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The 'Forever Migrant:' An Intersectional Analysis of L/A Workplace Discrimination on the Basis of Race, African Accent, and English Language Proficiency

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THE 'FOREVER MIGRANT:' AN INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF L/A WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF RACE, AFRICAN ACCENT, AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

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By

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ABSTRACT

Sociological literature has well documented patterns of workplace discrimination against racialized identities. This thesis analyzes a specific pattern of perceived workplace discrimination against those who are non-white, have African accents, and lack English language proficiency in the Lewiston-Auburn area (L/A). To understand this problem, a community-based research semi-structured interview about barriers to accessing the L/A workforce was conducted. I argue that utilizing Rosa's and Flores' raciolinguistic perspective, workers perceived to have African accents and English language barriers face workplace discrimination within the intersection of their race and linguistic identity. Those with perceived African accents are seen to be a L/A area archetype of African refugees and migrants which I call 'a forever migrant,' being assumed to have little education, job skills, intelligence, and trustworthiness within the workplace. Meanwhile, non-white individuals perceived to have English language barriers are believed to be unemployable no matter the importance of English language skills in the job they are applying for, being sometimes seen as a burden to employers. These patterns of linguistic discrimination are found to proliferate in part because those with perceived African accents and English language barriers assume responsibility to be a 'good neoliberal citizen,' through personally attempting to rid of their accent or language barrier. This allows white supremacy to proliferate in the L/A workplace, giving those perceived to have African accents and English language barriers an ultimatum to either assimilate to whiteness by ridding of their accent and native language or be subjected to linguistic discrimination by their employer.

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CHAPTER 1: CHANGING TIDES OF THE U.S. WORKPLACE

The U.S. labor market has become a hot topic in the light of the Coronavirus pandemic and more recently, what some academics have been calling the "great resignation" (Cech & Hiltner 2022; Williams 2021). Two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, the workplace has seen a historic power shift towards the worker, leading to significant increases in wages, along with a shift in American workers mindset surrounding jobs (Cech & Hiltner 2022; Gregg 2021). This shift led 47.7 million Americans to voluntarily leave their job in 2021, a record-breaking amount of these resignations occurring during November 2021 where 4.5 million people voluntarily left their job (Tappe 2022; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2022a). This mass shift in the labor force and perspective on work in the U.S. has been sociologically fascinating and exciting. It is a social moment that if harnessed effectively, can critically question and deconstruct the U.S. workforce experience which has historically been plagued with exploitation and discrimination, particularly towards non-white individuals (Williams 2021).

Discussion of the great resignation have primarily focused on the economics surrounding it; whether it be the impacts of decreased staffing on businesses, increased wages for employees, the retirement of older generations from the workforce, or the decreased priority of workers to always have a job (Cech & Hiltner 2022; Gregg 2021; Tappe 2022). While economically significant, there has been less discussion of the social implications, specifically, the opportunities for a major shift in a United States work culture plagued with worker exploitation, discrimination, and white supremacy (Gray 2019; Okun 1999; Williams 2021). This need for structural and social change in the U.S. workplace continues to be an increasingly studied topic in sociology. For instance, Williams (2020) during her American Sociological Association presidential speech notes that "we need some utopian thinking right now" when it comes to the

U.S. workplace experience (198). Williams emphasizes that

> it is time to imagine a society where people are not dependent on work. The pandemic shows us that relying on employment to ensure our collective well-being can have catastrophic consequences that are not equally borne throughout society. It is crucial to address the problems of access, job quality, and social inequality in the workplace, but it is not enough. A good life should not depend on having a good job. As sociologists, we have the tools and the research to show the world what is at stake in providing a good life for everyone (198).

The community-based research interview in which this thesis is written upon in-part answers this call for imagination, exploring the workplace aspirations, barriers, and successes of the African migrant and other non-white populations within the Lewiston-Auburn (L/A) area in Maine. Utilizing this imagination, this thesis explores a specific pattern of workplace discrimination against Black individuals who are perceived to speak with an African accent and non-white migrants who are labeled as lacking English language proficiency. These two specific patterns of discrimination are found to intersect with race, demonstrating a pattern of linguistic discrimination which is analyzed through Rosa & Flores (2017) theory of the raciolinguistic perspective. As this thesis comes to find, this linguistic discrimination in-part proliferates because African migrants and non-white individuals labeled to have English language barriers are expected to take neoliberal responsibility to be a "good neoliberal citizen" by personally addressing their perceived English language barrier or African accent (Randles and Woodward 2018). This pattern of linguistic discrimination is ultimately hypothesized to be one way that white supremacy proliferates throughout the L/A area workplace. Thus, this thesis begins to answer the question: What does the theory of the raciolinguistic perspective and the good neoliberal citizen reveal about the experience of linguistic discrimination in the L/A workplace?

THESIS OVERVIEW

What ultimately became this Senior thesis began its life as an interview study on behalf of the Maine Working Communities Challenge Pilot Project Team. The team wanted to learn

about the workforce experience of non-white individuals within the L/A area for the Maine Working Communities Challenge, a grant opportunity which would provide money to selected Maine cities to develop a job access program. I was recruited in August 2021 to be the researcher on the project by the Bates College Harward Center for Community Partnership. I was offered the opportunity both because of my experience working on projects for the center previously and because I could further analyze the interview findings for my sociology Senior thesis. This was an opportunity I excitedly took as my four years of sociology classes has made me incredibly interested in the intersections of identity and labor in the United States. To accomplish this study, I interviewed 24 non-white members of the L/A community who have made a serious effort -- whether successful or not -- within the past five years to attain work that aligns with or grows their job interests, skills, and aspirations. This revealed a diversity of triumphs, barriers, opportunities, and supports which define the L/A workplace experience for non-white individuals.

The seven chapters in this thesis work to explore and question a pattern of linguistic workplace discrimination. This begins with chapter two, which provides background on the L/A area and me as a researcher. It addresses the complex history and contemporary experience of immigration and labor in the L/A area. Additionally, I discuss my family's experience within the U.S. labor force. Chapter three reviews the two key literatures and theoretical frameworks the thesis is built upon. This review starts with an introduction of the raciolinguistic perspective and a discussion of job discrimination on the basis of race, specifically for Black, African migrants; perceived non-American accents; and perceptions of one's English language proficiency (Rosa and Flores 2017). The second key topic reviewed is neoliberalism in the workplace, which will be introduced through the theory of the good neoliberal citizen (Randles and Woodward 2018).

Chapter four describes the methodology for the semi-structured interviews. This is followed by a discussion of the analysis, limitations of the methodology, and the ways in which I as a researcher approached the interview process. Chapter five analyzes the overall work experience noted by participants during the interview and survey. This is followed by a discussion of the patterns of workplace discrimination on the basis of race, perceived African accent, and perceptions on the individual's English language proficiency. These findings are explored in chapter six through the raciolinguistic perspective.

Chapter six applies the raciolinguistic perspective along with the good neoliberal citizen to understand linguistic discrimination in the L/A workplace. This chapter argues that following Rosa's and Flore's (2017) theory of the raciolinguistic perspective, those perceived to have African accents and English language barriers face workplace discrimination within the intersection of their race and linguistic identity. This leads Black individuals perceived to have African accents and non-white individuals labeled as having English language barriers to be harmfully stereotyped in the L/A workplace. Those perceived to have African accents are assumed to embody a L/A area archetype of African refugees and migrants which I call 'a forever migrant,' being assumed to have little education, job skills, intelligence, and trustworthiness within the L/A workplace. Non-white individuals labeled as having English language barriers are perceived to be unemployable no matter the importance of English language skills in the job they are applying for, being sometimes seen as a burden to employers. These patterns of linguistic discrimination are found to proliferate in part because those perceived to have an African accent or an English language barrier assume responsibility to be a 'good neoliberal citizen,' through personally attempting to rid of their perceived accent or language barrier (Brezina 1996; Mudge 2008; Randles and Woodward 2018). This allows white

supremacy to proliferate in the L/A workplace, giving those perceived to have African accents and English language barriers an ultimatum to either assimilate to whiteness by ridding of their perceived accent and native language or be subjected to linguistic discrimination by their employer (Rosa 2019).

Chapter seven concludes the thesis, discussing the implications, limitations, and further opportunities for research within my findings. As a part of this discussion, I explore one framework which could help to deconstruct linguistic discrimination, beginning the process of dismantling proliferations of white supremacy in the L/A workplace (Gray 2019).

CHAPTER 2: EXPERIENCES ACROSS COASTS

The L/A workplace is a rich place to study the experience of discrimination against perceived African accents and English language barriers of African migrants and non-white individuals. Since its founding, Maine's second largest metropolitan area has seen a variety of economic and social shifts which have shaped the modern experience of the L/A workplace. This chapter briefly reviews this history, focusing on the L/A area's history of labor, racial tensions, and patterns of migration. This is followed by a recognition of my own perspective of the U.S. workplace as shaped by my parent's workforce experience in the Bay Area. This concludes with contemporary information about the L/A area and the modern African migrant experience.

L/A HISTORY OF LABOR, RACE, AND MIGRATION

The Lewiston-Auburn area, typically abbreviated to the L/A area or just L/A, finds itself saddling the Androscoggin River about 140 miles from Boston, Massachusetts in Maine. The area has been colonized by white Europeans since the 1600s, stealing land that would become later occupied by the city of Lewiston and Auburn from the Wabanaki Nation (Native Land Digital 2021; Wabanaki Alliance 2022). The city of Lewiston and Auburn were settled by white colonist as early as the 1770s and led to the incorporation of Lewiston, Maine in 1795 and Auburn in 1869. The areas were colonized in large part because of the Androscoggin River, which provided ample power for industry such as textile mills (City of Auburn 1969; Hogkin 2022; Leamon 1976). Throughout the 1800s, the textile mill industry economically exploded, leading to a rapid increase in the white European population within the region, many being English, Irish, and Canadian migrants looking for work within the mills. This continued until the need for textile mills began to fall in the 1920s, becoming primarily obsolete in the 1950s to 1970s. This led to the closure of many mills, creating an economic downturn and an exodus of

many of the initial migrants who came to the area that continues to impact population numbers today (Leamon 1976; New American Economy 2016).

This population decrease has however started to shift as in 2001, thousands of Somali and Somali Bantu Refugees, among other African migrant and refugee groups, began moving to the L/A area. Many of these individuals moved to the L/A area from other United States cities, citing L/A "as an affordable and livable small city with good public housing, safe schools, a very affordable cost of living, more financial support than in other cities, and the familiarity of a growing Somali community" (Besteman 2016:108). This influx of immigration to L/A has been credited by some city officials to have reinvigorated the L/A area, leading to the creation of new businesses, especially in the downtown; a growth in the local economy; a decrease in the local crime rate; and the presence of a younger and increasingly diverse population of Mainers (Besteman 2016; New American Economy 2016).

Despite social and economic benefit, this wave of immigration fell victim to a historic pattern of xenophobic sentiment from the previously settled migrants of the L/A area. Since the 1800s, L/A migrants have experienced harmful and discriminatory treatment from the previously established residents. Historically, both Irish and Franco-Canadian immigrants experienced discrimination when arriving to the Lewiston-Auburn area. The Irish began to migrate to the Lewiston-Auburn area in the 1850s following the Irish Potato Famine. Due to their poverty, many Irish migrants lived in shacks created on vacant lots within the city which were perceived to be dirty and disease ridden. This depiction was not helped by the Irish being perceived as morally harmful to the city, stereotyped as heavy drinkers and committers of petty crime. This prejudice culminated in the burning of an Irish Catholic Chapel by an anti-Irish mob in 1855, exemplifying the anti-Irish sentiment the previous residents of L/A had developed. However, by

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the time the U.S. Civil War started, the Irish began to be assimilated into Lewiston, being allowed to work in the mills and experienced much less discrimination (Leamon 1976).

French-Canadian migrants came to Lewiston about a decade later, many being recruited to labor in the mills as they were believed to be a hard-working group. French-Canadian migrants would become the largest migrant group to come to L/A during the second half of the 1800s and with them brought not only a new culture but also a new language, French (Leamon 1976; Myall 2022). French-Canadian migrants experienced consistent ethnic-based discrimination from the previously settled English and Irish population. With the addition of the French language, Franco-Canadian migrants were segregated into an area known as Little Canada, cut off from the perceived fluent, English-speaking population by canals and the Androscoggin River. When Franco-Canadians attempted to move out of Little Canada, they were often met with resistance from the Irish and English. This anti-Franco-Canadian sentiment primarily targeted their language, with jobs and schools not allowing French to be spoken and parents attempting to have their children learn how to speak and write in English as a means for social mobility. This culminated with the 1919 passage of a law which made it illegal to speak French in Maine public schools by the Maine State Legislator, not being repealed until about a half decade later. Starting in the 1970s, Franco-Canadians in Lewiston saw an increase in social mobility with the desegregation of Little Canada and many members of the community moving away from Lewiston (Myall 2022).

Discrimination against migrants continues to be pronounced in the Lewiston-Auburn area, with the African migrant population, and particularly the Somali and Somali Bantu Refugees, facing continued animosity and hate from residents. This migration was historic for Lewiston as for the first time, non-white individuals were the ones migrating into the

community, leading to intersectional discrimination including xenophobia, linguistic discrimination, racism, and Islamophobia. White residents believed African migrants, and particularly Somali Refugees, were "suck[ing] off liberal Maine systems." Rumors spread that migrants and refugees received social welfare benefits such as free cars, air conditioning units, and clothing; having families which were over-populating the area; and were taking jobs from the previously established white residents (Besteman 2016:140). Rhetoric flooded online news and social media comment sections, particularly describing Somali and Somali Bantu Refugees to be "infest[ing]" Lewiston, "misfits," "drain[ing]" city resources (140-141). This rhetoric was of course false, as about 10 years after the arrival of Somali Refugees to L/A, they were found to have the lowest rate of welfare program use as compared to all other populations within the L/A area (146).

Despite this, anti-immigration politicians in Maine took the opportunity to push false rhetoric about the Somali and Somali Bantu refugees, playing into national narratives about the effect migrants have on the United States. Infamously, in 2002, former Lewiston Mayor Laurier T. Raymond wrote an open letter to the Somali and Somali Bantu community entitled "A Letter to the Somali Community." In it, Raymond requests Somali and Somali Refugees to partake in "a voluntary reduction of the number of new arrivals" and obligates "Somali elders and leaders" to "discourage relocation into the City." The former Mayor believes that the "large number of new arrivals cannot continue without negative results for all. The Somali community must exercise some discipline and reduce the stress on our limited finances and our generosity." The letter ends with a plea, "please pass the word: We have been overwhelmed and have responded valiantly. Now we need breathing room. Our city is maxed-out financially, physically and emotionally."

This open letter was widely criticized by Somali Refugees and political leaders alike, calling out its clearly xenophobic and racist tone. Throughout much of his time in office, Mayor Raymond did not meet with Somali or Somali Bantu Refugees, only making an effort to meet after wide criticism of the letter (Belluck 2002). Former Mayor Raymond paints Lewiston as the victim, being abused by the 'undisciplined' Somali and Somali Bantu Refugees for being gracious enough to provide basic social services and not violate the universal human right to freedom of movement. Despite the letter being critically panned by many community and political leaders, it also emboldened the rhetoric espoused by many residents, leading to further harm and attacks against African migrants and refugees.

For example, in the summer of 2006, Brent Matthews rolled a pig head into a Lewiston-Auburn Islamic Center, a hate crime which he considered to be "a prank" (Zezima 2006). The incident would be investigated by the FBI as a hate crime, however the FBI decided not to charge it as such, and the civil suit brought against him did not conclude after Matthew's suicide during a police standoff in 2007 (Tice 2007; Williams 2006b). The incident demonstrated the intersections of racial, migrant, and religious discrimination which targeted the African migrant population. This tension continues to persist to this day, with examples like the 2019 release of racist text messages sent by disgraced Lewiston Mayor Shane Bouchard, disgustingly referring to elderly Black individuals in the community as "antique farm equipment." He resigned soon after the release of these racist texts and details about a workplace affair (Sharp 2019). Clearly, racial, religious, and immigration centered tension have come to intersect with one another, leading to intense hate and discrimination against African migrants. It is worth noting that compared to the initial arrival of Somali Refugees, community leaders do believe that there has been improvements and continuing acceptance for the range of African migrant groups who have

come to call the L/A area their home; however, an analysis of L/A workplace discrimination against African migrants would be incomplete without recognizing this historic and continued tension (Washuk 2018).

MY PERSONAL AND FAMILY BACKGROUND

In writing a thesis centered around the experience of identity within the workplace, it is important to establish my own identity as the researcher. As academics such as Bronwyn T. Williams (2006a) point out, identity is not separated from academic writing, instead it is always present and thus should be addressed. Considering that I am researching and analyzing experiences of individuals with a different background and identity than my own, it is important to establish my own identity as it can reveal my perspective and possible biases within how I analyze and present my findings. This section will do just that, establishing my identity and how the U.S. workforce experience of my parents has shaped my perspective on it.

When the first African migrants began to arrive in the L/A area, I was two years old more than 3000 miles away in Vallejo, California[1]. Before coming to Lewiston for college, I lived my entire life on the West Coast of the United States, living in different parts of the San Francisco Bay Area, California. My parents found themselves in Vallejo about five years before I was born to pursue a job my father received as an institutional research analyst at University of California,

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[1] Vallejo, California history shares some parallels with the history and contemporary experience of Lewiston, Maine. Vallejo has been in a period of economic downturn in part because the once booming Navy shipyard on Mare Island closed following World War II (National Park Service 2020). This leaving industry greatly impacted the city, leading to the city's filing for chapter 9 bankruptcy in 2008 after years of continued economic struggle (Jones 2008). Additionally, Vallejo continues to diversify racially, a pattern which began with the arrival of the Filipino migrants during the 1920s. This has led Vallejo to be one of the most racially diverse cities in the United States throughout the 2000s (Eligon 2017). Similar to Lewiston, this diversification of Vallejo was met with patterns of both racial discrimination and cross-cultural connection which continue to be mediated as the city recovers economically.

Berkeley. They were attracted to Vallejo because of the relatively cheap housing prices for the Bay Area and its proximity to UC Berkeley.

Prior to moving to the Bay Area, my parents focused on academics, both receiving their PhDs from University of Wisconsin-Madison. This gave my family a large amount of social capital, especially in the education and academic world, something I advantaged from going through the California public school system and later when applying to elite liberal arts colleges. Throughout my childhood, the caretaking responsibilities for me and my younger brother fell primarily on my mother while my father worked, often travelling for academic conferences. This was not necessarily my mother's choice, prior to having children she worked as a paralegal, however my family found itself in a place where we had the privilege to be able to survive with a single income in a dual parent household, but not enough money to be able to afford a professional caregiver. Because of this, my family found itself in a model reminiscent of a middle-class, nuclear family which would be unintentionally conformed to throughout my childhood.

I say unintentionally in part because my mother had routinely attempted to gain employment however was unable to. This has to do with both our family structure and socioeconomic status. Like many U.S. families, once the 2008 recession hit, my father received a significant pay cut and the job market had scarce offerings. We also had the bad luck of moving to Lagunitas, California right before the start of the recession, meaning that our previous home was put on the market right as the 2008 market crashed, making our personal financial situation worse. While it was not ideal, we were still fortunate enough to be able to afford food and other necessities, making us a lot better off than many U.S. families at the time. About five years after the start of the recession, the market had begun to improve, and we were able to sell the house.

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This alleviated much of my family's financial stress, putting my family in what I would consider to be an upper-middle class family situation with enough money to pay off credit card and loan debt entirely for the first time in my parent's life.

As my family's situation and job market improved, my mother continued to look for work, going back to school to receive a Master's in Library and Information Sciences through an online program with San Jose State University. This however proved fruitless as jobs within library sciences were commonly looking for younger candidates, leading to years of applying with no avail. While I am certain my mother could have gotten many jobs, at this point in her life, she wanted a job which utilized her education and skills, a position our family had the privilege to pursue. Nowadays, she has decided to move on from finding a job as outside of her own passion, it is not necessary as my father's work is able to support the needs and lifestyle they would like to live. Me and my brother both attend elite liberal arts schools (Bates College and Bowdoin College) and are able to attend both because of significant financial aid grants we receive and the presence our parents, especially our mother, had throughout our lives and education which allowed us to navigate the barriers of getting into higher education.

I tell this background not as a story of missed workplace opportunity nor a heroic middle class tell of excellence despite challenges, because it is neither. Instead, it demonstrates how my perspective and understanding of the U.S. workforce has been shaped by one privilege-based pattern where primarily white, middle-class families find themselves able to have one parent stay at home to child rear while the other advances in their career. This is one class-based pattern noticed by sociologists such as Shows and Gerstel (2009) and in Kane's (2018) literature review of gender and family dynamics, noting that heteronormative families of a higher-class backgrounds tend to have greater discrepancy in the amount of childcare responsibility and time

between parents. This is a perspective on the experience of U.S. jobs which I have begun to expand and deconstruct throughout my time at Bates College, especially throughout my work on this thesis, something I discuss further in chapter four.

LEWISTON IN THE CONTEMPORARY

Today, the L/A area continues to develop beyond its mill legacy. As of 2019, the Lewiston-Auburn metropolitan area is estimated to have a population of over 100,000 people and has continued to grow since the arrival of Somali and Somali Bantu Refugees in 2001 (Census Reporter 2019). As of the 2020 census, Lewiston continues to be the second largest city in Maine with a population of over 37,000. In Lewiston, 86.8% of the residents are estimated to be white, 5.9% estimated to be Black or African American, and 5.8% estimated to identify with two or more races. Auburn, Maine has a population of 24,061 as of 2020 and is estimated to be 91% white, 1.3% Black or African American and 5.7% individuals who identify with two or more races. The poverty rate in both cities is at or above the 2020 11.4% national average with Auburn at 11.3% and Lewiston at 18.1% of its residents' experiencing poverty (Shrider et al. 2021; U.S. Census 2020). Lewiston and Auburn have similar median household incomes, being $44,523 and $49,719, respectively, in 2019 (U.S. Census 2020). Most individuals in the L/A area are employed, with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022b) estimating an unemployment rate of 4.0-4.4% for the area throughout September 2021 to December 2021, the timing of this study.

Lewiston in particular has continuously looked for community development support from federal, state, and private grant money opportunities. This has included most notably a $30 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Choice Neighborhood's project, making Lewiston the first city of its size to win the grant (Rice 2021). The L/A area also has a plethora of community organizations, many of them focused on the

African migrant population and job access within the L/A area. This includes immigrant focused

organizations such as Maine Immigration and Refugee Services, Immigrant Resource Center of

Maine, and Somali Bantu Community Association of Maine; and job access organizations such

as Lewiston Trinity Jubilee Center, Community Concepts Inc, and R.E.S.T. As has been

previously mentioned, this project itself is the result of research for the Maine Working

Communities Challenge which tasks "Maine's towns, cities, and rural communities" with

"[addressing] economic growth and [reducing] inequity of opportunity tied to race, ethnicity, and

other aspects of identity and background" (WorkingPlaces 2022).

For many, these organizations are necessary for navigating and adapting to United States

and local structures which have limited flexibility for the unique needs of African migrants and

refugees (Besteman 2016). It is worth noting, however, that the practices of some of these

organizations and school programs have been criticized as being a "containment" strategy rather

than an effort for African migrant integration and leadership in the community[2]. For instance,

Besteman (2016) points to how L/A area organizations were quick to establish accommodations

such as translation services in schools and hospitals, however, did not make efforts to remedy the

culture of hate and alienation experienced by African refugees and migrants. By not addressing

the structural and social issues, African migrants were left in a place where they were managed

and accommodated for but faced barriers to community integration and leadership opportunities.

For example, Lewiston continues to have few Somali teachers within the public school system

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[2] As a Bonner Leader, I have heard varying opinions on the role that community organizations should play in the lives of African migrants. Some community leaders take a very structuralist view, believing that the L/A area should provide as much support as possible to breakdown structural barriers for migrants while others feel that the presence of numerous community organizations does not give African migrants the space to assimilate and integrate fully into L/A. For example, a leader in the Somali community recently shared their frustration with me about how they feel that L/A organizations are able to take care of everything for their community members, leaving them with no incentive to further assimilate into the U.S. culture through actions such as learning English. While there is likely no right answer to this debate, it is important to recognize the varying opinions on the role NGOs and government should play in L/A.

despite an increasing amount of the student body identifying as Somali or Somali Bantu. Considering this context, it is important for this research to contribute towards not only job access but also workplace integration and opportunity for African and other non-white migrants in the L/A area.

I see focusing on the L/A workplace as incredibly important and pertinent for community-based research and program development. Not only for the social mobility jobs provide community members, but also for the need to question the neoliberal assumptions made about African migrant success in the L/A workplace and the 'accommodation' lens organizations take (Besteman 2016). For example, Erin Reed from Lewiston's Trinity Jubilee Center recently attested to the Lewiston Sun Journal that African migrants succeed in the L/A workplace because

> their work ethic is stronger than whatever barriers they're facing. They are willing to work, they show up on time, they take extra shifts, they take on second jobs. They do jobs a lot of people won't do, like janitorial work, meat processing, working in group homes (Skelton 2021).

This thesis does not work to criticize this valuation of work ethic, nor this statement in particular, as there is likely a lot of truth within it. Instead, it questions the presence and proliferation of said workplace barriers, especially those which occur when someone is perceived to have an English language barrier, African accent, or experiences racism.

CHAPTER 3: RACIOLINGUISTICS AND THE GOOD NEOLIBERAL CITIZEN

Sociologists have commonly found that access to jobs, especially those of high quality, is in part predicted by the various aspects of one's identity such as gender, race, class, immigration status, sexuality, and disability, leading to vast inequality within the U.S. workplace (Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health 2017; Kane 2018; Kochhar 2020; Pager, Western, and Bonikowski 2009; Reich et al. 1995; Weller 2019; Williams 2021). Despite the passage of the Civil Rights Act about 58 years ago, labor market and workplace discrimination continues to be ubiquitous and define the experience of many non-white, low-income, disabled, migrant, and none-male identifying individuals (Kochhar 2020; Neumark 2018). Considering the massive scope that workplace discrimination encompasses, this literature review centers around the two theories used in the argument of this thesis. First, the raciolinguistic perspective will be explored, showing how race, language, and accent-based workplace discrimination is constructed and intersects with one another (Rosa & Flores 2017). This will focus on Black, African migrants, the primary group studied, however, it also makes reference to the experience of non-white individuals and migrants generally. Following this, the theory of the good neoliberal citizen is introduced and with it, the presence of a neoliberal culture within the U.S. workplace (Randles and Woodward 2018).

THE RACIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

The theory of the raciolinguistic perspective is an incredibly useful tool for deconstructing the interactions between linguistics and race within the L/A workforce. The perspective "interrogates the historical and contemporary co-naturalization of language and race" (Rosa & Flores 2017:622). By analyzing the intersections of language and race, "a raciolinguistic perspective illuminates the importance of conceptualizing contemporary debates about racial and

linguistic authenticity in relation to colonial logics through which boundaries delimiting categories of race and language are co-naturalized in shifting ways as part of broader power formations" (626). Thus, the raciolinguistic perspective works to deconstruct relationships between language and race, particularly the way non-white individuals are considered "linguistically deficient even when engaging in language practices that would likely be legitimized or even prized were they produced by white speaking subjects;" a notion created by European colonialism and reinforced by white supremacy (628).

Deconstruction of this notion is done through identifying processes of raciolinguistic enregisterment, "whereby linguistic and racial forms are jointly constructed as sets and rendered mutually recognizable as languages/varieties and racial categories" (631). In this process, racial and linguistic features become emblematic of one another, leading to patterns such as Latinx/e individuals being assumed to speak Spanish even when they are perceived to speak with an American accent and only speak English (Rosa 2019:7). Put simply, the raciolinguistic perspective works to deconstruct how raciolinguistic enregisterment has led people to be perceived as "looking like a language, sounding like a race" (2). Application of this theory has the goal of understanding "how and why these categories have been co-naturalized in particular societal contexts, and to imagine their denaturalization as part of a broader structural project of contesting white supremacy on a global scale" (Rosa & Flores 2017:622).

Comprehending the goal and framework presented by the raciolinguistic perspective, it becomes possible to consider how workplace discrimination within the intersections of racial identity and perceptions of linguistics can become prevalent in the L/A workforce. To make this argument however, it first needs to be understood how racial and linguistic discrimination tend to present in the U.S. workplace. To accomplish this, the literature on patterns of U.S. workplace

discrimination on the basis of an individual's race, perceived accent, and perceived English language proficiency, will be briefly reviewed. This review will also provide context for the intersectional patterns of discrimination faced by Black, African migrants.

Racial Discrimination and White Supremacy in The Workplace

Many of the non-white individuals within this study noted experiences of racial discrimination within the workplace, a pattern sociologists have documented for decades within the U.S. workplace (Williams 2021). Whether it is the discrimination faced on the basis of having a non-white sounding name when applying for jobs, inequal promotion opportunities within a workplace, or hiring committee's bias toward candidates considered to be culturally similar to committee members, non-white people commonly face barriers and exclusion in the U.S. workplace (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2003; Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health 2017; Pager, Western, and Bonikowski 2009; Rivera 2012). These patterns of workplace discrimination on the basis of race have led to long term financial and social impacts.

Persistent to this day, all but Asian men out-earn white men's median hourly wage, with Black men and Latinx/e men making about 73% and 69%, respectively, of what white men make. These disparities become starker on the lines of gender where Black, Asian, and Latinx/e women make 65%, 87%, and 58%, respectively, of what a white man earns as of 2016. These disparities stay consistent even when education level is controlled for, with white men 25 years and older making a median of $32 an hour whereas Black and Latinx/e men and woman make $22-26 an hour (Patten 2016). This pay gap has been one factor leading to the significant wealth disparity by race in the U.S., with white families having a median wealth of $188,200, whereas Black families have a median of $24,100, Latinx/e families have a median of $36,100, and all other racial identities, including Indigenous and Asian, have a median of $75,000. Despite some

recent wealth gains within Black and Latinx/e families, the wealth disparity proliferates, greatly

impacting the social mobility of non-white families (Bhutta et al. 2020).

Beyond finances, workplace racism, micro-aggressions, and racial discrimination define

the U.S. workplace experience for non-white individuals (Williams 2020). Pew Research found

that 64% of Black people report that they believe Black people are treated less fairly than white

people in the workplace, whereas only 22% of white people believe the same. In the same report,

21% of Black people and 16% of Latinx/e people identified that they were treated "unfairly in

hiring, pay or promotion" in the last 12 months because of their race (Parker, Horowitz, Mahl

2016). Such prevalence of discrimination creates a hostile work environment for non-white

individuals and harms workplace retention and productivity. As one meta-analysis of 79 studies

on racial discrimination in the workplace found, experiencing any form of racial discrimination

negatively impacts one's attitudes toward their job, their physical and psychological health, their

feeling that their company supports diversity and their organizational citizenship behavior[3].

These negative impacts of racial discrimination are not only harmful to the individuals who

experience them, but also harms the workplaces they work for as frequent racial discrimination

creates high turnover; decreases employee effort; increases physical and mental illness; and leads

to withdrawal of non-white employees (Triana, Jayasinghe, and Pieper 2015).

Lastly, race has been noted to have an impact on the job quality an individual can

achieve. Kalleberg's (2011) book *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs,* identifies the modern workplace to be

increasingly divided into what are considered "good jobs," jobs with good benefits, good wages,

limited exploitation, and 'bad jobs" which experience poor hours, bad wages, and frequent

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[3] Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) "are employee behaviors that, although not critical to the task or job,
serve to facilitate organizational functioning. Thus, examples of OCB include helping coworkers, attending
functions that are not required, and so on" (Lee and Allen 2002:132).

workplace exploitation. The book finds that non-white people are disproportionately in these "bad jobs" due to structural discrimination within education, the carceral system, the workplace, and society as a whole. For example, Tomaskovic-Devey, Thomas, and Johnson (2005), finds that employers tend to value white educations over Black and Latinx/e educations, leading to wage disparities and workplace discrimination. Importantly, this discrimination in wage earnings becomes starker the higher the level of education held by a Black or Latinx/e person is, demonstrating clear workplace discrimination on the basis of race and thus creating one of many barriers to gain access to high quality jobs. Additionally, when non-white people achieve high quality jobs, they do not experience the same job security white people experience, often being disproportionately let go from managerial positions during periods of company downsizing (Kalev 2014).

Many of these patterns of workplace discrimination are proliferated by the continued presence of white supremacy within the U.S. workplace and work culture. Building upon the work of other scholars and organizations which study white supremacist cultures, Tema Okun (1999) writes about the many manners in which white supremacy is institutionalized and proliferated in the U.S. workplace. Organizationally, U.S. workplaces tend to centralize power, with power being help by few, with those individuals being assumed to be allowed to make 'objective' assumptions about what is best for other workers without consultation of what workers think is truly best. Without power, those not in power become subject to standards of fast, perfectionist production, with supervisors catching and punishing mistakes individually without consideration for the comfort or situation of the worker. These workplace norms, along with processes such as workplace cultural matching, allows for the reproduction of a white

supremacy culture within the U.S. workplace, creating harmful reproductions of power, especially against non-white individuals (Okun 1999; Riveria 2012).

The U.S. Workplace Experience of Black, African Migrants

As chapter five will reveal, the most interviewed group were Black individuals who have migrated to the U.S. from an African country. As Hamilton's (2019) book *Immigration and the Remaking of Black America* demonstrates, despite Sociology's tendency to overlap the experiences of Black migrants and Black individuals born in the U.S., the two groups can have varied experiences and histories which lead to ranging social outcomes. This is true for the workforce experience of African migrants, who in the contemporary day, often have better workplace outcomes and participation than most other U.S. identity groups (Elo et al. 2015; Hamilton 2019). Despite this, African migrants, including in the L/A area continue to face assumptions that they are not active participants within the U.S. workplace, a false narrative created by U.S. laws which have discriminated against and exploited African migrants (Besteman 2016; Hamilton 2019). To understand the experience and discrimination faced by African migrants in the U.S. workplace, it is important to understand the history of Black, African labor in the United States. To accomplish this, this section will focus on the exploitative U.S. labor experiences for Black, African migrants from the following periods: The Transatlantic Slave Trade; the legal limitation of Black, African migrants from immigrating to the U.S.; and lastly, the contemporary workforce experience; all being connected together through Robinson's (1983) theory of racial capitalism.

Since the colonization of the United States, racial capitalism has been foundational to the development of the United States and the exploitation of Black, African migrants in the U.S. labor market. Robinson (1983) finds that "the development, organization, and expansion of

capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions, so too did social ideology. As a material force, then, it could be expected that racialism would inevitably permeate the social structures emergent from capitalism" (2). As Leong (2013) further defined in their review of racial capitalism, it is "the process of deriving social and economic value from the racial identity of another person," whether that value be economic, such as the labor exploitation of non-white individuals, or social, such as the way that non-white individuals become tokenized in predominantly white spaces (2153). Throughout its history, the U.S. has profited from racial capitalism, continuing to commodify and exploit non-white people's labor and bodies through various laws, social norms, and institutions within the labor market and beyond.

The clearest example of racial capitalism and labor exploitation in the U.S. for Black, African migrants is the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Between the years 1518 and 1867, the U.S. partook in the violent enslavement of Black African people. An estimated 11-12.5 million Black Africans were stolen from their homes and forcibly migrated to the U.S. to labor (Eltis 2001; SlaveVoyages Database 2022). By 1860, 90% of the four million enslaved Africans in the U.S. were forced to labor on southern farms and plantations (National Humanities Center 2007). This abuse of Black African migrant labor through the brutal institution of slavery was significant in the economic development of the United States, with enslaved individual's labor accounting for an estimated 18.7-24.3% of the growth in national per capita commodity output of the U.S. between 1839 and 1859. Put in another way, this labor of enslaved individuals has been valued to range from $5.9-14.2 trillion in 2009 U.S. dollars (Craemer 2015; Stelzner & Beckert 2021). Clearly, the United States economic and political prosperity was built upon the enslavement of Black Africans, an abuse which continues to go largely unrecognize in the United States.

Post Slavery International African Migration

Following the end of the U.S. Civil War, Black, African migrants domestically and internationally began to migrate within and to the United States. However, starting in the 1920s, migration was made structurally difficult as restrictive federal immigration policies were introduced in 1924, leading to a sharp decrease in Black African migration to the United States. This meant that throughout the 1950s, the majority of U.S. migration from Africa were white immigrants from Egypt, South Africa, and Morocco (Elo et al. 2015; Hamilton 2019). This continued until the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act which decreased discriminatory migration practices and thus increased Black African migration once again (Hamilton 2019). This pattern of exclusion through laws continued to be in line with racial capitalism as it demonstrates that once Black African migrants were unable to have their body and labor exploited by U.S. capitalism, they became devalued and thus restricted from entering the United States.

While contemporary migration to the U.S. is less restricted for African migrants, they continue to experience a significant range in workplace outcomes predicated on one's identity and social capital. In 2019, it was estimated that about 2 million African migrants live in the U.S., with the majority of them immigrating to the U.S. post 2000 (Tamir 2022). Migration patterns have since decentralized from Egypt, South Africa, and Morocco, with individuals migrating from countries across Africa, leading to about 75% of these African migrants in 2011 identifying as Black (Elo et al. 2015; Tamir 2022). Currently, most African migrants immigrate to the U.S. through various visa programs with the biggest being family-based visas, employment-based visas, and refugee-based visas, demonstrating the diversity in reasoning for immigrating to the United States. The differences between and competitiveness of receiving

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these visas; along with the access to resources and social opportunities within a migrant's country of origin and the need for Black, African migrants to prove their value in the U.S. workplace; has made the workplace outcomes for Black, African migrants in the U.S. extremely varied (Elo et al. 2015; Hamilton 2019).

As a result, U.S. job market outcomes vary wildly for Black African migrants, being dependent on their identity, social capital, and migration history. For example, wage earnings tend to be predicated on the identity and migration history with African migrants tending to make a higher wage if: they identify as white as compared to Black; arrived in the U.S. as a child instead of an adult, and if they are male identifying. Education attainment is also important, especially for male identifying individuals, who see an average of 62% higher wages when they have obtained at least some post-college education as compared to those with less than a college education (Elo et al. 2015; Hamilton 2019). Additionally, naturalization has also been found to be particularly important for Black African migrants, being associated with a 6% to 7% average wage increase. Lastly, longer amounts of time after migration within the U.S. is also a predictor for success and higher wages within the U.S. workplace. Because of this variability, Black African migrants who tend to have less social capital in the U.S. labor market will turn to self-employment for better outcomes, with some groups such as Liberian migrants earning 60% more on average when self-employed than their wage working counterparts (Elo et al. 2015).

It is also important to recognize the effect moving has for U.S. born Black people and Black, African migrants in the United States. Hamilton's (2019) analysis of past and current census data found that, in general, moving, whether it be migrating to or within the United States, leads to better workplace outcomes for Black individuals compared to those who did not move. Black Americans who moved within the United States often outperformed those who did

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not move and Black individuals who migrated from Africa often saw better or similar labor outcomes to Black Americans who moved. Differences between Black, African migrant and Black American workplace outcomes often comes down to increased educational attainment, access to resources in their country of origin, greater workplace participation, and higher rates of employment within Black, African migrant groups.

It is important to recognize that despite some claims from academics that this is a cultural deficit of Black Americans compared to Black, African migrants, data demonstrates that differences between these two groups come down to relatively better wages and working conditions. The wages and working conditions African migrants receive in the United States are often comparatively better than those in their country of origin, making these individuals more likely to take lower quality and worse paying employment. Because of this willingness, many Black, African migrant groups over time have surpassed the labor participation rates of both Black and white Americans, demonstrating how it is not the result of a "cultural deficit" within Black Americans (Robinson 2019:144-145). Similarly, it is important to see how this pattern of labor participation continues to be mediated by racial capitalism. Black individuals in the U.S. and especially those who migrated from Africa, tend to be structurally taken advantage of, being made to take lower quality labor through inequal education opportunities, limited job opportunities, and workplace discrimination (Kalleberg 2011). This allows the United States to continue to profit off and exploit the labor of Black individuals through making them work low paying and poor-quality jobs. This demonstrates how even if the structures which exploit Black bodies have changed, racial capitalism continues to manifest, mediate, and define the Black U.S. workplace experience (Leong 2013; Robinson 1983).

Linguistic Discrimination in the U.S. Workplace

As previously recognized, the raciolinguistic perspective centers the "co-naturalization of language and race" (Rosa & Flores 2017:622). This section reviews patterns of linguistic discrimination in the U.S. workplace as it becomes interwoven with race, perceived accent, and perceived language; a concept which is often referred to as "linguistic profiling" (Baugh 2002:155). As the name would imply, linguistic profiling "is based upon auditory cues that may include racial identification, but which can also be used to identify other linguistic subgroups within a given speech community" (Baugh 2002:158). In this model, structural privilege is given to those who are perceived to have an accent and speak in a manner which "sound[s] white," regardless of their true racial background (159). Similar to patterns of racial profiling, one's experience of U.S. structures becomes impacted by their perceived linguistic features. For example, those who do not sound white experience patterns of profiling such as housing discrimination during initial phone conversations with potential landlords, leading them to be more frequently denied. Ultimately, this section will begin to unpack experiences of linguistic discrimination in the U.S. workplace, demonstrating how individuals become perceived as "looking like a language, sounding like a race" (Rosa 2019:2). In doing so, this section recognizes that linguistic features such as language spoken and accent are not factual descriptors of an individual but instead perceptions put upon them by other individuals and social structures, something which can impact the experience of the workplace (Rosa 2019).

Discrimination Against Individuals Perceived to Have Non-American Accents in the U.S. Workplace

As described above, being perceived to have a non-American accent, especially if the perceived accent is typically associated with a non-white group, can greatly impact your experience of U.S. institutions, including the workplace (Baugh 2002; Iheduru-Anderson 2020;

Lippi-Green 2011; Rosa 2019). Part of this is based in U.S. civil rights law. Accents are treated somewhat differently under the Civil Rights Act, with the U.S. EEOC recognizing in 2016 that "Under Title VII, an employment decision may legitimately be based on an individual's accent if the accent 'interferes materially with job performance,'" a vagueness which has given employers leeway in how employee accents are treated in the workplace (Lippi-Green 2011; U.S. EEOC 2016).

Because of the legal ambiguity, but also stigmatization of certain perceived accents, there are plenty of examples of discrimination against certain non-American accents in U.S. institutions. For example, Rosa (2019) finds that for Puerto Rican and Mexican high schoolers in Chicago, their school puts a heavy emphasis on the importance of them developing 'unaccented' English, leading students and staff members to be stigmatized for their perceived non-English sounding accent. This ultimately stigmatizes non-European cultural and linguistic experiences and backgrounds; pressuring students to assimilate to white supremacist ideals of cultural erasure to avoid ridicule for their perceived accent and to be deemed a 'competent' English speaker. In the workplace setting, Lippi-Green's (2011) book finds numerous lawsuits and interview participant stories regarding accent discrimination. This includes barriers in the application process, interview process, and job retainment, with some individuals claiming to not be rehired because of their perceived accent.

A series of studies have demonstrated patterns of workplace discrimination on the basis of one's perceived accent both internationally and domestically. For instance, one study found that in Germany, those who inquired about a job to employers in what would be perceived as a Turkish accent, as compared to a German accent, were more likely to receive a negative response from potential employers, often being deceitfully informed that the job was no longer open

(Schmaus & Kristen 2021). When in the workplace, discrimination against accents continues as some employees perceived to have non-American accents are forced to alter their speech to 'sound right.' Drawing on the work of others and their own, Ramjattan (2018) explains this process in Indian call centers.

> As a result of complaints about having incomprehensible accents and racist backlash over their alleged stealing of jobs from workers in the Global North, Indian agents are often required to present themselves as non-Indian through specific language training. This training typically entails the 'neutralization' of various elements in their Indian-accented English, which often means learning American and/or British accents in particular (Ramjattan 2018:732).

Focusing on Black individuals perceived to have African accents in the U.S. workplace, nurses with African sounding accents have been found to be discriminated against; being perceived to be less intelligent, unsuitable to be a leader in the workplace, and less skilled compared to those who were not perceived to have an African accent. These perceptions were proliferated structurally and socially through hazing from co-workers who would make fun of their perceived accent, leading those labeled as speaking with an African accent to attempt to modify their accent to sound more 'American' (Iheduru-Anderson 2020).

Patterns of discrimination against accents can be explored through the raciolinguistic perspective, demonstrating how raciolinguistic enregisterment occurs within the perception of one's accent. For example, Rosa (2019) found that in the same previously referenced Chicago high school, students in the primarily Spanish speaking school were quick to call out and mock what was perceived to be 'accented' English. For example, students would regularly mock teachers who spoke in 'accented' English, with students posting online and gossiping about how they were unable to understand them regardless of the language they spoke, a possible critique of their intelligence. Those labeled as English Language Learner (ELL) students were also impacted, actively attempting to not speak when around other non-ELL labeled students because

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of their 'accented English.' A student also reported feeling some jealousy towards those who spoke English in what was perceived to be an American accent, showing stigmatization and a negative connotation of speaking 'accented English' (150-153, 157). Lastly, perceptions of one's accent can become part of a process of raciolinguistic enregisterment, with one of the high schoolers describing how when they participate in Xbox live voice chats, they find themselves to be assumed to be Mexican because of their perceived accent when speaking English (149).

Perceptions of English Language Proficiency Within U.S. Workplace Discrimination

Perceptions of an individual's English language proficiency can have a negative impact on the U.S. workforce experience. As with perceptions of accents, employers are permitted by the Civil Rights Act to 'test' individual's English language proficiency and to not hire an individual based on their perception of their English language proficiency as long as the decision is not made on the basis of the individual's national origin or other aspects of their identity (U.S. EEOC 2016). Like accents, this vagueness leads to forms of often unregulated discrimination on the basis of perceived language fluency (Lippi-Green 2011). This is true for African migrants, with one Australian study noting those perceived to have an English language barrier experiencing significant workplace barriers, making it difficult for African migrants to receive jobs, and when they do, they often receive low-quality employment (Udah, Singh, Chamberlain 2019).

Discrimination and exclusion on the perceptions of one's English language barrier is structurally proliferated in the United States. Despite the U.S. not having a universal language, the Cambridge English at Work Assessment found that vast majority of U.S. workplaces, especially top management and corporate jobs, require English language ability to some capacity. In the U.S., the majority of workplaces test for perceived fluency in English, primarily

done with English only interviewing in 75% of U.S. workplaces, making it hard for individuals with perceived language barriers to even begin to access a job. Beyond accessing the workplace, speaking English in a manner which is perceived to be an advanced or fluent level also provided benefits in some U.S. workplaces, with these English speakers receiving faster promotions, higher salaries, and higher-level roles in their workplace, demonstrating the important value to being perceived as a fluent English speaker in the U.S. workplace (Cambridge Assessment English 2016).

The importance of the English language in the U.S. workplace goes beyond just being able to speak it as U.S. workplaces also develop their own communications systems which can make it harder for nonnative speakers and migrants to adapt. Robert's (2010) literature review of language use in the workplace finds that workplaces become sites for language socialization which tend to homogenize communication styles to efficiency-focused and institutionally supported methods of communicating. Because each workplace develops their own specific communication style, workers have to go through both formal and informal processes of socialization where they begin to conform to and proliferate professional communications.

Communication within the workplace is almost always done in the dominant language and within the cultural standards of the country the workplace is located in, making it structurally difficult for migrants to enter the workplace regardless of fluency in the language (Roberts 2010). This is because for migrants, even when they are fluent in the dominant language, they often have not picked up the specific mannerisms of speaking, tone of voice, cultural context, and professional phrasing in the language of the new country (Robert 2010; Sicola 2014). This leads to a dynamic where especially English-speaking migrants are perceived to be an expert in the language in their country of origin but inadequate in the country they migrate to (Robert

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2010). Because of this, migrants are often faced with linguistic penalties in the workplace, making them less likely to be hired or receive promotions along with being subjected to stereotyping by those perceived to be fluent English speakers in the workplace, which can lead to decreases in non-English speaking employee productivity, decreased workplace inclusivity, and higher turnover rates (Canagarajah 2020; Moron and Mujtaba 2018; Roberts 2010; Udah, Singh, Chamberlain 2019).

NEOLIBERALISM IN THE U.S. WORKPLACE AND THE PURSUIT OF THE GOOD NEOLIBERAL CITIZEN

Labor in the U.S. is often seen through a neoliberal perspective (Randles and Woodward 2018; Randles 2013; Telford and Briggs 2021). Neoliberalism is thought of "as an ideological system that holds the 'market' sacred, born within the 'human' or social sciences and refined in a network of Anglo-American-centric knowledge producers, expressed in different ways within the institutions of the postwar nation-state and their political fields" (Mudge 2008:702). This definition, developed by Mudge's review of neoliberalism as a social science concept, emphasizes that neoliberalism is "rooted in a moral project, articulated in the language of economics, that praises 'the moral benefits of market society' and identifies 'markets as a necessary condition for freedom in other aspects of life'" (702). This market-based society leads to policies which reinforce "the autonomous force of the market; the superiority of market or market-like competition over bureaucracies as a mechanism for the allocation of resources" (724). The United States is a prime example of a market-based society, with many of its policies and social ideals being rooted in neoliberalism which lead workers to have to attempt to be a 'good neoliberal citizen' (Randles and Woodward 2018).

Neoliberalism is seen through many facets of the U.S. workforce. This section will focus on two key aspects of neoliberalism in the U.S. workplace: The emphasis on hard work over health and social circumstance, and the need to take personal responsibility to succeed in the job market, regardless of social background (Randles and Woodward 2018; Telford and Briggs 2021). First, many workplaces have taken on a neoliberal profit maximizing, productivity first model, typically at the worker's expense. More than ever, workers are reporting overwork where increasing work hours and responsibilities are leading to burnout, exhaustion, and mental health concerns for employees (Murray 2020; Telford and Briggs 2021). Over working of the U.S. workforce has become a growing, neoliberalism driven issue. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019), a full-time employee works an average of 8.78 hours a day or 43.9 hours a week, assuming a 5-day work week. The average American worked 1767 hours in 2020, a decrease from the 1950s, which saw the average American work 1968 hours a year (OECD 2020). This however is an incomplete depiction of neoliberalism's impact because while it is true that the average amount of hours spent working has decreased, it has in no way been proportional to increases in U.S. workforce productivity. Since the 1950s, the labor productivity of the average business sector has quadrupled, going from 26 output per hour to 112 output per hour in 2021 (FRED 2021). This means that American workers have become about four times as productive while still working a similar amount to what they did in the 1950s, leading to burnout. Because of the neoliberal focus on profit maximization and productivity of the individual, a pattern of overworking has been actively encouraged to grow, primarily to the detriment of the health and wellbeing of U.S. workers (Murray 2020; Telford and Briggs 2021).

In addition to a productivity first model, neoliberalism has also emphasized an individualist view toward workforce achievement, access, and programs, ignoring the many

structural aspects that impact job access and success (Ali et al. 2018; Kane 2020; Randles 2013; Randles and Woodward 2018; Rose and Baumgartner 2013). Most U.S. workplaces tend to subscribe to 'Bootstraps Ideology,' the belief that individuals need to 'pull themselves up by the bootstraps' and individually address their poverty (Brezina 1996). One example of this personal responsibility focus can be seen in the various job programs that have arisen to combat poverty and unemployment through teaching personal responsibility techniques instead of addressing structural and social barriers which can lead to unemployment and use of welfare programs (Randles and Woodward 2018; Randles 2013). By only addressing the individual causes of poverty, these programs attempt to assimilate and shame low-income, particularly nonwhite individuals, into taking personal responsibility for their poverty, despite a lack of resources to do so, ultimately setting these people and their families up for "continued failure" within the job market (Randles and Woodward 2018:54).

These two facets of neoliberalism within the U.S. workplace, among others, led Randles and Woodward (2018) to theorize 'the good neoliberal citizen.' The good neoliberal citizen is "a hard-working, self-regulating human abstraction, one that exists in a social vacuum devoid of race, class, and gender inequalities" (54). As the definition implies, the good neoliberal citizen is a socially desired but impossible to achieve conception of the ideal worker in the neoliberal workplace. It is a depiction which puts full responsibility on primarily marginalized individuals to achieve self-sufficiency, almost always leading to failure due to its complacency in not addressing or questioning structural barriers, such as white supremacy in the workplace. Neoliberal job markets like the one in the U.S. rely on these depictions in part because it allows for the reinforcement of structural barriers and emphasis on harmful productivity, all while blaming the individual for their failure in attempting to be a good neoliberal citizen. This makes

it an important lens for understanding how discriminatory structures often proliferate

unchallenged in the U.S. workplace, especially when against non-white individuals.

CHAPTER 4: THE L/A WORKFORCE STORIES PROJECT

This study utilizes a community-based research (CBR), semi-structured interview methodology to provide an in-depth perspective on the perceived workplace experience for non-white migrants in the L/A area. The initial study was done at the request of the Lewiston-Auburn (L/A) Working Communities Challenge Pilot Project Team throughout the months of September-October 2021 for their "L/A Workforce Stories Project"[4]. The team wanted to learn about the workforce stories of non-white members of the L/A community, working collaboratively with me to develop a 5-question interview study which I would conduct and analyze[5]. Ultimately, this data was collected for their application to the Maine Working Community Challenge Grant[6]. The team provided support in finding participants, funding the project costs, such as translation and transcription services, and provided a well-known, confidential, and centralized location for interviews to be conducted. Following the interviews and creation of a report for the Pilot Project Team, my research began to deviate from its initial goals, becoming focused on an unexpected pattern of perceived African accent and English

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[4] The L/A Working Communities Challenge Pilot Project Team is a collective of community leaders which assembled in August 2021 to collect data and create an application for the Maine Working Communities Challenge. The group represents a variety of community organizations including Bates College, Coastal Enterprise Institute, Immigrant Resource Center of Maine, Multicultural Community and Family Support Services, Cooperative Development Institute, and Lewiston Youth Network. The group started the L/A Workforce Stories Project, leading to the interview study I conducted on their behalf.

[5] Per internal planning documents, the goal of the project was "to elevate and learn from voices and experiences that are often not heard or listened to in our community…Among other things, we hope to learn about the opportunities they pursued, the challenges they faced, and the personal and communal resources/supports they used, tried to use, or wish they'd had available to them in their attempts to achieve their workforce goals. These learnings will inform the development of a proposal for a grant to help create more equitable workforce outcomes for our community."

[6] The Maine Working Community Challenge Grant was a two-phase grant opportunity with the goal of increasing "economic growth and reduc[ing] inequity of opportunity tied to race, ethnicity, and other aspects of identity and background" (WorkingPlaces 2022). The first phase of the grant was a pilot grant which paid for the study I conducted and other costs of the design phase which would become an application towards the Implementation Grant. In March 2022, the L/A area was announced to be one of six recipients of the Implementation Grant, receiving a $375,000 to create the proposed program over the next three years (Office of Governor Janet T. Mills 2022).

language barrier-based workplace discrimination. This chapter reviews the interview methodology and process of analyzing the data, along with an overall discussion of the justification for, and limitations of, this methodology.

The CBR, semi-structured interview method was decided on because it allows for the yielding of community centered, first-person data on opinions and values of the participant in a detailed and genuine manner (Chambliss and Schutt 2016:215). It was incredibly important to use CBR methods as this study was ultimately done for the benefit of the L/A community. CBR methods are perfect for this as it creates "a partnership of students, faculty, and community members who collaboratively engage in research with the purpose of solving a pressing community problem or effecting social change" (Strand et al. 2003:3). Thus, a non-CBR methodology would be unnecessarily exploitative and extractive of the L/A community, proliferating a concentration of knowledge and power in higher education institutions.

SAMPLING AND PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

The study yielded a sample comprised of 24 non-white members of the Lewiston-Auburn community, all of whom were 18 years of age or older and have made a serious effort in the last five years to obtain work that aligns with or progresses their career interests, skills, or plans. Participants were recruited using a purposive sampling method facilitated by the L/A Working Communities Challenge Project Team who provided study information and a sign-up form to over 50 L/A community organizations and coalitions to share with community members who use their services. A purposive sampling method was employed as the team wanted to ensure they heard from community members of a variety of backgrounds and workforce experiences. With the interview information shared, community organizations recommended individuals interested in interviewing to the team. Those recommended were reached out to by phone to see if they

were still interested in participating; providing those who agreed with the interview location, compensation details, a timeslot for interviewing, and translator information, if needed. Organizations involved with recruitment were reminded and expected to inform participants that access to their services is not dependent on one's participation in the interview study and that any recommended person's participation is fully voluntary. To ensure proper representation of the L/A Community, a quota of desired participants was employed by the team with the following identity groups sought for: 5 refugees, 5 asylum seekers, 5 migrants, 5 African American individuals, 2 Indigenous individuals, 3 Latinx/e individuals, along with an effort to find a range of ages, genders, religions, and disabilities. This recruitment method yielded the 24 individuals interviewed in the study.

DATA COLLECTION

Interviewees were given 90-minute timeslots to complete their interview. To ensure accessibility, I provided a range of times on all days of the week ranging from as early as 7 am to as late as 11 pm. Interviews were conducted over the course of two weeks in September-October 2021. The interview process was designed with strict COVID-19 precautions to mitigate the risk of spreading, at the time, the Alpha and Delta variant. This included proper six feet social distancing, face masks, ventilation through opening windows in the interview space, disinfecting of the space after every interview, hand sanitizer, and the full vaccination, along with regular (2 times a week) PCR COVID-19 testing of the interviewer. Interviews were held at a L/A community organization known well by community members and centrally located within the city of Lewiston. The space was toured prior to conducting interviews to ensure it was COVID safe, confidential, accessible, and comfortable for participants. Neighboring organizations were informed of the project and timing of interviews to further ensure confidentiality and a curtain

within the interview space provided extra privacy in-case a building tenant accidently walked into the interview space.

Despite the risk of COVID-19, this study necessitated in-person interviews for a couple of reasons. First, many of our prospective participants did not have a stable internet connection or access to good cell phone service, creating a technological barrier which could have lost valuable perspectives. Second, participants were sharing experiences deeply personal to them and thus needed to have a space which was controlled and confidential, something that remote interviews likely could not guarantee as many prospective participants live in multi-person households and apartments. Third, some of the participants required Somali and Portuguese language translation to participate in the interviews. While translation could have been done remotely, translators could also lack a confidential space or good internet connection and could translate more effectively when in-person as compared to online. Because of these considerations, the Bates College IRB provided an exception to their remote interviewing COVID-19 policy for this study.

Outside of COVID-19, it was also important to be in person to ensure that I developed authentic rapport with the individuals I interviewed. This was accomplished throughout the interview process with intentional conversations before and after the interview, giving participants the opportunity to learn more about myself, personal background, and ask questions about my research process and intentions. I made sure to be clear about my identity and background, informing individuals of how I identify and discussing my relationship with Bates College. This included a variety of discussions with participants, ranging from my identity and background growing up in California; the positionality of Bates College in the L/A area; and discussions of how individuals feel community-based research and projects can be done best.

This process allowed me to connect with the participants in what I felt was an authentic manner, ideally leading to participants being more open and honest with me as they answered their interview questions, something I believe I achieved based on the authenticity in the responses of the participants. This rapport building was incredibly important for the success of me as a researcher on this project as I was being invited to learn about a community and experience which I am not a part of nor have experienced. Being a white, cis-gendered male from Bates College especially necessitated that I made clear my intentions and reasoning for asking personalized questions about my interviewee's identity and how it interacts within the L/A workforce. Through these efforts, I believe I was able to have open and honest conversation with the majority of individuals interviewed.

Outside of informal conversation, prior to the start of all interviews, participants, and the translator, if present, were asked to review and sign an informed consent form. The form covered the purpose, risks, and benefits of the research; obtained their permission for audio recording of the interview, under the stipulation that it would be deleted once the audio was transcribed; and identifies the manners in which their confidentiality would be held, along with the confidentiality standards expected from them. After translators signed this consent form, they verbally translated the participant's informed consent into their preferred language, having the participant sign it once they fully understood the form. No interview was conducted without the signing of this form and both the participants and translators were given an extra copy of their respective form with my contact information in case future questions arose. Once signed, I provided interview instructions, answered any further questions, and then started the audio recording (See Appendix A for translator and interviewee consent forms).

As requested by the Maine Working Community Challenge Pilot Project Team, an interview schedule was utilized (See Appendix B). All participants were informed that for any questions they are asked, they can answer them in the amount of detail they are comfortable with and could skip any question they wished not to answer (see Appendix C for detailed interview, compensation, and data practices).

DATA ANALYSIS

Interview transcripts were hand coded in NVIVO using Rubin and Rubin's (2005) steps for defining categories (216-217). Initial coding categories were developed from themes in the literature on workplace discrimination such as discrimination on the basis of gender, race, and immigration status. These codes were then reviewed and refined, identifying a pattern of workplace discrimination on the basis of one's perceived African accent, perceived English language barrier, and race, which were coded through the lens of the theories of the raciolinguistic perspective and the good neoliberal citizen. This allowed for the identification of patterns and quotes which supported or did not support these patterns of workplace discrimination and their application to the two theories previously noted. Additionally, perceived accent, language, and race demographic data were coded to respondents, allowing for the identification of patterns within the interview cohort through quantitative data.

Similar to the data collection, during data analysis, I was intentional to consider how my own perspective on the U.S workplace could impact my findings. Through this process, I was intentional to deconstruct and disconnect my personal perspective on the workplace experience, instead relying heavily on quotes instead of assumptions to analyze identified patterns. This process of deconstruction began with my Bates College education. As a first-year student, I took my first sociology classes and began to expand my primarily white, middle-class centered view

of the U.S. workplace. While I was of course aware of identity-based workplace discrimination, my courses at Bates College have allowed me to explore these topics with a critical lens. I have been able to begin to critically question why someone like myself: a white, cis-gendered, male-identifying, agnostic, perceived English language fluent, perceived American accented, highly educated individual receives identity-based privileges within the workplace while those with identities different than my own are met with barriers created by institutionalized white supremacy and inequality within the U.S. workplace. This has been further explored through my four years as a Bonner Leader with the Harward Center for Community Partnership[7]. The center has afforded me the opportunity to do consistent community engaged work and projects within the L/A community, providing me insight into the diversity of workplace experiences present. This continuing process of deconstruction was necessary for the accurate, respectful, and critical analysis of the interview data.

Once the report for the Maine Working Community Challenge Pilot Team was completed in October 2021, all members of the committee received access to it. The report was about 15 pages, providing a general overview of workplace barriers, supports, and stories as revealed by interviewees. Additionally, a brief presentation of the findings were provided to members of the team during December 2021. With completion of the thesis, findings will be made into flyers and briefings in an easy to comprehend format for community members and organizations. Presentations will also be given to community members on the findings to ensure adequate opportunity for the community to access and benefit from the research. These interview methods were approved by the Bates College IRB on 9/14/2021.

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[7] The Bonner Leader Program is a four-year, paid position focused on providing students with consistent community engagement opportunities and education on the social issues within the L/A area. Throughout my time in the program, I have had the opportunity to do a variety of projects ranging from organizing and acting in a haunted house for the Boys and Girls Club to creating a L/A public art map and tour for L/A Arts.

LIMITATIONS

The interview methodological framework had some limitations. First, since a purposive sample was used, the cohort I interviewed is not fully representative of the entire L/A workforce experience. For example, members of the community who do not regularly utilize the resources of the collaborating community partners were inadvertently excluded from the interview. Secondly, because of the small sample size, the data provided from these interviews is not generalizable past the experience of some members of the L/A workforce. While this data is still incredibly valuable, especially for the community partners collaborated with, its findings lack the generalizability which can often be achieved with other sociological methods like an online survey. Thus, when given the opportunity to do a yearlong honors thesis, I decided to attempt to address these two weaknesses while further exploring the workforce experience of members of the African migrant community in L/A by creating and distributing an online survey in February and March of 2022. This follow-up methodology unfortunately failed, only yielding four responses during a two-month data collection period. Appendix C describes this methodology in-depth along with hypotheses for why it failed.

CHAPTER 5: "THIS CEILING IS BRICK"

This chapter reviews the data collected and analyzed from the 24 interviews conducted on the Lewiston-Auburn (L/A) workforce experience of non-white individuals. This begins with an overview of the general sentiment surrounding the L/A workforce experience and the study demographics. This is followed by an in-depth review of the patterns of racial, perceived African accent, and perceived English language proficiency-based discrimination identified by participants to be ubiquitous throughout the L/A area and Maine.

Interview Participant Demographics

Race/ethnicity	Refugee, Immigrant, or Asylum Seeker (African Diaspora)	African American	Indigenous/Native American	Arabic/Middle Eastern	Two or More Racial Identities		Total
	14	5	2	1	2		N=24
Gender identity	Male	Female	Transgender (Female to Male)				
	10	13	1				N=24
Socio-economic status	At or below poverty line	Low-income	Working-class	Middle-class	Upper middle-class	Decline to state	
	2	5	6	8	1	2	N=24
Religion	Islam	Christianity (Protestant/Catholic)	Christianity (all others)	Other religion or spiritual practice	No religion	Declined to state	
	6	7	6	2	2	1	N=24
Disability	None	Cognitive	Physical and cognitive				
	21	2	1				N=24
Citizenship status	U.S. Citizen	Asylum seeker	Undocumented migrant	Green card	Work visa		
	15	3	1	4	1		N=24

Table 1: Self-identified Demographics of the 24 Interview Participants

PERCEPTIONS OF THE OVERALL L/A WORKFORCE EXPERIENCE

Participants had a variety of answers regarding their experience in the L/A workforce. Participants anecdotally noted work experience ranging from a couple years to about 50 years within the L/A area and Maine. Generally, participants had mixed perspectives on the difficulty of finding jobs within the L/A area and Maine as non-white individuals. Some participants felt that jobs were out there and easy to find, reporting no difficulty in securing a job. For example, one participant noted:

It's not that hard finding a job, honestly, there are a lot of resources. You just have to make sure you follow up on people because I think that is a big thing. People just make an application, apply for a job and then not follow up…all you have to do is give a call.

Many other participants noted difficulty finding work, often attributing this to aspects of their identity or personal barriers such as their immigration status, lack of knowledge about U.S. jobs, racial identity, educational achievement, lack of childcare, lack of transportation access, perceived limited English language proficiency, or being perceived to have an African accent (Chart 1). For example, one participant who immigrated to L/A in the 1990s noted many of these difficulties in her overall work experience:

> [Moved] to Lewiston-Auburn, and it was almost impossible to find a job here. The only thing I could do was substitute teaching because I was a teacher in Ghana, in Nigeria, and in Turkey, where I lived before coming here. And when I got here, I was interested in going into teaching, but I was told I had to get certified here...

> ...I knew if I did not take some classes to upgrade my education, what I brought from Ghana, I would not be able to get other jobs. So, I decided to go back to school and to get a degree. And because I had three children who were in primary, middle, high school, I said the best way for me to do is to take classes locally so that I do not have to travel far. So, I took classes at the [university] here in social behavioral sciences.

Lastly, some participants noted a fluctuation in the ease of accessing work over time, especially in the context of COVID. One participant described this well:

> Interviewee: Well, right now it is pretty easy because of course, with COVID everybody is understaffed. So right now I would definitely describe it as easy. In the past, depending on the type of job, meaning entry level, senior level, whatever level I am applying to, it is a little difficult to get the higher-level jobs. So, I mean, that is of course based on experience as well. So that is a barrier, but yes.

> Interviewer: Great. And out of your time in the workforce, would you say right now has been the easiest to get a job in your experience?

> Interviewee: Yes.

Regardless of the ease of obtaining work in L/A, every participant reported at least one identity-based, structural, or logistical barrier to their ability to access, keep, or advance in jobs within the L/A area (Chart 1).

Structural	Identity-Based	Logistical
• Poor workplace culture/conditions • Inadequate support from or knowledge of community organizations • Lack of recognition of degree from another country • Minimal job opportunities • Lack of workplace diversity • Biased promotion process	• Race • Perceived African accent • Age • Immigration status • Educational attainment • Minimal job experience • Way hair/clothing is worn • Religion • Perceived English language proficiency	• Childcare expenses, access, and quality • Lack of knowledge of how to apply for a job • Inadequate wage • Poor public and private transportation access

Chart 1: Reported structural, identity-based, and logistical barriers from interview participants. Keep in mind that what is here is not mutually exclusive from one another as many of these topics intersect. For example, poor public transportation access is both a structural and logistical barrier in accessing the L/A workplace. The three categories do demonstrate the manners in which workplace barriers are proliferated in the L/A workplace.

The sheer diversity and number of patterns of inaccessibility and discrimination within the L/A workplace is important to contextualize, however is far too much to review in this thesis. Additionally, much of the sociological literature on workplace discrimination and access, including some of which is cited in chapter three, have deeply explored patterns of workplace discrimination and exclusion through structural, identity-based, and logistical means (Williams 2021). To ensure that this thesis does not solely state what is already known by both L/A community members and the sociological literature, this analysis section will focus on three commonly noted patterns of discrimination in the L/A workplace within the intersection of race, perceived accent, and perceived English language proficiency. First, non-white English speakers perceived to have American accents noted common experiences of racial discrimination in the workplace while non-white individuals perceived to have an African accent or lacking English language proficiency rarely noted race to be a barrier (Table 4). Second, only Black, African migrants who spoke English with a perceived African accent attributed specific forms of workplace discrimination and barriers to their perceived accent (Table 2). Third, non-white

individuals perceived to have limited English language proficiency identified experiences of

discrimination and barriers solely based on their perceived English language ability (Table 3).

These patterns become apparent when looking at the quantitative data. For those

perceived to have an African accent, 6 of the 8 individuals identified experiencing some form of

difficulty or discrimination within the Lewiston-Auburn workforce because of it (Table 2).

Similarly, participants perceived to be a non-English speaker, of which there were four, all

identified their perceived lack of English language proficiency as a significant barrier to the L/A

workplace (Table 3; 4). This is further intriguing as those perceived to have an American accent,

which made up 11 of the participants, 8 participants reported their race or workplace racism as a

barrier to their ability to access or keep work in the L/A area (Table 4).

Perceived Accent as a Workplace Barrier for Perceived Fluent English Speakers

	Perceived as Having an American Accent	Perceived as Having an African Accent	Perceived as Having Other Non-American Accent	Total
Identified their perceived accent as a barrier	0	6	0	6
Did not identify their perceived accent as a barrier	11	2	1	14
Total	11	8	1	20

Table 2: Perceived fluent English speaking participant's identification of their perceived accent being a barrier in the L/A workplace. Whether a participant was perceived to have an American accent was identified by comparing their accent to both the researcher's perception of American accents and a 2021 video series panel of linguistic experts discussing the various accents perceived to be from the U.S. (WIRED 2021a; 2021b). Whether a participant was perceived to have an African accent or not was determined by participant self-identification of their accent, participant country of origin, and perceived sound of their accent.

Perceptions of English Language Proficiency as a Workplace Barrier

	Perceived as Proficient in English	Perceived as Not Proficient in English	Total
Identified perceived English language proficiency as a barrier	0	4	4
Did not identify perceived English language proficiency as a barrier	20	0	20
Total	20	4	24

Table 3: *Participant identification of their perceived English language proficiency being a workplace barrier. Perceived English language proficiency was identified by whether a participant requested a translator for their interview.*

Race/Racism as a Workplace Barrier

	Perceived proficient in English, perceived American accent	Perceived proficient in English, perceived non-American accent	Perceived as not Proficient in English	Total
Identified race as a barrier	8	1	0	9
Did not identify race as a barrier	3	8	4	15
Total	11	9	4	24

Table 4: *Participant identification of their race or racism being a workplace barrier based on their perceived accent and English language proficiency. Racial identity was self-identified by participants as part of the interview demographic questions.*

These patterns within the intersections of race, language, and perceived accent were unexpected and intriguing. To begin to understand how these perceived patterns of workplace discrimination and barriers have arisen, the rest of this chapter will identify and analyze perceptions of the L/A workforce experience on the basis of race, perceived African accent, and perceived English language proficiency. This will be followed by a chapter six discussion of how these patterns apply to the theories of the raciolinguistic perspective and the good neoliberal citizen, along with the history and culture of discrimination against migrants in the L/A area (Besteman 2016; Randles and Woodward 2018; Rosa & Flores 2017; Rosa 2019).

RACE AND RACISM IN THE L/A WORKPLACE

Experiences of racism in the L/A workforce and beyond were commonly identified by Black, Latinx/e, and Indigenous participants. 8 out of the 24 participants explicitly noted experiencing racism within the L/A workplace while others noted racism in other aspects of their daily life, attesting to a racially prejudice environment in the L/A area and Maine in and out of the workplace (Table 4). Regarding the general racial prejudice against non-white people in the L/A area, participants noted experiences of being profiled, seen as non-productive members of

society, assumed to be partaking in criminal activities, and being subjected to racist comments

from white community members. As one African American participant noted

> particularly here in Maine, there is a lot of discrimination when…you are not white and having a high income, it seems like it is an issue. You get harassed, more bothered…The main view on any person that makes a lot of money in Maine and [is] colored is that you are either selling drugs and so on, so definitely the view will be you're doing something illegal.

This clearly racist assumption, made by "mostly white people" within the L/A community, is

rather telling of the sediment surrounding race. Non-white people are seen to only exist in the

L/A community in a deviant and harmful manner, being assumed to sell drugs or being involved

in other illegal activities, regardless of their actual income and intentions.

Another African American participant expands on these assumptions and their origins

saying

> I mean we are super diverse [in] Lewiston and everybody knows what they call Lewiston, the "dirty lew." And they just assume that people are not educated here and that people are more a part of the regression of Lewiston instead of the progressive parts.

This quote helps to further show the sentiment that much of the white population has towards the

non-white population in the L/A area. Non-white people are seen as part of a "regression" in the

area. This is noted to be a widely held belief by community members as the nickname for

Lewiston, the "dirty lew," is used as a way to stigmatize Lewiston, particularly its large African

migrant population. Thus, racism and fear of diversity leads community members to stigmatize

non-white people, despite the increasing diversity benefiting the area such as introducing new

businesses, decreasing the crime rate, and decreasing the vacancy rate (New American Economy

2016). Yet, despite benefiting the L/A area, this hostile environment proliferates, making it very

hard for non-white people to establish themselves as they face a variety of barriers that one

African American participant describes as "not even a glass ceiling. It is like this ceiling is brick…There's just a barrier."

Many participants noted experiences of bias, racism, and discomfort due to the way their racial identity is treated in the L/A workplace. Experiences of racial bias differed between workplaces, but overall participants found them to create a hostile and unwelcoming environment. In one workplace, an Indigenous participant reported that there was "one gentleman I worked with who was very clearly a white supremacist. He did not overtly say or do anything, but he puffed himself up a little bit more when he walked by me." This participant did not report this behavior because they feared retaliation and being viewed as a problem by their employer. Another African American participant reported a similar experience of racism and microaggressions by their co-workers:

> The expectation of me, I guess, proving that I fit the job is a lot harder than my coworkers would endure...The last 10 years I have gone into workspaces that are predominantly white. And so I have to kind of appear to be a certain way. And it is just odd because there will be certain things that come up in discussion if we are talking just casually and about—maybe, for example—something that happens in our home life, and my environment is so different than everybody else's environment...So if I say something, it is like a joke…people find the different terminology that is used at home or the foods that we eat, they just find it, I guess, odd…So it is kind of something that they laugh at…It is a really strange reaction.

Experiences of microaggressions like these led some participants to feel unwelcome and uncomfortable in the workplace because of bias against their race, making them feel that they have to act in a certain manner to be accepted in their predominately white workplaces.

Instances of racism were not limited to co-worker relationships as participants also noted experiences of racial discrimination during the job interview process. Black, Latinx/e, and Indigenous participants felt that they had to fight judgement and assumptions through the job interview process. For example, one African American participant describes their need to

"overcompensate when explaining [their] confidence in [their] versatility or confidence in [their] experience with the work that [they] might be applying for." This participant goes on to recognize the structural aspects which influence their employment as a Black individual, stating it is "really up to the interviewer or the company to decide whether or not that is good enough," showing the critical role racial discrimination plays in access to jobs within the L/A community.

Another African American participant expands on racial discrimination within the interview process, detailing a common experience:

> Oftentimes going into the interview process, I almost felt like I was being attacked or interrogated…What I feel like other people did not have to do because it was on their resume. Like my paper version of myself was always in question once they saw...My outwardly presentation because my name and the way that I sound on the phone was not like this indication that I was a person of color. So when I would show up and then it was obvious that it was not expected. And then the tone of the person interviewing would often change. So, it was both the fear of 'Is this person going to have a problem with a person of color?' And then the sense that 'Oh my gosh, they do.' When I got there. So, it was like either I am going to have to work really hard or this interview really is over before it even starts.

As this experience demonstrates, non-white people are often immediately stigmatized, believed to be lying about their ability and qualifications when interviewing for jobs within the L/A area. This leads this participant to observe that many of their opportunities to receive a job are "over before it even starts," creating a significant issue accessing the L/A workforce.

This pattern of racism is noted to lead to the underemployment of some non-white members of the L/A community and in Maine. One African migrant witnessed that

> They are minorities, apply for the positions opened, they apply for them like assistant principal, and they are highly qualified. I know someone who was qualified to be a superintendent and would apply for just assistant principal positions and [they were] never hired in Portland. Now, they have a Somali man who is a principal, but in the '90s, early 2000s, no. As a minority person, it was difficult for you to progress or to advance in any way. That is one of the issues with us here. We want to be really part of the community, but all these obstacles.

While this participant notes some improvement overall, they have seen a general pattern of non-white individuals being underemployed because they are a "minority." This is obviously concerning as it not only limits job opportunities for non-white people in Maine, especially high-quality jobs, but also shows how racism within Maine and L/A hiring practices are reproducing whiteness and thus white supremacy in the workplace instead of attempting to find the best candidate.

Some participants believe that part of the reason there are limited job opportunities for non-white people has to do with tokenism of these individuals by employers. For instance, an African American participant noticed a pattern that

> the main idea [for employers], is to push people up and then oppress some. It is like a way of saying, "Oh, now we have got somebody from your people." It is a way to cover up the way of racism in a way and satisfy the general view of things, like saying, when somebody say mentioned, "Oh, this person or this politician is racist," but then they all say, "Oh, but he got this Spanish person and this African-American and this Asian, how can we be racist?"

Another African American participant identifies a flagrant example of this tokenism

> I had a friend that moved to Orono as well and they also wanted to work [where I worked]. When they applied, one of the hiring managers there, she was just, "Yeah, it is not going to work." "We needed [you and your relative] here for diversity and now that both of you guys are both here, then we do not need any more diversity."

Both observations of tokenism demonstrate another barrier faced by non-white people in the L/A area, specifically, that some employers believe non-white people do not belong in the workplace. When they are in it, their presence should uniquely benefit their workplace, such as being a token for diversity, devaluing the humanness of non-white employees and demonstrating a presence of racial capitalism in the L/A workplace (Leong 2013; Robinson 1983).

Overall, racism in the workplace was frequently reported by Black, Indigenous, and Latinx/e participants, leading to barriers in accessing, and hostility within, the L/A workplace

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through discrimination in the hiring process, workplace microaggressions, unequal promotion opportunities, and tokenism of non-white people by employers.

THE L/A WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE FOR THOSE PERCEIVED TO HAVE AN AFRICAN ACCENT

Those perceived to have an African accent were observed to experience a significant, discriminatory impact throughout the L/A workforce experience. Starting with the hiring process, multiple participants reported negative experiences because of their perceived African accent. For example, a Black, African migrant who spoke with a perceived African accent describes a telling experience after their employer heard their accent and assumed them to be an African migrant:

> [Employers] like really to check if [African migrants] know how to print a paper, how to write on [it], even my first interview on my professional job, I had to finish up the interview. Then they were like, here use a computer. If you can type just like one sentence, just to check on me. So I can do that job, I did it, but at the end of the day…the frustration is there.

This stigmatizing experience not only shows the challenges of being perceived to have an African accent in the Lewiston workplace but also reveals the specific assumptions employers make about those they perceive to be African migrants, believing them to be incapable of tasks such as typing or using a printer.

This same participant described how these patronizing experiences continued after getting hired, telling the following story:

> Interviewee: Even my boss was trying to see if I can even turn on the computer. Like, the very, very basic. Not even trying to show you that you do not know, but that really trust was not there…And that is really frustrating, because it is like, can I just show you that I know much [more] than this.
>
> Interviewer: Absolutely. And do you have any insights? Why do you think employers did not trust you? Or why employers would not think that you knew how to do basic things like turning on a computer, for example?

> Interviewee: I mean, for that, I'm not going to say on their behalf. I do not know. But if like I do understand that seeing a person for the first time...it is one issue. Maybe not really talking like the American accent English, that is the second, because many, many people really confused, it is like not having American accent [relates] to the intelligence that you have.

This passage demonstrates a revealing pattern of the effect of being perceived to speak with an African accent has on the L/A workforce experience. There is a feeling that employers do not trust those perceived to speak with 'non-American' accents, creating a frustrating and discriminatory work environment which associates a perceived 'non-American' accent, such as the African accent, with a lack of intelligence.

This association of one's intelligence in relation to their perceived accent was noted by multiple participants. Another Black participant perceived to speak with an African accent found that

> Not having English accent [is related] to your knowledge, or your smartness. Like even the colleagues, the work colleagues, they feel like you are not really equal to them. It is like, I am not going to call it racism kind of, but you feel like you are under them because they feel like you are not really equal to them.

When asked which individuals in the workplace feel they are better than the those perceived to have non-English accents, the participant revealed that it is anyone perceived to have an American accent in the workplace, but you can avoid the stigma so long as you "show them that you are capable" despite your perceived non-American accent. This quote is interesting both because it gives further perspective on the perceived relationship between the African accent and intelligence but alludes to this pattern being considered somewhat separate from racism. Perceived African accents are observed to be directly related to intelligence, meaning that when their colleagues perceived them to be speaking with an African accent, they tend to think they are smarter and more "capable" than them.

This pattern is especially interesting in the context of the participants stating they are "not going to call it racism kind of," as it shows that discrimination against those perceived to have an African accent may go beyond just being a covert pattern of racism. As a Black, American-born participant noted, being a "Black person" and being a Black African migrant in the community is seen as different, stating "we are really separated and divided within the [L/A] population. And so, as a Black person, it is hard for me to say African-American because I am treated different." This separation between patterns of discrimination of those perceived to have African accents and those with a non-white race can be additionally identified by only 1 of the 8 participants perceived to have an African accent mentioning racism as a workplace barrier whereas 6 of the 8 mentioned their perceived African accent (Table 2; 4).

Discrimination on the basis of one's perceived African accent is also noted to be present within the job search process. A Black African migrant perceived to speak with an African accent recalled the following experience with a L/A job placement agency:

> Interviewee: Because when they hear your accent, they just classify you as someone who is looking for this hard work, like working in the factories. So, they think that you do not have any other qualification…even though you can speak English. But the accent is, they just classify [you] as someone who cannot do anything else other than working in factories.
>
> Interviewer: Do you have a story about that for yourself, as to when you were maybe classified as someone who could not do anything but work in a factory?
>
> Interviewee: Right, right, right. So, the same [job] agency that I told you about, they gave me the exam and I did an interview. And I never got an outcome regarding the position I was applying for. So instead of giving me the outcome, they start sending me emails about some other positions in factories.

This story reveals an important aspect of being perceived to have an African accent as it is not only assumed to be a reflection of a person's intelligence, but also of their education and workplace skills. This assumption of lacking qualifications is extremely apparent as this

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participant was both well-educated and had many years of experience in IT work, both things that this agency was informed about and actively chose to ignore. This pattern is concerning as it shows that individuals are being given limited access to high quality jobs in the L/A workforce because of their perceived African accent and the stereotypes that are associated with it.

The experience of being perceived as speaking with an African accent in the L/A workforce is not limited to just assumptions about one's intelligence and ability, it is also seen as an invitation for workplace hostility from both colleagues and customers. One Black, African migrant with a perceived African accent noted difficulty with their accent leading to poor treatment from customers.

> My accent is different than someone that is born here in the United States. And sometimes on the job, if peoples notice that you are not from here, they can be rude…I personally sometimes feel like they take advantage of us.

People in the L/A area feel not only frustrated by but emboldened to mistreat and take advantage of those they perceived to speak with an African accent in the workplace. Another Black, African migrant who is perceived to speak with an African accent identified an instance of disrespect because of their perceived accent, leading to a shocking and discriminatory outcome:

> I got one of those calls, and there was this person asking some questions that were not related to work. And I said, "We are getting calls from all over, so if you want to have this conversation with me, you are taking my time from getting calls from other people." Then she just went into, "You speak with an accent, why [at a state agency] of all places? There are Americans who can do a better job than you sitting here with an accent." So I hang up on her…I did not want to be rude to her so I just hung up. And within hours, I was written up. I had to go to a hearing, and I knew it was a setup by people working at [the state agency] to get [rid of me]...they did not want me there.

This powerful quote about workplace discrimination needs no explanation for what it implies toward the experience and discrimination faced by those perceived to speak with African accents in Maine. Customers and clients feel justified in creating a hostile work environment by criticizing those they perceived to have African accents while employers feel empowered to

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punish those who justify their existence, creating an impossible situation for those perceived to speak with an African accent to defend themselves. Experiences like these led this person to develop the perspective that their perceived African accent is something they need to change:

> Interviewee: If we find that we are deficient in something, if it is like this woman told me of my, what is it called? Accent. It is very easy, we are working. If you organize a training to train you on how you can improve your accent, if you are working you can pay to take such classes. I did some work at and there were some Indian women ... people from India and Asia, they were taking classes from Americans [so] they could lose their accent, and they were paying for it. It was not paid for by the [their employer] ... if we have good employment, we have the money, we can kill some of [these] deficiencies ourselves…like the accent.

> Interviewer: And may I just ask you, do you feel like your accent is a deficiency?

> Interviewee: I do…so many times when I work with the [state government], when LePage became the governor, I would get calls, people just insulting me. "How did you get this job? How did you get this job?" So I kept reporting it to Augusta and it got to a point Augusta just told me do not take such calls. So people started leaving them on my phone. They would leave horrible messages for me on the phone.

Considering this experience, it is hard to not see why this conclusion would be made, however disheartening it may be. It appears that this is not an isolated experience either, as migrants perceived to have African and other non-American accents in Maine are willing to pay money to attempt to rid of their perceived accents since their employers and clients see them as a deficiency. This need to rid of their perceived non-American accent is structurally reinforced by the passiveness of the State of Maine, stating that this participant should ignore the constant negative messaging, instead of attempting to prevent or mediate the harm caused by it.

Overall discrimination against those perceived to speak with an African accent is a clear and concerning pattern within the L/A and Maine workplace. While this is not universally agreed upon by participants, for example, one participant who is perceived to speak with an African accent attests that "finding a job as an English speaker is not like a challenge to me," there is a

clear pattern of discrimination and harm to many who are perceived to have an African accent. This discrimination appears to be explained by more than just workplace racism, however race is likely still an important factor in explaining why this bias is observed against only individuals perceived to speak with African accents.

THE L/A WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE FOR THOSE PERCEIVED TO HAVE LIMITED OR NO ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Four participants reported only speaking a language other than English, two being Somali speakers and two being Portuguese speakers. Regardless of the specific language, all of these participants found that their perceived English language-based barriers made it hard for them to achieve and advance in their employment. For example, when asked about the barriers they had experienced in their effort to find work, a Black, African migrant, Somali speaker gave me the simple response of "language barrier." When asked to expand on this, the participant stated through a translator, "in terms of communication. Sometimes I see things I can do where I have skills for it, but I cannot communicate to the employer that this is what I can do." This barrier led this participant to have consistent difficulties securing work as they are often unable to communicate with employers during interviews or job training, an experience shared by other participants who were perceived as not proficient in English.

Being perceived to have an English language barrier has tangible impacts on the work experience in L/A, leading to substantial difficulty securing work, obtaining high quality jobs, and keeping employment. Many participants who learned English as a second language and all participants who do not speak English reported their perceived English language barrier making accessing work in L/A extremely difficult. For instance, a Black, African migrant, Somali speaker through a translator, stated that

it was not easy, because of how [I have] a barrier in language. [I do not] speak English. But [I] never gave up. [I] applied through many agencies, and then [I] was not hired. Then, [I] applied for a [job at a local hospital organization], and [I] was hired.

While it is ultimately good that this participant was able to achieve employment despite their perceived English language barrier, it does demonstrate the great lengths that those with perceived language barriers must go for employment. Similarly, one Middle Eastern participant who learned English as a second language noted one of their biggest barriers being

The interview and the applying. English is not my first language by speaking, But when they saw me [as] unable to speak clearly, they [were] like, "We are not going to hire him." That is how I feel. So then they just say, "We are going to call you back." And they never call. That's the most hard thing.

This quote expands well on the bias that employers have against those they perceived to have an English language barrier and the frustration which comes from being seen as unemployable for not being able to "speak clearly." This same participant also revealed they got fired from a job because they asked too many questions during training, showing how perceived English language proficiency can be a substantial barrier to holding stable employment.

This perceived difficulty by L/A employers of working with those with English language barriers is felt by some participants to be largely constructed, especially considering the need for labor within the Lewiston-Auburn area post COVID-19. One English speaking, Black, African migrant shares their frustration with this construction, pointing out that

There is always another [co-worker] who will speak both language[s]…who will do the orientation on the first day, this person can just tell you, 'Okay, your role here will be just to check the bottle…So it is like something simple, an interpretation of 10 minutes will allow [the non-English speaker] to understand…And the safety questions is like easy to understand. There are signs, people can use their common sense to understand safety. And also during the training, you can tell people what is safe, what is not unsafe. So the job should not require people to speak English, but I saw many employers refusing to give to people, this kind of job, sending them back…[but] because of the workforce shortage, I have seen a lot of change. Like these companies who are like very strict about

the language, but [are now] a little bit open, like even someone does not speak English [can get hired].

This quote breaks down the construction of the amount of English language proficiency needed to work certain jobs in L/A, emphasizing that there are easy routes for allowing those perceived to lack English language proficiency to work. It also shows that jobs in the L/A area are starting to deconstruct this requirement themselves by amending their English language requirement to accommodate for a local labor shortage. This emphasizes at least some bias employers have against those they perceived to have English language barriers.

This perceived need for proficiency in English for L/A jobs is observed to be detrimental for the overall success of the L/A area as worker's talents are going unutilized because of it. For example, an English-speaking, Black, African migrant believes that

there is a lot of talents within communities, but people do not have any information or maybe they are scared. They say, okay, so who can I talk to? Maybe my English is not good. So how can I go and find a job? And there is some even if you are electrician, you do not need to know the language.

This belief that jobs are being unfairly exclusive on the basis of perceptions of English language proficiency is shared by other participants and appears to lead to underemployment in the L/A community. As another English speaking, Black, African migrant attests: "We may have some people who are nurses and doctors—is something they would love to do here, but because they do not speak English, they cannot be hired in these jobs." This shows the long term and frustrating impact that perceived English language barriers have created for effective employment for non-English speaking members of the L/A community. This is disheartening for the community because those with perceived language barriers "have a passion, a love to help [people], but because of the language barrier, they cannot get [work]." This notion of unemployability is harmful and saddening to those with these barriers and a loss of skilled labor

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for the entire L/A community. Clearly, perceived lacking English language proficiency is leading

to substantial and discriminatory impacts on non-white, non-English speakers' L/A workforce

experience

CHAPTER 6: THE FOREVER MIGRANT

The previous chapter provided an overview of three identity-based forms of discrimination and the intersection between them as perceived by non-white members of the Lewiston-Auburn (L/A) workforce. This revealed ubiquitous workplace discrimination on the basis of an individual's race, perceived African accent, and perceived lack of English language proficiency, each with a specific pattern of discrimination. Racial discrimination in the L/A workplace was aligned with past sociological literature on racial discrimination and white supremacy within the U.S. workplace, patterns which were briefly reviewed in chapter three (Williams 2021). While patterns of racial discrimination were to be expected, the manifestation of perceived English language proficiency, and African accent-based discrimination was not expected, especially its perceived separation from racial discrimination. Considering this, the following chapter uses the raciolinguistic perspective and theory of the good neoliberal citizen as a lens to understand how this pattern of perceived English language proficiency and perceived African accent-based discrimination came to be in the L/A workforce. This will be followed by a discussion of how perceived accent and language-based discrimination allows for the covert proliferation of white supremacy in the L/A workforce and community through the archetype of 'the forever migrant.'

By utilizing the raciolinguistic perspective, this chapter claims that through a process of raciolinguistic enregisterment, those perceived to speak with an African accent begin to "sound like a race," being stereotyped by the primarily white, L/A area perception of what it means to be an African refugee and migrant, being assumed to have little education, job skills, intelligence, and to lack trustworthiness (Rosa 2019). This false depiction of African migrants and refugees is what I call 'the forever migrant.' Those perceived to have English language barriers, while not

always stereotyped as an 'forever migrant,' find themselves to be perceived as incapable within the L/A workplace, experiencing language-based, structural barriers. This leads non-white migrants perceived to have African accents and/or English language barriers to feel that L/A employers are making assumptions about them as employees, leading to workplace discrimination and barriers to accessing the workplace.

This discrimination proliferates in part because individuals perceived to have African accents and English language barriers assume responsibility to be a "good neoliberal citizen" through individually attempting to acquire an 'American' sounding accent or by learning English, ignoring the structural barriers which require individuals to assimilate to 'American-accented' English to experience L/A workplace success (Randles and Woodward 2018). This process ultimately allows white supremacy to proliferate in the L/A workplace, giving those perceived to have an African accent and English language barrier an ultimatum: Either assimilate to whiteness by ridding of their perceived African accent and native language or face harmful linguistic discrimination, limiting their access to and mobility within the L/A workplace.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE 'FOREVER MIGRANT'

Prior to applying the raciolinguistic perspective and good neoliberal citizen, it is important to establish what it means to have migrated from an African country to the L/A area and how these individuals become perceived as a 'forever migrant.' During the interviews, participants were able to identify a clear stereotype of what it means to be an African migrant or refugee in the L/A area. One Black African migrant expressed how they believe some individuals from L/A perceive everyone who emigrated from African countries:

> if someone from here did not know anything about Africa, they may see or maybe met…some people who did not go to school. They may…[generalize] everybody [from Africa] saying they did not go to school. They live in camp for a long time, they do not even know how to write.

This harmful stereotype of African migrants and refugees plays both into a United States and local understanding of individuals who emigrate from African countries. Historically, global north countries like the United States harmfully stereotype Africa and the Black individuals who live in it to be uncivilized, less intelligent, violent, and to live in worse conditions than compared to countries in the global north, a perception which developed during, and persists from, European colonization and imperialism of the African continent (Besteman 2016; Corbey 1990; Helg 2000; Wiley 1991).

In the L/A area specifically, the most well-known groups of African migrants are the Somali and Somali Bantu refugees, a group who had to flee conflict from the Somali Civil War, spending often years in Kenyan refugee camps awaiting relocation with little access to resources and educational opportunities (Besteman 2016). While this lack of job, education, and English language fluency may have been initially true for the arrival of Somali and Somali Bantu refugees, it is an extremely inaccurate assumption in the modern context of African migration to the L/A area. Many of the African migrants interviewed in this study came from well-established countries with robust educational systems, job markets, and lifestyles. Those who did not often took advantage of the educational and job opportunities they could obtain within the L/A area. For instance, while it was not specifically asked for during the interview, five participants who identified as African migrants revealed they hold some form of a graduate level degree.

Yet despite the inaccuracy of this perception, primarily white members of the L/A area continue to proliferate racist and negative assumptions about the African migrant population. A 2017 Associated Press report investigating why the L/A area voted for then President Trump found that many members of the white population falsely believed that African migrants continue to rely on state welfare programs and feel that the L/A area has received too many

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African migrants (Galofaro 2017). The report additionally found that African migrants continue to find themselves labeled as outsiders, being identified synonymously as "refugees" by the white population despite their near 15-year presence in L/A as "Americans," ultimately creating and legitimizing 'the forever migrant' archetype. As this discussion chapter will lay out, these stereotypes of African refugees have permeated the L/A workplace, creating a false perception and thus barrier for African migrants accessing the L/A workforce, especially the high-quality jobs within it.

THE RACIOLINGUISTIC ENREGISTERMENT OF INDIVIDUALS PERCEIVED TO HAVE AN AFRICAN ACCENT TO MEAN 'A FOREVER MIGRANT'

It is important to understand the L/A stereotype of African migrants because it provides an explanation as to why those perceived to have an African accent, a marker of an African refugee/migrant within the community, could lead to specific forms of workplace discrimination. As chapter five revealed, many Black African migrants perceived to have an African accent attributed specific workplace barriers and discrimination to the stigmatization of their perceived African accent. Participants articulated their perceived African accent being associated with "smartness;" a lack of "trust" towards their ability to accomplish basic workplace skills such as being tested on if they can "type just one sentence" or "turn on the computer;" a feeling that "you are not really equal to" "work colleagues" with a need to demonstrate that you are "capable" within your job to receive respect; customers and clients feeling righteous in being "rude;" and job agencies assuming that they have no job "qualifications" and only want to "[work] in factories."

All individuals who identified these barriers were Black, African migrants perceived to have an African accent. All other participants, whether they were Latinx/e, Indigenous, Middle

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Eastern, or an African migrant who were perceived to speak English with an American accent did not report this specific pattern of workplace discrimination. Considering the already perceived notion that Black Americans and African migrants are "treated different" in L/A, it seems that being perceived to have an African accent does lead to a process of raciolinguistic enregisterment where Black individuals perceived to speak with an African accent sound like African migrants/refugees and specifically a 'forever migrant.' This association is further justified by the previously identified case of discrimination against a participant over the phone, showing that being perceived to speak with an African accent alone is enough to be seen as a 'forever migrant.' Considering this pattern of discrimination and the stereotypes that are often applied to all African migrants and refugees in the L/A area, I hypothesize that individuals that present as Black with a perceived African accent are assumed to be 'a forever migrant,' regardless of their true migration, educational, and workplace background.

I believe this application of raciolinguistic enregisterment is a justifiable explanation for the process of workplace discrimination against those perceived to speak with an African accent. This pattern was clearly seen through the experience that Black, African migrants perceived to speak with an African accents shared about the L/A workplace. When in the L/A workforce, their "smartness" is questioned, being tested on trivial tasks and are assumed to be unfamiliar with the U.S. workplace. Their skills and job experience are disregarded to the point that job agencies with only refer them to positions at factories, even went informed about their previous education and job skills. Lastly, their intention and trustworthiness are questioned, with employers being skeptical of their ability to accomplish their job while having to endure insult and rudeness from customers, receiving limited support from their work to combat this.

Once labeled as such, Black African migrants perceived to speak with an African accent experience discriminatory treatment in their workplace as employers, co-workers, and customers apply their internalized beliefs of what African migrants/refugees, and specifically, 'a forever migrant,' looks and sounds like. This perception put upon Black individuals perceived to have an African accent is a perfect example of raciolinguistic enregisterment. The perception of what makes someone a 'forever migrant' has become widespread enough in the L/A area that Black individuals that fit the stereotypical linguistic and racial identity traits of 'a forever migrant,' regardless of true personal heritage, are assumed to be and treated like one. Considering that raciolinguistic enregisterment works as a process of white supremacy, it makes sense why the assumption made about Black employees perceived to speak with an African accent would be predicated on the white-shaped, racist view of Africa, and specifically of Somalia, which gets depicted as a country which is uncivilized, uneducated, and devoid of morals (Besteman 2016; Corbey 1990; Helg 2000; Rosa & Flores 2017; Wiley 1991). This proliferation of white supremacy in the workplace for those perceived to be 'forever migrants,' creates an unequal, discriminatory, and hostile environment for Black individuals perceived to speak with an African accent which goes beyond the discrimination already present because of workplace racism.

APPLYING THE RACIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE TO PERCEPTIONS AND STANDARDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN THE L/A WORKPLACE

Workplace discrimination on the basis of perceptions of English language proficiency as a non-white migrant in the L/A workplace appears to have a different explanation than raciolinguistic enregisterment. While individuals experience discrimination on the basis of their perceived lacking English language proficiency, the interview data did not reveal strong evidence for a process of raciolinguistic enregisterment as was observed with those perceived to

speak with an African accent[8]. Those who did not speak English or continue to be perceived to

lack English language proficiency identified their perceived language barrier leading to increased

difficulty finding jobs; experiences of not being hired because they are perceived to not speak

English proficiently; underutilization of their job skills and education such as medical licenses;

and in one case, losing a job because of their perceived English language barrier being seen as

too difficult to work with. Those who did not identify having a perceived English language

barrier also noted that L/A jobs will sometimes exclude non-English speakers from jobs that do

not require English, demonstrating a monolingual job culture in the L/A area.

The connection to the raciolinguistic perspective within language discrimination is not as

apparent in this context as it was with perceptions regarding African accents. Part of this has to

do with the small sample size and the diversity within it. Four of the interviewees perceived

themselves to not be proficient in English, two of which were Portuguese speakers who migrated

from South America and the other two which were Somali speakers who migrated from Africa.

Additionally, there was one Middle Eastern individual who identified themselves as proficient in

English but continuing to be perceived as having difficulties with the language. Within this, there

were some limited examples of the process of raciolinguistic enregisterment. For example, those

who were perceived to have an English language barrier were assumed to be incapable or un-

hirable for most jobs, often finding themselves only able to receive jobs which are stereotyped as

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[8] For patterns of language-based discrimination to have been identified as a process of raciolinguistic
enregisterment, there would have needed to be a clear and assumed link between certain racial features and certain
linguistic features. While the L/A workplace structurally creates a standard where English language fluency is
needed to work, there was no clear indication that those interviewed became associated with or expected to speak a
certain language because of their racial identity and vice versa. For example, though participants did say they had
trouble accessing the L/A workplace because they only speak Somali, there was no indication that they or other
African migrants were being assumed to only speak Somali regardless of the language they actually speak. Because
of this, while the English language requirements in the L/A workplace are related to the raciolinguistic perspective, I
do not have the evidence to support it being an example of raciolinguistic enregisterment like how it is with
perceived African accents.

jobs migrants work such as construction and custodial positions. This pattern does play into the previously established notion of migrants in the L/A area being unskilled and uneducated, however this does not prove that a process of raciolinguistic enregisterment is what leads to language-based discrimination in place of structural patterns which enforce English language use in the U.S. (Roberts 2010).

This is not to say that the need to assimilate by speaking what is perceived to be fluent English to access the L/A workforce is justified or that structural language restrictions are unrelated to the raciolinguistic perspective. Rosa (2019) writes extensively about institutions enforcing the need for non-white individuals to speak "unmarked English," devaluing their perceived native language and natural accent (152). In the workplace, raciolinguistic enregisterment of language tends to occur through the actors that interact with said institution. For example, Rosa describes the experience of a monolingual Puerto Rican English speaker who works at a home improvement store. Despite only speaking English, this individual found themselves frequently assumed to know Spanish by customers, especially as the teenager's skin darkened in tone during the summer months. Additionally, their white boss frequently asked them to help individuals who were perceived to be or were Spanish speakers, despite knowing he was monolingual. Thus, this teenager found themselves "looking like a language," a process of raciolinguistic enregisterment (152). Patterns of raciolinguistic enregisterment such as this were minimally expressed by participants perceived to have English language barriers in the L/A workplace, instead having patterns of discrimination for the most part resulting from monolingual workplace structures (Roberts 2010). This nuance in the experience of one's perceived English language proficiency and African accents for non-white individuals, especially African migrants, can be seen in diagram 1 below.
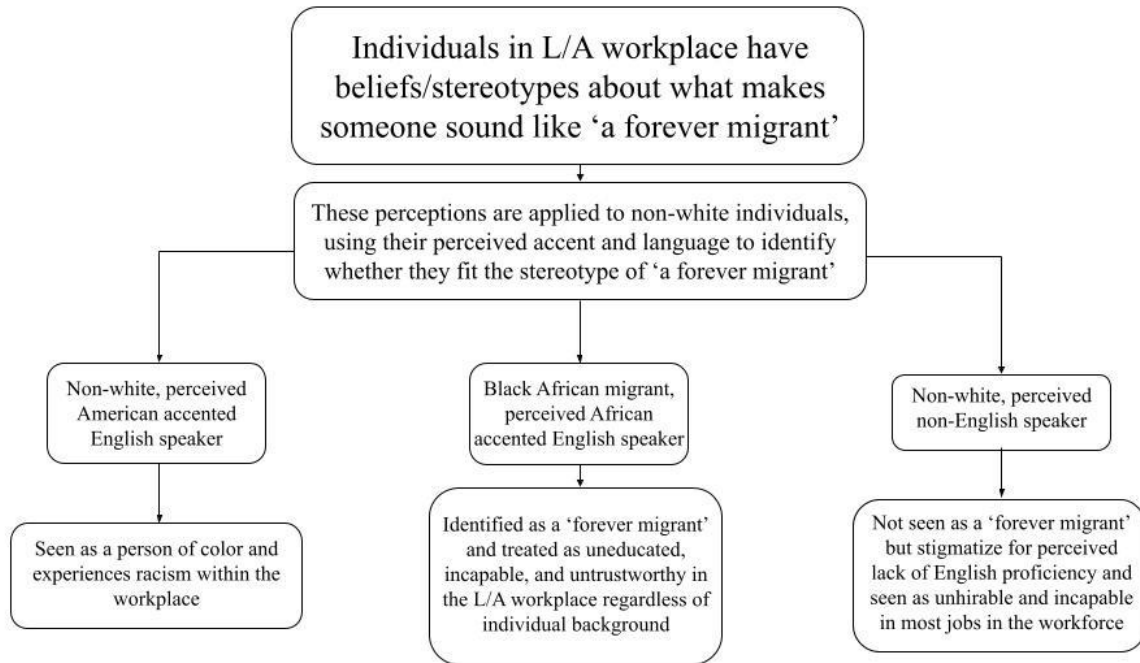
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Diagram 1: *The raciolinguistic perspective and process of raciolinguistic enregisterment in the L/A workplace in regard to the archetype of 'the forever migrant'*

While not directly a process of raciolinguistic enregisterment, the raciolinguistic perspective is still applicable as it is critical in questioning the structural need to speak English to gain access to the L/A workforce, recognizing this requirement as a pattern of white supremacy and European colonization. In its current structural form, workers who are perceived to lack English language proficiency are made to either experience consistent job insecurity or to need to assimilate to whiteness by ridding of their native language to access the L/A workplace.

THE GOOD NEOLIBERAL CITIZEN: THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN ASSIMILATING TO THE L/A WORKPLACE

While many participants were able to identify experiencing discrimination on the basis of their perceived accent and language, the structural reasons as to why this occurred were rarely questioned. Regarding those perceived to speak with an African accent, of the six participants who identified their accent as a barrier, none of them questioned the structural reasons as to why

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their perceived accent was considered an issue. When asked about what support they wish they had in the L/A workforce, no one wished for structural solutions such as employers to receive education or training regarding their bias against their perceived accent. Instead, those perceived to speak with an African accent identified their accent as a "deficit" which needed to be personally addressed. For example, as quoted in chapter five, a participant with a perceived African accent stated

> If we find that we are deficient in something, if it is like this woman told me of my, what is it called? Accent. It is very easy, we are working. If you organize a training to train you on how you can improve your accent, if you are working you can pay to take such classes. I did some work at and there were some Indian women...people from India and Asia, they were taking classes from Americans [so] they could lose their accent, and they were paying for it. It was not paid for by the [their employer]...if we have good employment, we have the money, we can kill some of [these] deficiencies ourselves…like the accent.

As described, this participant sees themselves as personally responsible for ridding of the 'deficiency' caused by their perceived African accent, a perspective that other migrants conform to, going as far as to spend their own money to attend 'American accent' classes.

A similar assumption of personal responsibility was identified for those perceived to lack English language proficiency. Only a couple of the participants questioned the structurally required need to be perceived to speak English fluently for L/A jobs. Most individuals who were perceived to have an English language barrier, either did not question why their perceived lack of English language proficiency should make it structurally difficult to receive work or they assumed personal responsibility for learning the language/finding strategies to work around the English language requirement. For example, one Somali speaking participant stated that

> if I have difficulty understanding a word [at my department store job], I [would] ask them to write it for me, so that I [would] come home and ask my kids. Little by little, I learned…[and] I understood my obligation more. Things got easier and easier.

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Similarly, another participant discussing their experience and the experience of other migrants, wished that they had more time to practice their English.

> I would say time…to improve my English…When I am saying this is of course [I mean] going back to school. And going back to school [requires] time…For example at adult education, they have the [English] program. So that you can improve your English, but [the] time does not work with [the] time that you need to work. And what happen[s]…to the most of us is we have to [give] up on school because we need to pay our bills. But if they had, for example, like night school [it would be easier].

In both these cases, participants are taking personal responsibility for learning English and wishing for tools which would allow them to take on this responsibility, not addressing the structural need to speak fluent English to access the L/A workforce. This unfortunately creates a harmful standard for those perceived to have English language barriers as regardless of the need for English language fluency in the L/A workplace, when they "apply for [a] job, [they will tell] them, 'Okay, you don't speak English. You have to go back to adult education, learn English and come [back in] three months."

This assumption of personal responsibility was not true across all non-English speaking participants. For instance, one participant wished there was a job resource center that could "understand your language barrier and they can fit you in the kind of jobs that will hire you." However, this same participant did also identify personal responsibility for learning English fluently, stating that "the most important thing is to get school where you can sharpen your language skills and to get to advance [your English]," demonstrating a belief of personal responsibility within learning English.

Between those perceived to speak with an African accent and those perceived to lack English language proficiency, participants tend to take personal responsibility for altering these aspects of their linguistic identity, rarely questioning the structures which lead L/A employers to discriminate against them. This pattern aligns with the theory of the good neoliberal citizen, as

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those perceived to have an African accent and English language barriers take on unrealistic

personal responsibility to address these "deficit[s]," while the structures that enforce this

assimilation through discrimination proliferate unquestioned. This is of course not an observation

meant to blame these individuals for taking on personal responsibility. By taking English

language classes or attempting to rid of their perceived African accent, these individuals are

adapting to a structure which devalues them to the best their situation allows.

Instead, this application of the good neoliberal citizen is meant to explain why oppressive

and white supremacist workplace structures can proliferate without question in the L/A area.

These linguistic structures rely on the U.S. workplace culture of neoliberalism to convince

individuals that they are the problem, not the institutions which benefit from their discrimination.

In the case of L/A employers, they proliferate white supremacy in the workplace by blaming

individuals for "deficiencies" in their perceived accent and language ability. This allows L/A

workplaces to create an unquestioned standard of whiteness in their cultures and policies, making

anyone who is not white or does not attempt to assimilate to whiteness experience difficulty

accessing the workplace and avoiding experiencing discrimination. Because of its coded nature,

the good neoliberal citizen has become a powerful tool for white supremacy in the L/A

workplace.

THE PROLIFERATION OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN THE L/A WORKPLACE

White supremacy exists throughout U.S. society, including the U.S. workplace (Okun

1999). This thesis uses the definition and understanding of white supremacy from Ansley's

(1997) chapter in *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror*, which states:

> [by] 'white supremacy' I do not mean to allude only to the self-conscious racism of white
> supremacist hate groups. I refer instead to a political, economic, and cultural system in
> which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and
> unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of

white dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings (Ansley 1997:592).

As the quote demonstrates, the system of white supremacy permeates many institutions, including the U.S. workplace, creating them into spaces that give power to whiteness through the subordination of non-white people. In contemporary U.S. society, white supremacy continues through the intention and conformity of white individuals and institutions, proliferating it in a subversive manner. As Bonilla-Silva (2017) describes in *Racism Without Racist*

> The United States does not depend on Archie Bunkers to defend white supremacy. Modern racial ideology does not thrive on the ugliness of the past or on the language and tropes typical of slavery and Jim Crow…Today most whites justify keeping minorities from having the good things of life with the language of liberalism ("I am all for equal opportunity; that's why I oppose affirmative action!"). And today, as yesterday, whites do not feel guilty about the plight of minorities (blacks in particular). Whites believe that minorities have the opportunities to succeed and that if they do not, it is because they do not try hard. And if minorities dare talk about discrimination, they are rebuked with statements such as "Discrimination ended in the sixties, man" or "You guys are hypersensitive" (242).

The proliferation of white supremacy through liberalism powerfully allows white people to benefit from white supremacy by ignoring structural benefits their race receives. Through liberalism, white individuals can claim personal responsibility and equal opportunity for their successes, denying the advantages afforded to them by living in a white supremacist society. This appeal to liberalism and by proximity, neoliberalism, demonstrates one of the manners that white supremacy is proliferated in the U.S. workplace. This connection between neoliberalism and white supremacy is made well by Ahlberg et al. (2019) whose argument for researching racism in healthcare identifies a modern pattern in which

> the neoliberal restructuring and silencing of racism has resulted in an ideology of color-blindness which makes racism even more invisible because it removes any suggestion of white supremacy or white guilt from personal thought and public discussion while legitimizing the existing social, political, and economic arrangements which privilege whites (3).

As Randles and Woodward (2018) shows, "neoliberal restructuring" is present within the U.S. workforce, occurring in part through the construction of the "good neoliberal citizen." Randles and Woodward find through their observations of required job classes for welfare recipients that

> In this neoliberal configuration of the state, economic well-being is believed to be the result of skilled individual behavior rather than structural conditions. Gender, race, and economic status are officially irrelevant and thus obscured by the programs conceived in the wake of neoliberal welfare reform (53).

As this finding shows, neoliberalism has constructed a workplace environment where individuals are valued through structural processes such as white supremacy while simultaneously having their success attributed to their individual behavior. This neoliberal standard creates the impossible archetype of the good neoliberal citizen. Individuals who experience structural barriers within the workplace on the basis of their identity are asked to ignore these structures, instead being required to embrace this "hard-working, self-regulating human abstraction" to see workplace success (54). By applying the lens of the good neoliberal citizen to this study, we can see both how non-white individuals in the L/A area came to take personal responsibility for structural barriers and reveal how linguistic-based discrimination in the L/A workplace becomes a tool for proliferating white supremacy.

Beyond the presence of neoliberalism, white supremacy in the L/A workforce is also revealed, and critically deconstructed, by the application of the raciolinguistic perspective. As put by Rosa & Flores (2017) the raciolinguistic perspective has the goal of deconstructing the proliferation of white supremacy caused by raciolinguistic enregisterment. To do this

> Rather than taking for granted existing categories for parsing and classifying race and language, [the raciolinguistic perspective] seek to understand how and why these categories have been co-naturalized in particular societal contexts, and to imagine their denaturalization as part of a broader structural project of contesting white supremacy on a global scale (622).

The raciolinguistic perspective accomplishes this through its ability to "[refocus] our theory of social change away from the modification of the linguistic behaviors of racialized populations toward a dismantling of the white supremacy that permeates mainstream institutions as a product of colonialism" (637). Thus, by applying the raciolinguistic perspective as a tool for identifying the process of language and accent discrimination of non-white, and particularly, African migrants within the L/A workforce, the presence and process of said discrimination can be critically challenged. White supremacy within the L/A workplace continues in part through linguistic discrimination against those perceived to speak with an African accent or who are labeled as having an English language barrier. By discriminating against and creating workplace barriers for these individuals, the white supremacist notion of what a non-white migrant, especially an African migrant, can be in the L/A area is structurally reinforced. This white supremacist workplace structure is allowed to continue unquestioned as individuals with linguistic "deficiencies" are made to blame themselves, taking neoliberal responsibility for a structure designed to exclude them.

While this pattern of linguistic workplace discrimination is likely not present within every L/A employer, what this research demonstrates is the culture of L/A workplace white supremacy is reinforced beyond workplace racism. This finding aligns with Lewiston's historic and modern immigrant sentiments which demand that migrants either assimilate to whiteness through ridding of their perceived accent and English language barrier or face continue linguistic discrimination and stereotyping, such as being considered a 'forever migrant.' This is a perception which proliferates white supremacy in the L/A workforce. Understanding the power of the raciolinguistic perspective to deconstruct processes of white supremacy within linguistics,

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the final chapter of this thesis will suggest manners in which this deconstruction of linguistic

discrimination, and thus white supremacy, could locally occur.

CHAPTER 7: "UTOPIAN THINKING"

As I conclude this thesis, I find myself both disheartened by the proliferation of white supremacy in the Lewiston-Auburn (L/A) workplace through linguistic discrimination but also invigorated by the implications of these findings as a way to begin to deconstruct it. In this concluding chapter, I will first summarize the methodology and argument of the thesis. This will be followed by a discussion of the research limitations along with its implications. As part of this discussion of implications, I will apply Gray's (2019) framework for deconstructing white supremacy in the workplace; utilizing the raciolinguistic perspective's ability to "seek to understand how and why these categories have been co-naturalized in particular societal contexts, and to imagine their denaturalization as part of a broader structural project of contesting white supremacy on a global scale" (622).

This thesis finds itself in a growing literature which uses the raciolinguistic perspective to identify and deconstruct patterns of white supremacy proliferated through the intertwining of linguistic features and racial characteristics by primarily white individuals and institutions (Flores 2020; Ramjattan 2019; Rosa 2019). By interviewing 24 non-white individuals in the L/A area about their workforce experience, evidence of linguistic-based discrimination became clear, targeting those perceived to speak with an African accent and those who were labeled as lacking English language proficiency. Black individuals perceived to speak with an African accent were found to experience a process of raciolinguistic enregisterment where they become assumed to fit the L/A area archetype of a 'forever migrant;' perceived to be unskilled, uneducated, unintelligent, and untrustworthy in the L/A workplace. Non-white individuals who were perceived to lack English language proficiency were found to experience structural barriers, experiencing substantial difficulty achieving work because of English language requirements,

demonstrating that non-white individuals perceived to have English language barriers are seen as 'deficient' in the L/A workplace (Hunter and Robinson 2016; Rosa and Flores 2017).

These patterns of linguistic discrimination proliferate unquestioned in part because a culture of neoliberalism is present in the L/A workplace, asserting that non-white individuals identified to have linguistic "deficiencies" must take personal responsibility to rid of said perceived "deficiencies" to be a "good neoliberal citizen" (Randles and Woodward 2018). In doing so, the primarily white structures and individuals which proliferate linguistic workplace discrimination can blame individuals for their inability to assimilate to this near impossible, structurally created, linguistic standard. This pattern of linguistic discrimination, and the neoliberal proliferation of it, allows white supremacy to violently continue in the L/A workforce. This has created a standard where non-white migrants in the L/A area either have to assimilate to whiteness by ridding of linguistic "deficits" to gain access to the workplace or face ubiquitous linguistic discrimination, limiting their access and power within the L/A workplace.

Within this argument and study, there are many notable limitations. First is the limited sample size and method of sampling. Being a community-based research project, the committee I worked with wanted to conduct a purposive sample where community organizations would be asked to recommend non-white individuals who were interested in being interviewed. I believe this method is justified as it was important for yielding a diverse group of individuals and necessary for gaining access to a sometimes hard to reach community. However, I cannot overlook some of the limitations which come with this method, most important of which is the possible bias within the sampling. Anyone who was sampled for this study had to be recommended by a community organization, meaning that they are a person who seek such community resources. This type of person could have an incredibly different experience than

someone who does not seek such help for jobs, an important group that the scope of this project does not cover.

Additionally, community organizations may have reached out to and recommended individuals who were either workplace 'success stories' for their organization or who have had a particularly difficult time achieving work. While I did not have control over this as the researcher, I do believe that the Maine Working Community Challenge Pilot Project Team did a good job limiting this kind of sampling bias as participants provided a variety of workforce experiences ranging from individuals who only identified one minor barrier to individuals who saw their entire workforce experience as defined by societal barriers. Considering the relatively small sample size of 24 individuals, it is also important to contextualize that these findings are not representative of the entire L/A workforce experience, but instead a collective of individual experiences which demonstrate some patterns which may be present in the L/A workforce.

Another limitation of this study is its generalizability. Considering that everything was contextualized to the L/A area, a somewhat unique region considering its migration history and being in Maine, it is possible that these patterns are isolated to the L/A area instead of being indicative of a nation-wide pattern. Since this study only interviewed individuals with experience working and living in Maine, I can only be confident in saying that these patterns are likely generalizable to the L/A area and throughout Maine. This is not to say that linguistic discrimination is not present in other aspects of the U.S., it certainly is, but the specific patterns of how it occurs in the L/A area may not be generalizable past the state of Maine. Similarly, since this study focused on non-white individuals within the L/A community, it is unclear if perceived accent-based or non-English speaking workplace discrimination is isolated to just the non-white population or if similar experiences are seen in other L/A migrant populations such as

Franco-Canadians. While the raciolinguistic perspective and intersectionality would suggest that the experience of linguistic discrimination in the workplace is different for non-white individuals than white ones, since white individuals were not interviewed, it is impossible to say for certain in the L/A area. Lastly, generalizability can also be limited by the virtue of L/A employers not being interviewed or surveyed, only workers. Thus, this thesis can only make claims about the L/A workplace and its employers based on employee perceptions.

Considering these limitations, there are many opportunities for further research. A couple of questions for further research include:

- Is linguistic-based discrimination isolated to L/A's non-white migrant population or do groups like Franco-Canadians, who once did experience linguistic-based discrimination, also experience it in the L/A workplace?

- What is the employer's perspective on linguistic-based discrimination? Do L/A employers see themselves as discriminating against those they perceived to speak with an African accent or an English language barrier?

- Are perceived African accents the only accent which experience stigmatization in the L/A workplace, or are there others?

- Are these patterns of linguistic discrimination seen in other U.S. communities which have a large non-white migrant population, especially African migrant populations?

While there are many exciting avenues to develop this research further, I believe that this research in its current form provides an important perspective to the on-going discussion in the L/A area and U.S. of how migrants, particularly Black, African migrants, are being integrated or prevented from entering the U.S. workplace. This research provides a look into how perceived linguistic features such as accent and English language proficiency become tools for proliferating

workplace white supremacy. Considering this identification of a pattern of raciolinguistics within

the L/A workplace, it is important to consider how it can be used as a tool to locally deconstruct

white supremacy within the L/A workplace. To do this, I will imagine this deconstruction from a

denaturalization perspective, identifying how employers can structurally dismantle linguistic

discrimination in the L/A workplace.

Deconstructing white supremacy in the workplace is a monumental task, however

through concerted effort in the L/A community, I believe it can be done or at least begun. Aysa

Gray (2019) provides a good framework to begin this process of deconstructing white supremacy

in the workplace. In her Stanford Social Innovation Review article, she lays out the following

framework, stating:

> I've come up with an initial framework for equitable workplace standards. It allows
> workers from ethnic and racial backgrounds to co-create shared work environments based
> on the following tenets that elevate historically marginalized people:
>
> 1. Do seek out renowned process facilitators to foster awareness of implicit bias and
>   white supremacy culture in professional, managerial, and workplace cultures.
>
> 2. Don't expect a one-time implicit bias workshop or panel to undo years of
>   inequity. Do ongoing work with consultants who specialize in white supremacy
>   culture to create human resources policies and procedures that at a minimum:
>   embrace cultural differences in dress, speech, and work style; evaluate
>   traditionally accepted professional tenets of workplace success, such as
>   timeliness, schedules, leadership style, and work style; center traditionally
>   marginalized voices in assessments; and examine hiring, firing, promotion
>   practices, and work culture in real time. Don't expect this work to be cheap or
>   quick (Gray 2019).

I like this framework a lot as it recognizes the time, thought, care, and intention it takes to

create meaningful structural changes away from white supremacy within the U.S. workplace.

Utilizing this framework, we can begin to imagine a process for deconstructing patterns of

linguistic discrimination within the L/A workplace. The first step would be to make entities in

the community aware of the presence of linguistic discrimination. This can be done through

further research but also public presentations about these patterns in an accessible format

available to all community members. With increased public knowledge, the first step of the framework can begin to be accomplished. Facilitators could come from many sources, for example, it could be job access focused NGOs, employer sought out consultants, or a city government hired group who could offer services to a variety of L/A workplaces. Regardless of the source, it is crucial that this burden does not fall upon impacted members of the community unless they actively want to be in a consulting role, receiving compensation for their efforts and time.

With consultation, workplaces can begin to develop human resource policies that combat workplace white supremacy. In addition to what Gray (2019) lists as required within these policies, the context of linguistic discrimination of non-white migrants also needs to be addressed. This can be done through creating workplace policies which recognize and properly value linguistic differences in the L/A community, deconstructing the harmful notion of them being deficits (Hunter and Robinson 2016). In doing this, it is important to recognize once again that the linguistic features of a person are perceived and thus labeled upon people by other individuals and institutions. Consequently, any workplace policies instituted must not take for fact the ways an individual's linguistic ability or sound becomes perceived and thus intertwined with specific identities, instead finding ways to mitigate and prevent the harmful impacts which come from these perceptions (Rosa 2019). While I am not an expert on how this may be done, based on my research findings I would suggest policies which:

- Assess how much English language fluency is truly needed to work a position
- Allow for free and easy access to translation services for employees not fluent in English
- Recognize and increase the pay of multilingual employees who are willing to provide translation services on the job to employees who do not speak English

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- Require that all workplace materials be translated into locally spoken languages such as French, Somali, English, and Portuguese

- Conduct regular, internal assessments of how employees perceived to have an African accents or English language barrier are treated and progressed through the workplace compared to those with 'American' sounding accent and/or are perceived fluent English speakers

- Protect employees against linguistically intolerant clients/customers

- Treat linguistic discrimination on the same level as other forms of discrimination fully protected in the Civil Rights Act.

While this process of structural change is admittedly lofty and oversimplified, the recognition and deconstruction of linguistic discrimination within the L/A workplace is an important step in dismantling white supremacy within the community. Non-white individuals, especially non-white migrants, do not face workplace barriers out of a lack of effort, despite what some community narratives may suggest. Instead, the proliferation of white supremacy in the workplace has been valued over the full utilization of the immense skills and talent which non-white individuals can provide to the L/A workplace. Until linguistic discrimination, among other forms of workplace discrimination, are addressed, the L/A workforce will continue to suffer, losing out on the full benefits all members of the community can provide.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participant and Translator Consent Form

<div align="center">**INTERVIEW AGREEMENT**</div>

As part of research for the Maine Working Communities Challenge Design Grant for L/A Working Communities Challenge Pilot Project Team and a Senior Sociology Thesis, at Bates College, I will be interviewing BIPOC members of the L/A community, learning about their workforce experience. Participating in this study carries the potential risk of unintentional breaches of personal confidential information along with the potential of becoming upset by talking about difficulties securing work. The potential benefits of participation include contributing to an increased knowledge of and support for BIPOC members of the L/A community within the workforce.

This form is designed to ensure that we talk about the procedures and standards for this interview, and that you have a chance to ask any questions you may have. An extra copy of this agreement will be left with you, and your interviewer will keep the signed copy.

OUTLINE OF PROCEDURES:

- Interviews will take approximately 90 minutes and 120 minutes if translation is required.
- Interviews will be audio-recorded and then transcribed by the researcher or a third-party transcription service. All personally identifying information will be redacted from the audio prior to transcription if a third-party service is used. After the interview recording has been transcribed, the digital audio file will be destroyed.
- You are welcome to skip any questions you would prefer not to answer, or to end the interview at any time if you decide you would like to do so.
- Confidentiality: We will ensure that the typed transcript for your interview will not contain your name or any other personally identifying information except a code number that we can use to keep track of the interviews. A record will be kept linking interviewee time slots and demographic information to code numbers, only to be viewed by the researcher and project advisor if necessary.
- In any presentations or written documents resulting from this research project, we will not use any identifying information. We may refer to quotes from your interview, but at no time will either your first name or last name or any other uniquely identifying information about your occupation, background, etc. be attached in any way.
- If you have any questions about the procedures now, your interviewer will be happy to answer them. If you have any questions later, please feel free to contact Ronan Goulden at Bates College, Student of the Department of Sociology (415-446-8427 or rgoulden@bates.edu).

COVID-19 STATEMENT: Due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, in-person interviews carry a heightened risk of COVID infection for yourself and others around you. Due to internet accessibility concerns, the comfort and confidential needs of this study, and the need for translation services for some participants, the decision has been made to hold interviews in-person with steps to mitigate the risk of contracting COVID-19. This includes wearing a mask, observing social distancing, ensuring adequate airflow within the interview space, and sanitizing the space and equipment after each interview. By signing this agreement, you acknowledge this risk and agree to these COVID procedures.

TO BE SIGNED BY THE PARTICIPANT: I have reviewed and understand these procedures.

_____   ____/____/_____

Signature   date

TO BE SIGNED BY INTERVIEWER: I have discussed these procedures with the participant and will conduct the interview in accordance with them.

_____   ____/_____/_____

Signature   date

INTERVIEW TRANSLATOR AGREEMENT

As part of research for the Maine Working Communities Challenge Design Grant for L/A Working Communities Challenge Pilot Project Team and a Senior Sociology Thesis, at Bates College, I will be interviewing BIPOC members of the L/A community, learning about their workforce experience. By providing translation services, you are helping to tell the workforce stories which are often unheard in the Lewiston-Auburn community.

This form is designed to ensure that we talk about the procedures and standards for this interview, and that you have a chance to ask any questions you may have. An extra copy of this agreement will be left with you, and your interviewer will keep the signed copy.

OUTLINE OF PROCEDURES AND STANDARDS FOR TRANSLATORS:

- Interviews will take approximately 120 minutes.
- Interviews will be audio-recorded and then transcribed by the researcher or a third-party transcription service. All personally identifying information will be redacted from the audio prior to transcription if a third-party service is used. After the interview recording has been transcribed, the digital audio file will be destroyed.
- Translators are expected to provide a word for word translation of both the researcher questions and the participant's response to the best of their ability. Translators should not abbreviate, summarize, or change interviewee responses.
- Confidentiality: It is expected that all translation provided by you today will be kept confidential. Anything discussed or any details about the interviewee should not be shared with anyone outside of the research team under any circumstance. We will ensure that your confidentiality is also protected by not sharing any details about yourself or translation services you provided.
- In any presentations or written documents resulting from this research project, we will not use any identifying information.
- If you have any questions about the procedures now, I will be happy to answer them. If you have any questions later, please feel free to contact Ronan Goulden at Bates College, Student of the Department of Sociology (415-446-8427 or rgoulden@bates.edu).

COVID-19 STATEMENT: Due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, in-person interviews carry a heightened risk of COVID infection for yourself and others around you. Due to internet accessibility concerns, the comfort and confidential needs of this study, and the need for translation services for some participants, the decision has been made to hold interviews in-person with steps to mitigate the risk of contracting COVID-19. This includes wearing a mask, observing social distancing, ensuring adequate airflow within the interview space, and sanitizing the space and equipment after each interview. By signing this agreement, you acknowledge this risk and agree to these COVID procedures.

TO BE SIGNED BY THE TRANSLATOR: I have reviewed and understand these procedures. I agree to keep the confidentiality of the interview and interviewee as stated above.

_____   ____/_____/_____

Signature   date

I have discussed these procedures with the translator and will conduct the interview in accordance with them.

_____   ____/_____/_____

Signature   date

Appendix B: Interview Schedule

Interview Questions:

1. Can you describe your overall experience in finding or trying to find work?

2. As you think about your attempts to find work in this community or to advance your work goals, what obstacles or challenges did you face?

3. What resources, programs, other supports, or personal assets helped you?

4. Are there resources you wish you'd had?

5. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experiences finding work or advancing in your work goals?

Demographic Questionnaire:

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability, you do not have to answer any question which you are not comfortable answering. These demographic questions are being asked to both ensure we are taking a representative sample of the L/A area but also to ensure that any future program can address the specific needs of certain members of the L/A Community.

- What would you describe as your racial and/or ethnic identity (Black, Latinx/e, White, Indigenous, etc)?

- What would you describe your gender identity to be (Male, Female, Non-binary etc)?

- How would you personally identify your socioeconomic status (in poverty, low-income, working-class, middle class, etc)?

- If you practice a religion, what religion do you practice (Islam, Christianity, Judaism, etc)?

- Do you experience any disabilities, cognitive or physical?

- What best describes your current U.S. Citizenship status (U.S. Citizen, Asylum Seeker, Undocumented, etc)?

Appendix C: Interview, Compensation, and Data Practices

To ensure the comfort of participants and the security of their answers, a number of best practices were used. For the interview, participants were informed they can skip any question if they were uncomfortable with it or end the interview at any time with no consequence. During each interview, I asked some follow-up questions for clarification, often being inspired by my interview notes to ensure they were direct and on topic.

After completion of the interview schedule, participants were asked to provide basic demographic information about their race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, and if they have a disability. The participants were then asked if they have any questions about the interview and were given two financial forms to fill out, one a W-2 and the other, an invoice form to ensure they received their $200 compensation by mail. The $200 worth of compensation, while a high amount, was decided on because the pilot project grant provided by the Maine Working Community Challenge stipulated that as much of the money as possible be invested into community members. These forms were put into a folder and processed by Community Concepts, a local community action agency. This ensured I did not see any of the personal information put on the financial forms.

To ensure confidentiality, each participant was assigned an individualized, randomly generated 4-digit code, such as INT5786 (Google Random Number Generator). This 4-digit code ensured that demographic details and interview time slots were separated from the transcripts

while allowing them to be reidentified if needed when coding the data. All audio and written interview notes, consent forms, and interview schedule identification documents were titled with this code and kept in a password protected folder on my computer's hard drive. Only me and my advisors had access to this folder. Audio files were deidentified through manual editing in Audacity and then transcribed by a third-party transcription service Rev.com, utilizing funds from the Maine Working Communities Challenge Grant. After the transcription of the audio, it was checked for accuracy and then all audio files were deleted.

Appendix D: Survey Methodology and Reflections

Originally, this project planned to use two methodologies. First was the interview, which was conducted in September 2021 and second was a follow up to this research in the form of an anonymous, online survey conducted during February-March of 2022. The survey method was chosen for this study as it has "versatility, efficiency, and generalizability" in its findings which would help to give confidence that the results from my interview research are generally applicable to the L/A area (Chambliss and Schutt 2016:140). The survey utilized a stratified sample of African migrants over 18 years old who have worked within the L/A area. Participants were recruited through digital distribution of the survey through various online platforms (such as email, social media, and websites) of collaborating community partners. To accommodate for the spread of the COVID-19 Omicron variant, the survey was designed with Qualtrics, only being accessible online. To ensure language accessibility, the survey was professionally translated by The Word Point online translation services into three locally spoken languages: Somali, Portuguese and French as advised and paid for by the Bates College Harward Center.

The survey is anonymous, with no identifying information such as IP addresses being collected. After reading and agreeing to the survey consent form, the survey was comprised of three parts: First, a Likert scale question asked participants to rank to what degree 10 aspects of

the respondent's identity, like gender and race, were or were not a barrier in their overall workforce experience. After completing this question, participants were asked to rank their top three barriers and then were asked Likert scale questions about where said barriers showed up in the workplace experience, such as within their ability to get promoted. Lastly, the survey asked 12 demographic questions which were inspired by both responses in the interview study and literature on workplace discrimination. The survey was kept intentionally short, allowing participants to complete it in 5-15 minutes.

After completing the survey, participants were given the option to fill out a separate survey which entered them into a raffle for a choice of one of five $20 gift cards for either a local coffee chain or a local supermarket chain as recommended and paid for by the Harward Center. This survey asked participants for an email address in which the gift card could be sent. This information was kept on a separate survey on a password protected computer, with results being deleted after the drawing. This would have allowed for participants to be compensated for their time while not revealing their identity. This research method was given approval for an IRB exemption 104(d)(2) by the Bates College IRB on January 27, 2022.

The goal of the survey was to receive 100 responses from community members as I felt this would be a reasonable number that would provide a decent dataset to test my thesis argument. As of March 2022, I have received four responses, 4% of the goal. This made the data unusable for this project, not the desired outcome considering the dozens of hours and hundreds of dollars spent in creating the survey. This was not for a lack of trying either as I worked with the Harward Center to distribute the survey to a variety of African immigrant focused organizations, reminding these organizations four times about the survey throughout the course

of February and March. Considering this, it was worth analyzing why this failed, of which I have a couple of hypotheses.

First, the distribution method of the survey was not ideal for the group I was attempting to access. Originally, the survey was going to be in both a paper and online format, however Bates College COVID-19 policy at the time barred in-person community engagement, thus I could only do an online survey. This is where the first problem came up, I attempted to distribute the survey through emails to organizations who would hopefully email and share it to their members. This was not the best way to do this as I later came to find out that within the L/A community, most online communication is done through WhatsApp and not email, meaning that my sampling method inadvertently missed many of the individuals I was hoping to hear from.

Second, anecdotally, there is a growing feeling within the L/A community that it is overstudied, especially for members of the African migrant population, leading to fatigue and skepticism regarding said studies. Because of its economic and migration history, the L/A area has become emblematic of many social dynamics and tensions within the contemporary U.S., making it a hot spot in the Northeast for research. Academics from across the United States have conducted studies in the L/A area, often focused on the African migrant community. This includes two major books about said community which have been released in the last decade, Besteman's (2016) *Making Refuge* and Bass's (2018) *One Goal*, among dozens of journal articles, and hundreds of news articles about the region and its African migrant population. It does not help that Bates College, an elite liberal arts college, requires all students to complete a thesis, leading to dozens of student research projects being conducted in the community a year, including my own.

This of course is not to say that researching a place is bad, in fact, it can often benefit the L/A area by providing greater understanding into the tensions which have arisen in the community and has been a path for acquiring large amounts of grant money for the city. However, it is also understandable that those who are constantly being researched will eventually get tired of their life being overanalyzed, or as one local member of the community called it, feeling like they are in a "petri dish." While Bates College does better than other institutions in ensuring that the research truly is desired by community members and organizations, it can still come off as and be extractive. Because of this, I would not be surprised if my survey, which had a rather academic tone to it, came off as myself, a white, Bates College student, wanting to extract more information from the community without a clear reason or benefit as to why. These lessons in sampling methodology and intention are important ones to consider for future research projects and community engaged work.