins (1990) have explicitly theorised *against* additive models of analysing oppression which focus only on identity in this way, underlining the inability of such models to properly account for and resist the structural and material conditions which produce intersectionality. Whilst intersectionality gives us insight into the politics of identity and difference, it must be linked to questions of power and materiality (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Hancock, 2007; Collins, 2015; Salem, 2018; McKinzie and Richards, 2019).

There were research participants who talked about their multiple identities in ways that distinguished between the simultaneity of holding identities which are marginalised, at once with those that are not. For example, one participant explains that:

> I call myself an intersectional feminist. … I mean, in the academic sense, [intersectionality is] about understanding the interrelations and the layering of oppression and the interconnections of those oppressions and the intersections of those oppressions. So, as you know, as a woman, I face certain structural barriers structural inequality, but I'm not Black. I'm not a woman of colour. I am very well educated and I have a good job so I don't have the class intersection necessarily going on there. Although, I came from a very poor family [abroad]. So, for me intersectionality is understanding the different structural

> inequalities and how they interact and how that can layer oppression and marginality and marginalisation on different people in different ways.

She comments on the varying axes that shape the lives of individuals in different ways, underlining intra-category difference. Even when individuals might be thought of as being grouped together in some way (such as women), there are differences within those groups ('as a woman, I face certain structural barriers structural inequality, but I'm not Black. I'm not a woman of colour') and these categories of difference are relational ('intersectionality is understanding the different structural inequalities and how they interact'). Additionally, these categories or axes of difference and power are fluid ('I am very well educated and I have a good job … Although, I came from a very poor family') and this fluidity is mediated by time and space (the participant immigrated to Britain from an African country). Although her analysis begins at the individual level and appears introspective at the surface level, we might read it as a comment on intra-group difference. The individual identities she lists are articulated in relation to wider group dynamics, problematising how groups are even conceived of in the first place. This is an effort to invite complexity into analysis, emphasising how we relate to and through difference; understanding that there are differences *within* groups constituted as 'different' or Other.

As much Indigenous feminist scholarship emphasises, *relationality* is the keyword here (Betasamosake Simpson, 2017; Starblanket and Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, 2018). Such work helps us to think about intersectionality as *relational, contextual, conditional,* and *contingent*. Intersectionality is not static, nor is it necessarily binary (e.g., powerful/powerless). As my research participants indicate, one can be situated in ways that draw forms of power or privilege on one or more axes whilst marginality is simultaneously manifested on others. These locations are always being produced in relation to others. As the last summarised 'quote' from a research participant reminds us, our locations within social relations of power change based on where we are and how the spaces in which we are located are constituted. Intersectionality asks not only that we turn our attentions to the experiences of those who are marginalised at the intersections of power. It asks us to examine *how* those intersections of power are articulated and produced through social relations. As such, the gaze of intersectionality must also fall on the people and processes that exercise power, not just those who are marginalised or oppressed (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2012). Indeed, this relates as much to debates within some parts of feminist and anti-racist movements as it does within environmentalism – highlighting some of the general challenges and issues at stake for social movement organising informed by intersectionality.

For environmentalists who consider intersectionality to be important to their organising work, it is important to centre 'the interconnections of … oppressions and the intersections of those oppressions' (Gael) – but this does not mean disavowing the complexity of doing such work (e.g., 'Because it's so interconnected, but then also it's so complicated, that kind of intersection of when you're trying to talk

about something but then it becomes involved in all these other issues' – Constantina). Finding ways to hold the issues that materialise at the local or individual level whilst connecting them out to broader, historical, collective issues is no easy feat. There are risks of focusing excessively on the individual and their multiple identities. As the research participants indicate, when considering intersectionality, it is difficult, however, to escape 'identity talk' – and their reflections invite us to ask whether we should even seek to. Talking about identity on the individual level has offered marginalised groups potent vocabularies with the power to mobilise people, as well as the basis from which to formulate radical politics that place value on the experiences of marginalised groups. We might think of Emma Dabiri's (2021) invitation to spend more time thinking about issues (*in concert with* identities!). This supports environmentalism with an inroad to framing environmental issues through an intersectional lens in a movement that is not bound by identities as such. However, the insistence of some of my interlocutors on both issues *and* identity affirms that identity is always already informing our approaches to and understandings of issues – the two shape each other. Indeed, much of the discussion in this chapter already has examined the ways in which environmentalists are seeking to hold issues and identities together in order to formulate, and hold themselves and others accountable within, their environmentalisms. They express a sort of dynamic approach to intersectionality which is able to oscillate between various levels of analysis and, though not easy, to bind an array of issues together to build (coalitional) strategies for organising.

In this research, the ways that participants start with their *own* identities in the first person, to talk about intersectionality speaks to how we arrive at and make knowledge claims (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002). Logically, the nature of this research opens itself up to inviting responses from participants which are embedded in their specific experiences. Certainly, parts of the interviews included my asking participants about their experiences. From this perspective, it is to be expected that participants reflect on intersectionality using their individual experiences as a starting point. At the same time, these responses also help us to think about the experiential nature of intersectionality and support our thinking about intersectionality with and through socially embedded standpoints. Indeed, the Combahee River Collective write about building 'a politics that will change our lives and inevitably end our oppression' upon expanding consciousness from 'look[ing] more deeply into our own experiences' (1983, p. 3). Ultimately, in a society where they are deemed expendable bodies with no inherent value, Black feminists consider that, for them, the 'most profound and potentially most radical politics come directly out of our own identity' (Combahee River Collective, 1983, p. 4). In sum, by starting with their own experiences, participants in this research demonstrate a kind of mirroring of Black feminists' commitments to taking their own (marginalised) standpoints as the starting place for building their theory/thought and politics. This is a radical approach to knowledge and politics, for it asserts that

marginalised groups do have a valid insight on the oppression that they experience *and* that their standpoints/experiences are inherently valuable despite dominant narratives arguing otherwise (Collins, 1989).

5.2.3 In the third person: identity and diversity

Previously, we saw how environmentalists that took part in this research related to intersectionality from a first-person perspective – reflecting on their own identities as a way to explain what intersectionality is (and relates to their approach to environmentalism). This subsection takes a pivot to think about intersectionality in the third person. That is, when conducting this research, I noticed the way that some participants talked about intersectionality and identity in relation to *others*. Again, I do not include any direct quotes from interviews here to protect the anonymity of participants.

It is also important to note that we might use or think of the word intersectionality when actually meaning something else, like diverse representation. This brings us back to some of the themes raised in the chapter on problematising absences – highlighting the potential simultaneity of presence and absence. When I asked some (white) participants about intersectionality, they responded by listing the multiple marginalised identities of their colleagues. These participants' responses are significant given that both professionalised and grassroots environmentalist organisations in Britain lack in diversity on several fronts (Bell, 2021; Wildlife & Countryside Link, 2022) and are making little progress on fostering inclusive cultures (Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Hudl Youth Development Agency and Involving Young People Collective, 2021; Wildlife & Countryside Link, 2022). Today, the environment sector remains one of the least ethnically diverse sectors in the UK with only 0.6% of environment professionals identifying as non-white (Norrie, 2017). But this doctoral research is about intersectionality rather than diversity per se. The two are not unrelated – but they are not the same. Intersectionality is not and should not be reduced to an interchangeable synonym for diverse representation (Bilge, 2014; Nash, 2017). Diverse representation is only one part of a wider conversation wherein intersectionality is understood as 'a product of structural inequalities that merit material redress' (McKinzie and Richards, 2019, p. 4) By listing the identities of colleagues as a way of evidencing intersectionality in environmentalist organisations, some of my interlocutors move to synonymise intersectionality with diverse representation. As explored above, such an approach tends to consider intersectionality purely 'at the personal identity level, as an attribute of individuals' (Christoffersen, 2019, p. 723). Here intersectionality is conceived as an individual attribute of others – it situates others at (marginalised) social locations, without recognising the relational nature of these 'locations' as they are produced in actual space. This is different to a relational, 'constructionist' (Prins, 2006) or 'interactive' (Ferree, 2009)

approach to intersectionality which stresses the dynamic and contingent nature of intersectionality, speaking to the *production* rather than the mere description of power.

Focusing on the individual identities held by others as evidence of intersectional engagement can have a depoliticising effect. It shifts the focus from dismantling structures of domination to, as one participant puts it, taking a 'quite surface level approach to identity that [leads to] the conversation being stuck on like, well, we need more Black people as directors of businesses and CEOs' (Caelan). In a nutshell, conceiving of intersectionality in this way complies with neoliberal regimes of diversity management that focus excessively on the social mobility of individuals within the continuation of white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy (hooks, 1995, p. 29) – a reformist rather than a radical approach. As the typology of intersectional absence in the previous chapter (Table 2) shows us – intersectional absences and presences can occur simultaneously. One may strategically avoid using the word intersectionality in public whilst engaging with its core principles privately. But, as this chapter shows us, it is also possible to claim to be 'doing' intersectionality whilst actually doing something else (i.e., diversity). This reminds us that differing interpretations and uses of intersectionality can give rise to radically different political and discursive outcomes.

5.3 Unpacking aspects of explicit presence

Building on the discussion about pluralistic interpretations of intersectionality, we now move to examining some of the usages of intersectionality as explicitly present in the organising strategies and discourses of environmentalists in Britain. Where intersectionality is explicitly present, the word intersectionality is used and, often, its Black feminist origins are explicitly acknowledged. The actors in question have a demonstrable interest in and sensitivity to the ways in which multiple oppressions overlap – and they relate this explicitly to their environmentalism. This part of the chapter unpacks some of the ways that environmentalists who draw on intersectionality explicitly use it: as a tool to engage in self-reflexivity, as a way to measure and legitimise particular iterations of environmentalism, and an emergent strategy for coalitional organising.

Out of the thirty-five interviews that I conducted for this research, there were six interviews that stood out as instances in which interlocutors talked confidently about intersectionality, both as a notion more broadly, and as a specific basis from which they approach their environmentalism. These six interviews stand out as instances in which the respondents showed a very explicit and unambiguous commitment to intersectionality as part of their politics as environmentalists. These are what I call examples of explicit presence. In some cases, my understanding of these participants' working with this explicit presence was further supported by my interpretations of the communications produced by their groups

and/or – which I took as proof of a wider group ethos that they were drawing on/contributing to rather than purely personal, individual views.

Within environmentalism in Britain, intersectionality appears to be less deep rooted than in the histories and trajectories of other movements such as some parts of feminist and anti-racist mobilisation (Lépinard, 2014; Evans, 2016b; Evans and Lépinard, 2019; Fabbri, 2022). Nonetheless, my findings suggest that intersectionality *does* constitute the fundamental organising frame from which some environmentalists in Britain are operating. Though, one of my participants, Cecilia, reflected, that these environmentalists are often operating 'on the margins' of a more mainstream British environmentalism which tends to shy away from conversations centring heteropatriarchy, ableism, etc. under racial capitalism. That I was able to attend the first Black EcoFeminist Summit in London (October 2022), which was organised under the umbrella of the US-based organisation Intersectional Environmentalist is a testament to the existence of environmentalists who draw energy, strength, and a sense of collective rootedness from intersectionality. I will return to the Black Ecofeminist Summit shortly. But first, let us clarify exactly why it is important to think about explicit presence and what it reveals in the context of the study.

If we turn our attention to some of the ways in which intersectionality *is* explicitly present amongst British environmentalists (even if this is not representative of a wider national majority), I suggest that we can gain greater insight into how intersectionality 'travels' into green contexts, what it looks like as a green politics, and some of the organising strategies it produces in these spaces, as well as some of the different levels at which intersectionality can operate (e.g., individual/national/international). Thus, below, I draw on the empirical data I collected for this research to examine instances of explicit presence in greater detail – whilst linking this back to the wider learnings we can glean from my empirical observations which I situate very specifically in their respective contexts (without, of course, compromising the anonymity of my interview respondents).

5.3.1 Intersectional validation and hegemonic sustainability discourse

Silke Roth (2021) argues that since intersectional power dynamics shape the conditions in which *all* social movements are operating, it is crucial for every movement and its constituents to acknowledge and consider this in how they strategise. This has not yet come to pass in many places, including in the feminist movements that studies have tended to direct most attention towards (Lépinard, 2014; Weber, 2015; Evans, 2016b; Emejulu and Sobande, 2019), as well as in other movements (Erevelles and Minear, 2010; Hiraide and Evans, 2023) such as the environmentalist movement in Britain that this thesis focuses on. Environmentalists for whom intersectionality *is* important demonstrate an acute awareness of this. They position intersectionality as a kind of reference point to which they hold their

organising and use it to qualify and validate the nature of their environmentalism. For example, Fenix tells me that '[intersectionality] is always something that we talk about in our work because we're a climate justice group *rather than merely an anti-emissions group'* (Fenix, emphasis added). Here, intersectionality functions as a tool with which environmentalists can use to shape and frame their organising; seeking to combine theory and practice. This echoes findings about student feminist activism in the UK (Evans, 2016b), which have shown that student feminists use the word 'intersectional/ity' to signal their investment in a particular form of feminism that centres discourses (and strives for practices) of inclusivity, which reject single-axis approaches to feminism. In environmentalist contexts, qualifying environmentalism with 'intersectionality' also signifies a *particular* form of socially conscious environmentalism which exists in opposition and separation to other forms of (conservationist, technoscientific, post-political) environmentalisms. The former aims to hold justice, power, and the interconnectedness of struggles as key ideas through which to understand and resist ecological breakdown. This means addressing how power and inequality shape internal group dynamics, as much as the strategies, actions, and demands that the group makes.

Fenix implies that her group is *more* than 'an anti-emissions group' – by working with and through intersectionality, the group centres questions of justice, and the nature of injustice and turns away from a technoscientific, post-political approach. This aligns with Kishi Animashaun Ducre's call to see intersectionality as 'the lens to evaluate current social justice movements that advocate for [Black women's] liberation from multiple oppressions' (2018, p. 25). Intersectionality works, then, not just as a tool to understand or describe particular phenomena – but a normative framework within which environmentalists resist depoliticised technoscientific narratives that privilege 'sustainability' without social transformation (Tulloch and Neilson, 2014) and fetishise carbon emissions as the ultimate object of environmentalism (Kenis and Lievens, 2014).

Fenix is not the only environmentalist that I spoke to for whom intersectionality functioned as a tool with which to frame and validate particular forms of environmentalism. For example, Gael, an elected Green in Scotland, argues that:

> Well, if [as environmentalists] all we care about is sustainability and we don't take equality across the board seriously, then sustainability is a tool of oppression. And unless we understand the structural inequalities that different groups of people face, we aren't going to be able to guard against sustainability and green stuff being used as a tool of oppression and a tool of marginalisation. So, for me, [intersectionality is] very much a part of that social justice thread of my politics.

In a similar vein to Fenix, Gael, too, responds to and resists the hegemony of depoliticised discourses of sustainability within environmental politics. She moves to politicise environmental questions by describing intersectionality as a way of centring justice as a key 'thread' of her politics. Gael shows an

acute awareness of the ways that environmentalist discourse and environmental policies can reinscribe and reinforce existing relations of power (Newman, 2011; Bell, 2021). Intersectionality thus emerges as a way to distinguish particular forms of social-justice-minded environmentalisms from hegemonic forms of environmentalism which, as Gael notes, can actually 'be used as a tool of oppression and a tool of marginalisation'. In her focus on filtering her politics through 'the structural inequalities that different groups of people face', her approach is expressed through what we might describe as anthropocentric. It centres human experience. But this form of anthropocentrism which centres difference and inequality resists the imagination of the Anthropos and 'the human experience' as singular, homogenous, undifferentiated. Intersectionality, even whilst being anthropocentric, complicates anthropocentrism – just, for example, as intersectionality has historically complicated narrow imaginations of groups like 'women' as necessarily white, able-bodied, and heterosexual, or 'Black' as masculine, able-bodied, and heterosexual (Hull, Scott and Smith, 1982).

Femi, also an elected Scottish Green at a different level to Gael, talks about intersectionality as a way to validate both feminism *and* environmentalism:

> Femi
> [If feminism] isn't intersectional, I don't think it's feminism. And so, I guess that's the same with [environmentalism but] I've never thought about that before. But I suppose I believe that environmental activism or climate justice that isn't intersectional isn't justice.
>
> Lydia
> So, intersectionality could bring something to environmentalism?
>
> Femi
> Yes. I think without it, it is just gardening.

Femi invokes a famous statement by a prominent Brazilian trade unionist and environmentalist, Chico Mendes, who was ultimately assassinated in a bid to counter the forest defending activities that he was part of. Mendes is often quoted as saying, 'Ecology without class struggle is just gardening' (Owens, 2022). Femi tweaks and reimagines Mendes's quote, claiming that 'Environmental activism or climate justice that isn't intersectional isn't justice. Without it, it is just gardening'. Femi colours the notion of class struggle with all the axes that such a struggle includes by using the word intersectionality, through which class struggle includes the struggles for justice around race, gender, ability, and other axes. In the background, her mention of 'just gardening' might be understood as a veiled critique of the white, middle-class forms of environmentalism that she seeks to reject in her own politics. This works to expand beyond the post-materialist thesis which positions environmentalism as the preserve of well-to-do bourgeois white people – and weave (the material concerns of) justice into the heart of an environmentalism worth pursuing. We can read Femi's use of intersectionality as a way to signal, and validate, the nature of the politics that she is advancing with two heterogenous movements in mind.

Ultimately, I understand Femi to be making a claim that if feminism is not intersectional, it does not qualify as feminism just as if environmentalism is not intersectional, it is not environmentalism.

Femi uses intersectionality as a kind of standard against which to evaluate whether a movement is pursuing a goal or idea at the expense of a community or group – a meaningful strategy to signify a particular type of political commitment. However, it can be problematic to disavow forms of feminism or environmentalism that we do not subscribe to as simply 'not environmentalism' or 'not feminism'. I would argue that we need to acknowledge that even if we don't share the same values as transphobic or white feminists, technoscientific or populationalist environmentalists, such approaches emerge from the same traditions as those of us who are striving for intersectional feminism or intersectional environmentalism. Branding others as either 'not environmentalists' or 'not feminists' does not make them disappear. It also does not guard against or help us to identify and work through our own shortcomings as feminists and environmentalists. From this perspective, I would argue that we need to distinguish amongst different types of feminism and environmentalism more meaningfully than just 'is' or 'isn't' feminism or environmentalism. Qualifying them, describing them, resisting them with nuance, detail, context, I would argue, is crucial.

Additionally, in our conversation, Femi explained the importance of talking about intersectionality to buttress against transphobia as an elected Green in Scotland, given ongoing tensions and intraparty difficulties around issues of transphobia in the Green Party of England and Wales. Beyond Green politics, these are live issues that are current in women's and feminist organising in Britain (Phipps, 2017, 2020). The parallels between issues of transphobia in feminist and women's organising as well as environmentalist organising might speak to the crossover between those movements and the general importance of social issues which provide the conditions in which all movements are organising at any one point in time and space.

Ultimately, Femi uses intersectionality not only as a way of qualifying or signalling a particular form of *feminist* politics (which we can read as responding to white feminism and transphobia in Britain), but also a particular form of environmental or climate politics (which we can understand as rejecting the hegemonic discourses of sustainability that Gael talked about resisting). This is echoed in the ways in which Mikhal and Matthew talked about their own approaches to environmentalism as youth strikers:

> …think there's no point in focusing on the climate crisis if you don't recognise that it coexists with social values. So, people are such a huge part of it. It's kind of like you can't ignore it. It interlinks and it all plays a part together. Whether that's just people being badly treated in sort of fast fashion, factories, or people physically living in places where they're being affected by it. Intersectionality is such a huge part of it. Like, climate change is absolutely going to worst affect the area… I mean, like, low-income countries and people of colour, and I think you can't address one issue without the other. (Mikhal)

> Social justice and climate justice would be an example of intersectionality because they're always overlapping. There's so many things in common and there are a lot of solutions to one that are the solution to the other. … I think these issues are so complex that it just-, of course, they're not as simple as black and white. Like, there's an answer for one and then the solution for the other is really interlinked. (Matthew)

Both Matthew and Mikhal appear to reject the forms of environmentalism that Gael and Femi also opposed, resisting against environmentalist approaches that might reinforce existing hierarchies and oppression. These are insights echoed in the websites and group statements of some environmentalist groups (Friends of the Earth Scotland, 2018; Woodier, 2019; Kaur Paul, 2020; Palmer, 2021; London Environmental Network, no date; *BP or not BP? – That is the question*, no date; *UKSCN London - Reading lists & educational stuff*, no date). But in order to situate their environmentalisms in relation to others, Mikhal and Matthew, like Gael and Femi, explicitly frame their approaches to environmentalism through the lens of *intersectionality* – which emphasises the 'overlapping' and 'interlinked' (Matthew) nature of environmental and social issues. Using intersectionality as a way to situate their own organising, Mikhal describes there being 'no point' to climate activism that fails to account for intersectional power dynamics both descriptively and normatively. Intersectionality thus operates as the lens through which environmentalism is evaluated (Ducre, 2018) and even positioned as valid or worth pursuing.

Though she does not explicitly use intersectionality to frame or validate her environmentalism, Denver talks about intersectionality as framing a specific approach to environmentalism which is more meaningful and desirable than the forms of environmentalism that Mikhal describes as there being 'no point to'. Denver tells me that intersectionality is

> …about how you get different structures within society that disadvantaged certain groups of people and how they interact with each other. … There are different unjust structures within society that, you know, that mean that certain groups of people are disadvantaged over others and climate change acts as a kind of stress on them. So, you need to be thinking about, well, how does racism intersect with climate change? How does sexism, issues around economic inequality… How do they intersect with climate change? And so on.

Denver draws on intersectionality in a way that is both descriptive (how does climate change materialise through axes of difference and power?) and makes of it a heuristic (how can we understand and respond to these differences through the lens of intersectionality?). She takes a slightly different approach to the participants' reflections so far in this subsection. That is, she is not quite framing her own environmentalism through intersectionality as a tool to validate and legitimise a certain approach. However, in a way that runs parallel to the participants above, Denver positions intersectionality as a way of 'asking the other question' in the context of ecological breakdown. Intersectionality thus becomes a guiding tool for a certain form of environmentalism that is sensitive to questions which centre power and justice (as opposed to those that focus on technological and scientific solutions around carbon emissions).

Denver's approach to understanding and responding to environmental issues can be read as building on Mari Matsuda's invitation to understanding and explicitly drawing on intersectionality as a heuristic with which to 'ask the other question' (1990). Denver's approach is echoed in other groups, especially amongst youth and student led groups like People and Planet, and, at the European level, European Young Friends of the Earth (Hiraide and Evans, 2023). In Matsuda's framing where we see ableism, we should ask how it interacts with heterosexism; where we see racism, we should ask how it is interacting with classism. Matsuda's approach is originally conceived with regards to building solidarity across movements that are bound by social axes like gender, race, class, and disability. Denver reframes it to think about how we understand and respond to climate change, ultimately drawing connections and interlinkages amongst several struggles which coalesce around the issue of climate. This understanding and usage of intersectionality resists the 'tendency to think of intersectionality [purely] as a way to indicate the multiple identities people possess, rather than understanding them as a product of structural inequalities that merit material redress' (McKinzie and Richards, 2019, p. 4). As we will see below, this effort to build active forms of solidarity and engage in coalitional organising is acknowledged explicitly by environmentalists as a move which flows from centring intersectionality.

5.3.2 Prefiguration and coalitional organising

Discussions about using intersectionality as a way to frame and validate certain forms of environmentalism are highly relevant to the roles of prefigurative and coalitional politics within social movement organising. Prefigurative politics refers to ways of organising that seek to 'build a new world in the shell of the old'[29] by aligning practices as closely as possible to values and desires. Prefiguration seeks to practice the politics we strive for in the here and now (Monticelli, 2021). Coalitional organising can be understood as a type of prefiguration, though not necessarily. It refers to organising across the porous borders of movements, challenging what we see as boundaries amongst separate movements by bringing issues and organising into the same spaces in equitable ways (Di Chiro, 2008). This short subsection underscores some of the links that can be made between environmentalists' emphases on intersectionality in their organising with prefigurative and coalitional approaches to environmentalism.

We can link insights about prefiguration to education and intersectional labour, as we began to see in the previous chapter. The website of student organisation, UK Student Climate Network (UKSCN), speak to the necessity of learning and education as a way of minimising harms both within and beyond the group. Their website lists articles that people should read before joining, mirroring the approach of feminist grassroots groups like Sisters Uncut (Evans, 2016b). The reading lists focus heavily on issues

[29] As noted in a previous chapter, this phrase is one of the stated aims of the internationalist union, Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), as written in their constitution first published in 1920.

that might not necessarily be interpreted as environmental – or 'purely' environmental – at first glance. This echoes the affirmations of other groups who may not use the term intersectional to describe their work, such as the Black Environment Network (BEN), but for whom 'there is no such thing as a purely environmental initiative' since '[a] so-called purely environmental initiative is one that has neglected its social, cultural and economic dimensions' ('About – Black Environment Network', no date). UKSCN's various reading lists include: 'Suggested articles on anti-oppression & eliminating racism' in which intersectionality features heavily, as well as lists titled 'What's a Green New Deal?', 'Why Don't We Work With the Police?', 'Why do the climate kids care about prisons?' 'Climate resistance handbook, 'Articles on anti-oppression & eliminating racism', 'Systems of oppression reading list,' and 'Neo-liberalism reading list' (*UKSCN London - Reading lists & educational stuff*, no date). The reading list titled 'Suggested articles on anti-oppression & eliminating racism' includes, as the first piece on the list, an article titled 'Our activism will be intersectional or it will be bullshit' (Tamlit, 2017) by Ali Tamlit from the group Plane Stupid which focuses its organising around the UK aviation industry. These reading lists appear to be targeted at all potential (and current) members of UKSCN, but we can notice in the reading list about anti-oppression and anti-racism, headings which mention white allyship and white privilege; suggesting that these readings are particularly important for members with access to racialised power and 'privilege'. Mirroring the practices of grassroots feminist groups like Sisters Uncut, UKSCN members are expected to do the labour of learning about harm and oppression before joining the group. This brings us back to thinking about prefiguring a politics in which liberatory labour is not a burden placed squarely on the shoulders of minoritised environmentalists.

Analysis of the websites and literature of environmentalist groups resonates with existing findings relating to intersectionality as feminist praxis for student feminist organising in the UK (Evans, 2016b). Most websites consulted do not use the word intersectionality to frame groups' values or approaches, and some use it only in passing. We can take, for example, London-based theatre protest group, BP or Not BP? (who have often collaborated with UKSCN), which organises against fossil fuel sponsorship in cultural institutions across Britain. The group, which I am part of, have been focused on cultural restitution and fossil fuel sponsorship at the British Museum in recent years. In a safer spaces and group values statement, the group commits 'To be[ing] intersectional in our approach – in other words, to be constantly aware of the links and the overlaps between different struggles and oppressions' (BP or not BP?, 2018). This means that the group and its members seek, in their work, 'To challenge oppression both inside and outside of our organisation. We recognise that the same systems of domination, unearned privilege, exclusion and institutional violence underpin many different forms of oppression. We need to constantly check and challenge this in the aims and narratives of our actions, and in our engagement with people and other campaigns outside of our organisation' (BP or not BP?, 2018). The

commitment to 'constantly check[ing] and challeng[ing]' positions intersectionality as a process or heuristic rather than a static end goal for environmentalists. BP or Not BP? does not describe itself as a Black feminist group (*BP or not BP? – That is the question*, no date) but it draws on the Black feminist framework of intersectionality and seeks to use it to fuse theory and practice for inclusive organising that is 'supporting, not undermining or ignoring, other vital social struggles' (BP or not BP?, 2018). The group commits to fusing theory and practice together, by using intersectionality as a way of explicitly framing the groups' action messaging and modulating its practical strategies both internally (operating a safer spaces policy that recognises and tries to attenuate the ways that relations of power show up within the group) and externally (coalitional strategies which foreground the struggles of local communities who are marginalised in and around the institutions that the group targets, as well as communities at the frontlines of fossil fuel extractivism and ecological breakdown further afield). Thus, in an ecological context, intersectionality is conscious of histories of colonialism and is multi-scalar in its levels of analysis and intervention (Ducre, 2018).

Coalitional organising is emphasised in much of the foundational and emerging scholarship about intersectionality (Matsuda, 1990; Di Chiro, 2008; Carroll, 2017; Tormos, 2017; Ellison and Langhout, 2020; Ciccia and Roggeband, 2021; Einwohner *et al.*, 2021; Roth, 2021). Transnational, coalitional forms of organising are important in the context of environmentalism, as several of my research participants mentioned, given the simultaneously local and global nature of climate change and ecological breakdown. Intersectionality can work as a tool within which to frame the simultaneous relevance and connectivity of multiple struggles across different spaces:

> So, we are always interested in, like, linking up. So, this first protest that I went to with Fossil Free London was against fracking in Argentina, and we were linking up with the Argentine solidarity campaign. We did that protest because the UK government were funding fossil fuel projects abroad. So, we tried to link up with other groups and certainly, in our messaging, we were like, what are the key parts of intersectionality? (Fenix)

Fenix's group Fossil Free London is based, as its name suggests, in London. But that does not stop it from relating to and working with other lands and communities beyond London – especially if we note that the unequal ecological exchanges that have historically taken place between London and other parts of our planet (Tilley and Ajl, 2023). Fenix describes using intersectionality to build strategies and messaging that expose these historical and contemporary links, pointing to an emphasis on the 'intersectionality of issues' (Dabiri, 2021) from a social ecological perspective. Doing intersectional climate and environmentalist work relies on an understanding and centring of colonial histories, which call for (but can also affect) the coalitional and transnational organising that seeks redress for multiple communities. Opportunities for, and efforts towards, coalition as intersectionality materialise in different ways in different spaces (Ciccia and Roggeband, 2021). They are not without challenge, nor are they universal amongst environmentalists. Indeed, where these efforts towards coalition are absent,

reinforcing marginalisation within a movement, there are environmentalists for whom there is greater promise in autonomously organised spaces that opt to make of the margins, in the words of bell hooks, 'a space of radical openness' (1989). Let us turn to examining how intersectionality shapes some of these spaces below.

5.3.3 'Choosing the margin as a space of radical openness'[30]

Whilst there are opportunities for coalitional organising that flow from an intersectional approach to environmentalism, self-organising also emerged as a pertinent strategy for intersectional approaches to environmentalism, especially for Black women environmentalists. These Black women environmentalists raise questions about what it means to choose the margin as a form of self-organising, and what these spaces look like in dialogue with intersectionality. Autonomous and coalitional organising are not antithetical to each other – and my research offered me the opportunity to be part of autonomously organised spaces for Black/global majority women and non-binary environmentalists that also contained elements of coalitional organising. But when we think, more broadly, about what intersectionality might mean and look like in a space that is broadly so not diverse, like environmentalism, two examples offer food for thought: the Black Environment Network (BEN) and the Black EcoFeminist Summit. The first, which is newer and more ephemeral (an event, rather than an organisation), centres Black feminism and intersectionality specifically. Launched by the California-based collective, Intersectional Environmentalist, connects Black and global majority women across borders, connecting the local and global margins of environmentalist work in their activities. The second, BEN, grows out of the movement for political blackness specific to anti-racist mobilisation in Britain in the 1980s, that focuses more on diversifying the existing environmental sector and getting ethnic minorities involved in local environmental activity. Both of these autonomously organised spaces speak to intersectionality – but not in the same way.

The relationship between intersectionality and autonomous organising on the margins can be illustrated more deeply through some of the participant observation work that I undertook for this research – specifically, my attendance at the Black EcoFeminist Summit in London (October 2022). Having discussed BEN briefly here and in the previous chapter under reflections on intersectionality's 'strategic absences', I am going to focus more on the Black EcoFeminist Summit here because of the ways that it explicitly foregrounds intersectionality. But firstly, a note on how environmentalists situate the necessity for autonomous organising, as understood in relation to intersectionality.

[30] hooks, 1989.

Self-organised spaces led and upheld by Black women place significant emphasis on the intellectual and political heritage of intersectionality which they acknowledge as being rooted in Black feminism (Hancock, 2021). This is true for organising both within and beyond environmentalism, as spaces like the Black EcoFeminist Summit reveal. In its very naming and how it was programmed, the Black EcoFeminist Summit explicitly acknowledges and seeks to build on the intellectual and political work of Black feminist forbears. This work makes theoretical and practical demands of us: that we situate the issues we are organising around in histories of colonialism and heteropatriarchy that are geographically and temporally dispersed (Ducre, 2018); that we keep our eyes on the oppression of Black women (as a heterogenous group) in a way that reminds us of the wider conditions in which struggles take place (Jones, 1949); and that we organise in ways that do not reinforce this oppression (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins and Bilge, 2016). These demands appeared as an explicit critical current running through the comments, poetry, and music shared at the Black EcoFeminist Summit, about different possible futures (and prefigured presents) as constructed through Black feminist intersectionality. As climate activists like Joycelyn Longdon, who spoke at the Black EcoFeminist Summmit, reflect:

> Q: Do you feel that climate justice is connected to liberation for all? If so, how so?
>
> JL: 100%! My thoughts on this are characterised perfectly by the legendary words from the Combahee River Collective Statement published in the 70s which made clear that "if Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression" – the exact same thinking is needed when we talk about climate justice. We must look to embed justice within all facets of our climate and environmental actions and solutions, otherwise, we will all continue to suffer. We may be able to trick ourselves, with fancy technologies and 'greener' consumption, patting ourselves on our backs as we barricade ourselves in our protective armour of privilege, but the suffering will be insidious and ubiquitous because that safety would have been born at the expense of more vulnerable people and communities. (Longdon, no date)

While such claims might be contentious in other spaces (as research participants opting for a strategic absence approach demonstrate), Longdon, and others who spoke at the Black EcoFeminist Summit did not have to battle to bring intersectionality into conversation with environmentalism. The event materialises in a way that already assumes intersectionality as the basis for coming together. It does not need explaining or obscuring. It does not need to be made more palatable. Though heterogenous, in autonomously organised spaces like the Black EcoFeminist Summit, intersectional oppression is shared experientially and intellectually and participants work from this shared basis (even if there is difference within this). Ultimately, the shared starting place at which attendees arrive work to lighten the burden of the labour that is necessary to bring these conversations to spaces which, at best, ignore intersectionality, and at worst, actively resist it. As Cecilia comments, feeling like the only environmentalist operating in this way can ‘affect’ you on a ‘personal level’ – taking us back to discussions about organising labour, burnout, and wellbeing. From this perspective, being in

autonomously organised spaces can alleviate the pressures of being the Black feminist killjoy (Ahmed, 2017) in other spaces.

To contextualise it, the Black EcoFeminist Summit was a half day event designed and promoted as 'an intimate, but global, convening of Black Ecofeminists to share space, learn and find joy. ... [an] experience [which] will highlight the vast contributions of Black women to the environmental movement and serve as a hub for joy' (Intersectional Environmentalist, 2022). The registration and attendance policy at the Black EcoFeminist Summit in London reads as the following: 'Due to limited venue capacity, tickets are prioritized for Black women and Black non-men only' (Intersectional Environmentalist, 2022). This is a somewhat commonplace practice amongst organisers in the US today and historically, the concept of designated safe spaces has been mobilised within women's movements since at least the late 20th century (i.e., women-only spaces), including in European countries like Britain and France (Owen, 2013; Baily, 2015; Lewis *et al.*, 2015; Delap, 2016). Nonetheless, Black feminists in European contexts have faced great pushback for operating such policies. For example, in 2017, the French Afro-feminist collective MWASI Collectif Afro-Féministe became the subject of controversy for having organised workshops within a festival which were reserved for people who experience racial marginalisation and oppression (Othieno, Davis and Mwasi Collectif, 2019).

Now, the French context presents its own unique challenges which, however interesting they may be, are not the subject of this research project. But transnational Black and Afro-feminist groups like MWASI and Intersectional Environmentalist have many things in common which are interesting in the context of this research. They take intersectionality as an important basis upon which they organise. Crucially, this means that they also organise in ways that work to provide safe spaces in which people who experience the brunt of intersectional oppression commune together. These safe spaces operate as 'counterspaces' (Case and Hunter, 2012), promoting the wellbeing of marginalised communities whilst placing their knowledge, experiences, and acts of political imagination at the centre of their space – an act of resistance which reimagines the margin as the centre (Dempsey, Parker and Krone, 2011; hooks, 2014; McConnell *et al.*, 2016). In the previous chapter, we saw some of the challenges around burnout and wellbeing for environmentalists undertaking the labour to build intersectionality-centred environmentalist spaces and agendas, in which they are currently minoritised. Cecilia reflects on why this is important:

> When you're trying to facilitate intersectionality in a space that is homogenous and consistently homogenous, then you have to assess what is actually possible in that space. If the demographics of the organisation haven't changed for four or five years, what makes you think that they're going to be open to intersectional approaches to environmentalism? ... if you're working in a space where you are minoritised, or you feel minoritised, you need to be constantly reminded that you're not the only one, because that narrative of being the one is actually going to do you more harm in the long run. And it's certainly not true. You know, it's

> not true that I'm the only Black woman working on this. There's loads of us like, so much, you know, but if I bind to that idea, it really affects me on a personal level. But it is just disconnected from reality, basically.

Self-organising has been an important resource for groups that have historically been marginalised or side-lined in other movements – such as queer communities of colour facing racism in white LGBTQ+ movements (Bacchetta, El-Tayeb and Haritaworn, 2015), Black lesbians subject to racism and homophobia from white feminists and Black feminists who are heterosexual (ibid), and working class disabled people experiencing ableism in the trade union and labour movements (Humphrey, 1998). That settings like the Black EcoFeminist Summit are autonomously organised in the sense that they are led and upheld by Black women does not mean that they are not coalitional, however. The Black EcoFeminist Summit programmed panels that included Black women environmentalists from places as far and wide as Germany, the US, and different parts of Britain. The women used the platform to critique hegemonic forms of environmentalism whilst sharing stories and struggles from different lands – enacting the coalitional, solidaristic space-sharing that we saw activists like Amanda Hassan, active with CND, reaching towards and desiring in the archives.

However, autonomously organised spaces are not without challenges either. Cecilia, who was part of the Black EcoFeminist Summit tells me that:

> ...it's interesting because my experience of intersectionality in nature conservation pertains to race. I think affinity groups are great for like people of colour, but I even find in that, it's held up a lot by Black people. And so, we still have to do more work to hold up these spaces.

These insights underscore the prevalence of antiblackness in environmentalist spaces, specifically those oriented towards nature conservation. As we have already seen, there is a recurrent theme in which race takes on a spectral character within social movement organising in European settings (M'charek, Schramm and Skinner, 2014). But, to go even further, reflecting on race requires us to move beyond binaries of Black/white – since anti-Blackness can emerge even in spaces led and made up by people from global majority communities. As Cecilia notes, autonomously organised spaces are not free from intersectional dynamics of power.

Certainly, I noticed challenges around practical inclusive practices in the physical set-up of the Black EcoFeminist Summit. The digital sphere shaped the day heavily (for example, programming details were only available via Instagram, limiting access to those who use this platform). We could think about this through the lens of age and generation, especially given that there were (a very small number of) elders participating in the event. Mobilising around an intergenerational issue like climate change and ecological breakdown require us to foreground issues relating to age and generation as a relevant axis of intersectionality (Bell, 2021; Pickard, Bowman and Arya, 2022) beyond the mere rhetorical

valorisation of youth mobilisation (Arya, 2022). Indeed, the work of Patricia Hill Collins (2021) has invited us to take generation and age more seriously in how we understand and operationalise intersectionality within social movement organising. From this perspective, we need to think about the importance not only of *who* is in a social movement space, but also *how* they occupy these spaces in relation to each other. What do our relationships look like in social movement spaces? How might intersectional power dynamics shape these relationalities? Going beyond mere descriptive diverse representation, these questions of *who* and *how* determine how autonomously organised spaces are constructed.

5.4 Coda

In this chapter and the previous one, I studied the different articulations of intersectionality that we can find in and amongst environmentalist contexts. Within both the academic literature and beyond, there remains contestation around how we describe and use intersectionality (Collins, 2015) and the ways in which it has come to be stretched conceptually, sometimes to the extent that it is emptied of meaning (Bilge, 2015; Nash, 2017; Salem, 2018). The academic literature and the insights from the interviews I conducted for this research indicate that even when many of us use the same word, 'intersectionality', as we engage in dialogue with each other, we can mean different things. This requires us to reflect on the practical and political implications for how we use and understand intersectionality. Normative and descriptive debates emerge as we explore conversations around how intersectionality *is* and *should be* conceptualised.

Environmentalists operating from an intersectional basis talk about and reflect on doing so in ways that resonate with wider existing debates about intersectionality. They raise questions about how it works and what it means – which is relevant both within and beyond environmentalism. We saw that identity was an important part of the discussion – and I organised different approaches to individual identity in explicit intersectional engagements into first and third person grammars. Some research participants drew on their own individual identity markers (first person approach) to articulate an understanding of intersectionality in the context of environmentalist organising. They thus invited us to examine some of the political problematics that the (Black) feminist scholarship and movement raise about how we construct knowledge (especially from our own individual experiences) as well as some of the political implications triggered by excessive focus on individual identity markers (both in the first and third person) as a way of engaging with intersectionality (Ferree, 2009; Gimenez, 2023). In a nutshell, we saw how the individual can and might serve as the primary unit of analysis when working with intersectionality – and that this can occur in more than one way. In the next chapter, I propose some

reflection on these grammars of intersectionality, especially as we respond to concerns about the pivot away from class and materiality that intersectionality is said to participate in.

This chapter raised challenges about how we come to know about intersectionality, noting my interlocutors' suggestions of different ways of learning about and developing intersectional praxis (e.g., experiential, academic, etc). Considering the historic silencing of subalterity in dominant narratives and decision making processes (Spivak, 1988), it is vital to recognise the validity of knowledge claims which are made from marginalised standpoints – and the role that they consequently play in shaping politics and policy (Collins, 1989). At the same time, it is useful to remain critical of claims about the relationships that standpoints are considered to hold in relation to the notion of an objective truth (Paradies, 2018). The latter is a notion of which many remain critical (Haraway, 1988; Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002; Yuval-Davis, 2015; Simandan, 2019), myself included.

There are several key problematics which remain constant throughout this chapter and the next one: intersectionality's provenance – and whether this is or is not acknowledged, the interplay of different levels of analysis used to frame intersectionality, intersectionality's practical operationalisation, and – key to this thesis in particular – how this is situated within a specifically environmentalist approach. The latter, reflection on what it means to *think* and *do* intersectionality in environmentalism forms the basis of the following chapter building on the discussions so far. Thus, the following chapter builds on the discussions up to here in order to suggest routes to moving towards 'a billion green Black feminisms'– recognising plurality while encouraging rootedness and relationality. The next chapter is an effort to ask questions that can help build theory and develop praxis based on the insights from this and the preceding two chapters. What does it mean to build and enact green Black feminisms? How does intersectionality root and route them? These are the questions that the following chapter begins to propose.

Chapter 6. Questions for a billion green Black feminisms

To my knowledge, this thesis is the first full-length study of its kind. Primarily, it provides new empirical data and analytical insight on intersectionality as it relates to discourses, strategies, and praxis in environmentalism across Britain. So far it has reflected, at length, on how intersectionality shows up in terms of its presences and absences in modern environmentalist organising. The chapter here begins to offer some more theoretical and speculative perspectives, exploring what these intersectional presences and absences that we observed in the previous two chapters could suggest for building green Black feminist praxis both in the present and future. It asks how we might use them to continue developing the types of theory and praxis that are attentive to the different articulations of power as they manifest both in the issues that environmentalists organise around, as well as the ways that this organising takes place practically. I offer this chapter as a set of reflections that emerge not only from the encounters with fellow environmentalists and Black feminists that produced and coproduced the empirical data that this research relies on, but also some of the existing scholarship and my own experiences organising as a Black feminist environmentalist in Britain.

Ultimately, this thesis argues for praxis that is more fully grounded in a Black feminist intersectional framework to be taken up more rigorously and widely within environmentalist organising in Britain. In other words, it argues for a move towards and embrace of what I refer to as green Black feminist praxis; an approach which is urgently attentive to the multiple social ecological axes of white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy. Building and enacting praxis is an inherently social act; it is forged through collective effort (Kemmis and Smith, 2008; Smith, Salo and Grootenboer, 2010). Below, I draw on the work of theorists, thinkers, and activists whose lives and work continue to enrichen Black feminist and/or ecological analyses and practices that seek to dismantle systems of oppression. I would like to offer the reflections below as a reaching towards the praxis I reflect on. The reflections emerge out of my engagement with the lands and people that I have encountered both directly and indirectly throughout the undertaking of this work. In that sense, I think of it as a kind of grounded theory which orients itself towards and embeds itself in action – but because of its form (a doctoral thesis), I hesitate to present it as *praxis in itself*.

Echoing the work of Kathryn Yusoff (2018), this chapter calls for a billion green Black feminisms to take shape. In *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (2018), Yusoff argues for the development and foregrounding of more politicised, historicised geological narratives that are equipped to deal with the colonial foundations of the 'Anthropocene'. She calls for geological studies to account for the colonial histories and develop racial reckoning with regards to ecology. In doing so, we may create space 'to think

about encountering the coming storm in ways that do not facilitate its permanent renewal' (Yusoff, 2018, p. 108). Yusoff makes a necessity of forging a billion black Anthropocenes – the alternative to them is 'none'. If it does not account for the racialised logics of colonialism and coloniality, and the ecological relations they inspire, the Anthropocene narrative can only reproduce the futures that it tries to avoid. With this in mind, I argue that an environmentalism that seeks no engagement with social problematics, understood intersectionally, will do the same. It will be an environmentalism that reproduces the power relations that are, themselves, the manufacturers of ecological crisis (Whyte, 2018; Sultana, 2022b).

It is not sufficient to account for humans broadly conceived when tackling ecological issues; ecological analysis and political agenda building must attend to the uneven and intersectional dynamics of power as it shapes and is shaped by ecology (Mikulewicz *et al.*, 2023). In the absence of analysis and praxis which speaks to existing power dynamics, how they figure in the issues we resist as well as the strategies we use to resist them, environmentalist efforts can uphold, rather than unsettle, social and ecological status quos. Drawing on Yusoff's work, then, I use this chapter to call for a billion green Black feminisms, which fuse intersectionality and political ecology together to contribute to the development of environmentalist social movement praxis that is thoroughly political and politicised. This work responds to the issues raised by the Anthropocene on social and ecological lines. It is pluralistic (hence the billion).

The first part of the chapter proposes intersectionality as ecological heuristic. In simpler terms, it proposes intersectionality as a tool or process, rather than a static telos or end goal. The discussion invites us to focus not on *who* is intersectional, but how intersectionality frames our relationality. As environmentalists, how can we use intersectionality to frame and understand the ways that we relate to each other and our lands? What kinds of new or different forms of relationality can an intersectional approach to ecology support? It proposes the use of intersectionality as a way to ask questions as we build and develop green Black feminist praxis. Hence, I close each of the following subsections with further sets of questions both about and through intersectionality. The following subsection of this chapter weaves together these discussions to think more closely about intersectionality in concert with climate justice, examining how the notion of intersectional climate justice expands the remits of both intersectionality and environmentalism. It asks: What is *intersectional* climate justice and how can it support the development and practice of a billion green Black feminisms? The subsequent subsection goes further, to think about what it might mean to move beyond a conceptual and practical distinction between environmentalism and Black feminism – and seeks to explore the potential suturing of the two. The penultimate part of the chapter revisits debates about intersectional labour in environmentalist organising. I reflect on some of the provocations offered by my interlocutor, Cecilia, in particular – who

argues for a strategy of exit from environmentalist spaces that do not serve or hold space for minoritised environmentalists.

6.1 Intersectionality as ecological heuristic

In the previous chapters, one theme which emerged repeatedly was that of learning and reflexivity. My interlocutors talked about their own experiences and processes of learning about intersectionality and environmental issues/organising. We observed the emphasis of groups like UKSCN and BP or Not BP? on encouraging (potential) members to commit to learning about intersectionality. This learning foregrounds how intersectional power relations shape internal group dynamics, solidaristic links and coalitional organising, as well as the types of issues and actions that groups undertake.

Whether experiential or academic, the findings from this research say something about intersectionality as an opportunity to learn – that it is a tool that shapes process, rather than a static adjective. As Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge argue, a productive engagement with intersectionality takes it 'as an analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves' (Collins and Bilge, 2016, p. 2). Hence, this subsection proposes intersectionality as ecological heuristic; in short, a tool which supports environmentalists (and, to some extent, social movement organisers operating in other spaces) to ask questions and engage in analysis that attends to the social complexity of ecology as a set of political issues and the articulation of power within the groups and networks – the social movements – formed to respond to these issues.

6.1.1 Facing up to environmentalist histories

The chapters on environmentalist genealogies and contemporary intersectional presences/absences have given us several insights about environmentalism and intersectionality in Britain: intersectionality is completely absent in some ways of organising, whether by ignorance or resistance. Environmentalists have a history of presenting and engaging with climate and environmental issues as universalised, post-political problems (Russell, 2012). Although the climate justice frame has been introduced to push against this post-political agenda, issues with anti-social environmentalism do remain (Lakanen, 2019). These forms of environmentalist organising have side-lined the gendered, racialised, and classed politics of environmental issues – producing feelings of alienation for some marginalised communities in some instances (Bell and Bevan, 2021) and in others, reproducing narratives, policies, and actions that materially reinforce marginalisation (Newman, 2011). Such forms of environmentalism can be situated more closely to the imperialist versions of conservationism and anti-social environmentalism that do not hold space for the liberation of parts of our own species alongside others. But even where there are intersectional presences, these presences take different forms, some of which are explicit and

forthcoming, and others, strategically obscured and/or made palatable to potentially hostile audiences. I am not arguing that we need to have a universalised approach to making intersectionality present – or that this is even possible; rather, we should stay critically conscious of our engagement with intersectionality. That is, that we recognise that the different ways that we conceptualise it produce different results with a critical consciousness of mainstream environmentalism in Britain's historical lack of engagement with intersectionality.

Therefore, I suggest that we ask questions both *about* and *through* intersectionality in order to avoid the anti-social forms of environmentalism described above. This subsection focuses mainly on questions *about* intersectionality. Because intersectionality is still so contested, I argue that it is useful to clarify meaning when using it as much as possible. If one person is using it to describe diverse representation, and another is using it to capture the interconnectedness of different struggles, the common ground on which to forge collective dialogue and action starts to falter. Hence, I propose that we ask definitional and conceptual questions *about* intersectionality, as much as we ask the broader political questions that intersectionality inspires from a substantive perspective. Hence, I propose that we ask: How do we check and negotiate meaning when talking about intersectionality? In a shared conversation, are we using the term 'intersectionality' in the same way when we talk about it? How can we clarify our understandings and practices around intersectionality in collective settings? Further definitional questions seek to clarify the *levels of analysis* on which we are building an intersectional approach to environmentalism – whether these are local, regional, or global, personal, reflexive, or collective. Again, there are many ways of conceptualising and operationalising intersectionality – and how we do so will fundamentally shape the strategies and discourses that we employ in theorising and organising.

6.1.2 Asking the right questions

Understanding intersectionality as ecological heuristic is also premised on the idea that the questions we ask are as important as the answers we provide to them. In conducting this research, I have found the incisive questions posed by critical race theorists, Indigenous scholars, Black feminists, and organisers to be extremely useful in developing my thinking. If we return to some of the questions that have informed the undertaking of this research: in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999), Linda Tuhiwai Smith offers a set of questions about decolonisation and research, which have since informed and been cited in a plethora of research across several disciplines (for example, Elder, Damiani and Oswago, 2016; Elder and Odoyo, 2018; Nguyen, 2020; Vlachou and Tlostanova, 2023). By asking 'Ar'n't I a woman?', Sojourner Truth lays bare the contradictions of Black womanhood in a society that assumes women to be white and Black people to be men. I want to emphasise, thus, the importance of asking questions and asking the right questions. Rather than

proposing a definitive theory of green Black feminism, I invite plurality and exploration – I propose what I see as a beginning to ask some of the right questions so that the dialogue and interaction between intersectionality and environmentalism may strengthen.

One of the interviewees participating in this research framed intersectionality as about asking questions. As noted in previous chapters, this resonates with Mari Matsuda's work, which proposes intersectionality as a method of 'ask[ing] the other question':

> When I see something that looks racist, I ask, "Where is the patriarchy in this?" When I see something that looks sexist, I ask, "Where is the heterosexism in this?" When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, "Where are the class interests in this?" (1990, p. 1189)

Matsuda's questions are relevant for thinking about environmental issues and environmental organising. In a similar sense, the work of Kathleen M. de Onís (2012) undertakes this exercise of asking questions, by using the metaphor of 'looking both ways' to forge critical links between reproductive and climate justice. By 'looking both ways', de Onís suggests that we keep climate justice in critical view as we address reproductive justice, and vice versa. Whilst this approach forges vital links between two bodies of critical justice-oriented praxis (as this thesis tries to do), the two bodies are still conceptualised in separation to each other – just as my own research has largely addressed Black feminism and intersectionality in separation to environmentalism. These are problematics which I return to shortly.

To return to Matsuda's questions and de Onís's invitations to 'look both ways', we can use intersectionality to consider how we address environmental issues from a multi-dimensional vantage point (avoiding the single axis approaches to power that intersectionality critiques). We can continue to build on these invitations to synthesise and interlink systems of oppression in our understanding and response to environmental and social issues. I frame this as asking questions *through* intersectionality. That is, we can reflect on the types of politics, resistance, and futures that intersectionality makes possible when we use it to keep asking questions. For example, intersectionality incites questions about how we 'see' systems of power at work in environmental issues and environmentalist organising. Hence, we ask: How can we 'ask the other question' in environmentalism? Where do we see capitalism, heterosexism, white supremacy, ableism, settler colonialism, and state oppression at play in the issues we organise around? In our internal group dynamics? And in our relationships with others? Keeping these multiple questions to hand can encourage us to do the work of *looking several ways* to see and name the power relations in the multiple social axes of issues which have historically been side-lined or ignored in environmentalist organising in Britain.

Although different levels of analysis have coloured the development of intersectional praxis, its trajectory through CRT scholarship, with a focus on legal structures, has lent itself more urgently to local

and national perspectives. We will see in more detail later in this chapter, but environmentalist context inspires different levels of analysis in intersectionality. From this perspective, we should ask: What are the different levels of analysis informing our approach to environmentalism and intersectionality? Are they individual, local, regional, national, international? How does this shape our politics? By reflecting on the different levels of analysis, we can attend to the specificities of environmentalist issues and organising. It might go without saying, but applying an intersectional analysis to a legal case of discrimination using employment law requires a different engagement with levels of analysis than an intersectional analysis of fossil fuel extractivism in a Southern country, for example. The former calls for the examination of how (national or local level) legal architectures affect individuals and interpolate group categories. The latter, however, directs more attention to the global material flows of fossil fuels extracted from local ecologies often to meet the energy needs of rich nations, whilst affecting human and more-than-human communities at the individual, local, and national levels. Considering *how* intersectionality might interact with these different levels of analysis is necessary, especially given the historical conditions in which intersectional ideas and praxis have developed.

Since environmentalism has historically engaged less with intersectionality than other more explicitly identity bound social movements, further development is required to understand the levels at which intersectional analysis takes shape in this context. In environmentalist contexts, this requires thinking about the extent to which intersectionality is able to speak to the current *and* historical global dynamics of climate change and ecological breakdown – an issue which the literature appears to address by operationalising intersectionality in concert with the concept of climate justice (Mikulewicz *et al.*, 2023).

Building on existing scholarship and organising, my research seeks to encourage a critical view of how we use intersectionality, rather than a simple take-up of the word to satisfy a kind of social desirability bias that one of my interlocutors talked about in relation to climate justice in the previous chapter. As scholars have argued, intersectionality is an analysis of power in which the intersectional gaze falls not only on those who are marginalised (as critiques suggest that it does), but also on those with access to power, advantage, and 'privilege' (Yuval-Davis, 2006). This is an invitation to continue thinking about and developing the terms on which we engage with intersectionality in environmentalist (and other social movement) contexts. As I have argued throughout this thesis, social movement understandings and take-up of intersectionality are important not only for the development of political agendas and ideas, but also the actual spaces in which these agendas and ideas are matured. How we think about and approach the latter, however, has elicited contentious debate – especially around the extent to which identity politics and a politics of deference contour these spaces (Táíwò, 2022).

In *Elite Capture* (2022), Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò encourages us to re-examine the absences in social movement organising spaces whilst taking a critical view of an excessive focus on diverse representation and a politics of deferring to minorities within movements. This requires focusing our attention on who is not 'in the room' and how our activities inside said room might affect those outside (who are often on the frontlines of the issues at hand). Examining what takes place both *inside* and *outside* of 'the room', and how they relate to each other is crucial – for the two are not mutually exclusive. Moreover, if we take the politics of prefiguration seriously, we are forced to recognise that the social movement setting itself also produces and shapes the futures it can create. This means directing our attention not only towards the epistemologies and political demands that social movements advance, but the makeup and dynamic of the spaces in which they are conceived too. From this perspective, the following questions are designed to facilitate an appreciation of the power relations in which environmentalists are always entangled. Which grammars of intersectionality do our politics operate in? Is our engagement with intersectionality exclusively inward-looking (self-reflexive) or outward facing (describing or regarding others)? Can we do both? These questions encourage us to view reflexivity as of ongoing, but not exclusive, importance. It also embeds an explicit ethic of relationality in our engagement with intersectional organising that implicates *everyone*, not just those who are intersectionally marginalised.

All of the questions offered here are given without definitive responses. Questions serve as ways to inform further discussions, research, and action. I think of them as gifts. In proposing intersectionality as a heuristic, I suggest that it can help us to ask more generative questions that build more political, critical, and liberatory versions of environmentalism. These questions are double-pronged. Some of them are *about* intersectionality; how we understand and use it. But intersectionality itself prompts a myriad of questions and responses too. I try to do both here. I propose a set of some suggested questions at the end of each subsection in this chapter, in the hopes that they go towards building some of the billion green Black feminisms that this work reaches towards.

Because they are open ended, the questions invite a possible plurality of responses. Above all, they seek to centre our attention on meaningfully integrating intersectionality in social movement praxis. We can notice that some of these questions are relevant for social movement organising more generally; others are very specific to environmentalist and ecological forms of organising. These are questions that I offer as heuristics – instruments for reflection that can be used by academics and organisers. Each set of questions encourages us to think about how we use intersectionality in social movement spaces practically and strategically. The questions also interrogate how we use intersectionality to build and develop political narratives and agendas, to develop political demands, and enact them.

6.1.3 Questions: Intersectionality as ecological heuristic

- How do we check and negotiate meaning when talking about intersectionality? In a shared conversation, are we using the term 'intersectionality' in the same way when we talk about it? How can we clarify our understandings and practices around intersectionality in collective settings?
- How can we 'ask the other question' in environmentalism? Where do we see capitalism, heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, ableism, settler colonialism, and state oppression at play in the issues we organise around? In our internal group dynamics? And in our relationships with others?
- What are the different levels of analysis informing our approach to ecology and intersectionality? Are they individual, local, regional, national, international? How does this shape our politics?
- Which grammars of intersectionality does my politics operate in? Is it exclusively inward-looking (self-reflexive) or outward facing (describing or regarding others)? Can it do both?

6.2 Intersectional climate justice

The insistence on climate justice in relation to intersectionality appeared in the interviews conducted for this research. Climate justice was also a frame which I observed in the materials of many groups. This chapter has already begun to explore how we can navigate the different analytical levels of intersectionality in relation to those of climate justice. These are discussions that is already being developed within the literature, with the number of studies focusing on intersectional climate justice is growing (de Onís, 2012; Perkins, 2018; Wågström, 2018; Lakanen, 2019; Hathaway, 2020; Amorim-Maia *et al.*, 2022; Mikulewicz *et al.*, 2023).

Climate justice operates on a primarily global plane of analysis. It focuses on the inequities of climate change along the divisions of Global South and Global North, as examined through the lens of imperialism and 'climate coloniality' (Sultana, 2022b). This differentiates it somewhat from much of the prominent work on intersectionality which, though conscient of the global flows and histories of colonialism, has tended to begin with analyses that focus on how power articulates *within* national borders and legal systems. Intersectional climate justice resists against post-political iterations of environmentalism. It advances climate justice discourse and praxis by insisting on the *intersectional* nature of climate and environmental injustices (Amorim-Maia *et al.*, 2022) – and advances intersectional discourse by providing an ecological perspective on power relations (Craig, 2014). For

example, discussions regarding global migration flows, climate change, and human reproduction in environmentalist contexts are fraught with issues relating to gender and race that are articulated at the individual/local *and* global levels, especially given that '[e]nvironmental studies, led by countries of the Global North, have a tendency to render Global South countries, and especially women, responsible for a surplus of population which would be the principle cause of the environmental crisis' (Larrère, 2015, p. 116). Intersectionality, in this context, draws our attention not only to the global inequities between North and South, but also the specific reproductive justice related burdens and concerns that women *within* Southern countries face when population and migration are pushed as environmentalist issues. To advance intersectional climate justice is to not only recognise the historical and global inequalities, but the inequalities *within* regions too – to think about how these ecologically expressed inequities and injustices are materially expressed in different ways in different spaces, across several intersecting axes. The work of addressing this expands the remits of both intersectionality *and* environmentalism, to observe the interactions and overlaps amongst issues conceived in simultaneously environmental, social, political, and cultural terms.

6.2.1 Expanding remits

As we saw in the previous chapter, one interviewee used intersectionality to differentiate her group's activities from what she described as anti-emissions groups. In doing so, she distinguished her group as seeking political and social rather than technoscientific solutions. Taking an intersectional approach to climate and environmental issues requires engagement beyond the technoscientific elements of the issue (Kaijser and Kronsell, 2014). This means underscoring the political and social roots of ecological breakdown. Such an approach observes the social articulations of the issue and understands these articulations as parts of a wider ecosystem. So, fusing the two together gives us an opportunity to think about the social and political systems that produce intersectional marginalisation as part of these wider ecological systems. We can start to see all kinds of struggles as interconnected and make links (and coalitions) that may otherwise not materialise.

As environmental justice scholarship indicates, some issues have historically been excluded from environmentalist organising in Britain because they have not been considered to be environmental in nature (Bullard and Wright, 1990; Bell, 2021). From an intersectional perspective, it is important to ask the scope that the environmentalist movement permits itself to take up and whose concerns lie at the centre of its action. This will vary amongst groups and will depend on several factors, but one key shaper of how environmental groups work will be how they define the 'environment' at the outset. This is a contested terrain with concrete implications that has been taken up already by a number of thinkers (e.g., Allen, Daro and Holland, 2007; Bell, 2020c; MacGregor, 2020). Karen Bell notes, for example, that

'when working-class groups approach mainstream organisations for support with their issues, for example the location of incinerators in their communities, the mainstream organisations can deem such issues to be outside the scope of 'environmental'' (2020c, p. 13). This example illustrates how the fundamental definitions of the environment which a group uses will define the parameters of the work that they see as relevant and necessary to do. Here, a depoliticised white middle-class 'capture' of the concept impedes their capacity to take action on issues which affect the immediate environments of working-class communities. This is owing to a fundamental separation between understanding the environment as a 'fragile ecosystem to be protected versus a place of dangerous threat' (Allen, Daro and Holland, 2007, p. 124). From this perspective, how can we expand our understandings of ecology beyond a focus on 'climate' and carbon emissions? How can we expand the remit of both Black feminism and environmentalism to respond to 'the environment' more broadly conceived? An intersectional approach asks that we keep our eye on issues that are ecological and environmental in nature that are not necessarily climate change. It challenges the boundaries of Black feminism and environmentalism to respond to the politics of our ecosystems, which include and stretch beyond human social relations.

We can thus use intersectionality to stay curious and open to interrogating (and potentially reimagining) the ways we understand and relate to this idea of the environment. Hence, what types of intersectional power dynamics shape the environmental issues we are organising around? Are there issues we have overlooked because they are not typically understood as 'environmental' in nature? This means that working with intersectionality is not about *who* is intersectional, but rather how intersectionality frames the ways we relate to each other and lands. It is not about a static accumulation of individual identities but about an interrogation of power as relational, fluid, and contextual. So, if we think about intersectionality this way it becomes an invitation to keep asking questions as we move across time and space. And these questions are not just about individual selves, conceived as static, unmoving subjects, but about the ways that we interact with and within broad ecosystems of power.

6.2.2 Questions: Intersectional climate justice
• How can we expand our understandings of ecology beyond a focus on 'climate' and carbon emissions? • What types of intersectional power dynamics shape the environmental issues we are organising around? Are there issues we have overlooked because they are not typically understood as 'environmental' in nature? • What kinds of new or different forms of material, social, and political relationality can an intersectional approach to environmentalism support?

- Where are the material frontlines of the issues we are organising around? How can we hold space for the communities at these frontlines? If we are part of these communities, how can we seek and bolster support amongst our peers, kin, friends, collaborators?

6.3 Suturing Black feminism and environmentalism

Part of the object of this thesis has been to consider what Black feminism and intersectionality studies/organising might learn from environmentalism, and vice versa. However, this objective presupposes a distinction between the two; one which it has implicitly tried to blur, especially in considering the explicit presence of intersectionality in some environmentalist groups and spaces (such as the Black EcoFeminist Summit). Why, then, do we think about Black feminism and environmentalism as separate from each other? And should we? Having explored what it would mean to expand the remits of both intersectionality and environmentalism respectively, this short subsection goes further to imagine the two as more intimately interwoven. I draw on political, geographical, sociological, anthropological, and personal perspectives to both *remember* and *remake* overlaps and sutures between Black feminism and environmentalism. The subsection moves to explicitly identify and address some of the fissures, tensions, and cracks that become apparent when we treat Black feminism and environmentalism as separate bodies of praxis. In Britain, this separation has often – but, as we have seen in the previous chapters, not always – been maintained.

6.3.1 Synthesising movements and concepts

There has been a lot of scholarship published which encourages the development of critical approaches to environmentalism which account for the social and political aspects of environmental issues and environmentalist organising – from Murray Bookchin's work on 'social ecology' (2007); to the works of ecofeminist scholars like Val Plumwood (2002), Vandana Shiva (1993, 2015), Ariel Salleh (1993, 2018), and Greta Gaard (1997, 2010, 2011, 2015); and, of course, the extensive scholarship on race and environmental justice largely across the US (Di Chiro, 1998; Allen, Daro and Holland, 2007; Agyeman *et al.*, 2010) but also in other occupied territories such as Palestine (Shmueli, 2008; Pellow, 2018). Such work is not antithetical to Black feminism – much of it is in dialogue with it. It does not, however, always attend to the specifically intersectional dynamics so much as the broadly social contours or single axis of ecological issues. Hence, other works have sought to either conceptualise Black feminism and environmentalism in dialogue with each other, or further, synthesise them (Craig, 2014; Frazier, 2016; Animashaun Ducre, 2018; Thomas, 2022). These works are relevant for their attention to the (sometimes already overlapping) spheres of Black feminism and environmentalism that this thesis concerns itself with, working to expand the remit of both.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the assumption that intersectionality and Black feminism and environmentalism are articulated in separation to each other prompts several problematics. Undoubtedly, there are environmentalist spaces that do not identify or engage with Black (or any other) feminism. The inverse is certainly true too. From this perspective, we might view intersectionality as 'travelling' into environmentalism from the realm of Black feminism. But what about the work of those who identify with both movements simultaneously and are already doing the work to fuse Black feminism, intersectionality specifically, and environmentalism? What does their work suggest about who intersectionality is for and how it materialises? Given the heterogeneity of contexts in which social movement organising takes place, there are many ways of doing and arriving at Black feminism, environmentalism, and green Black feminism. For this reason, drawing on Yusoff's work, I am proposing *a billion* green Black feminisms, rather than just one.

Black feminism and environmentalism are not necessarily discrete, and I want to keep in mind the long history of anti-colonial environmentalism that has taken place and continues to develop beyond Britain (Guha, 2001; Muthuki, 2006; Nixon, 2011; Guha and Alier, 2013; Ochieng Omedi, 2017). Movement organising led by Wangari Maathai in Kenya, for example, succeeded in marrying women's and workers' rights organising to issues and mobilisation around forest conservation – though not without challenges (Muthuki, 2006). From this perspective, there are already examples of intersectional organising that may not have called themselves that. As we seek to synthesise and suture Black feminism and environmentalism in places where this has not yet come to pass, what does it mean to occupy a space of critical friendship through intersectionality? How do we support and uplift our movement whilst holding it accountable when it falls short? How do we find ways to fuse Black feminist thought *with* environmentalism, rather than seeking temporary coalitions amongst disparately conceived movements? This work of synthesis requires deep reflection and learning, given that there have hitherto been limited histories of interaction between the two movements in Britain, as explored below.

6.3.2 Language and accessibility

Throughout the last two discussion chapters, polemics about the word intersectionality itself (more than the ideas necessarily associated with it) emerged repeatedly. Some interviewees who took part in this research talked about their difficulties with using the word intersectionality; they were concerned that using the word will incite confusion at best and hostility at worst. In the context of the British 'war on woke' (Davies and MacRae, 2023) and the aggressive stoking of 'culture wars' (Duffy *et al.*, 2021) by elites make for challenging conditions in which to develop and explicitly talk about green Black feminisms. And in a movement which is not as well versed in issues of race, gender, class, disability, and sexuality as anti-racist and feminist movements might be, conversations about intersectionality

can be unwelcome. But does that mean we should self-censor, as some of my research participants choose to do by enacting strategic absences of intersectionality? This prompts serious reflection question about the provenance, politics, and accessibility of language and ideas. In the context of environmentalism, will using the word 'intersectionality' in organising spaces create tensions or difficulties? If so, how can we reflect on and respond to the triggers of these tensions?

'Intersectionality' is a linguistic shortcut – it is a way of capturing systems thinking and liberatory praxis in a word. It is a way of signalling a particular type of politics and political commitments, as we saw in the previous chapter. However, we can note the reticence with which some environmentalists approach (or avoid) the word 'intersectionality' – rooted in concerns around conceptual illegibility/unfamiliarity as well as the potential for resistance and hostility. With regards to the former, though, we might, for comparison, think about other concepts that are current within environmentalism, such as 'net zero', 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development', and even climate change itself. These are all terms which, to a non-expert, are not necessarily in common parlance. They require introduction and explanation. This does not make them unusable, however. Concepts or words do not need to be self-explanatory as such – but they must be explicable. We should therefore stay conscious and weary of the types of reductive or bad-faith critiques to which intersectionality might be subject to as interviewees contributing to this research indicated. In conditions of white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy, Black feminists are no strangers to bad faith (Bliss, 2016).

Several times, this research encountered perceptions of intersectionality as too academic. In what might seem like a tangent, I would like to take a moment to reflect on what the historical trajectory of jazz music might help us to understand about intersectionality and academisation/academic perceptions. Jazz music has been a medium for subversion embedded in histories of revolution, feminism, and communism (Davis, 1999; Goenawan, 2021). Eric Hobsbawm's full-length study of jazz music, *The Jazz Scene* (Hobsbawm, 1993), penned under a pseudonym (Francis Newton, borrowed from Billie Holiday's communist trumpeter), details the hotbed of politics, subversion, resistance that the jazz scene once was. Today, you can pay egregious amounts of money to dine à la carte and 'dance' to jazz music at The Ritz Restaurant played by an all-white, all male jazz band in one of Central London's wealthiest quarters. Jazz has also been academised and can be studied at prestigious institutions like the Royal Academy of Music.

Writing of dinners and degrees in jazz might seem irrelevant here – but I would like to suggest that there are parallels with intersectionality here. What would it mean to think about intersectionality as jazz? Jazz music's entry into the academy and its elevation to 'high culture' is partly subversive. It achieves what much of the Négritude movement of the early twentieth century was striving for (Senghor, 2010) –

validating cultures which hegemonic discourses denigrated and dominated. But this is also partly problematic, especially where this is institutionalised, and jazz (or intersectionality, for that matter) comes to be identified exclusively with its academic iterations. Jazz, like intersectionality, springs out of marginality, resistance, and a desire for change. They both cry out to be heard in conditions of silencing and are born of struggle. However legitimate, interesting, or useful the academic iterations of jazz music and intersectionality are, they are more than their academic iterations. I propose that we think about intersectionality as jazz, then; to accept its plurality but to also stay critical of its academic routes beyond its grass roots.

Reflecting on the deep roots and shifting routes intersectionality relates to previous discussions about synthesising Black feminism and environmentalism, especially when the latter is treated as being 'out of place' (Bliss, 2016) as it reaches different terrains, such as environmentalism. The efforts to suture Black feminism and environmentalism are not without challenge – and, as we have seen in the chapter on absences, can be met with hostility or resistance. These efforts require learning and education – which means they require teaching and information sharing, activities that require labour. I do not deny that the question of language accessibility is extremely important. However, where language is perceived as a barrier to accessing intersectionality as we seek to formulate green Black feminisms, closer scrutiny is warranted around whether the language itself is the veritable barrier (given the history of intersectionality) or a way to avoid developing ways of organising that have hitherto existed on the margins of mainstream environmentalist organising in Britain.

6.3.3 Questions: Suturing Black feminism and environmentalism
• What does it mean to identify intersectionality with environmentalism? What does it mean to conceptualise them separately? • What differentiates Black feminist environmentalism or green Black feminism from Black feminism and environmentalism, if anything? • What does it mean to occupy a space of critical friendship through intersectionality? How do we support and uplift our movement whilst holding it accountable when it falls short? • Will using the word 'intersectionality' in organising spaces create tensions or difficulties? If so, how can we reflect on and respond to the triggers of these tensions?

6.4 Doing the labour – leave or stay and struggle?

The chapters preceding this one emphasised and problematised the issue of labour in undertaking intersectional organising within environmentalist spaces, especially for marginalised actors. The

existing scholarship and archival material consulted for this research indicates the presence of issues like racism, nationally myopic (as opposed to internationalist) strategising, and an intersectionally uneven distribution of organising labour within groups such as CND (Ritscherle, 2009; Burkett, 2013). These findings resonate with more contemporary observations I have made from the interviews that I conducted, as well as content analysis of more recent magazine articles and scholarship on groups like XR (Gayle, 2019; Shand-Baptiste, 2019).

Within academia, Black feminists and Black feminist thought still face an excessive 'culture of justification' (Dotson, 2012, p. 6) which demands that we prove that the study of Black women's lives and ideas is worth doing or talking about at all (Cooper, 2015). A similar phenomenon can be understood in the context of environmentalism, too, where (often marginalised) actors labouring to advance an intersectional agenda are met with hostility and resistance through this culture of justification. Some of the Black and global majority women that I discussed this with described these experiences as tiring, exhausting, and draining. for some, it triggered questions about their desire to carry on organising.

6.4.1 In the face of resistance and ignorance

The affective aspects of organising labour in climate and environmentalist work are particularly heavy for organisers experiencing climate anxiety (Whitmarsh *et al.*, 2022) alongside the feelings of stress and overwhelm that social justice work can bring on more generally (Gorski, Lopresti-Goodman and dallas rising, 2019). And, as we have seen, this can also be compounded with the internal intersectional dynamics of some environmentalist spaces, which either refuse or are ill equipped to manage and mitigate expressions of racism, classism, ageism, ableism, and heteropatriarchy internally (Gorski, 2018). Killing joy (Ahmed, 2017) is a strategy which minoritised feminists have often employed as we navigate institutions and settings governed by the hegemonic logics of white supremacy, capitalism, and heteropatriarchy. But this work is, as marginalised environmentalists in this research have stated, not easy.

Having reflected on the burdens of emotional labour and the risk of burnout and movement exit, I want to spend a brief moment recalling my interviewee Cecilia's thoughts on what keeps her going: self-organised spaces. She tells me: 'Okay, but having said that, that's like the one side of it, which is the majority. But on the margins is really exciting work that's happening. There's lots of like cool movements and collectives. And they're very grassroots, but they are real. And they are making a difference…' (Cecilia). Cecilia's celebration of the work happening 'on the margins' is the materialisation of bell hooks' call to see and use the margin as 'much more than a site of deprivation […] it is also the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance' (hooks, 1992). In a social movements context, Keisha-Khan Y. Perry's work on Afro-Brazilian women's mobilisation engages with Black Brazilian feminist Sueli Carneiro's

scholarship to underline the imperative and political consequeneces of such self-organising: 'Black Brazilian feminist scholar and activist Sueli Carneiro asks, "Why did black women reach the conclusion that they had to organize themselves politically in order to face the triple discrimination as women, poor people, and blacks?" (2000, 27). Black women involved in Brazilian black social movements recognize the importance not only of racial and gender inequality, but also of class-based struggles over material resources in their urban communities.' (Perry, 2016, p. 117). This, of course, speaks more strongly to how more active and visible *presences* of intersectionality materialise in environmentalist organising.

My interlocutors described their environmentalism as pushing for more intersectionally sensitive ways of understanding and responding to the multiple textures of ecological issues. Specifically, they underscored the need to embrace ways of organising that recognise histories and contemporary issues of race and racism in Britain, and the environmentalist movement which carries the weight of these histories. Throughout the previous chapters, we have seen different approaches with which marginalised environmentalists relate to some of the mainstream environmentalist spaces that they are or have been part of. These approaches include staying and opting for strategic absence, staying and pushing explicitly against the resistance to engage with intersectionality, or exiting the movement and opting for self-organised spaces, and even exiting the movement *tout court*. Will talking about intersectionality create tensions or difficulties? If so, how can we reflect on and respond to the triggers of these tensions? Do they come from a place of resistance or of ignorance? If resistance and/or ignorance to intersectionality are sustained, as in the experience of some of my research participants, this might lead us to ask: Is it realistic to expect concrete change where we are? If not, which alternative spaces exist or could be built to do this work? The latter questions in particular lead to serious considerations around the benefits of creating and sustaining self-organised spaces as explored in the previous chapter. At the same time, such spaces are never homogenous either. For example, the Black EcoFeminist Summit's heavy reliance on digital platforms like Instagram for organisation and communication raised questions about how this self-organised space might have better embraced the very few elders who participated.

The work of bell hooks has argued that *Feminism is for Everybody* (2000). By extension, I want to suggest in this research that intersectionality is too – including environmentalism and environmentalists who are not intersectionally marginalised. As Chapter 2 detailed, there are serious issues with intersectionality's co-optation, appropriation, and depoliticisation (Alexander-Floyd, 2012; Christoffersen and Emejulu, 2023), or what I term expropriation, where marginalised groups are dispossessed of their ideas, concepts, and language that are taken up in ways that run counter to the interests of the groups they emerged from (Bilge, 2015; Cruel Ironies Collective, 2019). From this perspective, we need to take great

care with the ways that we make intersectionality 'travel' whilst we encourage its introduction to spaces, like environmentalism, that have historically failed to engage with their own entanglements in intersectional power dynamics. As we have seen, however, this work of travelling requires the undertaking of learning and unlearning. In Britain, environmentalist and feminist groups like UKSCN and Sisters Uncut place the onus on the ('privileged') individual to undertake this learning and sustained reflection, anticipating what it means to ask marginalised actors to perform the labour of resisting, explaining, and justifying their oppression inside and beyond their organising setting.

As we reflect on how marginalised actors navigate mainstream environmentalist spaces, and the types of additional organising labour (affective, educational) that is brought on in doing so, we should ask what types of intersectional power dynamics shape the way we relate to each other *within* social movement organisations. But the issue of intersectionality does not stop at the border of the organisation in terms of its own boundaries or its national setting. The transnational nature of climate and environmental issues lend themselves to coalitional organising (Sovacool *et al.*, 2023); demand it, even. However, as the literature indicates, coalition is not without intersectional challenge (Ciccia and Roggeband, 2021). Hence, where coalitional organising takes place, and environmentalists strive for transnational and international forms of intersectional solidarity (Tormos, 2017), attention to how the complexity of power dynamics plays out *amongst* groups is also necessary.

6.4.2 Questions: intersectionality, environmentalism, and organising labour
• What steps can we take to enact an intersectional ecological politics *here and now* practically, not just in the future? What does this look like inside our group or organisation? How is this labour distributed? How does this shape our outward-facing messaging and activities? • What types of intersectional power dynamics shape the way we relate to each other in and across groups? • Will talking about intersectionality create tensions or difficulties? If so, how can we reflect on and respond to the triggers of these tensions? • Is it realistic to expect concrete change where we are? If not, which alternative spaces exist or could be built to do this work?

Increasingly, we hear ecological issues being talked about in terms of crisis – in the news, in daily conversations, and in the words of activists and politicians too. This is something that I also noticed a lot in the words of my interlocutors (e.g., 'climate crisis' or 'ecological crisis). In closing this chapter, let us pause on how we can understand crisis in relation to the billion green Black feminisms that I am calling for here.

In *The Shock Doctrine* (2007), Naomi Klein shows how elements of government and private contractors collaborate to exploit crisis as an opening for extreme austerity and pro-corporate condition building. She calls this 'disaster capitalism'. In a conclusion to a thesis on intersectionality and environmentalism in Britain, this might seem like a tangent – but it is not! If we follow this train of thought, it can help us to close this discussion generatively by reflecting on how this thesis figures more broadly in relation to the polycrises we face today. Disaster capitalism relies and thrives on crisis. Whilst ordinary people recover from the shock of disaster, crisis opens a critical juncture. Here, radical ideas, which may be unthinkable in 'normal' times, are rebranded as feasible and ardently pursued. In the introduction to her book, Klein quotes free marketeer Milton Friedman who wrote that 'only a crisis—actual or perceived—produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable' (Friedman 1982 quoted in Klein, 2007, p. 6). Ultimately, Friedman was invested in developing exploitative and extractive ideas and policies – frameworks designed to boost the uneven accumulation of wealth founded on the labour of women, workers, and the global majority (which overlap) and the extraction of resources from, and therefore destruction of, ecologies. Yet, if we appropriate Friedman's dictum that crises can produce change – and that this change is dependent on the ideas 'lying around' at the time of crisis, we should act to keep liberatory ideas 'alive and available until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable'.

As we saw in previous chapters, through intersectionality, Black feminists have argued that the collective liberation of Black women could only flow from the radical dismantling of white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy. Collective social and ecological liberation is embedded in the liberation of Black women. For those of us invested in the liberation of oppressed people, lands, and cultures, serious engagement with intersectionality and ecology *is* the politically inevitable. That is why I have proposed intersectionality as an ecological heuristic which helps us to ask questions that filter environmental problematics and organising through a lens which understands the interconnectedness and complexity of power relations. Dividing this chapter into four themes (education, movement

relevance, organising labour, and climate justice), I proposed four sets of questions which invite reflection both on the substance and implications of intersectionality. How we understand intersectionality shapes how we use it, and how we use it has consequences for the types of environmentalist spaces we build in the present, as well as the ecological futures we reach for in the future.

This chapter, and the ones preceding it, have sought to build on and contribute to dialogue around some of the existing and potential billion green Black feminisms that take intersectionality as a basis for organising. What I am proposing here is not a definitive or absolute theory. It is an invitation to continue reflecting on and developing existing approaches to environmentalism and Black feminism that attempt to undertake the messy work of interlinking questions relating to ecology, intersectionality, racial capitalism, power, and materiality. It is not a theory of everything. It is a call to deepen theoretical and practical approaches to building social and ecological justice that foreground, address, and resist the intersectional network of systems that produce the violence, harm, and degradation of life forms that are rendered objects under white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy.

Conclusion

This final chapter ties together the discussions of the previous chapter to provide some closing remarks. It revisits the research questions framing this research project, reaffirming the key lines of argument that run throughout the thesis. Having considered the ways that intersectionality draws our attention to power and marginality – and in doing so, provides nuance, texture, and complexity to our understandings of how power functions – I reaffirm intersectionality's relevance for addressing climate and environmental issues. Additionally, the ways in which social movement actors relate to intersectionality impacts both how they shape and communicate their political demands, as well as their practical tactical repertoires. Indeed, this argument has political, theoretical, and methodological implications for both the study and undertaking of climate and environmentalist organising in Britain. My findings resonate with existing research on feminist and anti-racist organising both in and beyond Britain. Even if environmentalism is not ostensibly bound by a particular axis of relational power like race or gender, the question of ecology is fundamentally social, political, cultural, and material. The same is true, too, for intersectionality. From that perspective, environmentalism and other social movements might have more opportunities and challenges in common than is often recognised – and they may benefit from engaging more explicitly and more frequently with each other.

7.1 Theoretical and empirical contributions

Though growing in public and scholarly interest, intersectionality remains contested. It is important to remember that I have not sought to provide definitive or authoritative answers about its use in environmentalism or in social movement organising more generally. Rather, I have used intersectionality to design three research questions which invite extended reflection on the (potential) spaces that are available for the cultivation of a more explicit dialogue between intersectionality and environmentalist praxis in Britain.

As we saw in the introduction, this thesis set out to answer three key research questions, as a study of environmentalism and intersectionality in Britain:

- *How does intersectionality interact with environmentalist discourse, strategy, and praxis more broadly?*
- *How might we build and enact environmentalisms that resist rather than reinforce existing patterns of power and oppression?*

The open-ended and future-regarding nature of these questions allow for more than one way of approaching and answering them. I have tried to provide but a few possible ways of thinking about the themes that they raise. From this perspective, research about intersectionality and environmentalism in Britain provides an exciting and galvanising opportunity to think about, imagine, and explore alternative possibilities without, of course, forgetting the gravity of the polycrises that we face collectively, and, for many of us, individually too. These questions remain invitations for further reflection beyond the pages of this doctoral dissertation – especially the latter two.

Hitherto, there have been no full-length academic studies which have specifically examined environmentalist social movement organising from an explicitly intersectional lens in Britain. My research provides some empirical and theoretical insight into how intersectionality is being taken up and rejected in some parts of the environmentalist movement in Britain. Based on the qualitative research undertaken over the last three years, I have suggested that intersectionality has not yet penetrated the wider discourses of environmentalism in Britain. Nonetheless, I have shown that it still informs the praxis of some organising groups, and in parts, this is operationalised in concert with environmental and climate justice as conceived at individual, national, and international levels.

A large part of the theoretical and analytical discussion examined what I have termed *intersectional absences* and *presences*. Engaging with the literature and the insights from my empirical research and analysis, I argued that intersectionality is an important framework for thinking about social and ecological justice, an approach which has not yet been fully embedded in environmentalist discourses and strategies in Britain. Using the framework of absences and presences, however, I showed that engagement with intersectionality is not straightforward. Presences and absences can show up simultaneously, reminding us that intersectionality is contextually contingent and can materialise in several ways across time and space.

We saw, for example, that using the *word* 'intersectional/ity' is not a proxy for its substantive presence. Sometimes the word 'intersectionality' is used, but it is actually a stand-in for representational diversity. Other times, the word is *not* used despite it having informed the ideas and practices of a certain environmentalist or group. This functions as a shield for environmentalists who may be engaging with potentially hostile audiences or collaborators. In other contexts, environmentalists avoid using the word because they perceive it as an overly academic term – even if they fundamentally agree with the ideas that undergird it. Using accessible language is crucial. However, I problematised the notion that an idea which developed out of grassroots organising by enslaved people is, in its nature, too academic to be engaged with. If we think about the history of intersectionality, people who have been barred from universities, and even effectively barred from mainstream society in some places more broadly,

developed these ideas. Even if intersectionality does live academic lives today, I have suggested that it is a mistake to dismiss intersectionality as a purely academic, abstract, or intellectual thought exercise. It is and should be grounded in struggle. The jazz metaphor that I used in the previous chapter sought to capture this.

The discussion presented in this study reflected not only on how intersectionality is made invisible or absent in environmentalist organising, but it also drew from scholarship and organising around Black and Indigenous futurity to begin imagining – and in some places –observing how we might start to build and enact *ecologisms* that *resist* rather than reinforce intersectional power and oppression. Environmentalists use intersectionality to construct more socially conscious narratives about processes of ecological degradation and craft politicised demands which reach for political, not technoscientific, solutions to the polycrises we face. Strategically, they engage in solidaristic, coalitional organising, which is not without its own challenges since this organising takes place within existing relations of power. Some of my research participants who were not marginalised talked about reading/education, sustained reflexive discussion and agreed upon procedures for dealing with any internal issues, and coalitional organising as strategies for incorporating more intersectional approaches into their organising. For some environmentalists, especially those who are of Black and global majority heritage, autonomous organising emerges as a useful strategy for crafting spaces that value and operationalise intersectionality. In creating spaces in which intersectionality forms a common ground upon which the people in the room stand, those who are marginalised in mainstream environmentalist spaces (especially along the lines of race in European contexts) find themselves having different, generative conversations than in the mainstream. Rather than self-censoring or explaining what intersectionality means, they create the opportunity to spend more time nourishing the solidaristic links and political ideas which make intersectional environmentalism or ecologism more concrete over time.

As the chapter on archival findings and historical contextualisation of this study showed, environmentalist organising is not new to Britain. The historical discussion showed how forms of environmentalism which include a more social account of environmental and climate issues have emerged over time. But it also problematised some of the historically exclusionary tendencies that have characterised environmentalist organising in Britain across time. These exclusionary tendencies have manifested at the level of the social movement organisations (i.e., issues with diversity, representation, and internal group power dynamics) as much as at a broader level of groups' political agendas and tactical repertoires. In recent years especially, we have seen greater public discussion about how these exclusions show up, and speculation about how they might be remedied. Whilst there is no magic pill

to redress the reproduction of existing hierarchies and power within environmentalist organising, insights from those who generously took part in this research demonstrate the potential of intersectionality as a heuristic which can help us move towards enacting more solidaristic, equitable, and coalitional forms of ecological organising. If nothing else, intersectionality serves as a framing instrument that helps us to ask ourselves questions about the relational dynamics that produce and are produced by our engagement with environmentalism.

At the same time, we need to stay cautious about what we ask of intersectionality conceptually. There is no catch-all idea or concept which has the capacity to respond to any and every problem anywhere. Exploring intersectionality in environmentalist contexts requires a sensitivity to the different levels of analysis which it can speak to, as well as the historical context of its conception and development. There are always limits to any concept. We should continue to engage with intersectionality with care, checking in with what we are stretching or asking it to achieve – and asking ourselves whether this makes conceptual sense, and how this speaks to (or potentially erases) its origins.

This research has sought to build on a wealth of empirical and theoretical material to make a normative theoretical contribution about how intersectionality can inform environmentalist organising. Largely speaking, it has argued for the building of environmentalisms which are radically curious and energetic about responding to the challenging but crucial questions around how we address inequality, power, and marginality on a warming planet. It is vital to filter environmentalist problematics through intersectional lenses to recognise how power and inequality frame climate and environmental issues, and therefore the organising strategies and demands that we devise to address these issues.

The scope of this study has been very specific. This work does not provide a generalisable and representative view of intersectionality and environmentalism in Britain. It has offered several possible interpretations of intersectionality which characterise some iterations of environmentalist praxis – and recognises that each of these iterations will be informed by the specific contexts out of which they emerge. Secondly, this study is not without limitations. We can regard these limitations as invitations for further inquiry, research, and reflection. As we saw earlier in the discussion, this thesis began as a comparative case study. The format of the doctoral thesis and the circumstances under which it was undertaken meant that it was necessary to switch to a single case study approach. From this perspective, there remains space for further research which take a comparative approach to intersectionality in environmentalism. Further insights on commonalities, differences, and coalitions between Southern and Northern environmentalists would also be welcome opportunities to expand our knowledge about how intersectionality mediates and shapes transnational environmentalisms.

Further studies might examine a specific *type* of environmentalism. This study has taken an expansive approach to environmentalism including activity and actors from large NGOs, political parties, and the faith sector, for example. Whilst this research has identified that intersectional organising is, indeed, contextually contingent, more research on a specific component of environmentalist organising (i.e., faith organising) could help us to better understand which problematics and possibilities a specific context raises. Faith organising, for example, emerged unexpectedly as an important component in this research – simply because of the willingness of faith-based environmentalists to engage with me and my research. Ethnicity and religion are closely correlated in Britain with important implications for political participation (Sobolewska, 2011). And so, any further research into global majority community engagement with environmentalism and intersectionality in Britain might take the faith component into consideration.

Finally, there is still more to be known about how anthropocentrism figures in intersectionality (Rowe, 2013, 2016). I tend to steer clear of these types of discussions in my own research because I do not think all humans have been historically (and are even currently) centred in what we call Anthropocentrism. Calls to decentre humans in building ecological praxis need to reflect on which humans are being decentred in the first place. Nonetheless, advancing research on anthropocentrism and speciesism in intersectionality has the potential to further our understanding on what intersectionality can and should look like in environmentalist praxis specifically. Indigenous scholarship on species kinship and relationality could be a useful referent for such research.

7.2 'Until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable'[31]

As we saw in previous chapters, through intersectionality, Black feminists have argued that the collective liberation of Black women could only flow from the radical dismantling of white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy. As such, the liberation of many is tied to the liberation of Black women. For those of us invested in the liberation of oppressed people, lands, and cultures, serious engagement with intersectionality and ecology is the politically inevitable.

To think about intersectionality in concert with the ecological issues at stake is to undertake the imagination and vision work of futurity. It is to imagine – and prefigure – other ways of living which support social ecological wellbeing. When done seriously, it is to build environmentalisms that surpass conservationist tendencies reliant on human exclusions, that go beyond a more diverse environmentalist movement, that actually seek to reorganise material, political, cultural life collectively

[31] Friedman 1982 quoted in Klein, 2007, p. 6.

and coalitionally. This, as I explained in the introductory chapter, is about reaching for desire – and doing so in community with others, whether through reading, collectively discussing ideas, or taking direct action.

This thesis is an invitation to use intersectionality as a heuristic to *keep asking questions* about the work we do to address the issues at stake. It is an invitation to keep engaging in a form of radical, generative curiosity and openness which regards marginality as a creative site from which to theorise and do environmentalist politics.

So, let us keep returning to futurity and reaching for desire; to keep thinking about how we can be reflexive, critical friends to our movement, and galvanise our collective power to create alternative futures to the pasts and presents which so many of us have endured more than enjoyed. Let this work be a reminder of both the joy and lightness with which so many of us are undertaking this work, without dismissing the altitudes of the political mountains we have yet to climb. Let us keep reaching for different possibilities for ways of doing research and environmentalism. This conclusion does not mark the end – it is in invitation to all those who read it to keep asking 'other questions', for without these questions, there can be no futures.

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Appendix A: Interviews conducted

Organisation	Date
Bishop Stortford's Climate Group	21.02.22
Black Environment Network	27.06.23
Climate Action Plymouth (Friends of the Earth)	07.02.22
Eco Dharma Network	25.02.22
Eco Dharma Network/Extinction Rebellion	07.04.22
Eco Sikh UK	15.03.22
EcoSynagogue	16.03.22
Extinction Rebellion	06.11.20
Extinction Rebellion Bath	02.02.22
Extinction Rebellion Scottish Borders	10.02.22
Extinction Rebellion Somerset/Just Stop Oil	10.02.22
Extinction Rebellion Totnes	17.02.22
Extinction Rebellion Youth Bristol	18.03.22
Faith For the Climate	19.01.22
Faith For the Climate	25.01.22
Fossil Free London	26.01.22
Green Party of England and Wales	01.11.21
Green Party of England and Wales	03.11.21
Green Party of England and Wales	22.12.21
Green Party of England and Wales	24.01.22
Green Party of England and Wales	29.10.21
Green Party of England and Wales	30.09.21
Green Party of England and Wales	30.09.21
Hindu Climate Action	08.02.22
Mums for Lungs	24.01.22
North Tyneside Climate Strike	14.02.22
North Tyneside Climate Strike	15.02.22
North Tyneside Climate Strike	16.02.22
Operation Noah	08.02.22
Scottish Green Party	07.02.22
Scottish Green Party	26.01.22
Greenpeace	10.02.22
Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF)	22.11.22
Young Christian Climate Network	10.02.22
Young Christian Climate Network (YCCN)	20.01.22

Appendix B: Archival search terms										
Search term ↓	Black Cultural Archives		Women's Library		Glasgow Women's Library		The Disability Archive		gal-dem	
	Results	Relevant	Results	Relevant	Results	Relevant	Results	Relevant	Results	Relevant
Environment	11	3	92	2	21	0	9	0	477	52
Environmental	8	6	38	1	51	2	2	0	120	65
Environmentalist	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	8
Environmentalism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	13
Climate	6	1	35	0	8	0	0	0	292	45
Climate change	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	99	32
Global warming	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	13
Biodiversity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	12
Pollution	1	1	17	0	0	0	0	0	30	14
Intersectional	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	102	9
Intersectionality	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	78	0
Greenham	4	3	483	2	7	1*	0	0	0	0
Greenpeace	2	2	6	1	0	0	0	0	10	8
Friends of the Earth	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	5	5
WWF	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
National Trust	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Green Party	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	8	1
Solidarity	29	0	44	3	15	1*	0	0	472	13
Black feminism	2	0	1	0	38	0	0	0	19	0
Black feminist	3	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	23	1
Date searched	15.05.23		15.05.23		15.05.23		15.05.23		19.06.23	

Note: Asterisks indicate singular duplicates.