PHONOLOGICAL VARIATION AT THE INTERSECTION OF ETHNORACIAL IDENTITY, PLACE, AND STYLE IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

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This dissertation examines phonological variation in Washington, DC, which has remained under-explored in urban sociolinguistics. The paucity of research on language in DC relates to its dialectal marginality, its unique African American (AA) and European American (EA) settlement histories, and its current public image as a cosmopolitan, transient city. Three phonological features in 21 sociolinguistic interviews with lifelong AA and EA Washingtonians are analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively: /l/ vocalization (cool' for cool), -in (runnin' for running) and Coronal Stop Deletion (east' en' for east end). I analyze the features’ community-level patterning, as well as inter- and intragroup distributions and stylistic (intraspeaker) uses of the features towards interactional enactments of speakers’ Washingtonian identities.

At the community level, Coronal Stop Deletion is not significantly affected by ethnoracial affiliation, sex, age, or educational attainment; -in and /l/ vocalization are more extensively used among AAs than EAs. The overall absence of /l/ vocalization among EAs supports previous analyses of /l/ vocalization in West Virginia and /ay/ monophthongization in Maryland, which attribute loss of these Southern features to increased alignment with DC, the region’s economic hub. While the community-level links between the features and AA identity are expected, significant intragroup diversity is present and demands closer attention. Not all AAs use the three features similarly, and speakers with similar life experiences are linguistically diverse. I call the constellations of features within groups and individuals stylistic repertoires, following the notions of ethnolinguistic repertoire (Benor 2010) and styling (Coupland
2001, 2007), foregrounding the use of ethnoracially-linked features toward a variety of goals in interactions, including ethnoracial solidarity but also the construction of different types of local identities.

Motivations for variation within a community are inaccessible without attention to the stylistic use of variable phenomena in discourse about locally salient themes, and this is particularly important for studying diverse and contested communities like Washington, DC. This dissertation contributes to sociolinguistic inquiry through an integrated, qualitative and quantitative analysis of variation in a community that defies easy description, and foregrounds intragroup diversity as a key aspect of contemporary urban sociolinguistics.
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For Elfrida
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Chapter 1.

Introduction and background

1.1. Initial questions

This dissertation is about three things: Language, identity, and diversity. More specifically, it is an investigation of phonological variation and how socially salient phonological variants are implicated in the construction of local identities in Washington, DC.

1.1.1 Basics of the study

In this section, I briefly describe the basic parameters of the study, with respect to the features and population studied and a motivation for selecting these. I look at three phonological features in North American English and analyze how they pattern among European American and African American residents of Washington, DC. I chose to look at these features because they share associations with social groups, associations that in turn allow speakers to use the

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1 Henceforth I will refer to the city as Washington, Washington, DC, or simply DC. All three toponyms are equivalent.
features as resources to construct their multifaceted identities in interaction (chapters 3, 4 and 5 discuss these associations). The features are:

**Coronal Stop Deletion (CSD).** This refers to the deletion or absence of the coronal stops /t/ and /d/ at the end of a word-final consonant cluster (e.g. eas’ en’ for east end, mis’ for missed; kep’ for kept) as opposed to other possible realizations of the coronal stop, for example, release with an audible release burst.

**Alveolar (ING) or -in.** (ING) refers to the variable production of morphemic and non-morphemic word-final (orthographic) <ing> as either the velar [ŋ] (running, morning) or the alveolar [n] (runnin’, mornin’). In this study, I consider primarily the alveolar variant, which is colloquially known as ‘g-dropping’. I refer to this variant as –in or alveolar (ING).

**/L/ vocalization.** The vocalization of /l/ refers to the realization of dark /l/ in syllable codas (e.g. in cool) and syllabic environments (e.g. people) with a lowered and retracted tongue dorsum and weaker contact between the tongue tip and the alveolar ridge, resulting in /l/ sounding more like the high back vowel [u] or the glide [w].
The research questions I am addressing are:

1. How do the three phonological variants under study (CSD, -in, and /l/ vocalization) pattern in Washington, DC, both between two ethnoracial groups and within each group?

2. How do Washingtonians use these features, individually and in concert, as resources to construct and reflect their diverse, and interactionally situated identities as Washingtonians, as members of various social (including ethnoracial) groups, and as individuals?

The data for the study come from 21 sociolinguistic interviews with lifelong residents of Washington, DC. The speaker sample includes 10 European American (EA) and 11 African American (AA) participants (5 EA men, 5 EA women, 6 AA men and 5 AA women). The speakers’ ages ranged from 21 to 65 years of age at the time of the interview. They were all born and raised in Washington, DC or the immediately adjacent suburbs of Silver Spring, MD and Takoma Park, MD. All the speakers have lived the majority of their lives in Washington, DC, with the exception of those who went away for college. In studying lifelong Washingtonians with strong ties to the city, I want to contribute to the study of geographic language variation, an area of study that has largely bypassed Washington, DC.

The data are taken from sociolinguistic interviews, which are loosely structured interviews devised by Labov (1972a) as a method for eliciting a range of speech styles, but
focused primarily on setting up a comfortable situation (by, for example, interviewing in the interviewee’s home and discussing the subject’s life story, childhood memories, games, et cetera) in order to capture what is believed to be the speaker’s truly vernacular or natural speech, the kind that occurs when they are not paying attention to their language use (but see, e.g., Schilling-Estes 1998, who problematizes the natural/unnatural distinction).

Although the data come from across a range of interview topics, I look most closely at the type of talk known as metalinguistic commentary or “language in the context of linguistic representations and evaluations”, i.e. talk about language itself (Jaworski, Coupland and Galasinski 2004: 4). The examples that I present throughout the dissertation and the three extracts that are analyzed in detail in Chapter 5 are taken from sections of the interviews focused on metalinguistic talk. These examples are found both in the metalinguistic module of the sociolinguistic interview (i.e. the portion of the interview where the interviewer asks explicit questions about language and language use, thereby initiating the commentary) and in speaker-initiated metalinguistic commentary, or those instances where the speakers themselves bring up language as an aspect of social life.

I perform three kinds of analysis. In order to establish patterns for CSD, -in, and /l/ vocalization, among European Americans and African Americans in Washington, DC, I perform
sociolinguistic variationist analyses in Chapters 3 and 4. The three features are variable phenomena in American English that have been shown to systematically vary according to both \textit{internal} or linguistic and \textit{external} or social factors. Variationist analysis, whether of phonological or other features, is concerned with the distribution of a particular feature or features within some community (whether geographic, ethnoracial, or other social group), and the effects of linguistic and extralinguistic conditioning factors on the systematic variable patterning of the forms of interest. Through quantitative analysis of this kind, we can find out about the patterning of a feature in a community, and how it converges with or diverges from patterns in other communities, both geographic and social. In addition, we can gain some idea of the social meaning(s) of the features in questions, through examining in which groups and speech situations the features are concentrated, bearing in mind of course the important caveat that correlation does not equal causation. This important caveat also points to the need for in-depth qualitative investigation of how features are used by individuals and in unfolding discourse, the other two components of the current study.

In Chapter 5, I perform an analysis of the \textit{stylistic repertoires} of speakers. I call the combined usage levels for all three features for the speakers’ \textit{stylistic repertoires} as a critique of the \textit{ethnolect} perspective, or the assumption that speakers within a particular social group (e.g. an
ethnoracial category) are speakers of a delimited variety associated with this group. I instead view the speakers’ use levels for the features as a repertoire of resources from which they can draw strategically in order to construct, in interactions, aspects of their identities, including ethnoracial and place identities. In order to show the process of recruiting phonological features for identity work, I conduct a qualitative analysis of interactionally situated uses of CSD, -in and /l/ vocalization in Washingtonians’ talk about links between language and Washingtonianness.

All three of these analyses are conducted with the aim of elucidating the role that language plays in the lives of Washingtonians; this study situates phonological variation at the intersection of ethnoracial identity, place, and style, in Washington, DC. Through the study of community- and individual-level variation among residents of Washington, DC, I aim to contribute the following insights:

1. **Variation in transitional and marginal places.** This study aims to contribute to our knowledge of language variation and place identity. Washington, DC, is an interesting case for variation and place research, because it is a ‘transitional’ and ‘marginal’ city situated outside of any defined dialect region.

2. **Community- and individual-level variation.** Because this study looks at three levels of variation – across different social groups in a geographic community, within the groups, and within individuals – it contributes to our understanding of the relationship between community- and individual-level variation, particularly how individuals use community-level linguistic resources to their own ends.
3. **Intra-group diversity.** One of my main arguments in this dissertation is that social groups are inherently linguistically diverse, and that this intragroup diversity needs to be foregrounded more in a sociolinguistics concerned with contemporary urban communities.

1.1.2 *Key concepts: Style, styling, and social associations*

Before moving on to describing the motivation for studying language variation and identity in DC, I want to briefly introduce three concepts that are key to my study: *style*, *styling* and *social associations/social meanings*. These are important to the relationship between the quantitative and qualitative components of the study, and require definitions for the purposes of this study.

**Style and styling.** Many definitions of style have been proposed in the sociolinguistic literature, including that style is intraspeaker variation ranging from more casual to more careful speech according to the formality of the speech situation and the degree of attention paid to speech itself (i.e. *attention paid to speech*, see Labov 1972b), that style is intraspeaker variation in accordance with convergence with or divergence from interlocutors’ linguistic usages and/or social attributes (i.e. *audience design*, see Bell 1984, 2001), and that style is the process by which a collection of linguistic *resources* are used towards speaker’s social goals in interactions, whether they adhere to considerations of formality, audience-related social closeness/distance, or other
factors such as the projection of particular types of stances or personae (i.e. speaker design, see e.g. Schilling 2013a; Coupland 2001, 2007; Eckert 2001, 2008).

My study is aligned with the speaker design approach to style (2013a). Under this view, as with audience design approaches, stylistic variation is seen as both a reactive and initiative phenomenon. In addition, though, rather than engaging in style shifting primarily based on audience characteristics, a speaker design view holds that speakers style shift for a whole host of reasons, including creating distance from or closeness with salient social groups, expressing stances towards propositions and people, projecting personae and/or character traits, and in other ways linguistically constructing, negotiating, and complicating facets of their selves.

The stylistic potential of phonological variation is predicated on the phonological features being associated with kinds of people, traits, stances, and/or language varieties – associations that are forged in the communities and broader cultures in which speakers participate. Style, therefore, interrogates the relationship between the group and the individual in sociolinguistics, and so it is an important concept for this dissertation. According to Coupland, sociolinguistics tends to draw direct and sometimes simplistic parallels between production patterns in a community and the stylistic enactments of individuals’ identities related
to these production patterns, rather than focusing on the process by which these links are forged in interactions:

“But understanding the social structuring of styles […] is not enough in itself. We need to understand how people use or enact or perform social styles for a range of symbolic purposes. […] Stylistic analysis is the analysis of how style resources are put to work creatively”. (2007: 3)

The speaker design perspective, despite its focus on individuals’ creative stylistic meaning-making, in no way discounts the influence of community patterns but rather emphasizes that the influence of these group-level and broader sociocultural linguistic patterns can take vastly different shapes in individual speakers and individual interactions. Therefore it is important to simultaneously attend to the group-level and interactional dimensions of social styles in the search for the social meanings of phonological variables.

I do so by first establishing community patterns for the three features, and then by looking at how Washingtonians’ metalinguistic commentary about local linguistic practice draws on meaningful social associations of the features under study. This latter dimension allows me to see how the use of the socially associated phonological variants works together with aspects of discourse structure – including constructed dialogue, referring sequences, and
the voicing of different characters– which reinforce the phonological aspects of style shifting in the construction of Washingtonian identities. Following Coupland (2007), I call this kind of interactional meaning– and identity-making *styling*.

**Social associations/social meanings.** I would like to add a brief note on the choice of term for the kinds of associations that exist between linguistic forms and groups of people/types of speech, and that get circulated in sociocultural contexts, allowing them to be used for stylistic purposes by speakers. There exists a rich literature on the topic of *indexicality* in sociolinguistics, a concept that details how a linguistic form, for example, can point to or be interpreted as pointing to a particular social group or type of person (e.g. Ochs 1992; Silverstein 2003; Eckert 2000, 2005, 2008; Johnstone and Kiesling 2008; Moore and Podesva 2009, to name but a few studies). The meaningful links between linguistic form and social identity, then, are often called *indexical links* and we can say that linguistic forms *index* particular kinds of identities. In this dissertation, I choose to use the near-equivalent terms *social association* and *social meaning* to describe these links in the context of styling, following Bell’s (2001: 142) assertion that “style derives its meaning from the association of linguistic features with particular social groups” and Campbell-Kibler’s (2009: 136) definition of *social meaning* as “social content tied in the minds of a given speaker/hearer to a particular piece of linguistic behavior”, both of which emphasize the
intricate links between linguistic practice and social information. To better get at the diversity of social meaning of styles and their components, I would like to point out that styles do not only get their meaning from associations to ‘social groups’, which Bell foregrounds above, but also from associations to ‘individuals’ (e.g. ‘longtime DC resident’, ‘gentrifying newcomer’), ‘behaviors’ (e.g. hardworkingness, refinement, solidarity, knowledge), and ‘types of talk’ (e.g. vernacular speech versus standard speech). Because all the above concepts are closely related, I choose to treat social associations, social meanings, and indexical links as more or less functionally equivalent for the purposes of this dissertation.

I now move on to a discussion of how I became interested in the questions of language and identity in DC, outlined in section 1.1.1, and the two observations that underlie the study: DC’s sociolinguistic and geographic liminality, and the intricate and sometimes contradictory links that Washingtonians make between ideas of language, dialect, and local identity in metalinguistic commentary.

1.1.3. Motivations for studying language in DC

My motivation for studying language in Washington, DC, and its relationship to Washingtonians’ own discursive construction of local selves rests on two broad observations.
The first observation is: We as sociolinguists don’t know *where* DC is. I became aware of this some time after my own move to the Washington, DC, area. For the first three years of my time in the DC area (during which I have lived in VA, DC, and MD) I lived in the Lyon Village neighborhood in Arlington, VA, just across the Potomac River from Georgetown in DC. Because I was crossing a major border – between Virginia and Washington, DC – every day on my way to work, I couldn’t help but become aware of the unique geographic and cultural situation that DC area residents find themselves confronting daily. So I started thinking about the connection, in the DC area, between the city’s geographic location, and the linguistic correlates of regional identification. Did ideas of language, dialect, and language use factor into Washingtonians’ identities? And to which region did DC really belong? Because I am a sociolinguist, I looked for some answers in the dialectology literature.

Dialect geography has not adequately addressed the regional/linguistic affiliation of Washington, DC, as it has other cities on the United States Eastern Seaboard. In many ways, we can imagine Washington, DC, as being the specific place that separates the Northeast from the Southeast. Data from the *Pronunciation of English in the Atlantic States* (Kurath and McDavid 1961) and the *Handbook of the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States* (Kretzschmar, McDavid, Lerud and Johnson 1994) suggests that Washington, DC, is situated in an undefined
borderland between the South and the diverse dialect regions that are situated north of the South proper. The *Atlas of North American English* (Labov, Ash and Boberg 2006) explicitly calls Washington, DC a *transitional city* that is “marginal to the South (2006: 139)”. Figures 1.1 and 1.2, below, show DC’s geographic location in the United States and a closer picture of its place on the margins between Southern and Northeastern dialect regions. Both are adapted from Labov et al. (2006: 146). In Figure 1.1, we see that Washington, DC, borders the states of Virginia to the south and west, and Maryland to the north and east. As I discuss in section 1.2 of this chapter, Washington DC’s location marks the junction between the North and the South both socioculturally and dialectally.
Figure 1.1. Location of Washington, DC (DC represented as red, solid oval)

Figure 1.2 looks more closely at DC’s location in relation to surrounding dialect regions.

We see that DC is located in an undefined boundary space between several dialect regions; the South, according to Labov et al. (2006), starts just south of DC, the Mid-Atlantic region picks up just Northeast of DC, and the Western Pennsylvania region is located nearby, and encompasses part of DC’s neighbor, Maryland.
The relationship between DC and the surrounding regions is not straightforward, and we are unable to say with any certainty whether DC is indeed part of the South or Mid-Atlantic, ‘marginal’ to either of them in some sense, or entirely distinctive from them. Walt Wolfram first remarked upon this in his 1984 note to the American Dialect Society about doing (or not doing, as the case was) dialectology in the Washington, DC, area. Wolfram remarks that certain characteristics about DC, including its status as a primarily middle-class, white-collar city; its distinctive patterns of in-migration from elsewhere in the United States; and the high turnover
of residents due to the local labor market (largely focused on politics), has made it a challenge for dialectologists to find the ‘canonical’ sociolinguistic participants: the older, non-mobile, working-class males.

But Wolfram is quick to point out that this is not an impediment to sociolinguistic work in the DC area. Indeed, it can be a unique opportunity to study those speech communities that are inherently diverse. On the mélange of dialect-related variability among the speakers we might characterize as multigenerational Washingtonians, Wolfram notes:

“Consider the kind of in-migration that typifies those making up the present generation of ‘permanent residents’ [of Washington] […] there is the northern flow of folks from North Carolina and Southern Virginia, with well-developed Southern dialect features […] substantive middle class [Black] population in the Gold Coast (upper Northwest DC area) is more Northern than Southern in its standard English, and working class Black in the Southeast and Northeast quadrants of the city are more coastal Southern” (Wolfram 1984: 22)

Wolfram foregrounds the inherent diversity among DC residents and adds – very importantly – that “this diversity is often excused as simply regional on the basis of in-migration, when in fact it should not be. It has become interwoven into the social fabric of the linguistic community (22)”. His statement underscores why studying language in DC is not a futile, but an exciting undertaking.
Wolfram’s encouragement for further study in DC underscores the link between DC’s exceptional socio-geographical position and its linguistic diversity and elusiveness. When we look at DC, we see a city whose labor market is quite peculiar, dominated as it is by the federal government and other white-collar sectors such as defense contracting. We see a city whose migration patterns are distinctive from much of the migration that has led to the sociocultural makeup of other major US cities. As Manning (1998) points out, DC was never a destination for the mass-migration of European ethnic groups during the early 20th century. In part, this trend was due to the already existing (and in many ways simultaneously lucrative and exploitative) blue- and white-collar labor force of African Americans, a community that was established in DC very early on prior to and immediately following the abolition of slavery². We see a city that is undergoing rapid social and economic change, as I will show in sections 1.2-1.3 of this chapter, below.

And we see a city in which regional, ethnic, professional, and local identities are constantly negotiated and contested. These issues are, just like Wolfram suggests, parts of the tapestry of Washingtonian identity and appear inherent to how Washingtonians talk about their

² In a way, it is rather fitting that one of the early studies of African American Vernacular English (Fasold 1972) was conducted in Washington, DC. It remains, to date, the only large-scale investigation of African American speech in the Washington, DC, area, though much of the argument in the book focuses on AAVE in general, and does not concern DC-specific patterns.
own place in the region and in the United States more broadly. It is also evident in the commentary that Washingtonians provide when asked about the place of language in the community. Consider for example the speaker in (1), Mark, who is a 54-year-old European American Washingtonian. Mark grew up in an affluent part of Northwest DC, and displays a strong sense of Washingtonian identity in his interview. In this extract, the interviewer asks Mark if he thinks he has an accent.

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I use the terms African American and European American to refer to the speakers in my corpus throughout the dissertation, though note of course that the terms can be problematic if overapplied; for example, European American is a label that incorporates myriad ethnic groups. I discuss this issue further in Chapter 2, in the summary of the speaker sample. Furthermore, the use of these terms is problematic in that it suggests that ethnoracial categories are neatly separable, static, and pre-determined, when, as we shall see, they are constantly shaped and re-shaped, including, crucially, via linguistic interaction.
(1) Mark, 54, European American, retired luxury car salesman

1. Int: Do you think you have an accent?
2. Mark: Interesting! Good question! And the reason I say (.) a good question (sigh)
3. There have been times where I have been with different groups of people who...
4. find out that I am a native Washingtonian.
5. Int.: Mm-hm.
6. Mark: Some... have said... "But you speak like you're from the South!"
7. But I've had other people say, "You speak... like you're from the North!"
8. Int: @@@@@
9. Mark: And I say, "What does that mean?"
10. I'm a Washingtonian, um, and a Southern accent to me is definitely noticeable,
11. not from me but from- I have friends that are in, um, Georgia in, um,
12. outside of Atlanta and y-oh my gosh, yes, there is that Southern drawl.
13. They sp-uh-speak a little slower
14. so I'm always amazed when I meet someone or someone will say-
15. and it doesn't happen often-
16. but when I say I'm from Washington, DC, uh,
17. somebody will say, "Oh, no-no-no-no, you're from Baltimore.
18. And I and I don't know why they say that.

Mark's metalinguistic commentary is quite typical of what I have encountered when talking to Washingtonians about whether there is such a thing as a DC accent. Mark neither confirms nor denies that the DC accent exists, but rather situates DC discursively in a liminal space between the North and the South. Following the interviewer's question in line 1, Mark

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*The transcription conventions in this dissertation are based on Bucholtz (2011) and Tannen, Kendall and Gordon (2007), and appear in full in Appendix 1*
creates a personal narrative\(^5\) that allows the interviewer a glimpse into the cumbersome dialectal liminality of a Washingtonian. In lines 2–9, Mark performs what Johnstone calls a “narrative of encounter with linguistic difference” (Johnstone 2006: 48), a type of personal narrative that foregrounds language as an element in local identity. In these types of ‘plots’ (also in Johnstone’s terms), the speaker sets up a scenario in which a non-local story character points out some difference about the speaker’s speech, thereby enabling the speaker to comment on, explicitly perform, or dispel myths about some aspect of local speech.

In Mark’s case, the story characters are different groups of people (line 3) who are not native Washingtonians, and who have conflicting opinions about whether he sounds Southern or Northern. Mark himself wonders what does that mean (line 9). His question is further augmented by his own stance that Southern accents are definitely noticeable (line 10) and by the added confounding factor of people sometimes insisting that he sounds like he is from Baltimore (lines 15–16). So he does not accept either the proposition that he sounds Southern (by marking Southern speech as noticeable to himself) or the suggestion that he sounds Northern (by expressing a lack of understanding about the Baltimore connection).

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\(^5\) This narrative might be better categorized as a so-called ‘small story’ (see e.g. Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008), because it relays an apparent habitual experience rather than a temporally ordered sequence of events, as required for a canonical narrative of personal experience in Labov’s sense (e.g. Labov 1972c).
Mark’s metalinguistic commentary thus lets us in on a secret: Washington’s linguistic identity is contested, and even Washingtonians themselves cannot make sense of it – but Washingtonians do talk about language and language does factor into Washingtonians’ conceptions of local identity. This is the second observation, along with the idea that DC is regionally undefined, that informs my study of language and identity in Washington, DC.

In my data collection – and in general since moving to the DC area – I have become aware not only of sociopolitical boundary issues that incorporate geographic and linguistic factors, but also internal boundaries that are salient to Washingtonians. I begin this study by outlining some social and geographic boundaries relevant to DC, including DC’s status as a federal district, the boundary between North and South, and DC’s longstanding and perhaps escalating racial and economic inequities that form the basis of ideological divides in the city, which in turn interact with how language is used and perceived. These geographic and social distinctions are also important because they indicate the speech varieties (that is, Southern European American English and African American English) that will become important in the quantitative portion of the study.
1.2 Geography: North and South

Washington, DC, is formally known as the District of Columbia. Though it is the capital city of the United States, Washington, DC, is itself not part of any of the 50 US states, but is a designated Federal District. DC was founded on land ceded by Maryland and Virginia, the two states on whose border it is situated, in 1790, under the Residence Act, which intended to establish a permanent seat for the government of the relatively recently formed United States⁶.

Originally an area of 100 square miles in a diamond shape, the portion of DC south of the Potomac River was retroceded to Virginia in 1846, amid fears of slave trade proponents that the federal district might outlaw slavery (Richards 2004). Present-day Washington, DC, thus is situated on land ceded by Maryland. Lacking a voice in either the US House of Representatives or Senate, while being subject to full Federal taxation, is a point of much annoyance for many Washingtonians. Since the year 2000, Washington DC’s standard license plate reads: “Taxation Without Representation”⁷.

Washington, DC, has occupied a strategic and socioculturally salient position since its inception in the late 18th century. Notably, it is situated on the boundary between the

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⁷ “No taxation without representation” was a slogan used in the original 13 British colonies that later became the United States to express dissatisfaction over the lack of representation in the British parliament. This movement led directly to the Revolutionary War and the formation of the United States. The irony in DC’s use of the modified slogan in such a public way is unmistakable.
Confederate States (of which Virginia was one), and the Union States (to which Maryland belonged despite being a slave-trade state in the Antebellum period). This symbolic border identity was not lost on Washingtonians. For example, Georgetown University’s school colors came about due to the location of the university. As a symbolic celebration of the end of the Civil War, blue (Union) and grey (Confederate) were selected to represent the university*, and DC’s border status continues to be an object of comment even in contemporary times. A flippant characterization of Washington, DC, as a “city of Southern efficiency and Northern charm”, famously attributed to John F. Kennedy, further underscores that the city is continuously positioned as a boundary area between North and South in the public imagination in the United States.

In the interest of not belaboring the point about DC’s border identity, suffice it to say that ‘border’, rather than ‘South’ or ‘North’ is a designation that appears throughout DC’s history, seen in political and urban planning decisions in the 18th century, in its role as a destination for free African Americans following the abolition of slavery, and in the continued appearance of ‘North’ and ‘South’ as contrastive entities in Washingtonians’ appraisals of the city’s linguistic identity (illustrated by Mark’s comments in extract (1), above). DC’s

* http://www.georgetown.edu/about/history/index.html
demographic and migration history is an important part of the city’s ‘exceptionalism’ among American cities and thus its social and sociolinguistic landscape.

1.3 Demography

The social issues in DC, relating to geography and class but perhaps most of all to demographic patterns, have been on the minds of socially conscious commentators for a long time. In 1982, the soul and jazz musician and poet Gil Scott-Heron, articulated some of the boundaries and contradictions at play in DC in his song, “Washington, DC”:

May not have the glitter or the glamour of L.A.
May not have the history or the intrigue of Pompeii
But when it comes to making music, and sure enough making news
People who just don’t make sense and people making do
Seems a ball of contradictions, pulling different ways
Between the folks who come and go, and ones who’ve got to stay
It’s a mass of irony for all the world to see
It’s the nation’s capital, it’s Washington DC

-- Gil Scott-Heron, “Washington, DC”

Several demographic facts and changes in the Washington, DC, Metropolitan area are key to understanding the social and particularly racial dynamics that underlie much of the discussion, both public and private, about Washingtonian identity. Much of the discussion of the

demographic history of DC below is adapted from Manning’s (1998) discussion of Washington, DC’s demographic and labor development as distinct from Northern industrial cities. Because I am unable to touch on all the important events and movements that have shaped contemporary Washington, DC, I focus primarily on the development of DC’s African American community and the concurrent growth of the government employment sector.

Table 1 shows the overall demographic patterns and the development and change in the African American population of DC from 1860 to 2010. In the 1860 census, 19.1% of Washington, DC’s population consisted of primarily enslaved African Americans and a small number of freedmen. In the wake of the Civil War, and following the abolition of slavery, Washington, DC’s population grew considerably, from 73,492 in 1860 to 109,092 in 1870. A sizeable number of the new in-migrants were African Americans, who were attracted to Washington, DC, due to the flourishing labor market in need of civil servants and skilled labor and service workers to keep up with the urban expansion.

African Americans continued to constitute a large and growing population group in Washington, DC, and the presence of a large African American labor force in the city created a market that was not profitable for the huge waves of European immigrants (e.g. Italians, Polish, Irish, and Germans) who flooded Northern industrial cities such as Philadelphia, New York
City, Detroit, and Chicago around the turn of the century (Manning 1998: 333). While DC’s African American community was the largest both proportionally and in size in cities outside the South proper before 1910, it was overtaken by New York, Chicago, Baltimore and Philadelphia by the 1930s due to the massive waves of domestic African American migration out of the South, known as the Great Migration (Wilkerson 2010) that began in the 1910s and continued until the 1970s. Washington, DC’s history of African American settlement and culture remains one of the oldest in the United States, and is today evidenced by cultural sites and artifacts such as the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site in Southeast DC and the African American Civil War Memorial in Northwest DC.
Table 1.1. Washington DC’s overall and African American populations, 1860-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>DC Total</th>
<th>African American (N)</th>
<th>African American (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>73,492</td>
<td>14,307</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>109,092</td>
<td>35,455</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>147,491</td>
<td>48,377</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>230,402</td>
<td>75,572</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>278,785</td>
<td>86,702</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>331,389</td>
<td>94,446</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>438,112</td>
<td>109,966</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>487,336</td>
<td>132,068</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>664,064</td>
<td>187,266</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>803,144</td>
<td>284,313</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>763,891</td>
<td>411,737</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>756,276</td>
<td>537,712</td>
<td>71.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>638,333</td>
<td>445,154</td>
<td>69.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>606,900</td>
<td>399,604</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>572,100</td>
<td>348,981</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>601,700</td>
<td>306,867</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethnoracial identity and ethnoracial relations are two of the most prominent issues at the forefront of the minds of Washingtonians. The longstanding and rich African American history of DC is one reason for this prominence. Another reason for the contemporary primacy of race as a social identifier and social issue in DC is its status as a ‘majority-minority’ city and the more recent trends that have influenced the demographics and sociopolitical climate in DC.

In Table 1.1, we see that DC reached an all-time population high of 803,144 in 1950. This can largely be attributed to New Deal policies, which flooded the DC metropolitan area with civilian

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Adapted from Manning (1998), 2000 and 2010 data added, from US Census
federal government employees for decades to come (Manning 1998: 334). Following this boom, however, the population of DC itself steadily declined as suburbanization saw many – mostly European American – Washingtonians leave the city for the suburbs in Virginia and Maryland.

It should also be noted that many – primarily affluent and upwardly-mobile – African American Washingtonians and new in-migrants also sought the prestige and comfort of suburban living in the 1960s and 1970s, and this 'black flight' mainly to Prince George’s County, MD, has led to the county’s status as the highest-income majority-black county in the United States (Cashin 2004: 127-128). Nevertheless, as Washington, DC, was losing population, the proportion of African American residents was increasing, peaking at 71.1% in the 1970 Census. The funk group Parliament’s 1975 album “Chocolate City” pays tribute to the African American heritage and community in Washington DC, and despite a slowly decreasing proportion of African Americans in DC since that time, the moniker has stuck to this day; journalistic reportage detailing the changing demographics of DC suggests an impending and inevitable “farewell to Chocolate City” (Hopkinson 2012).

Despite the apparent exceptionalism of DC as an African American majority city, the history of the demographic composition of DC has also been a product of a broader trend in the United States of residential and racial segregation or urban apartheid (Sundstrom 2004); (Gillette
1995; Jaffe, Harry and Sherwood 1994), as it was an expression of a long-standing and historically significant settlement.

1.4 DC, history and authenticity

Issues of race and ethnicity in DC are bound up in a complex, intersectional relationship with class, pride, and the politics of migration. In this dissertation, I attempt to situate language in relation to these social issues. In the first few years of the 2000s, perhaps due to the huge boom in defense contracting and the newly formed federal agencies following the terror attacks of September 11th, 2001, the changing demographics of the city have become particularly visible and therefore available for social commentary in Washington, DC. Still, as Gil Scott-Heron remarked back in the 1970s, Washington, DC is often viewed by outsiders and Washingtonians alike as a place with two identities and full of two kinds of people; the people who make music and the people who make news, the people who come and go and the people who have to stay. Its ‘irony for all to see’ lies in a demographic and historical configuration that is often misunderstood both socially and linguistically, particularly because Washington, DC, in many ways flies in the face of the constructs of what ‘counts’ as authentic places and speakers in
sociolinguistics (Bucholtz 2003) and the social sciences more broadly, as well as in society more generally.

In particular, Coupland’s (2003) analysis of how ‘authentic’ things/places/categories are imagined comes to mind. He suggests that whether an observer or analyst subscribes to a view of establishment authenticity (i.e. a view that there are ‘right’ or ‘appropriate’ ways to speak or act in order to count as ‘authentic’) or a view of vernacular authenticity (i.e. a view of authenticity as an emic, ‘on the ground’ phenomenon), several criteria need to be satisfied in order for a phenomenon, type of speech, or type of community to be considered authentic by societal, and often even academic, standards, at least outside of “post-modern critical commentaries” (Coupland 2003: 418). The criteria are (adapted from Coupland 2003: 418–419):

1. **Ontology:** Most basically, authentic things have a real existence, as opposed to a spurious or derived existence. Things that lack this quality are treated as more marginal, socially.

2. **Historicity:** Because they are not fabricated to order, authentic things generally have longevity; they have survived. They resist human agentive interference and are in that sense durable and even timeless.

3. **Systemic coherence:** Authentic things are properly constituted in significant contexts. They reflect a principled set of relations, for example when an authentic written text or artefact is part of an extended religious or political or literary movement.

4. **Consensus:** To be authentic, things must have a high degree of acceptance within a constituency, and there must be a consensus that they have been properly authorized.
5. Value: Because authentic things are ratified in the culture, often occupying prominent symbolic positions, they have definite cultural value. They are revered and endorsed as mattering.

If we apply this taxonomy of traditional (at least according to Coupland) authenticity to a place, such as Washington, DC, we might analyze it as flouting several of the criteria for authenticity. For example, DC’s ontology is different from most urban centers in the United States, and around the world: It was brought into being by a top-down political decision, rendering it, perhaps, manufactured rather than authentic, in the popular imagination. Its historicity reminds us that it was intended to be the seat of the political administration, an inherently short-lived and iterative construct since administrations change so frequently. Because of this, it lacks systemic coherence; in the ‘significant context’ of cities or speech communities, Washington, DC is an anomaly.

As Scott-Heron’s lyric about the contradiction inherent in representations of DC suggests, there is a lack of consensus about what the real Washington, DC, is. With respect to the importance of value to an authentic place, the contestation over whether DC is Northern or Southern, white or black, a city of hotshot politicos or of the impoverished and besieged, complicates the valorization of Washington, DC, as a cultural object. In short, DC is difficult to fit into ideas of authenticity in the sense that it runs counter to many narratives of authentic
urban and speech communities, due to its apparent lack of consensus, questionably authentic history and ontology, and contested value.

Coupland goes on to make an important point: Sociolinguistics should not succumb to essentializing the ‘authentic’ as the only type of language worth studying. Coupland states that:

“[The social structures that define authenticity] have of course not vanished overnight [but] it seems right to argue that they are becoming progressively less stable and are progressively losing their naturalness and their categoriality. The implication is that sociolinguistic theory [in the area of authenticity] will become more challenging, as speech communities come more and more to lack the particularities of structure, history and esteem that is a prerequisite for authentic membership.” (2003: 425).

In short, communities we might have deemed ‘inauthentic’ are in fact not so; they merely represent a way of conceptualizing authentic community that takes into account social instability, turbulence, and change, as well as acknowledging that competing ideas of authenticity and value are at work within communities. Because Washington, DC, in some ways constitutes such a community, my dissertation contributes to the exploration of the sociolinguistics of authenticity in late-modernity (Giddens 1991; Rampton 2006). Leaving this (necessarily) incomplete examination of DC history behind, I now present some demographic data that informs the current sociocultural situation in DC.
1.5 Ethnoracial affiliation and income

In this section I examine the current demographic profile of DC, using data from the 2010 Census (Figure 1.4) and the 2005-2009 American Community Survey (Figures 1.5-1.6)\textsuperscript{11}. First a note on the internal geography of Washington, DC. As shown in figure 1.3, Washington, DC is internally divided into four quadrants and eight wards. The quadrants radiate out from the Capitol building and are known as Northwest, Northeast, Southwest and Southeast DC. The majority of Southeast DC is located south and east of the Anacostia River, which marks a significant social boundary in DC as a whole – neighborhoods like Anacostia, Fort Dupont and Congress Heights are located “east of the river” and are both physically and symbolically separate from the rest of the city.

Figure 1.3. Washington, DC’s eight wards and four quadrants

Figure 1.4 illustrates the largest racial and ethnic groups across the geographic area of Washington, DC and the inner suburbs, spanning parts of Arlington County, VA, and Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties, MD. Neighborhoods (census tracts) that are majority white (according to the US Census ethnic and racial categorization) are seen in green.

12 http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/metro/specials/theguide/maps05/dc_anc.gif
majority black neighborhoods are blue; majority Hispanic neighborhoods are yellow, and majority Asian neighborhoods are red. The ‘dominant’ groups shown in the figure were calculated by percentage of the total population; a group is viewed as the largest if its share of the population exceeds 40%. The shading of each representative color indicates the actual concentration of a dominant group. For example: the lightest blue means that black residents constitute 40-60% of the population. Medium blue shading indicates a concentration of black residents at 60-80%, and the darkest blue represents neighborhoods where over 80% of residents are black.

Figure 1.4. Largest racial/ethnic groups in Washington, DC, and inner suburbs
We can see in Figure 1.4 that residential segregation in a lot of ways persists and that the quadrants and wards mark not merely geographic but also social distinctions. There exists a deep divide between the nearly all-white upper Northwest DC and the nearly all-African American Southeast DC. Nevertheless, neighborhoods like Columbia Heights and Mount Pleasant, the latter of which was the subject of Modan’s (2007) ethnographic work on discursive community building and maintenance in DC, are majority Hispanic. This map thus shows us that DC’s population is more diverse than is often discussed, a reality Manning (1998) suggests points to DC’s current and growing status as a multicultural city, despite the persistent narrative of DC as exclusively bi-racial.

Still, ethnoracial categories are inextricably tied to issues of income, residential segregation, and class. Figure 1.5 illustrates the median household income for Washington, DC, and its inner suburbs in Maryland and Virginia, with the darkest green representing median incomes of over $100,000 and the lightest green representing incomes of under $25,000. Overall, Washington, DC is a wealthy place. The median household income for 2011 in DC was $63,124, compared to the national median household income of $50,502\(^\text{13}\).

\(^{13}\)https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/american_community_survey_acs/cb12-r25.html
We can see that the wealth that is part of the narrative about DC as a government city is not evenly distributed. Most of the lowest-income households are concentrated in Northeast and Southeast DC (except in the wealthier neighborhoods on Capitol Hill), and in neighboring Prince George’s County (to the east of DC, and inside the Beltway\(^\text{14}\)), which according to Cashin (2004) sharply contrasts with the wealthy African American communities right outside the Beltway. These are also neighborhoods that are mostly African American\(^\text{15}\), as illustrated in Figure 1.4 above.

\(^{14}\) The Beltway is the popular name for Interstate 495, a highway that circles Washington, DC and its inner suburbs.

\(^{15}\) Wealthy African American neighborhoods of course do exist. Neighborhoods such as Crestwood and Shepherd Park are clustered around 16\(^{th}\) Street NW, a prominent north-south thoroughfare that runs from the tip of the DC diamond all the way to the White House. 16\(^{th}\) Street NW has been colloquially known as the Gold Coast, indicating
Figure 1.6 illustrates the proportion of households with a median income of under $30,000 in the region. Figure 1.5 showed that despite overall wealth, significant income disparities are a reality in DC. In figure 1.6, we see more clearly where poverty is concentrated in the DC area. And indeed, the majority of very low-income households are found in Wards 7 and 8, east of the Anacostia River, in the heart of majority African American neighborhoods.

These demographic and income trends have of course not been static over time. As we saw in Table 1.1, something is happening in DC. After decades of losing population, there has been a recent upswing in the number of DC residents in the past decade. At the same time, DC is its popularity with Washington, DC’s, wealthy African Americans throughout the 20th century. Note that 16th Street NW marks the sharp division between high-income and low-income neighborhoods on the maps in figure 3 and the absence of very low-income households west of 16th Street NW.
losing its African American majority. These demographic changes are at the forefront of public discourse about where DC is headed, and depending on where people stand on the issue, media outlets speak of ‘gentrification’ or ‘urban revitalization’.

**1.6 Discourse(s) of demographic change and gentrification**

Aside from the demographic changes, what do Washingtonians talk about when they talk about social changes affecting the city? One important facet of Washingtonians’ reality is the idea of gentrification, and the uneasy relationship between this phenomenon and the intersection of race and class, is at the forefront of much discussion about DC’s past, present, and future. In the interviews that make up the corpus for this dissertation (see sections 2.4–2.5 below for a discussion of the data set), gentrification comes up again and again. Some illustrations of what Washingtonians are saying about gentrification are seen in Extracts 2 and 3.

In Extract 2, Zara, who is 21, African American, and a college student, talks about moving, as a child, from the Brentwood neighborhood in Northeast DC to Columbia Heights in Northwest DC. She looks back on her time in Brentwood fondly throughout the interview, talking about playing double-dutch with her friends and seeing fireflies, but her relationship with Columbia Heights, where her parents still live, is more complicated.
(2) Zara, 21, African American, college student

1. Zara: I went to uh-we moved to Northwest [i.e. Columbia Heights] and they live-
2. and my parents still live there now and it's off... Argyle Terrace.
3. And it's kind of like behind Sixteenth Street and it's a pretty-
4. it's a nice neighborhood, um, it's like deer and stuff, you think you-you are
5. somewhere in the country.
6. Um, it's ni- <clears throat> is like there or whatever.
7. So <clears throat>
8. Int.: Is it gentrifying?
9. Zara: Of course. All my neighbors are gay and white.

Fred, the speaker in Extract 3, is a 41-year-old European American airline pilot. He has lived most of his life in the DC area, and spent his childhood in the Logan Circle neighborhood in Northwest DC, where he also moved back recently. The neighborhood has seen a steady influx of more commercial activity in the past decade, as well as a sprouting of new condominiums. Fred himself owns a condo in a converted Victorian row house, and characterizes some of the changes to the neighborhood as muppies, or middle-aged yuppies, moving in.
(3) Fred, 41, European American, airline pilot

1. Int.: Are there, are there local political issues going on in Dupont or Logan that you’re, I mean, not really involved with but aware of?
2. Fred: Uh, yeah, I'm not really aware of- nope,
3. I'm sure there is because that area of town is very vibrant, very busy.
4. You know, um, there's backlash about, uh, the muppies coming in, you know.
5. Yep, the gentrification issue is huge, there's constantly, I see little flyers up…
6. You know, they don't say that ‘this is a meeting about gentrification’,
7. but you can tell that it's a community meeting for long time residents.

These examples are just two of many, but they show the commonness of gentrification and other social changes in the kinds of talk that Washingtonians readily engage in, suggesting that issues of social change, demography, and the political aspects of urban life are never far from the forefront of Washingtonians’ minds when they are asked to talk about their communities. Both Zara and Fred’s comments indicate that inter-group difference and tension are key to the way Washingtonians imagine the city. Difference and tension are also two central aspects of Washingtonians’ talk about language, and in the next section, I discuss why metalinguistic commentary, or talk about talk, is so important to the overall goals of the dissertation, including examining how inter- and intragroup differences and tensions are revealed in and shaped by linguistic usages. I also present examples of metalinguistic commentary that links Washingtonians’ speech to ideas of Southernness and African Americanness.
1.7 Metalinguistic commentary

1.7.1 Why look at metalinguistic commentary?

One goal of my study is to analyze the process by which phonological variants come to be activated in discourse towards the enactment of Washingtonianness, that is, the stylistic potential and use of the variants in the interview setting as a means of actively constructing various facets of speakers' Washingtonian identities. I have chosen to focus primarily on stylistic variation within metalinguistic commentary, or when speakers directly address and comment on language as a cultural and social object in the community. Most of the examples in this dissertation come from metalinguistic commentary, both at times when it is directly elicited by the interviewer and times when interviewees themselves bring up language.

The motivation to look at metalinguistic commentary as a stage for enactment of identity through use of vernacular variants like CSD, -in and /l/ vocalization may seem counterintuitive, largely because of the position that metalinguistic commentary has been taken to hold in the sociolinguistic interview and in the formulation of theories of style in sociolinguistics.
Labov’s (1972c) guidelines for analyzing style in sociolinguistics identify two forms of speech, casual and careful. These two kinds of speech are elicited by the interviewer through a series of interview modules whose design promotes casual speech in contexts such as talk about childhood games, talk in peer-groups, and narratives; and careful speech in contexts such as talk about language, ‘soapbox’ talk (passionately talking about an issue of importance) and short, direct responses to questions (Labov 2001).

The effect of such views on the ostensible value of metalinguistic commentary for examining vernacular speech is obvious, and its ‘careful’ nature is further argued by two principles. First, the Principle of Attention states that “styles may be ordered along a single dimension, measured by the amount of attention paid to speech” (Labov 1972b) meaning that the more attention is drawn in the interview situation to the interviewee’s speech, the less ‘casual’ and more ‘careful’ their speech will become. Because metalinguistic commentary explicitly focuses the interviewee’s attention to speech, then, metalinguistic talk is some of the most careful, because it is rather far from the desired vernacular, unguarded speech that the interview is designed to obtain. The Principle of Subordinate Shift states that in metalinguistic talk, speakers of subordinate varieties will vary irregularly towards or away from the superordinate, or standard, variety (Labov 1972b: 111). This irregularity of metalinguistic talk, according to
the principle, makes it a bad candidate for investigating vernacular speech, whether we define vernacular speech as a person’s earliest acquired variety, their least self-conscious variety, or a ‘non-standard’ variety (see e.g. Milroy and Gordon 2003: 49–50 for discussion of sociolinguists various definitions of ‘vernacular’.)

I take a different approach to metalinguistic commentary, one that is guided by the speaker design approach to linguistic style, which foregrounds the agentive and interactional motivations for shifting between more or less vernacular ways of speaking (Schilling-Estes 2008; Schilling 2013). Schilling-Estes’ (1998) research on metalinguistic performance in the sociolinguistic interview shows that speakers can control when to shift in and out of varieties deemed standard and non-standard (including ethnic varieties), regardless of the kind of talk they are engaged in within the interview at the time. They can use metalinguistic talk to subvert researcher control of the situation, to amuse themselves and their interlocutors, and to project facets of self, real or imagined, for strategic purposes within the interview. And they can do it at will, at least to some extent, initiating styles removed from mainstream varieties at unexpected moments.

Schilling-Estes’ work points out the vast potential of metalanguage to construct identity, and suggests that sociolinguistic interviews, even when attention to speech is high, encompass
myriad styles that all need to receive researchers’ attention (Schilling-Estes 2008). This is one good reason to investigate metalinguistic commentary in the sociolinguistic interview. By talking about language and its users, speakers are able to perform and evaluate different kinds of people, whether themselves or others they agree or disagree with; situations of intimacy or of distance, and story worlds within which language plays an ideologically important role. Metalanguage is therefore an important component of identity work in interaction, and the metalinguistic commentary in the sociolinguistic interview presents an excellent opportunity to witness the links between linguistic and social realities in Washington, DC.

1.7.2 Metalinguistic commentary about DC

Before moving on, it is important to look at more examples of the kinds of social situations and relations that Washingtonians describe when they talk about language. This commentary is the foundation of the kinds of correlations between language and social category membership that I measure quantitatively and interrogate qualitatively in this dissertation.

Many Washingtonians appeal to one of three constructs in their metalinguistic commentary: DC as ‘standard’ and ‘unaccented’ place, African American language as primary dialect difference in the city, and an unclear and sometimes uneasy relationship to the South. In
Preston’s (1996) terms, Washingtonians display *global* folk linguistic awareness about language in DC, in the sense that while they do make mention of Washington, DC area language, they are often unable to perform or are unaware of specific linguistic features particular to DC. Further, they often do not discuss any potential general features of DC speech either, but instead compare DC speech to other, more recognizable and enregistered dialects (Agha 2003, 2007), and approach DC as a ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘accentless’ place. In Extract 4, May, who is a 53-year-old African American woman, struggles to get a firm grasp on the DC dialect. Prior to this extract, May had started to talk about the DC accent as she saw it, and mentioned that she wasn’t sure what it was like. We were then interrupted by a customer who came into May’s vintage clothing shop, and she attended to this person for about 10 minutes. After the customer left, I picked up the metalinguistic conversation again.
I initiate the conversation about the DC accent by referring back to a comment May made earlier about the DC accent being *not really noticeable* (line 1), to which May replies that *when you’re in it, you notice it* (line 2), but that *there are people who ask me where I’m from* (line 3). This foregrounds the DC accent’s slippery quality – insiders notice it but it remains unknown to outsiders, who ask Washingtonians where they are from. May further characterizes DC with relation to language as *more cosmopolitan* (line 7) and perhaps thus less accented, particularly because May doesn’t *hear it* (line 8). May goes on to contrast DC’s language from language in New England, which she can tell, is different (lines 9-10). Her brother-in-law, a Brooklynite,
also speakers differently, in a way that May herself can hear (lines 12-13). So while areas in the Northeast are obviously accented – including New England and New York – DC is an unaccented place. May reinforces the connection between DC and lack of accent by discussing her two other siblings, a sister (who I found out lives in Maryland) and a brother in New Jersey, both of whom [talk] like me (lines 13, 15) and from whom I don’t hear an accent (line 15).

This extract is also interesting in its lack of reference to either Southern speech or African American speech – as an African American, May could have appealed to the recognizable and stereotyped discourse about African American English to make a point about DC’s (un)accentedness, but she chooses in this extract to contrast aregional DC speech with the Northern speech of her own family members. From the point of view of a sociolinguist who is interested in both geographic and ethnoracial issues in production and perception of language variation, this extract underscores the need for what Johnstone and Kiesling (2008) call a phenomenological approach to language variation, which they define as “attending to the multiplicity and indeterminacy of indexical relations and to how such relations arise historically and in lived experience (2008: 5)”.

Multiplicity and indeterminacy are recurring ideas in much metalinguistic commentary about DC. In the next extract, Casey, a 37-year old European American woman, who owns a
craft shop nearby where May sells vintage clothing, is asked by the interviewer (me) if there is a DC accent, and replies that she thinks it’s maybe a little bit Southern, but that she is unsure.

(5) Casey, 37, European American, store owner

1. Casey: I mean, I wouldn’t e-even think of it unless you’d asked that question
2. so I would have to, yeah, I-I don’t really. I mean I don’t really know.
3. I was talking to [coworker] about it, who works with me
4. and she said, “Yes”, she definitely thought that accents were in DC,
5. and just the way people talk, the way they uh,
6. especially the African-Americans, you know, people have heard
7. the-the way the slang and stuff is used is very differently than like,
8. different areas, and she definitely was like “Yeah, definitely”,
9. the-you know- so I [inc] I hadn’t really thought of it you know.
10. I mean, I know like moving to West Virginia [inc] very extreme
11. Ana: [but that’s proper=
12. Casey: [yeah
13. Ana: =mountain?
14. Casey: Yeah which is like such-
15. I mean when I moved back here from West Virginia
16. people would always be like, “Where were you?”
17. I mean, they could hear.

Just like Mark in Extract 1, Casey sets up a stranger-encounter narrative (Johnstone 1996) as a frame for discussing her thoughts about the DC accent. The encounter Casey narrates is with a coworker at the shop, of whom she asks the question that I had asked her when we first met, and before we set up the interview. The question was broadly about Casey’s perception of
what kinds of accents there are in the DC area. In this narrative, Casey approaches her coworker
with the question (line 3; roughly, “Are there accents in DC?”). The coworker’s response “Yes”,
*she definitely thought that accents were in DC* (line 4), delivered using constructed dialogue (Tannen
2007) and the epistemic adverb *definitely* (Kärkkäinen 2003: 45), stands in contrast to Casey’s
own thoughts, since she admits to not having often considered the matter of DC dialects.

I met the coworker when Casey and I were first introduced, and she is African American,
so in this way Casey’s metalinguistic commentary further underscores the ethnoracial
component of dialect awareness in the DC area – Casey’s view is that African Americans know
that there is a DC way of speaking, while European Americans aren’t aware or haven’t thought
about it. Casey constructs a distinction between DC speech and speech in West Virginia, where
she lived for two years as a middle schooler. In line 10, Casey introduces the contrast by saying *I
mean, I know like moving to West Virginia [*inc*] very extreme* (line 10), indicating that the West
Virginia accent is very ‘extreme’. I go along with this view by calling the West Virginia accent
*proper… mountain* (lines 11, 13), and Casey overlaps *yeah* in agreement (line 12). She reinforces
the distinction between DC and West Virginia by telling about moving back to DC and people
noticing her accent, *people would always be like “Where were you?”*, *I mean, they could hear* (lines 16–
17).
Casey’s interview thus shows another common way of illustrating dialect difference in DC: constructing a difference in awareness (and thus in production) between European Americans and African Americans, and in some way contrasting DC speech with a recognizable regional variety, in this case Southern speech. But race is not an unproblematic correlate of language in DC. In the next extract, Fred, who negotiated notions of gentrification and ‘muppification’ in Logan Circle in extract 3, replies to the interviewer’s question “Do you have an accent?” and “Do you think other people have accents?” Fred does not think that he himself has an accent, but about other people around him in the Washington, DC, area, he says:

(6) Fred, 41, European American, airline pilot

1. Fred: Every-yes, I do, I hear accents all the time.
2. Um, I like to- but what’s funny is no one can seem to s- place
3. where I’m from.
4. Uh and one thing that I have noticed is, uh,
5. I think maybe I’m completely wrong, I haven’t really thought about it
6. but it seems to me that people from Washington, uh, that are not …
7. oh God, this is going to sound awful,
8. that aren’t BLACK, you know, don’t generally have accents.
9. You know? Or at least it’s a very neutral kind of, you know,
10. not like in Baltimore, New York or Boston.
11. Or even Southern California, you know they have pretty accents.
In Fred’s metalinguistic commentary, he discusses hearing accents around him, and who has an accent. Fred’s statement that *I haven’t really thought about it* (line 5) echoes Casey’s lack of commitment to being conscious of the distinctiveness of DC speech. Fred also much more explicitly draws the link between accent and race. Where Casey attributed awareness of DC speech to her African American coworker, Fred (somewhat reluctantly, it appears) acknowledges his own observations about accent. In lines 6-8 says that *it seems to me that people from Washington, uh, that are not… oh God, this is going to sound awful, that aren’t BLACK, you know, don’t generally have accents*. Fred’s commentary about the perceived links between race and accent is the most overt acknowledgment so far of the ideology of accentedness, related to the standard language ideology (c.f. Lippi-Green 1994), which holds that the majority or ‘unmarked’ group in a particular context [*don’t*] *generally have accents* (in Fred’s words), while minorities do. So Fred’s commentary about the distinction between social groups in Washington based on perceived accentedness echoes other types of distinctions, including income, residence, and so on. Language, in this way, is implicated in social distinction.

Language is also implicated in the process of social change, especially the kind of social change that happens at the level of individual Washingtonians. While speakers like Fred, who are not themselves ‘accented’, may view linguistic difference in DC as relatively
unproblematically correlated with race, others indicate that African American speech in DC is
diverse and internally contested. In Extract 7, Phil, who is a 32-year-old African American man,
talks about whether he is perceived as sounding Washingtonian or not.

(7) Phil, 32, African American, architect

1. Int.: Have people told you that you sound different from most native Washingtonians?
2. Phil: For sure, I would say people from DC, I mean people who are from-
not from the area, they say I have a DC accent at times,
but people who are here, especially more so black folk, basically if you-
if you're- if you're black and you talk a certain way that's not urban or,
yeah man, “What's going on with this and that” you know,
use a lot of urban- urban colloquialisms or what have you,
then you may not be down, or you talk white, or you talk proper,
or- or whatever. And you're not in touch with culture.
Um, I think that, uh, yeah people say that.
So yeah, I would, I think I'm a chameleon in some respects.
I know as I get older, I just talk the same to everybody,
but growing up I would talk a certain way when I went to private school
and when I would come home I wouldn't talk a different way,
but it would be a different version.

Phil acknowledges that people who are from- not from the area, they say I have a DC accent at
times (lines 3–4), though he does not specify exactly what it is about his accent that people pick
up on. But the majority of Phil’s commentary about local language compares and contrasts two
competing language ideological perspectives on DC speech. While outsiders might say that Phil
has a DC accent, Washingtonians do not share this perception. According to Phil, *people who are here, especially more so black folk* (line 5) have a different analysis of his speech. Although he does not follow up with a canonical narrative of a time when a fellow African American Washingtonian criticized his speech, Phil stylistically constructs a hypothetical scenario in which his language use gets questioned. In Phil’s experience, *basically if you- if you're- if you're black and you talk a certain way that's not urban or, yeah man, “What's going on with this and that” you know, use a lot of urban- urban colloquialisms or what have you, then you may not be down, or you talk white, or you talk proper, or- or whatever. And you're not in touch with culture* (lines 5–10).

Using the generic second person pronoun *you* throughout the example, Phil draws on the impersonalizing pragmatic function of the pronoun to construct a more general situation, and to convey that this experience is not confined to him but presents a more ‘general truth’ (Kitagawa and Lehrer 1990: 739). The pronominal shift represents a salient change in Phil’s footing (Goffman 1981a) toward the discourse. Describing the stances that some Washingtonians apparently take to speech that isn’t ‘full of urban colloquialisms’ and that sounds ‘white’ and ‘out of touch with culture’, Phil avoids forms that cast him as author of these opinions (e.g. “I think”), nor does he use clearly referential third-person pronouns to pick out specific actors to whom the opinions can be attributed (e.g. “They say that…”). In this way, Phil is able to convey that these
opinions – ideologically mediated perceptions of African American speech as ‘urban’, ‘colloquial’, ‘not white’, ‘not proper’ and ‘in touch with [African American] culture – are common in Washingtonian public discourse. In line 11, Phil clarifies that *Um, I think that, uh, yeah people say that.*

Importantly, Phil does not simply reject the analysis of his speech as *not* African American, but offers an alternate interpretation of what it means to talk like a Washingtonian. He presents a view of linguistic practice as a result of life experience and stylistic practice, suggesting that he is a *chameleon in some respects* (line 12), and that his language is influenced by growing up speaking slightly differently at school and at home. Phil also underscores his own linguistic security even in the face of having his linguistic practice questioned by other Washingtonians, asserting that *I know as I get older, I just talk the same to everybody* (line 13).

In short, from Phil’s talk we can glance a complex relationship between language and social life in Washington, DC, full of ideologically informed opinion about what is African American speech, how speakers come into their dialects, and how language changes over the course of one’s life. This kind of discourse is reminiscent of what Rahman (2008) found in her work on metalinguistic awareness among middle class African Americans in California. While those speakers generally had a positive stance towards African American Vernacular English as
an ‘ancestral variety’, they cast their own language use in the same terms as Phil does above: middle class, linguistically secure African Americans in professional positions often situate themselves as ‘chameleons’ whose largely ‘standard’ language use is a point of pride but does not distort or damage their African American identity, even though others (including other African Americans) may think it does and accuse the speakers of so doing.

To sum up this introduction to Washingtonians’ metalinguistic commentaries, many different ways of conceptualizing language as part of life in Washington, DC surface in sociolinguistic interviews. Many of the parallels drawn between language on the one hand and social life on the other have to do with the borders and boundaries discussed earlier in the chapter. Speakers assert or deny links between language in DC and more recognizable regional varieties, but they don’t do so uniformly or unitarily within themselves. Comparisons are made both with Northern varieties such as New York and Boston area Englishes, and to Southern varieties like the dialect of West Virginia, with a number of residents conceptualizing language in DC as something in between Northern and Southern, or something that is neither but is instead aregional in character. Ethnoracial category is another highly salient aspect of linguistic difference in DC, but the discourse surrounding it is by turns overly simplistic (i.e. African American language is ‘accent’, European American language is not), and highly sophisticated
(i.e. there are different ways of being African American, linguistically, though some people insist on accepting only one form of African American language as authentic).

What we do observe, despite the lack of a unified approach to language as part of DC life and culture, is an awareness of DC as a distinctive speech community as because of the social, cultural, racial, regional, and professional attributes of the city. So despite DC’s difference from better-understood speech communities, and despite its difference from authentic communities in the traditional sense (i.e. cohesive, longstanding, homogeneous communities), there is absolutely no lack of authentic speakers or authentic speech in Washington, DC. Indeed, as Wolfram noted in his early call for sociolinguistic investigation of DC, DC’s authenticity lies exactly in its internal diversity of communities, of viewpoints, and of approaches to language. Authentic speakers in a late-modern place like DC, as Coupland points out, might be quite difficult to characterize and quite diverse in definition and life experiences, but they are there.

1.8 Diversity’s centrality to discourses and understandings of DC

I want to take a moment to caution against an essentialist picture of the social situation in Washington, DC, especially in terms of ethnoracial categories. We have seen so far that residential segregation has played a significant role in how ethnoracial categories and social
class are perceived in the city, and also that the forces of gentrification contribute to continuing
tension between African American Washingtonians on the one hand, and recent in-migrants on
the other. It is important to note that not all changes are attributable to a single wave of
nominally white in-migrants ‘forcing out’ a homogeneous population of African Americans,
however. Diversification is happening in Washington, DC, in an unprecedented way. Central
American immigrants, primarily from El Salvador, have had a strong presence in the city for the
past two decades, a presence that is only increasing (Modan 2007), along with a significant, and
highly visible, Ethiopian community. Howard University, the local historically black private
university, is home to many African international students. The city’s ex-patriate contingent is
larger than ever. Silver Spring, MD, bordering DC to the north, is home to a longstanding and
sizeable orthodox Jewish community. So I go into this dissertation with the need to caution
against an essentialist stance toward ethnoracial categories and place in the DC region.

Nevertheless, the historical facts outlined above situate Washington DC’s social and
sociolinguistic landscape in a context where the ‘bi-racial’ (Manning 1998) character of the city
has been primary to the discourse about DC for some time. And to this day, much of the
understanding of social dynamics in DC is predicated on there being two Washingtons: one
white, and one black. There is little talk of traditionally Jewish, Irish, Polish, or German
neighborhoods in Washington, DC, unlike in many other cities on the Eastern Seaboard, such as Philadelphia. We talk about black neighborhoods and white neighborhoods. And we talk about how the black neighborhoods are being taken over by white interlopers who come to the city to do government and non-profit work. But even this conversation is not so clear-cut. Shani O. Hilton’s feature *Confessions of a Black Gentrifier*¹⁶ in the local weekly *Washington City Paper* discusses the liminal experience of young African American in-migrants with money to spare in a city whose identity is predicated on categorical understandings of mobility among whites and non-mobility among African Americans. And indeed, DC’s African American history is as much one of social mobility and white-collar work as it is of blue-collar and service professions and urban blight.

All these facts make it difficult to talk about DC as one unified speech community, and it is also necessary to think carefully about which sociolinguistic methods are best suited to representing the internal diversity and dynamism that is inherent, in Wolfram’s words, to the Washington, DC, situation.

1.9 Previous studies of language in Washington, DC

In this dissertation, I explore the role of sociolinguistic variation as it correlates with social difference in DC, and also how variable linguistic phenomena can be employed to do identity work beyond just macro-social, primarily ethnoracial, identification and solidarity. One way in which I approach the place of language in Washington, DC, is by studying three stable sociolinguistic features whose associations with Southern white speech on the one hand and African American speech on the other potentially allow Washingtonians to do different kinds of identity work vis-à-vis Southerness and African American-ness as recognizable, but also contested, social concepts.

This is of course not the first work to address language and identity in Washington, DC. In addition to myself, several sociolinguists are currently conducting ongoing research about Washington, DC, under the Georgetown University Linguistics Department’s umbrella project *Language and Communication In the Washington, DC, Metropolitan Area* (LCDC); this dissertation is also part of the project. I describe the project, its goals, some results to date in Chapter 2.

Two studies in particular have informed my own focus on variation, diversity, and discourse in DC. One of the foundational sociolinguistic studies of African American Vernacular English, Ralph Fasold’s *Tense marking in Black English: A linguistic and social analysis*
(1972) investigated the linguistic and social conditioning of consonant cluster simplification and invariant be in AAVE, and it did so using interview data recorded in Washington, DC.

The speakers in the study were recorded in 1968-1969 by Fasold and fieldworkers at the Center for Applied Linguistics. Detailing the study’s sampling procedures, Fasold describes some of the same difficulties that I and other sociolinguists working in Washington, DC are facing today. In particular, the team found it difficult to locate speakers who had lived more than half their lifetime in DC. In the end, the study used data from 47 African Americans, both male and female, representing several age groups (including children, adolescents, and adults of 21 years and older). There was also difficulty in locating speakers from across a range of social classes, and the final analyses are mainly of speakers classified as upper working class and lower working class (Fasold 1972: 25-27). Fasold also mentions having difficulty determining class based on Warner, Meeker and Eells’s (1960) Index of Status Characteristics, and notes that sometimes the speakers themselves would be unable or unwilling to provide information to allow the investigators to make this classification with enough accuracy. Fasold notes:

“[A] backlash against giving information to be used in esoteric studies was developing in the black community. This in turn focused my attention on ethical questions about the propriety of soliciting information from speakers for purposes whose ultimate value to those speakers could not be assumed to be great.” (1972: 25)
This unwillingness to engage with notions of class is also something that I noticed throughout my fieldwork in Washington, DC, and Fasold gives a historical precedent for considering social class highly problematic as an analytic concept in Washington, DC, especially considering that in DC, the overall social class status of African Americans has long been lower than that of European American Washingtonians. For these reasons – difficulty of determining social class status, and speakers’ own unwillingness to engage in class comparisons – I am not using social class as a measure in this dissertation. I instead include educational attainment as something of a partial stand-in for social class, primarily because despite the varying amounts of demographic and personal information that speakers volunteered to interviewers in my corpus, all speakers provided information about how much schooling they had had, whether when explicitly asked about it or in the course of talking about their personal histories.

The second work that profoundly informs my study is Modan’s (2007) ethnographic monograph on Mount Pleasant, a multi-ethnic and mixed class neighborhood in Washington, DC, and the role of discourse practices in the construction and contestation of place identities. Modan’s work foregrounds ideological contestation of public space and place identity, showing how oppositions among residents become contextualized within interactions and lead to the formation of larger community discourses.
While this work takes a rather different approach to language in Washington, DC than does my study – Modan’s study is entirely linguistic ethnographic in perspective, while mine uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods – the goals of the study are highly compatible with my own, and Modan provides a solid foundation for further study of community identity formation in Washington, DC. She points out that Washington, DC, is an inherently diverse city, that its residents are aware of and engaged with public discourses of place, identity, and gentrification, and that language often mediates and constructs these ideologies.

Fasold’s foundational study of variation among Washington, DC, African Americans, and Modan’s ethnographic study of ideology and discourse together inform my own investigation and allow me to enhance our understanding of language and identity in DC in two ways. Firstly, to my knowledge, no previous sociolinguistic study has considered phonological variation among European American residents of Washington, DC, with the possible exception of Bowie’s (2000, 2001) studies of the speech of European Americans in Charles County, MD, located to the south of DC and considered to be part of the greater Washington, DC, metropolitan area. My sample includes both African Americans and European Americans, and is
therefore one of the first investigations of the language of the elusive European American native Washingtonian, so often overlooked in discourses of the transient white collar population\textsuperscript{17}.

Secondly, influenced both by Fasold’s fine-tuned description of some aspects of DC-area AAVE and by Modan’s commitment to representing Washingtonians as multi-faceted, engaged citizens in a rapidly changing and inherently diverse environment, I take the position that a mixed-methods, quantitative and qualitative approach is the best direction to take toward a fuller understanding of language’s role as part of the sociopolitical and sociocultural tapestry of urban life in DC. For this reason, I interweave quantitative and qualitative evidence for the social significance of ethnorace- and place-linked language throughout the text, and present an analysis of the participation of phonological variation in the construction of Washingtonians’ identities in interviews.

\textbf{1.10 Organization of the dissertation}

In this chapter, I have presented two reasons for studying language as a facet of identity in Washington, DC. First, DC presents an intriguing case for social dialectology, due to its historically-grounded ‘marginal’ identity. Second, despite a paucity of overt and widespread

\textsuperscript{17} S. Lee’s (2011) work on back vowel fronting and low-back merger in DC also compared European American and African American Washingtonians, and I view my own and Lee’s studies as complementary.
commentary on Washington, DC, speech, language (and specifically, dialect) does form part of Washingtonians’ social consciousness and the social differentiation of groups in the city. This study seeks to uncover links between European American and African American Washingtonians production of three phonological features, and the kinds of social ends for which these are used. In this way, this study seeks to understand how language is implicated in identity work and social change even, and perhaps especially, in a community where social identities are variably focused and diffuse, stable and contested, and depending on one’s point of view, central, marginal, or liminal.

I have outlined some background characteristics of Washington, DC, in terms of its demography and historical and current social changes in the community. These facts form the foundation for linguistic identification and linguistic identity work. In Chapter 2, I outline the methods used and the data that I analyzed in the dissertation, introducing the speakers who make up the sample and discussing the sampling procedure.

Chapter 3 turns our attention to the question of DC as a linguistically marginal community through an analysis of /l/ vocalization, a widespread phonological phenomenon found across many English varieties, but associated quite strongly with European American speech in areas surrounding DC. European American Washingtonians’ lack of participation in
the widespread vocalization found around them may speak to Washington DC’s position not only as a dialectally marginal place, but also as an urban migration and commuting hub and a source of dialect leveling in European American varieties. African Americans’ extensive use of /l/ vocalization aligns DC AAE with other many other varieties of AAE and in addition may serve as a marker (whether more or less consciously) of DC African American identity as distinct from DC European American identity, among other meaning potentials, which I examine in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 examines the two other sociolinguistic features analyzed in the dissertation: Coronal Stop Deletion (also known as (−t/d) deletion) and −in, the alveolar variant of (ING). The two features have been widely studied, and their distribution among different communities as well as the interpretations of the features by participants in perception studies reveals a common set of social meanings that in turn contributes to the stylistic potential of the variables for identity work relating to ideas of race, region, and interactional strategies. I report on both the distribution and probable stylistic meanings of the features in Washington, DC.

In Chapter 5, I move on from the quantitative analyses of each individual feature to consider how they variously cluster together in the speech the different individuals in this study. The constellations of features – which I call *stylistic repertoires* and discuss further in Section 5.3.1
– are not only indicators of speakers’ overall ‘vernacularity’ and consistency with Southern and/or African American speech norms, but also form each speakers ‘toolkit’ for doing identity and interactional work through harnessing the social and interactional meanings of the features that comprise each repertoire. The repertoires also, and very importantly, allow us to see the internal diversity among groups that frequently – both among sociolinguists and in wider discourse – get treated as homogeneous when in reality they comprise individuals whose linguistic behavior is not always in line with shared lived experience. Finally, Chapter 5 exemplifies how Washingtonians use the three features in order to reflect and construct different kinds of Washingtonian identities in metalinguistic commentary.

Chapter 6 summarizes the present study’s findings on language variation and identity in Washington, DC, and looks forward to implications of this work for sociolinguistic theory and future directions for the stylistic repertoire perspective and the study of linguistic identity in difficult-to-categorize yet perfectly authentic contemporary speech communities.
Chapter 2.

Methods and data collection

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the data collection, speaker sample, and analysis methods, and introduce the variables under study. First, I will briefly describe and justify the use of demographic terminology found throughout this dissertation. In particular, I would like to turn the reader’s attention to the use of ‘ethnoracial affiliation’ in place of ‘race’ or ‘ethnicity’, as well as my two chosen terms for the demographic groups under study, ‘European American’ and ‘African American’.

2.2 Choice of demographic category labels

**Ethnoracial affiliation.** A fairly common view of the distinction between ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ is that race refers to physical characteristics distinguishing populations and revealing geographic ancestry (such as skin color, hair texture, and other features), while ethnicity points to shared cultural histories, nationhood, and language as distinguishing populations (see e.g.
Bobo (2001) for a social scientific review of these terms). This distinction is preserved by, for example, the US Census Bureau, whose survey design uses both race and ethnicity. The Census prompts participants to affiliate with one or more categories that it identifies as ‘race’: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. In addition, Hispanic is included as an ethnic category: “[p]eople who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race”\(^{18}\).

The separation of race and ethnicity is problematic in demographic research, partly because race and ethnicity categories are (and the US Census Bureau concedes that they are) highly interpretable and social in nature. While the race and ethnicity categories are measured differently (e.g. those identifying as ‘Hispanic’ also choose a racial category and are, in a way, counted twice), most representations of Census demographic data, including those in this dissertation, treat ‘Hispanic’ as a category similar to ‘White’ or ‘Black or African American’. If nothing else, this way of handling racial and ethnic categories indicates that the boundary between the two is blurry. For this reason, I follow the lead of sociolinguists such as Modan (2007), Podesva (2008) and Nielsen (2012), who elect the term ‘ethnoracial affiliation’ when talking about demographic classifications. ‘Ethnoracial affiliation’ buys sociolinguists two distinct advantages: First, it brings to the foreground the difficulty of separating race and

\(^{18}\)http://www.census.gov/population/race/
ethnicity, since they are so closely linked. Second, choosing ‘affiliation’ over ‘category’ reminds us that the designations, while socially highly salient, are not inherent, permanent, or monolithic but rather are very often results of a researcher’s own choices. Schilling (2013b) discusses the potential pitfalls of researcher-initiated categorization of subjects, and notes that “it is certainly not meaningless to group people into the very groups we often take for granted as ‘givens’ since most likely our speakers do so, too” (2013b: 85). However, Schilling also cautions against blanket categorization and urges sociolinguists to pay attention to subject-initiated social categorization and self-identification, as well as to the multifaceted and malleable nature of such identifications.

In Washington, DC, we can readily observe that the distinction between ‘white’ and ‘black’ people is highly salient, as evidenced in Chapter 1 by Zara’s comment that her new neighbors are all gay and white, Fred’s reluctant admission that he thinks people who aren’t BLACK don’t have accents, and Phil’s analysis that black folk privilege a way of speaking that isn’t talking white. These observations make me comfortable with using researcher-initiated determinations of these two ethnoracial affiliations, since they align with the self- and other-identifications of research participants. But rather than use the labels ‘black’ and ‘white’, I have
also chosen to use ‘European American’ and ‘African American’ as descriptors of two groups in DC, and these terms too require some explanation.

**African American and European American.** The choice of terms for the demographic categories I am analyzing is of course problematic. I expect that sociolinguists are – as I have been – sometimes challenged by audiences and maybe even participants themselves with the question “Why don’t you just say ‘black’ and ‘white’?” Indeed, if we seek an ecologically valid and emic representation of demographic categories in the community we study, then perhaps looking at speakers’ own discourse provides us with more accurate labels.

While the terms ‘white’ and ‘black’ may be preferable as they reflect how race is often described in the community, I choose ‘European American’ over ‘Anglo’ or ‘white’ and ‘African American’ over ‘black’. These choices, to me, reflect the distinctions within white and black populations in DC. DC has large groups of expatriates from across the world and several large immigrant communities. ‘European American’ picks out those Washingtonians of European descent who were born and raised in the United States, while acknowledging that internally, speakers’ heritage might vary (i.e. they are not all of ‘Anglo’ descent). The same reasoning applies to choosing ‘African American’ over ‘black’. My sample does not, for example, include Washingtonians who are members of the city’s large East African diaspora, and using ‘black’ as
an across-the-board term would obscure this fact. It is important to note that while this type of nomenclature is very common in sociolinguistic studies, this is not to say that these terms unproblematically capture the multifaceted notion of ethnoracial identity, though of course particularly sociolinguistic variationist study necessitates employing similar classification as previous literature in order to ensure comparability across studies.

2.3 Language and Communication in the Washington, DC, Metropolitan Area (LCDC)

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Washington, DC, has been largely overlooked by sociolinguists of American English, despite the great opportunities it affords those of us interested in urban diversity and language in social change. While perhaps the best-known studies of DC are Fasold (1972) and Modan (2007), several recent studies have been and are being conducted as part of a large-scale sociolinguistic project currently underway in the Linguistics Department at Georgetown University. The project, known as *Language and Communication in the Washington, DC, Metropolitan Area*, or LCDC, is an ongoing fieldwork-based effort to create a corpus of Washington, DC, area speech and to analyze the structural components of the varieties of English and other languages spoken in the DC area, the changes
affecting DC-area language varieties, and how people use language to convey and create interactional and identity-related meanings in Washington’s many communities.

Since 2006, graduate students enrolled in courses such as *Sociolinguistic Variation* and *Sociolinguistic Field Methods* have conducted sociolinguistic interviews with Washingtonians of all walks of life, ethnoracial affiliations, sexes and professions. The resulting corpus of interviews is growing and at the time of writing comprised 142 interviews. All interviewees are 18 years of age or older, and live in the DC metropolitan area, including Washington, DC; the cities of Arlington and Alexandria, as well as Fairfax and Loudon counties in Virginia; and Montgomery, Prince George’s, and Frederick counties in Maryland. Because the objective of the project is to capture how language is structured and functions within all aspects of urban life, not all interviewees were born and raised in the DC area. Many have lived in the DC area for a relatively long time, however, and most non-natives came to DC for career reasons.

### 2.3.1 The LCDC interviews

All 21 interviews that I analyzed for this dissertation are part of the LCDC corpus, and as such they share some characteristics. The LCDC interviews are modeled on the classic sociolinguistic interview (Labov 1972a), that is, they are loosely structured interviews guided
by a protocol that includes a series of modules, or questions the researcher asks the interviewee. The classic sociolinguistic interview modules, described by Labov (1984) touch on a variety of aspects of the interviewee’s life and opinions, including childhood games and rhymes, dating, marriage, school, leisure, family, fights and ‘danger-of-death’ experiences, race, religion, and language.

Since it is important that the LCDC interviews be conducted with their social context in mind, the modules that have been developed for the LCDC project differ somewhat from the original Labovian modules. For example, since LCDC researchers are interested in changes underway in the city (because gentrification is an important social issue in DC), some interviews include modules on DC’s past, the speaker’s neighborhood and how it has changed, and memories of significant events in DC, as well as everyday issues such as commuting. Some of the interview modules used by LCDC interviewers are found in Appendix 2.

In addition, the LCDC interviews are very diverse, owing to the large group of interviewers that have collected data for the corpus over the years. All interviews include modules on the speaker’s personal life, on DC, and on language, but the shapes that these modules take vary greatly. The modules that interviewers bring to the interview are not always strictly followed, and there is a lot of variability among the types of talk in different interviews.
as a result (and as a result of the fact that different interviewee’s too can approach sociolinguistic interviews very differently – e.g. as casual conversations, as formal interviews, as occasions for the proclamation of strongly held opinions). Tangents, that is, stretches of talk where the interviewee changes the topic or otherwise does not stick to the interviewer-initiated question, occasionally dominate an interview. This is not seen as a negative thing under the LCDC mission, since the researchers are interested in interview language being, as much as possible, the product of a casual, loosely structured, and interviewee-driven process.

2.3.2 LCDC studies to date

Several variationist and interactional sociolinguistic studies have come out of the LCDC project, and this dissertation is among them. Some have sought to characterize language variation and change in DC-area African American English. Comparing LCDC recordings to recordings from the 1960s generously made available by Ralph Fasold, Jamsu, Callier, and J. Lee (2009) looked at real-time evidence of change in /ay/ monophthongization in pre-voiced, and word final contexts¹⁹ (when ride is pronounced [raːd], and pry is pronounced [praː]). They find evidence for a sex-linked change for /ay/ monophthongization: Women and girls in the

ⁱ⁹ Pre-voiceless monophthongization is a more recent phenomenon (Fridland 2003) and is less frequently found in African American English than in (Southern) European American varieties.
Fasold corpus monophthongize more than men and boys, while women in the LCDC corpus monophthongize less than men. For /r/-lessness (*cah* for *car*), another feature strongly associated with African American Vernacular English, Schilling and Jamsu (2010) find real time evidence that the feature is stable among DC area African American men. S. Lee (2011) looks at fronting of /u/ and /ow/, and the low-back (/o/-/oh/, or ‘cot-caught’) merger among African Americans from the LCDC corpus, and finds that European Americans front the back vowels to some extent, while African Americans overall do not. With respect to the low-back merger, a sex-linked split similar to that of Jamsu et al. (2009) is found. While African Americans overall are less completely merged than European Americans, African American men’s distributions are much less merged than African American women’s, who instead pattern more closely to European Americans. In sum, evidence available to date points toward some convergence between DC area African American English (AAE) and European American English (EAE), possibly led by African American women, but also stability in AAE features maintained chiefly by men.

True to the mission of the LCDC project, studies have also sought to describe discursive aspects of the link between linguistic practice and Washingtonian identity. Tseng (2011) diversifies the populations under study in DC, looking at discourses of Washingtonian identity.
among DC area Latinos while Nylund (2013) considers metalinguistic commentary collected in interviews with lifelong Washingtonians and ways in which talk about local language practices is used to communicate ideas about broader social issues, including gentrification and racism.

Next, I describe the interviews included in my dissertation corpus, the speakers, and the features under study.

2.4 Interviews

In this dissertation, I analyze 21 sociolinguistic interviews with lifelong residents of Washington, DC and/or directly adjacent neighborhoods in Montgomery County, MD. I chose to use 17 interviews from the LCDC corpus and conducted four of the interviews myself. My own interviews were also submitted to the LCDC corpus.

The interviews that I conducted were with Casey (37, female, European American), Gillian (57, female, European American), Walter (57, male, European American) and May (53, female, African American). I recruited these speakers because they work in small businesses in the neighborhood where I was living at the time of data collection. I first came in contact with Walter during the winter of 2010 while visiting his shop, and after finding out that he was a native Washingtonian I asked if he would be willing to meet and talk about his life and work in
DC. Following our interview, which took place at a Formica table in his shop at 6.30am, he noted that many of the business owners and workers in the neighborhood were long-term community residents. I met Gillian while following up on this lead from Walter, and was subsequently introduced to her coworker May, and May’s friend Casey. The rest of my corpus consists of interviews with Washingtonians from all parts of the city. Because I had less control over the interviews that I had not conducted myself, I selected the remaining 17 interviews based on the following criteria:

- Speaker is both born in and currently resides in Washington DC, Silver Spring or Takoma Park (two immediately adjacent suburbs in Maryland)
- Speaker is identified in interview metadata as European American or African American
- Quality of recording is high enough to allow auditory coding of phonological variables
- Quality of recording is high enough to allow hand-checking of tokens in Praat (Boersma and Weenink 2013)
- Interview is at least 30 minutes long, preferably between 45 and 90 minutes
- Interview must include modules on: childhood, everyday life, work, neighborhood/DC history and change, language
- Metalinguistic commentary module touches on language in the speaker’s community
2.5 Speakers

The selection process resulted in 21 sociolinguistic interviews with European American and African American Washingtonians. Table 2.1 identifies social characteristics of the speakers.
Table 2.1. The 21 speakers, arranged by age at the time of interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Ethnoracial Affiliation</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Neighborhood (Childhood ngh.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zara</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>College student</td>
<td>Columbia Heights NW (Brentwood NE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mick</td>
<td>European American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>College student</td>
<td>Georgetown NW (Columbia Heights NW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>European American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>Health analyst</td>
<td>Dupont Circle NW (Glover Park NW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassius</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Physical therapist</td>
<td>Trinidad NE (Capitol Hill NE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrie</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>Audio engineer</td>
<td>Eckington NE (Eckington NE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>Trinidad NE (Bloomingdale NW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>European American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Shop owner (craft)</td>
<td>Takoma NW (Takoma NW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carla</td>
<td>European American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Animal hospital receptionist</td>
<td>West End NW (Georgetown NW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mona</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>Non-profit sector</td>
<td>Takoma Park, MD (Takoma NW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Pastor/army reservist</td>
<td>Takoma Park, MD (Takoma NW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>European American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Commercial airline pilot</td>
<td>Logan Circle NW (Logan Circle NW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Vintage clothing curator</td>
<td>Manor Park NW (Crestwood NW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillian</td>
<td>European American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Pet sitter/shop clerk</td>
<td>Takoma NW (Silver Spring MD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>European American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Retired car salesman</td>
<td>Georgetown NW (Georgetown NW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azza</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Speech pathology/ Islamic school aide</td>
<td>Capitol Hill SE (Anacostia SE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imam</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>Imam</td>
<td>Shaw NW (Anacostia SE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Small business owner</td>
<td>Takoma NW (Petworth NW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter</td>
<td>European American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Shop owner (café)</td>
<td>Silver Spring MD (Capitol Hill NE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtis</td>
<td>European American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Antiques dealer/restorer</td>
<td>Takoma Park MD (Takoma Park MD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fahad</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Security guard</td>
<td>Columbia Heights NW (Fort Lincoln NE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turing</td>
<td>European American</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Apartment building concierge</td>
<td>Georgetown NW (Georgetown NW)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 2.1 we see the following information about the speakers: Pseudonym, ethnoracial affiliation, sex, age at the time of interview, educational attainment, occupation, neighborhood where speaker lived at the time of interview (including quadrant or state), and neighborhood where they spent the majority of their childhood (in parentheses).

I was unable to satisfactorily determine socioeconomic class categories for the speakers, in large part due to the multiple combinations of educational attainment and occupation at the time of interview. College graduates whose jobs are service-oriented (e.g. Mark and Turing) are represented, as well as high school graduates who are successful entrepreneurs with several employees (e.g. Casey and Peter). I have therefore chosen to exclude social class as a factor in my analyses, using only educational attainment as an external factor possibly correlating with patterns of language variation in the quantitative analysis.

2.6 Variables and variants under study

I analyze three phonological features with variable realizations (that is, phonological variables). The variables and their variants are:

- Variability in /l/ in coda and syllabic position (e.g. cool, people). The variant I am interested in is /l/-vocalization, that is, the degree to which the /l/ in coda and
syllabic position is vowel-like (e.g. [kʊː] or [kʊːw] for cool). This is a continuous variable, that is, the degree of vocalization is measured on a scale from more /l/-ful to more vocalized.

- (ING). This variable refers to the variation in the nasal in word-final -ing, both morphemic –ing (e.g. running), and –ing in monomorphemic, multisyllabic items (e.g. morning). The two variants for this variable are velar ([rʌnɪŋ] for running), which I will refer to as -ing and alveolar ([rʌnɪŋ] for running), which I will refer to as –in. I am interested in the patterning of the alveolar variant.

- Coronal stops in word-final consonant clusters. This refers to the variable realization of the coronal stops /t/ and /d/ in words like missed, past, mend and filmed, that is to say, at the end of word-final consonant clusters. I am interested in the patterning of deletion of /t/ and /d/ in this position, a variant which is known as Coronal Stop Deletion (henceforth CSD). Other variants include ‘present’ (but not audibly released) and ‘released’, with an audible release burst.

All three variables are well attested in varieties of American English and the variants under study (/l/ vocalization, -in and CSD) have strong associations with both European American Southern speech and African American speech. Because of these shared social group
associations for some of their variants, the variants lend themselves to a study investigating the
effect of several phonological components in social meaning-making, such as this one. Before
moving on to consider the social associations and geographic spread of the variants, which I
describe in detail in Chapter 3 for /l/ vocalization and in Chapter 4 for –in and CSD, I will
present considerations for the coding and analysis of the features.

2.6.1 Characteristics and coding methods for /l/-vocalization

In this section, I review phonetic characteristics and coding methods for /l/
vocalization, which refers to the vowel-like production of ‘dark’ [ɬ] in syllable codas and
syllabic environments, such as cool or little. ‘Clear’ [l], most commonly found in syllable
onsets\(^\text{20}\), is produced with an apical gesture against the alveolar ridge and a retraction of the
tongue dorsum (see Figure 2.1), while ‘dark’ /l/ is produced with a similar apical gesture and a
raised tongue body (Ladefoged 1982: 61-62).

\(^{20}\) Van Hofwegen (2010) finds that speakers of American English, particularly African Americans, also exhibit
degrees of ‘darkening’ or velarization of /l/ in syllable onsets.
Vocalization of dark /l/ involves the retraction and lowering of the tongue body, resulting in a weakening of both the apical and dorsal gestures (Ash 1982). Vocalized /l/ has been described as having an acoustic, perceptual, and articulatory likeness to a back vowel /u/ or semi-vowel /w/ (Hardcastle and Barry 1989), or a “voiced glide articulated far back in the mouth” (Ash 1986: 330). Sproat and Fujimura (1993) find that the articulatory settings of both dark and vocalized /l/ are very similar to the setting involved in producing high and mid back vowels /u/ and /ɔ/, so that dark /l/ can be vocalized or strongly /l/-ful.

The shared gestures between /l/ and back vowels make it notoriously difficult to capture acoustically. The articulatory settings result in similar formant patterns for back vowels and /l/. To illustrate the acoustic likeness, Figures 2.2 and 2.3 show one /l/-ful and one vocalized instance of /l/ in the word ‘cool’, spoken by me. The two tokens appear to differ only
in the height of F3, which has been used as a way to measure /l/ vocalization acoustically (Hazen and Dodsworth 2012; van Hofwegen 2010).

Figure 2.2. ‘Cool game’, non-vocalized dark /l/ highlighted, showing F3 at 2781 Hz

Figure 2.3. ‘Cool game’, vocalized /l/ highlighted, showing F3 at 2362 Hz

In Figure 2.2, there is no visible transition between vowel and /l/ in the formant structure, due to the fact that dark /l/ and back vowels share a vocalic articulatory gesture, the
retraction of the tongue dorsum (Sproat and Fujimura 1993: 305). The dark /l/ is thus virtually indistinguishable from the vowel in F3 (2781Hz). In Figure 2.3, we see some difference in F3 between the preceding vowel and the vocalized /l/, indicating that F3 may be a useful way to measure degree of vocalization in sociophonetic studies. F3 as a measure of /l/ vocalization shows particular promise because vocalized /l/ is often accompanied by lip rounding (Docherty and Foulkes 1999), and lip rounding in turn lowers F3 (Maeda 1990: 143).

Sociolinguists have treated /l/ vocalization using both acoustic and auditory methods. Dodsworth, Plichta and Durian (2006) examine the acoustic difference in amplitude between a nucleus vowel and the coda-/l/ following it. They correlate higher degrees of difference in amplitude between a vowel and coda-/l/ with more consonantal realizations of /l/; since vowels have higher amplitude, a less vowel-like /l/ exhibits relatively lower amplitude than a more vowel-like /l/. Hall-Lew and Fix (2012) report being unable to replicate the findings. Hazen and Dodsworth (2012) use F3 as a measure of degree of /l/ vocalization. In their study of 64 West Virginians, they find that /l/ vocalization is receding in apparent time, by measuring F3 for coda-/l/ and syllabic /l/. Younger speakers, particularly younger women, show higher F3 values for both types of /l/, and the researchers interpret this difference as a more ‘consonantal’ /l/. Although some researchers are using acoustic methods, there remains a
lot of uncertainty about the reliability, replicability, and accuracy of these methods (see Hall-Lew and Fix 2012 for a thorough discussion).

To date, most studies of /l/ vocalization utilize a variety of auditory techniques. Most auditorily coded studies of /l/ vocalization operationalize the variable as having several potential realizations, corresponding to researchers’ perception of degrees of vocalization. Many studies (Ash 1982; Dodsworth 2005; Durian 2008; Fix 2004; Horvath and Horvath 2002; McElhinny 1999) code /l/ on a three-point scale, including unambiguously /l/-ful tokens, unambiguously vocalized tokens, and those in between. Stuart-Smith, Timmins and Tweedie (2006) use a four-point scale including fully consonantal, in-between, fully vocalic, and fully deleted segments. Hall-Lew and Fix (2012) use a four-point scale that is designed to reflect the gradient nature of /l/ vocalization, and to attend to the fact that it is frequently difficult to distinguish between fully vocalized and deleted /l/s. The scale distinguishes between four steps of vocalization, where 1 = “definitely /l/-ful”, 2 = “some perceptible vocalization”, 3 = “strong perceptible vocalization”, and 4 = “definitely vocalized”. Rather than treating all ambiguous tokens as belonging to one category, the four-point scale captures the fine distinctions even among those tokens that are not obviously vocalized. In an inter-coder perception experiment in which trained linguists coded degrees of /l/-vocalization, Hall-Lew and Fix (2012) found
that the method is relatively reliable across coders, and that lack of agreement between coders frequently had to do with classification of intermediate tokens. I have chosen to follow Hall-Lew and Fix’ method in this dissertation; because I am able to both perceive and produce /l/ vocalization reliably, I found that I could use the four-point scale with relative ease to capture degrees of vocalization in the recordings included in my corpus.

Next, I describe the considerations and categories employed in coding /l/ vocalization in DC, including environments for vocalization, and linguistic and social conditioning factors selected as possible influences on the feature’s variable patterning.

**Environments for vocalization.** (Horvath and Horvath 2001: 40), and Borowsky and Horvath (1997) describe that vocalization happens in three environments: in syllable coda, as in *cool*, as part of syllable coda cluster, as in *milk*, and in a nucleus/syllabic environment, as in *bottle*. McElhinny (1999), however, states that “vocalization of /l/ can occur in almost any environment in which /l/ occurs, including intervocally, postconsonantally, word-initially, syllable-initially, pre-consonantally, and word-finally” (1999:179). Some research has investigated word-medial and intervocalic vocalization, notably in Pennsylvania (Ash 1982, 1986; McElhinny 1999), England and Scotland (Stuart-Smith et al. 2006; Timmins, Tweedie and Stuart-Smith 2004). I chose to only focus on word-final coda-/l/ and syllabic /l/
realizations, partly because most work on /l/ vocalization considers these environments, and partly because there was little indication of vocalization in initial and intervocalic environments in my interviews. I included all tokens of word-final coda and syllabic /l/ except those followed by /l/ (e.g. feel like).

**Internal (linguistic) factors.** Previous sociolinguistic studies of /l/ vocalization have consistently found preceding and following phonological environment to strongly affect the degree of vocalization. I most closely follow Dodsworth’s (2005) coding categories for linguistic influences on /l/ vocalization; she tested for the effects of preceding and following phonological environment, as well as the morphology of /l/. Dodsworth considers morpheme-final /l/ and morpheme-internal /l/ as factors in her analysis, and notes that the majority of morpheme-final tokens were also syllabic. In my study, I tested for effects on vocalization of syllabic /l/ and coda-/l/, a category which roughly corresponds to Dodsworth’s morphology category²¹.

**Preceding phonological environment.** I coded for the following preceding environments:

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²¹ I adhere to the methods used by other researchers, in particular Dodsworth (2005), for this analysis in the interest of comparison and replicability. However, one potential problem with treating morphology/syllabicity as a factor in the same analysis as preceding phonological environment is the interaction between them – only syllabic /l/ will be preceded by a consonant, and only coda-/l/ will be preceded by a vowel. I have set this potential interaction aside for the purposes of the present analysis, with the caveat that it is problematic and requires closer analysis in future work.
• Front vowel (feel, hill, children, elderly)
• Back vowel (fool, dull, almost, cold)
• Labial consonant (trouble, people)
• Coronal consonant (little, middle)
• Dorsal consonant (wiggle, tackle)

Following phonological environment. I also treat following phonological environment similarly to Dodsworth (2005). Unlike Dodsworth, McElhinny (1999) treats following pause in terms of degree of juncture rather than a following phonological environment. In McElhinny’s work, syllable-internal /l/ s are treated as followed by a weak boundary (e.g. cold tea), and the boundaries get stronger for syllable-final /l/ s (e.g. cool tea) and intonation phrase-final /l/ s. I have chosen to treat following pause alongside other following phonological environments.

The following environments were coded for analysis:

• Front vowel (fall in, middle English)
• Central vowel [ə], unstressed following segment (little and)
• Back vowel (fall over, people are)
• Labial consonant (people bring, cool boat, almost)
• Coronal consonant (people can, cool trip, children)
• Dorsal consonant (people go, cool cat)
• Pause

Syllable structure. I used two categories to test whether syllabic /l/ or coda-/l/ were more likely to be vocalized:

• Syllabic /l/ (people, tackle, little, middle)
• Non-syllabic /l/ (cool, milk, children, almost)
**External (social) factors.** In addition to the internal conditioning factors, I coded for several external or social factors:

- Speaker sex (male; female)
- Speaker age (continuous, given in years)
- Ethnoracial affiliation (African American; European American)
- Education (college; non-college)
- Discourse context (DC; Personal; Language)

I chose these social factors because they can help establish the status of /l/ vocalization, as well as of –in and CSD, in DC vis-à-vis several social categories, to help us understand the social associations of the variants in DC. I coded for speaker sex because women have been shown to use vernacular variants less than men (e.g. Labov 2001) in stable variables. Testing for the effect of speaker age enables me to find out if any of the features are undergoing a change in progress in apparent time (i.e. if younger generations are moving toward more or less vernacular-linked use; see Bailey, Wilke, Tiller, and Sand (1991)). The interest in speakers’ ethnoracial affiliation is self-explanatory; since no previous studies have been done comparing DC area EA and AA populations, testing for the effects of ethnoracial affiliation helps establish the similarity or difference of the usage patterns among the two groups. Speakers’ educational

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22 In initial analysis, I tested a three-way contrast of high school, college, and graduate degree, to best represent the differences in educational attainment among the speakers. This contrast was not found to be significant.

23 I discuss the coding for this category in section 2.6.4.
attainment serves as a heuristic for socioeconomic class (though this is problematic, as I discuss in section 1.9). Finally, I am interested in the effect of what speakers are talking about on their use of the three vernacular-linked variants. I discuss this discourse context category in section 2.6.4.

In addition to the internal and external factors, which are all fixed effects whose influence on vocalization was tested across the speaker sample, I tested for variation having to do chiefly with individual speakers’ variable usage. I discuss the usefulness of testing any individual speaker’s influence vis-à-vis group effects of the various linguistic and extralinguistic factors in order to avoid over- or underreporting either linguistic or social effects, in section 2.7. A total of 1846 tokens (average 88 tokens per speaker) were included in the quantitative variation analysis and submitted to a linear regression analysis using the statistical program, Rbrul, created by D. Johnson (2009).

2.6.2 Characteristics and coding methods for Coronal Stop Deletion

Environments for coronal stop deletion. The second phonological feature included in this study is coronal stop deletion (CSD), also frequently known as (-t/d) deletion. CSD is one variant of the variable production of word- and cluster-final coronal stops /t/ and /d/. The
possible range of variants includes release, such that *east* is produced with a realized stop ([i:stʰ̪]); a range of intermediate forms including glottalized ([mnʔ] for *mint*) and tapped or flapped ([wenʔən] for *went on*) forms; and deletion, in which the segment is entirely absent ([fæs kəʔ] for *fast car*). The feature is exceptionally well studied in most varieties of English. In fact, recent work on CSD in Appalachia, where it is used widely throughout the community (Hazen 2011), and comments by Labov (1994) indicate that CSD overall is losing its social significance, simply because it is so widespread throughout both rural and urban communities. Nevertheless, it remains associated (particularly outside the high-use groups) with Southern and African American speech, making it a fruitful feature to investigate in Washington, DC. I give a more thorough treatment of CSD and its social correlates in Chapter 4.

**Internal (linguistic) predictors.** Guy (1980, 1991) showed that CSD is an interaction between morphology and phonology as deletion is systematically related to the morphological class of the item; deletion co-varies strongly with simple past-tense morphemes (e.g. *passed*), and is found less frequently in irregular (e.g. *kept*) and monomorphemic environments (e.g. *fast*).

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24 Some researchers have also considered the variable production of */t/* in intervocalic and non-cluster environments, particularly in investigating the social meanings of the performance of the feature. Podesva, Jamsu, Callier, and Heitman (2008) and Sclafani (2009) link intervocalic and non-cluster */t/-release ([səkʃərəθi] for *security*) to social meanings of articulateness and propriety, and flapped realizations ([səkʃəɾəɾ] for *security*) to meanings of lower prestige and friendliness. This is a feature separate from CSD, which refers to not only */t/* but also */d/* production, and is typically analyzed as cluster-final as well as word-final. I only consider */t/* and */d/* in consonant clusters in this study.
As just noted, despite the wide-ranging spread of CSD and its robust linguistic conditioning, it has continued to be associated with social and geographic groups, notably European Americans in the US Southeast (despite Hazen’s finding that CSD is no longer socially salient within Appalachia), and African Americans. While CSD occurs in a variety of environments, pre-vocalic CSD (e.g. *slep’ all night*) has particularly strong social associations, and is very robustly associated with non-standard African American speech. Guy and Cutler (2011) find a strong correlation between European American adolescents’ use of CSD and their reported affiliation with and participation in (predominantly African American) hip hop culture. CSD, then, retains social meanings despite its proliferation across communities. The internal or linguistics factors chosen for my analysis of CSD in Washington, DC (in adherence with previous studies, noted below) are:

*Voicing.* I coded each token for whether it was a voiced or voiceless coronal stop.

*Morphological category.* Following Guy (1980); (Guy and Boyd 1990), I coded the following categories:

- Regular past (*passed, trapped, dragged*)
- Semiweak past (*kept, went, slept*)
- Monomorphemic or uninflected (*mold, wind, trust*).

*Preceding phonological environment.*

- Stop (*packed*)
- Non-nasal/sibilant fricative (*stuffed*)
• Nasal (stunned)
• Sibilant (kissed)
• Liquid (killed)

**Following phonological environment.** Studies of CSD variation consider varying numbers of categories for following environment, from three (following vowel, consonant, pause, in Fasold (1972)), to several pooled into four major categories (consonants plus /l/, glides plus /r/, pause, /h/, and vowel, in Hazen (2011)). In this study, I have chosen to break the following environment category down further, to allow for fine effects of the following environment to emerge. The categories I employ are:

• Stop (*parked cars*, except following /t/ and /d/, e.g. *last time*)
• Non-nasal/sibilant fricative (*passed from*)
• Nasal (*trust no one*)
• Sibilant (*trust some people*)
• Liquid (*talked later*)
• Glide (*happened yet*)
• Stressed vowel (*slept all night*)
• Schwa (*kept a log*)
• Pause

**External (social) factors.** The same external factors were applied to all three features under analysis:

• Speaker sex (male; female)
• Speaker age (continuous, given in years)
• Ethnoracial affiliation (African American; European American)
• Education (college; non-college)
• Discourse context (DC; Personal; Language)
Speaker was included as a random effect. 1638 tokens of coronal stop deletion were included in the quantitative variation analysis and submitted to logistic regression analysis in Rbrul.

2.6.3 Characteristics and coding methods for -in

(ING) is a stable sociolinguistic variable that is found in most varieties of English (Chambers 2003); it refers primarily to the variable production of the nasal in progressive verb and gerund <ing> suffixes (he was swimming, swimming is fun) as well as monomorphemic, multisyllabic forms (morning, something). Though the -in variant of (ING) is colloquially known as ‘g-dropping’, the variable in fact encompasses two variant phonetic forms of the nasal: the alveolar nasal (e.g. he was swimmi[n]) and the velar nasal (e.g. he was swimmi[ŋ]). In this dissertation, I refer to the alveolar variant as alveolar (ING) or –in and to the velar variant as velar (ING) or –ing.

Environments for (ING) variation. Analyses of (ING) always consider this variability only in multisyllabic environments (excluding items like bring, thing, and spring) since (ING) only varies in unstressed syllables (Hazen 2008: 121). Other typically excluded forms are grammaticalized gonna for going to (Hazen 2008), and pronominal forms anything and everything
where <ing> is stressed (Mendoza-Denton 2008). *Something* and *nothing* are possible environments for (ING) variation. Some researchers have chosen to exclude them (Labov 2001: 79) after finding near-categorical rates of –*in*, while others have analyzed *something* and *nothing* alongside other monomorphemic (ING) nouns (e.g. Hazen 2008), or created a new category for –*thing* forms (c.f. Mendoza-Denton 2008 on *Th-Pro*). In this dissertation, I exclude *anything* and *everything*, and analyze *something* and *nothing* as nouns, in the same category as nouns like *morning*. The tokens of (ING) were coded for several internal and external factors.

**Internal (linguistic) factors.** I coded for three linguistic factors: grammatical category, and preceding and following phonological environment. In analyzing the grammatical conditioning of (ING), I follow the coding scheme used by Hazen (2008) in West Virginia, in part because it allows for clear comparison between Washington, DC, and its western neighbor state.

**Grammatical category.**

- Progressive verb form (*he was swimming*)
- Non-gerund noun (*what a beautiful morning; I didn’t do nothing*)
- Gerund (*swimming is fun*)
- Gerund-participle (*I tried introducing them*)
- Adjective (*school is boring*)

**Preceding phonological environment.**

- Back vowel (*going, booing*)
- Front vowel (*being*)
• Labial consonant (stopping, living, farming)
• Coronal consonant (eating, morning)
• Dorsal consonant (faking, hanging)
• Liquid consonant (falling, boring)

Following phonological environment.

• Back vowel (was depending on, I'm getting old)
• Front vowel (doing imitations, being able to)
• Central vowel, unstressed (having apartments, touring or something)
• Labial consonant (calling people, making fun of)
• Coronal consonants (coming together, doing something else)
• Dorsal consonant (feeling young, I feel spring coming, eating chicken)
• Liquid consonant (dividing line, expressing rage)
• Pause

External (social) factors. The same external factors were applied to all three features under analysis.

• Speaker sex (male; female)
• Speaker age (continuous, given in years)
• Ethnoracial affiliation (African American; European American)
• Education (college; non-college)
• Discourse context (DC; Personal; Language)

Speaker was included as a random effect. 1301 tokens of (ING) were submitted to a logistic regression with mixed effects in Rbrul.

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25 I include palato-alveolar affricates in the dorsal category
26 One speaker was excluded: Ellen, a 27-year-old European American woman. Ellen’s (ING) production differed from all other speakers in that many of her –in tokens were produced with a tense vowel [ɪn] rather than the typical lax vowel [ɪn]. Such raising/tensing has been described as a feature of both Chicano and California Englishes (Ladefoged 1999: 43, Mendoza-Denton 2008). Unlike the nasal alternation of (ING), raising/tensing
2.6.4 Coding for discourse context

Here I discuss the motivation to code the interviews for discourse context. My interest in the quantitative patterning of /l/ vocalization, -in and CSD follows work on stylistic variation, or intraspeaker variation within and across speech situations, that has looked at how the kinds of things speakers talk about condition their use (or non-use) of socially salient features. Specifically, I follow three studies that correlate use of vernacular variants associated with ethnoracial and place identity with particular discourse contexts in interview situations.

Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994) found that an African American teenager’s usage levels of AAVE-linked features including habitual be and plural –is absence were higher in talk about romantic entanglements than in talk about school and career plans, both with an African American and a white interviewer. The topic, the authors argue, evokes adolescent-centered social life, with all the melodrama, and non-standard morphosyntax, that it brings. Schilling-Estes (2004) finds that convergence or divergence in the use of AAVE-linked features such as /r/-lessness in an interview between an African American and a Lumbee Indian in Southeastern NC is linked to discussion topic: talk about race relations creates ethnoracial distance and divergence in AAVE-linked features, while talk about friends, family, and their

happens in both mono- and multisyllabic environments (e.g. thing as well as something). [in] thus does not fit within the scope of the (ING) variable. Because Ellen was so qualitatively different from other speakers’ –in production, she was excluded from the quantitative (ING) analysis.
shared experience in college brings them, and their use of AAVE-linked features, closer together. Finally, Becker (2009) finds that longtime residents of New York City’s Lower East Side – a neighborhood undergoing social change – use /r/-lessness, which is a classic New York City English (NYCE) feature, more frequently and strategically when discussing topics directly related to their neighborhoods. So discourse context, for a variety of reasons having to do with topic, speaker ideology, and self-expression, affects intraspeaker variation in sociolinguistic interviews.

To see whether discourse context affects Washingtonians’ stylistic choices at the group level, I selected three discourse contexts within which I coded all instances of /l/, (ING), and coronal stops, as discussed above. The contexts I selected were personal talk (i.e. talk about speaker’s childhood, family, leisure and work), DC talk (i.e. talk about neighborhoods, the past and present in DC, social and demographic change, important events in DC), and language talk (i.e. talk about local language practice, DC slang, and other types of metalinguistic commentary, both interviewer- and interviewee-initiated). These three categories represent the majority of talk in the interviews. I did not code talk discussing the physical environment at the time of interview (the microphone, weather, and so on) or talk that can be equated to extended list-making (one participant spent 15 minutes listing and humming songs by bands she enjoys).
My goal was to see whether talk about DC or talk about language would engender significantly more or significantly fewer instances of the vernacular variants, but the discourse context factor did not significantly affect the patterning of the variants for any of the features under study. This can be attributed in part to the difficulty of delimiting discourse contexts in loosely structured interviews like the LCDC interviews. For example, ‘personal’ talk about childhood games overlaps greatly with ‘DC’ talk about one’s childhood neighborhood and how it has changed. The contexts are inextricable from each other in such a loosely controlled environment, and therefore these interviews do not lend themselves to quantitative analysis of the effect of discourse context on vernacularity across speakers. In addition, as noted in Section 1.7 above, the ‘language’ context can and does encompass different types of styles, from relatively standard to highly vernacular, from the stiffly self-conscious to the jocularly performative; the same holds true for the other two discourse contexts as well. When speakers talk of DC, for example, they may be evoking its associations with politics and hence (often) standard speech or with its highly visible African American population (and dialect); even more diversely, the ‘personal’ topic of leisure may evoke far more casual, vernacular speech than the ‘personal’ topic of work.
However, investigating language variation in various discourse contexts shows clearly when and how speakers attend to ideas of place and identity, or identity and language, and is therefore excellent data to examine for evidence of moment-to-moment identity work in the interview, using the phonological variants of interest in conjunction with discourse-pragmatic elements. I examine this kind of meaning-making in metalinguistic discourse in Chapter 5. Before moving on to analyzing the quantitative patterns for the three variables in Chapters 3 and 4, I will discuss the variation analysis and attendant statistical analysis techniques used.

2.7 Quantitative analysis

As I mentioned briefly in Chapter 1, quantitative variation analysis seeks to assess and weigh the effects of various linguistic and social factors (independent variables) on the realization of sociolinguistic features (dependent variables) through the use of multivariate regression analysis. This type of analysis helps answer questions like: Which of the factors at hand – for example preceding environment, following environment, speaker sex, age, ethnoracial affiliation, and education – most strongly affect the use of a particular linguistic variant?
I analyze the tokens of /l/, coronal stops and (ING) through a series of multivariate regression analyses using RBrul (Johnson 2009). RBrul is a software package developed specifically for sociolinguistic variation analysis using the R statistical platform, which is in wide use across the social sciences. It performs largely the same functions as classic statistical programs used in sociolinguistic variation analysis, known as ‘variable rule analysis’ programs; these include the classic VARBRUL 2 (Sankoff 1975) and its recent Goldvarb incarnation (Sankoff, Tagliamonte and Smith 2005).

There are two main differences between these variable rule analysis programs and RBrul: (1) what types of regression analyses are possible, and thus what types of dependent variables can be analyzed, and (2) how they control for the variability among individual speakers and how this might affect the overall patterning of variation in a data set. With regard to (1), other variable rule programs perform a regression analysis known as logistic regression, while RBrul has the capability to perform both logistic and linear regression. With regard to (2), other variable rule programs treat all independent variables (e.g. environment, age, sex, et cetera) as fixed effects, while RBrul also has the capability of analyzing random effects, taking into account individual speakers’ patterns. The mix of fixed and random effects in a model is referred to as ‘mixed effects modeling’ and is an option in RBrul analysis.
Below, I discuss these differences, in order to explain my choice of analytical tools for this dissertation. I discuss how to read and interpret RBul results alongside each quantitative analysis in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

**Logistic and linear regression.** Variable rule programs like VARBRUL and Goldvarb conduct variation analysis through *multiple logistic regression*. Logistic regression is a type of statistical analysis that analyzes the effect of some number of factors on the outcome of a categorical dependent variable – i.e. a variable composed of discrete variants, often two, as in the case of binomial variable rule analysis (as for example with the \(-in\) and \(-ing\) variants of (ING)), though sometimes more, as in the case of multinomial variable rule analysis. A great many sociolinguistic features can be analyzed as discrete, including (ING) as exemplified above. In addition, variables with more than two discrete variants are often treated as binary for logistic regression analysis purposes. For example, we can treat CSD as a binary variable in the sense that we test which factors favor deletion vs. all other realizations (e.g. glottalized, unreleased, or released realizations).

Because variable rules programs like VARBRUL and Goldvarb only use *logistic* regression, they lack the capability for analyzing variables whose realizations are gradient or continuous. Such variables should be analyzed using *linear* regression, and include vowels
(whose frontness/backness and height can be measured along a continuous scale of Hertz values rather than as discrete variants such as the fronted vs. non-fronted production of a particular vowel) and also /l/ vocalization. As mentioned in Section 2.6.1, /l/ vocalization can be treated as categorical (i.e. the realization can be coded as either vocalized or not vocalized), or as continuous. Continuous coding reflects degrees of vocalization. I code vocalization auditorily on a four-point scale, creating essentially an index which, while composed of discrete ‘variants’ 1, 2, 3 and 4, also represents a cline of vocalization from not vocalized at all (1, analogous to 0% vocalization) through some vocalization (2 and 3) all the way to fully vocalized /l/ (4, or 100% vocalization). RBrul enables a linear regression analysis of /l/ vocalization, which better captures the continuous nature of /l/ vocalization than would a logistic regression analysis, in which variants must be treated as discrete rather than as points on the same linear scale.

**Mixed effects modeling** stands for a type of statistical modeling in which the analyst assesses both the effects of particular factors across the whole sample (these factors are *fixed* effects, such as age, ethnoracial affiliation), as well as factors that may vary ‘above and beyond’ the fixed effects (these factors are *random* effects, such as speaker – since different speakers may
act differently from what their ‘fixed’ characteristics might predict). Mixing fixed and random effects in a model is known as mixed effects modeling.

Variable rule programs like VARBRUL and Goldvarb do not support mixed effects modeling, perhaps due to some foundational tenets of variationist analysis as originally conceived. In an important work, Guy (1980) demonstrates that when one analyzes large amounts of data across a wide variety of individuals within a community, community-level patterns of CSD are reflected in the patterns of individual speakers. In this type of large-scale analysis, because individuals’ patterns reliably trend in the direction of the group, analyzing fixed effects such as sex, age, and ethnoracial affiliation, yields reliable outcomes, informative about variation in the community.

The data set for this project, because I am interested in interactional and stylistic questions in addition to variation in the DC community, is slightly different, and benefits greatly from mixed effects modeling. In data sets like mine, with a limited speaker sample (21 speakers) and sizeable numbers of tokens per speaker, the behavior of a particular individual can have a skewing effect on the outcome of a model. For example, if one speaker in a smaller sample near-categorically exhibits –in for (ING), treating each of the speaker’s tokens as representative of the whole group (by analyzing the data for ‘fixed’ effects such as sex, age,
ethnoracial affiliation, et cetera) may produce a model that overestimates how much each factor contributes to the patterning of -\textit{in} across the whole group, by assigning the preference for \textit{-in} to a social factor (sex, age, and so on) instead of to the speaker who is responsible for it. Including a ‘random’ effect of speaker helps avoid overestimation of the linguistic or social effects, while ensuring that the effects that do hold for the whole sample will be visible.

In sum, the quantitative analyses in this dissertation are logistic and linear regressions with mixed effects, conducted using RBrul, and aim to describe the overall patterning of CSD, -\textit{in} and /\textit{l}/ vocalization among the 21 Washingtonians whose sociolinguistic interviews I analyzed.

2.8 Summary

In this chapter, I have introduced the data used for this dissertation and some methodological considerations. In summary, this dissertation is part of LCDC, an ongoing sociolinguistic project at Georgetown University, whose aim is to investigate structural and functional roles of language in social differentiation and community building and orientation in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area.

The data is drawn from 21 sociolinguistic interviews with lifelong residents of Washington, DC; five European American men, five European American women, six African
American men, and five African American women are represented. I conducted four interviews myself and used 17 interviews from the LCDC corpus. I use the label *ethnoracial affiliation* rather than *race* or *ethnicity* because I believe the term better reflects the intimate relationship between the two notions. The labels *African American* and *European American* better capture the groups I am analyzing than do the labels *white* and *black*. The coding choices for the features under study made largely reflect prior literature on /l/-vocalization, CSD, and (ING). The coding was done auditorily, by identifying tokens of the variables in possible environments and coding for their realization. Finally, I discuss considerations in choosing quantitative analysis tools, including the use of linear and logistic regressions and mixed effects modeling in RBrul.

In the next chapter, I turn to the analysis of /l/ vocalization, looking at its linguistic and social patterning among European American and African American Washingtonians. I also connect patterns of /l/ vocalization to DC’s geographic marginality and exceptional status among cities in the region.
Chapter 3.

/L/ vocalization in Washington, DC

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I consider the linguistic and social conditioning of /l/-vocalization in Washington, DC, particularly as it relates to place identity and Washington, DC, as a marginal and transitional community. One motivation behind looking at /l/ vocalization specifically, besides its association with European American Southern and African American speech, which I describe below, is that it was one of the few specific linguistic features picked out as a local feature in European Americans’ metalinguistic commentary. We see such commentary in Extract 8, taken from the interview with Ellen, a 27-year-old European American woman who grew up in the Glover Park neighborhood in Northwest DC. Prior to the extract, the interviewer has asked Ellen, about how she perceives DC accents. Ellen reports not noticing that DC accents are particularly distinctive, although she has noticed something in her own speech. What she has noticed is a tendency not to pronounce the /l/ in words like ‘wolf’.
1. Int.: So you say 'woof' for 'wolf'?  
2. Ellen: Wolf- so a a funny story to kind of make this more clear would be, um,  
3. when my nephew was born about three years ago,  
4. and I went to, um, Toys'R'Us, looking for a stuffed animal that was a woof.  
5. And I asked the gentleman working there, “Do you have any woof toys””,  
6. and he's like looking at me kind of perplexed like “Do you mean woofle ball?”  
7. and I was like “No, like like a woof, you know like a stuffed animal, a woof”,  
8. and he's like, “A wolf, wolves?”, like that sort of thing,  
9. and I'm like “Yes a woof”, um…  
10. But again it- it sounds completely normal to me,  
11. and I don't know if that's the way the rest of my family says it or just me,  
12. but that's something that I get called out for.

The feature that Ellen is performing through the stylization of “woof” is the vocalization of coda-/l/. Other Washingtonians also notice /l/-vocalization. In extract (9) another European American woman (Gillian, 53), comments on noticing the feature in place and street names in the area. Gillian’s comment in particular shows a very specific understanding of the feature, namely that /l/ is deleted in some people’s speech.

1. Gillian: Around here, Colesville Road was Coesville, C-o-e-s-v-i-l-l-e.  
2. No 'l' in there, it was Coesville.
These European American metalinguistic comments on /l/, alongside /l/ vocalization’s social and place associations across English-speaking communities, make /l/ vocalization a good candidate for investigating the liminal, marginal, and transitional place that Washington, DC, occupies in sociocultural and sociolinguistic terms. Metalinguistic commentary indicates that /l/ vocalization may be widespread among DC-area European Americans, which could help us understand better DC EAs’ linguistic relationship to EA Southerners. Knowing its distribution among DC area African Americans contributes to a better overall picture of DC AAE as well as potentially indicating similarities to or differences from other varieties of AAE across the United States. Finally, understanding the social associations of /l/ vocalization in DC contributes to the analysis of the enactment of Washingtonian identities in interaction through the use of socially salient phonological variants. With all these goals in mind, I begin this chapter by reviewing studies of /l/ vocalization across English speaking communities. I then discuss the results of the quantitative analysis of /l/ vocalization in DC. Finally, I discuss the patterns of /l/ vocalization among EAs and AAs in a sociogeographic context, arguing that /l/ vocalization is one of the features that showcases DC’s identity as a sociolinguistically marginal community, mainly due to its role as a migration hub and major metropolis.
3.2 Studies of /l/ vocalization in English

/l/ vocalization is a fairly widespread feature in English, found in communities as geographically disparate as Australia and New Zealand (Horvath and Horvath 2001, 2002), London and the Southeast of England (e.g. Hardcastle and Barry 1989, Wells 1982), Glasgow (Stuart-Smith, Timmins and Tweedie 2006) and even the Falkland Islands (Sudbury 2001). Johnson and Britain (2007) explain the wide-ranging and diverse dialects in which the feature occurs as a phonological consequence of its phonetic profile. According to Johnson and Britain, /l/ vocalization can occur in any dialect of English that maintains an allophonic contrast between clear /l/ and dark /l/, with the former being found in syllable onsets and the latter in codas.

In the United States, /l/ vocalization is perhaps most commonly associated with the speech of African Americans. Vocalization of /l/ has been shown to be a robust feature of African American English (Labov, Cohen, Robins and Lewis 1968; Rickford 1999; Thomas 2007). Geographically specific descriptions of /l/-vocalization in AAE include New York City27 (Labov et al. 1968) and Columbus, Ohio (Fix 2004, 2005; Durian 2008). The feature is also associated with the speech of European American Southerners (Hazen and Dodsworth 2012;

27 Labov et al suggest that the realization of /l/ as weakened or deleted patterns similarly with postvocalic rlessness, another phonological process associated with African American vernacular speech; see also Thomas (2007: 454) on ‘l-lessness’

Aside from correlating with place and ethnoracial affiliation, findings have suggested that /l/ vocalization participates in more complex relationships between groups and language varieties. Specifically, /l/ vocalization stratifies not only according to region and race, but also according to intercommunity relations and speakers’ orientation toward communities. Horvath and Horvath (2001) studied the presence of /l/ vocalization in nine communities in Australia and New Zealand. The authors suggest that New Zealand communities’ high levels of vocalization represent a sociocultural as well as linguistic divergence from Australian prestige forms, due to an ideological distinction being created and maintained between New Zealand and its larger and more powerful neighbor, Australia. Among the locations in the two countries in which /l/ is a longstanding stable variable, speakers from Christchurch, New Zealand, vocalize
the most, and speakers from Sydney, Australia, the least. Sydney is an Australian metropolis, and Christchurch is the only city on the New Zealand South Island, rather far removed from the densely populated and more prestigious capital, Auckland. /L/ vocalization thus carries social associations to New Zealand and, most likely also to pastoral communities and lower prestige.

/L/ vocalization also carries various associations to working-class identity in urban contexts. Across varieties of English, one of the strongest class-linked associations for /l/ vocalization is to broad Cockney, a stigmatized, non-standard urban variety of English spoken by working-class London area residents. /L/ vocalization has historically been a prominent feature of Cockney (e.g. Wells 1982: 282, Johnson and Britain 1997), although recent decades have seen it spread from Cockney to the less stigmatized, more middle-class and prestigious variety known as Estuary English (Wells 1994a, 1994b). It is also found in the speech of residents of Glasgow, Scotland, most extensively among young working-class Glaswegians (Stuart-Smith et al. 2006).

Such class- and prestige-oriented meanings for /l/ vocalization are also found in the United States. Aside from Labov et al.’s (1968) finding that /l/ vocalization is widespread among working-class African Americans and Puerto Ricans in New York City, class is a major social correlate in more recent work on vocalization in the Midland dialect region (McElhinny
McElhinny’s study finds extensive rates of vocalization among working-class European American uniformed police officers in Pittsburgh, PA. /L/ vocalization is found among both EAs and AAs in Columbus, OH, but is attributed to social class as well, with blue-collar workers using the feature more than white-collar workers (Durian 2008). In addition, Dodsworth finds that among European American, middle-class speakers in the Columbus suburb of Worthington, vocalization rates correlate with orientations toward the relationship between (wealthy) Worthington and (poorer) Columbus, whose urban sprawl is encroaching on the town. The strongest resistance to vocalization is found in the speech of those who identify strongly with “old Worthington” rather than the “Columbus outskirts,” leading Dodsworth to suggest that /l/ vocalization indexes working class urbanism in the Columbus area.

Surprisingly little work has been done on the correlation of class and /l/ vocalization in the US South. Hazen and Hamilton (2008) report that /l/ vocalization is widespread across communities in West Virginia and that there appears to be no overt stigmatization of the feature, indicating that vocalization is not strongly class-linked. This finding mirrors Hazen’s (2011) argument that Coronal Stop Deletion – a historically class-stratified and stable sociolinguistic variable – has lost its social links to class in West Virginia due to the wide spread
of the feature across classes and communities. Nevertheless, /l/ vocalization is receding in West Virginia, a change led by younger, female speakers (Hazen and Dodsworth 2012), indicating a loss of a local (Southern) speech norm. Whether or not /l/ vocalization carries strong class-linked meanings within communities in the South, it is a stereotype of Southern speech, which in turn is frequently caricatured as the speech of poor, rural, working-class people (Preston 1996).

The links between /l/ vocalization, European American Southern speech and African American speech, regardless of whether or not the variant also carries social class associations, motivate the investigation of the patterning of /l/ vocalization in Washington, DC, as a feature that is potentially highly revealing of regional and ethnolinguistic affiliations. In the next sections, I present the quantitative analysis of /l/ vocalization in Washington, DC, and argue that its patterning among EAs and AAs together with the social associations found in previous studies helps situate DC sociolinguistically in terms of regional and social affiliations.

### 3.3 Results

In this section, I present the results of the quantitative analysis, using linear regression analysis in RBrul as the chief statistical tool (see section 2.7 for description). The internal, or linguistic, factors tested were preceding phonological environment, following phonological
environment and syllable structure (see section 2.5 for details on coding). I also tested for the effect of social factors on /l/ vocalization. The factors tested were sex, age, ethnoracial affiliation, educational attainment, and discourse context. I also included speaker as a random effect.

The analysis accounts for the degree and direction of the effect of a variety of factors on the realization of /l/, that is, whether the linguistic and/or social factors make it more or less likely that /l/ will be more or less vocalized. In the analysis of categorical variables (like (ING) or CSD), the degree of each factors’ effect is reported as a factor weight. Factor weights are reported as values between 0 and 1, centered at 0.5. A factor weight of 0.5 indicates that a factor has no effect on the dependent variable; factor weights above 0.5 indicate that the factor favors the occurrence of the selected variant of the dependent variable (i.e. the ‘application’ of a variable rule, in older variationist terminology). Factor weights below 0.5 indicate that a factor disfavors the application of the selected variant of the dependent variable. As an example (taken from my analysis of –in in Chapter 4), the grammatical category of words ending in <ing> has an effect on the likelihood of –in realization. Progressive forms (e.g. he was running, factor weight 0.635) favor –in; gerund-participles (e.g. I tried introducing him, factor weight 0.495) neither favor nor
disfavor -in; adjectives (e.g. *a boring movie*, factor weight 0.339) disfavor -in. The likelihood of -in realization is thus progressive > gerund-participle > adjective.

In the case of a continuous dependent variable, such as /l/ vocalization, RBrul is unable to assign any meaningful factor weight to the factors. Instead, effects and their sizes are reported in terms of log-odds coefficients. Unlike factor weights, these are centered at 0, with positive coefficients indicating that a factor predicts more vocalization, and negative coefficients indicating a disfavoring effect. Like factor weights, the coefficients indicate the direction of the effect. The higher a positive value, the more vocalization a factor predicts; the lower a negative value, the less vocalization is predicted. The effects of the linguistic and social factors for /l/ vocalization is reported as log-odds coefficients in Table 3.1. The factors that have a significant effect on the patterning of vocalization are presented, in descending order of strength. Out of the linguistic factors, syllable structure (syllabic vs. coda-/l/) was not chosen as significant; out of the social factors, age, educational attainment, and discourse context were not chosen as significant.
Table 3.1. Significant factors affecting /l/ vocalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor (N=1822)</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnoracial affiliation (p=0.001)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>0.321</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>2.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European American</td>
<td>-0.921</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>1.416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following phonological environment (p&lt;0.001)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause</td>
<td>0.207</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>2.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorsal</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>1.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labial</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>1.724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1.756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronal</td>
<td>-0.011</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>1.710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back vowel</td>
<td>-0.072</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front vowel</td>
<td>-0.102</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>1.590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central vowel</td>
<td>-0.292</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>1.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (p=0.03)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.183</td>
<td>854</td>
<td>2.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.183</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>1.584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preceding phonological environment (p&lt;0.001)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronal</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1.770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labial</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>1.898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back vowel</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>1.867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velar</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1.615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front vowel</td>
<td>-0.168</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>1.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviance=4626.264</td>
<td>DF=16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept=1.722</td>
<td>grand mean=1.784</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28 The values reported at the bottom of the table — deviance, degrees of freedom (DF), intercept, and grand mean, reflect various aspects of the model and the data set. ‘Deviance’ indicates how much the variation observed in the data deviates from the predictions for this variation made by the model: the larger the deviance, the worse the fit. There is no baseline for reporting deviance, since this is dependent on the number of predictors (independent variables), so the large deviance value in the /l/ vocalization model also reflects that it has many predictors. ‘Degrees of freedom’ (DF) is a value that also reflects the number of independent variables that are used to build the model of variation: the more factors that go into a model, the higher the number. ‘Intercept’ indicates the baseline for the model, that is, the estimated value for the dependent variable independent of the effects of any linguistic or extralinguistic factors: this model’s intercept indicates that the model estimates the mean value for /l/ vocalization to be 1.722 according to the four-point scale, that is, exhibiting slight vocalization. The ‘grand mean’ reports the overall data distribution: the data in this model has a mean of 1.784, that is, the actual mean degree of vocalization is slightly higher than estimated by the intercept.
3.3.1 Preceding phonological environment

The effect of preceding environment is significant, though the narrow range in log-odds coefficients indicates that the effect is small\(^{29}\). Preceding coronal consonants most strongly condition /l/ vocalization (coefficient 0.065), followed by labial consonants (0.054) and back vowels (0.051). The effect resonates with previous findings: Dodsworth (2005) found back vowels and labial consonants to favor /l/ vocalization in Columbus, OH. Durian (2008) and Hall-Lew (2009) also confirm the promoting effect of preceding back vowels on /l/ vocalization. The effect of back vowels, which promote vocalization, is unsurprising as dark and vocalized /l/s share a velar gesture (lowering and retraction of the tongue); indeed, vowels like [u] and [ɔ] look all but identical to a back vowel when viewed in a spectrogram (see Figures 2.2 and 2.3 in section 2.6.1). Conversely, preceding front vowels inhibit vocalization as they are produced with the tongue in a fronter position.

The favoring effect of preceding labials and coronals is less strongly supported by previous work, as studies have found preceding coronals to inhibit vocalization (among EAs, Dodsworth 2005, Durian 2008; among AAs Durian 2008; though McElhinny 1999 does find a favoring effect for preceding /r/). To account for the patterning in this data, the effect of

\(^{29}\) The effect is small despite the p-value of under 0.001 putting this factor well within the threshold for statistical significance. This result demonstrates the necessity of looking not only at p-values but also log-odds coefficients when determining statistical significance of individual factors.
coronal and labial consonants may be the opposite of that of preceding front vowels. Since the main articulatory closure in these segments is labial and/or apical, the dorsal gesture of /l/ vocalization is not inhibited, thereby promoting some degree of vocalization, because the tongue tip and dorsum are able to move independently of each other to some extent.

The effect for coronals might also be attributable to the exact phonetic characteristics of the preceding segment, since there is a limited number of syllabic lexical items represented in the data. For syllabic tokens with a preceding labial, *people* is a well-represented item; for preceding coronals, *middle* and *little* are high-frequency items; and for preceding dorsals, *single* and *circle* are particularly common. What distinguishes coronals from both dorsals and labials in this case is the fact that the highest-frequency preceding coronal is a flap. *Little* is often pronounced as [lɪʰɬ] rather than [lɪtɬʰ], and since the flapped segment is produced with a weaker (and shorter in duration) closure at the alveolar ridge than a released /t/, this makes the flapped coronal a favorable environment for /l/ vocalization.

In this analysis, I did not consider ‘word’ as a random effect to account for uneven distribution of environments; doing so will fruitfully disambiguate the relationship between vocalization and preceding environment, and is a necessary next step for this work.
3.3.2 Following phonological environment

Following phonological environment is a more straightforward conditioning factor. Following pause most strongly conditions /l/ vocalization (coef. 0.207), followed by dorsal consonants (0.164) and labial consonants (0.061).

This finding consistent both with Sproat and Fujimura (1993), as well as Ash’s (1982) and McElhinny’s (1999) studies of /l/ vocalization in Pennsylvania. Interestingly, Durian (2008) and Dodsworth (2005) observe inhibiting effects of following pause. Their findings are unexpected given Sproat and Fujimura’s (1993) suggestion that intonation phrase-final /l/ is likely to have a stronger vocalic gesture due to the relationship between phrase-finality and rhyme length. A longer rhyme allows more time for the tongue dorsum to lower and retract, resulting in an /l/ that can approach vocalization.

However, we must of course bear in mind that not only linguistic but also social factors may play an important role in the conditioning of variation and that sometimes, social meanings can lead to unexpected linguistic conditioning. Durian’s and Dodsworth’s findings regarding pre-pausal /l/ may suggest that there are more layers of social meaning to /l/ vocalization than simply its association with demographic groups and regional varieties. One social motivation for maintaining a stronger alveolar gesture during dark /l/ production before pauses might be the
stigma associated with features that socioculturally index ‘subtraction’ (analogous to the folk belief that (ING) variation is ‘dropping’ or ‘deletion’ of a segment; for a fuller treatment of ‘economical’ and ‘additive’ sociolinguistic variables, see Finegan and Biber 2001). An intonational boundary, while phonetically a favoring environment for vocalization, may at the same time be a socially favoring environment for ‘full’ pronunciation, because of the relative perceptual prominence of segments in pre-pausal position. I discuss the potential social meanings of /l/ vocalization further in Chapter 5.

Such apparent conflicts, where social meanings appear to trump linguistic probability, are found both at the community and individual levels in variation literature. Three prominent community-level examples are the island communities of Martha’s Vineyard, MA (Labov 1963), Smith Island, MD and Ocracoke Island, NC (Schilling-Estes 1997), where residents’ resistance to leveling of their distinctive island dialects is inversely correlated with how much time they have spent on the mainland for schooling and work, but may be explained by their strong sense of local identity and ideological resistance to dialect leveling.

Additionally, at the individual level, inquiry into linguistic style reveals that examining the use of linguistic variants in linguistically and socially disfavored contexts – what Kiesling (2009) calls outliers or extreme variants, as well as the use of unexpected language varieties (e.g.
Rampton 1995 on crossing, can be more informative about variants’ and varieties’ interactional and personal meanings than a focus solely on linguistically and socially expected usages.

Nevertheless, it is important to know what the baseline patterns in the community under study are, because it is these patterns that form the foundation for potential interactional meaning-making through phonological variation. I discuss the situated, interactionally meaningful uses of /l/ vocalization as well as –in and CSD, among both EA and AA speakers, in Chapter 5. First, however, I discuss the group-level patterning of /l/ vocalization among AAs and EAs, as well as the patterning with respect to speaker sex. In chapter 4, I discuss group-level patterns for –in and CSD.

3.3.3 Ethnoracial affiliation and speaker sex

Of the social factors in Table 3.1, ethnoracial affiliation has the strongest effect on /l/ vocalization. African Americans (coefficient 0.321) vocalize significantly more than European Americans (-0.315). Men (coefficient 0.183) vocalize significantly more than women (-0.183). The two effects thus indicate that /l/ vocalization is associated with African Americanness and masculinity in DC, and suggest that it may be used (more and less consciously) to index these social associations.
The finding that AAs vocalize more than EAs in DC consistent with previous findings that /l/ vocalization is a robust feature of AAVE. As early as Labov et al. (1968), /l/-vocalization was described as a feature of African American (and Puerto Rican) speech in New York City. In addition to simple correlation, /l/ vocalization has also been found to have meaningful social associations with African Americaanness, for example by Fix (2004, 2010). In Fix’ studies of racially integrated social networks and speech accommodation, EA women with stronger connections to the AA community vocalize to a higher extent (Fix 2004) than those with less integrated social networks, particularly in explicit dialect performances (Fix 2010).

There is currently a lack of studies examining the feature among both AA and EA populations within the same geographic location with the exception of Durian (2008), in Columbus, OH. As in Columbus, AAs in DC overall show higher rates of /l/ vocalization than EAs. Unlike in Columbus, where /l/ vocalization is relatively widespread among both groups, DC area EAs’ vocalization rates are much lower than AAs’ rates. I show the extent of /l/ vocalization for AA men and women and EA men and women in Figure 3.1. In this figure, I have included both tokens coded as [4] or completely vocalized, and [3] or significantly vocalized\(^{30}\).

\(^{30}\) I have chosen to represent vocalization this way, rather than showing the mean values for vocalization of each group, because the fine distinctions in the coding scheme allow us to see both the overall extent of some vocalization
Figure 3.1. /l/ vocalization for AAs and EAs, by speaker sex

[Bar chart showing the percentage of /l/-vocalization for men and women of African American and European American descent]

Figure 3.1 illustrates both the sex and ethnoracial pattern; men vocalize more than women and African Americans vocalize more than European Americans. The ethnoracial pattern suggests that /l/ vocalization patterns similarly in DC as it does in Columbus, OH. The figure shows a suggestive relationship between ethnoracial affiliation, sex, and degree of vocalization. Note that EAs rarely, in 2% of the cases for men and never for the women, vocalize /l/ completely, while both AA men and women fully vocalize /l/ at least some of the time, with AA men fully vocalizing /l/ much more frequently (25%) than AA women (9%). This difference in the community as well as any difference between groups in the degree of vocalization. It appears that AAs overall vocalize both extensively and fully, while EAs, when they vocalize at all, rarely produce fully vocalized tokens.
in production might be indicative of a quite specific social meaning for /l/ vocalization in DC. Not only is it associated with AA speech and male speech, but potentially with the interaction of the two. /L/ vocalization might then participate in the construction of specific AA and male-linked styles in interaction.

However, at this stage we cannot be sure what /l/ vocalization’s position is within Labov’s (1972a, 2001) classic taxonomy of linguistic features charged with social meaning, in which he distinguishes between ‘indicators’, ‘markers’, and ‘stereotypes’. We do not know whether /l/ vocalization is merely statistically associated with a group while remaining below the level of consciousness in the community (indicator), whether it has reached the level of consciousness and is stigmatized, resulting in social stigma for the speakers who use it (marker), or whether it has become much-talked about and perhaps even commodified both within and outside the community (stereotype).

European American Washingtonians comment on vocalization being present in the community, as we saw in section 3.1, while it is African Americans who actually use it. The statistical correlation qualifies /l/ vocalization as an indicator, but the awareness attributing it to a different group complicates an analysis of it as a marker purely of African American identity in DC. A closer look at how /l/ vocalization is used by Washingtonians is necessary to
determine whether the quantitative correlations between the feature and demographic
categories is reflected in practice. I return to the interactional function of /l/ vocalization in the
production of Washingtonians’ identities in Chapter 5.

In the remainder of this chapter, I consider how DC’s position as a marginal city, a local
center of in-migration and transience, and as a peculiarly a-regional commuting hub, can help
explain the patterning of /l/ vocalization in Washington, DC, particularly among EAs.

3.4 /L/ vocalization and place identity in DC

I suggested in Chapter 1 that the ideological position of Washingtonians about their
regional and social belonging is an important factor to consider when studying this community,
as DC is a difficult city to categorize in terms of regional affiliation both socially and
linguistically. /L/ vocalization can help unpack some of the intersectional relationships among
language and region in DC. In the remainder of this chapter, I argue that the lack of /l/
vocalization among DC EAs might be one among a number of linguistic and sociocultural
indicators of DC’s ‘exceptionalism’ among American cities. This fact lays the foundation for the
overarching argument of this dissertation, which is that less easily identifiable, segmentable, and
analyzable communities benefit from a speaker-oriented, stylistically informed, and repertoire-based linguistic approach.

3.4.1 The North, the South, and the transitional cities

In the Atlas of North American English, one of the main goals is not only to describe the patterning of individual linguistic features across the United States and Canada, but also to chart the patterning of distinctive phonological changes underway, or completed, across North America. With reference to the distinction between Northern and Southern dialects, Labov et al. (2006), describe the relationship between place-linked linguistic features and the types of places with which they are associated:

“This underlines the contrast between North and South: the most advanced speakers of the Northern Cities Shift are concentrated in the many big cities of the North, while the leading edge of the Southern Shift is found in a few medium-sized cities in a limited area.” (Labov et al. 2006: 146-147)

In the North, and chiefly in the areas participating in the Northern Cities Shift, Labov et al. (2006) observe the most advanced features among residents of large cities, while the ‘most Southern’ speakers are residents of what the authors describe as the Inland South, a dialect region spanning parts of Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama.
The dialect regions identified by the *Atlas* are shown in Figure 3.2. Notably, the largest cities in the Inland North region include large population centers such as Chicago (IL), Detroit (MI), and Buffalo (NY), while the Inland Southern cities are smaller, and include Birmingham (AL) and Knoxville (TN).

**Figure 3.2. North American dialect regions (reproduced from Labov et al. 2006: 146)**

The statement above by Labov et al. (2006) indicates a relationship between ‘strength’ of dialect features and type of locality (Johnson and Britain 2007); the NCS is most concentrated in
larger cities while the Southern vowel shift (SVS) is concentrated in a smaller area with lower population density. Naturally, the NCS is found in rural as well as urban areas, and Figure 3.2 also shows that the Southern dialect region is large and spans cities as well as the rural ‘heartland’ typically associated with the South. Nevertheless, the point Labov et al. are making is that Southern dialect features tend to be more strongly associated with rurality, while Northern dialect features are more strongly associated with urbanism.

While the Atlas is primarily a description of linguistic production, research on Southern speech has also looked to speakers’ own, as well as naïve listeners’, perceptions of the link between urbanity or rurality and Southern accent. Greene (2011) interviewed 30 women in a rural community in Kentucky and analyzed the data with an ideological question in mind: why do speakers of a stigmatized variety maintain this variety, though they are – in the late-modern and mobile society – aware of the stigma attached to their speech? The metalinguistic commentary revealed that as rural people, Greene’s interviewees view a ‘strong’ Southern accent and a rural identity as a badge of honor, regardless of outside stigma or indeed the extent of their own production of these features. The Southern-rural link is often maintained in dialect mapping, and other folk linguistic tasks, described by Preston (e.g. 1996, Preston and Niedzielski 2000) and colleagues. Participants in Allbritten’s (2011) matched-guise study, in
which speech samples that included relatively more or relatively fewer Southern features were played, were more likely to rate speech with more Southern features as Southern and rural than as Southern and urban, though notably raters did not reject the notion of an urban Southerner completely.

So where does this leave DC residents, who live in an urban area on the very border between the North and the South? As we have seen, after all, EAs in the Midland (Pittsburgh, Columbus), the Mid-Atlantic (Philadelphia), and South (southern West Virginia) vocalize /l/. Why don’t European American Washingtonians?

The ANAE identifies a number of cities as ‘transitional’, meaning that these are cities that are geographically close, but not linguistically comparable, with whatever regions they border. In particular, the authors identify a number of cities that are “marginal to the South (Labov et al. 2006: 139),” and that do not participate as clearly in the Southern Vowel Shift or other Southern dialect features. These are Southern cities that differ greatly from Inland Southern cities such as Birmingham and Knoxville. Transitional or marginal Southern cities include Corpus Christi, TX (on the Texas Gulf coast), El Paso, TX (bordering New Mexico), Charleston, SC, and Washington, DC. Also mentioned are New Orleans, LA, and Atlanta, GA, and though not a city, the entire state of Florida is considered transitional.
While *ANAE* does not go into detail on the reasons for the transitional status of these places, we might analyze them as peripheral rather than ‘heartland’ places. It is also important to note the role of social history and demographic makeup as factors in the linguistic divergence from the Inland South. Florida is often the butt of ‘Northern retiree’ jokes among Southerners and also has a longstanding and continuing influx of new immigrants from the Caribbean. El Paso occupies a boundary space between the culturally very distinctive Texas and the solidly Western New Mexico and has a large Spanish-speaking population. Corpus Christi, on the Gulf coast of Texas, is not only home to a Hispanic majority but is also a town with a strong military tradition and presence. In addition to noting the connection between the Southern dialect region and rurality, Labov et al. (2006) suggest that a history of trade with the North and relative wealth (Labov et al. 2006: 260-261; Manning 1998) influence the degree to which residents in larger, more well-connected and mobile marginal communities produce the linguistic features most closely associated with Southern speech.

Where does Washington, DC, fit into the picture of ‘heartland’, rural Southerness versus peripherality coinciding with diffuse linguistic patterns? Labov et al. (2006) show that DC is marginal to the South, and adjacent to the Western Pennsylvania/Appalachi region.\(^{31}\)

\(^{31}\)Jefferson County, WV, is typically seen as part of the Washington, DC, Metropolitan Area, and this easternmost point of West Virginia forms part of the DC exurbs due to the proportionally high volume of commuters from
We have already seen indications of Washingtonians’ sociolinguistic awareness of some relationship with the South in the metalinguistic commentary in Chapter 1; recall for example Mark’s acknowledgment that some people think he sounds Southern but also Casey’s emphatic contrasting of DC speech with Southern speech. The question still remains why EA Washingtonians do not vocalize /l/ - a feature shared by their Southern, Midland, and Mid-Atlantic neighbors. The answer to this question might be found in ideas of supra-regionality and DC’s ideological affiliation.

3.4.2 DC’s influence: Sound change and loss of Southern norms

Bowie’s (2001) work on the production and perception of vowels by residents and former residents of the Waldorf, MD, a community of 67,000 residents located some 20 miles south of DC, illuminates the role of Washington, DC, as hub and supra-regional metropolis.

Waldorf’s geographic position on the undefined edges of the South motivates Bowie’s investigation of the direction of change for /ay/-monophthongization, a feature of the Southern Vowel Shift. Its position also makes it a fruitful comparison point for my study. Figure 3.3 shows the location of Waldorf (represented by the blue circle) and of Washington, DC.

Jefferson County to the neighboring Loudon (VA) and Washington (MD) counties, as well as to counties closer to DC itself. A full description of the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria (DC-VA-MD-WV) metropolitan area is available at: [http://www.census.gov/econ/census/snapshots_center/dc.html](http://www.census.gov/econ/census/snapshots_center/dc.html)
(represented by the red oval) vis-à-vis the boundaries of the Southern dialect region as defined by two studies of dialect boundaries on the US Eastern Seaboard: *The pronunciation of English in the Atlantic states* (Kurath and McDavid 1961) and *The handbook of the linguistic atlas of the middle and south Atlantic states* (Kretzschmar et al 1993)

**Figure 3.3.** Location of Waldorf, MD and Washington, DC in relation to the dialectal boundaries of the South (reproduced and adapted from Bowie 2001)

Waldorf, MD, presents an interesting sociolinguistic environment for many of the same reasons as DC – it is situated either on, or very close to, the northernmost edge of the South dialect region. Bowie finds a number of patterns concerning Southern features in both lifelong
Waldorfians and Waldorfian ‘exiles’ (Bowie 2000), i.e. those who moved away in adulthood. The apparent time pattern for monophthongization of (ay), a longstanding and iconic feature of Southern US speech, shows a receding trend, in which younger Waldorfians, whether lifelong or exiled, monophthongize significantly less than those in the oldest age group. Bowie analyzes the latter as a “loss of Southern norm”, and remarks that:

“[B]y the end of the twentieth century, Waldorfians certainly had more contact with speakers of other varieties than they did just after World War II [...] because increasing numbers of Waldorfians began commuting to Washington, D.C. for work in the intervening years [...] This dialect contact may have accelerated the trend toward diphthongal /ay/, or it may have caused the variation to tend toward a lower level than it might have otherwise, even though it does not appear possible to name it as the cause of the trend.” (Bowie 2001: 339-340)

Bowie is claiming that the loss of Southern speech norms in Maryland perhaps came about in part due to the shift from an agricultural to a service economy, of which DC is an aerial hub. It is thus Washington, DC’s urban – rather than Southern or non-Southern – status that contributes to the diphthongization of /ay/. If Washington, DC, is supra-regional – and I argue that, due to its ‘exceptional’ status in the US, discussed in detail in Chapter 1, it is – perhaps the
absence of /l/ vocalization from the speech of EA Washingtonians is attributable to the ‘cosmopolitan’ image of Washington, DC. Cosmopolitanism, and in particular the patchwork of in-migrants from both North and South, are important characteristics of Washington, DC, in the descriptions of it that surface both in the literature and among speakers themselves. Recall, again, Wolfram’s (1984) characterization of Washington, DC, as sociolinguistically interesting because of rather than despite its diverse resident profile:

“Consider the kind of in-migration that typifies those making up the present generation of ‘permanent residents’ [of Washington] […] there is the northern flow of folks from North Carolina and Southern Virginia, with well-developed Southern dialect features […] [A] substantive middle class [Black] population in the Gold Coast (upper Northwest DC area) is more Northern than Southern in its standard English, and working class Black in the Southeast and Northeast quadrants of the city are more coastal Southern” (Wolfram 1984: 22)

Wolfram foregrounds the inherent diversity and negotiation of regionality among DC residents, and adds – very importantly – that “this diversity is often excused as simply regional on the basis of in-migration, when in fact is should not be. It has become interwoven into the social fabric of the linguistic community” (22). This statement is a compelling early formulation.

The presence of /l/ vocalization among African American speakers confirms the relationship between African American and White Southern Vernacular Englishes. As Thomas (2007) points out, the two varieties have many features in common, and many DC African Americans have deep Southern roots.
of the need for a style- and repertoire-based approach to language variation in Washington, DC, and in addition underscores the link between DC’s exceptional sociogeographical position and its linguistic diversity and elusiveness.

/L/ vocalization in Washington, DC, is but one linguistic feature that exemplifies the hybridity and diversity of the linguistic patterns of DC residents. African Americans use it variably, while European Americans barely use it at all although their Southern and Northern neighbors do. Part of the explanation may be the metropolitan, supra-regional, and marginal identity of Washington, DC, vis-à-vis the surrounding regions.

Washington DC’s marginality may in fact be the deciding factor in explaining /l/ vocalization and its patterning in the community. If /l/ vocalization is seen as a robustly AA feature, as well as a EA Midland feature and a (more rural than not) EA Southern feature, it stands to reason that both African American and European American Washingtonians who view themselves as cosmopolitan and as regionally undefined may avoid this feature. Somewhat vocalized variants may naturally surface in certain phonological environments, however. And even for speakers who do not vocalize very much overall, /l/ vocalization may hold stylistic significance. This stylistic significance can help us reconcile the fact that European American Washingtonians overall do not vocalize /l/ with the fact that they apparently do notice it and are
able to point to it directly in metalinguistic commentary as a local feature. I discuss the potential for the stylistic role of /l/ vocalization among Washingtonians further in Chapter 5.

3.5 Summary

This chapter has focused on /l/ vocalization in Washington, DC. I have shown that the feature is conditioned primarily by speakers’ ethnoracial affiliation sex, with African Americans, particularly men, vocalizing /l/ significantly more than European Americans. In addition to /l/ vocalization marking a distinction between EA and AA speech in Washington, DC, its distribution also helps situate DC in a regional context.

In Chapter 4, I turn my attention to the other two features under investigation in this dissertation: Coronal Stop Deletion and –in. The two features share many similar social associations. They are associated with similar regional and social groups, and in addition, recent work by Eckert (2005, 2008a) has discussed their potential as elements of styles. As this dissertation is concerned both with the quantitative patterning of phonological variation in Washington, DC, and with the use of phonological variants in the negotiation of identity among Washingtonians, a review of CSD, –in and their shared social meanings will help situate /l/ vocalization as a socially meaningful phonological variant in DC as well.
Chapter 4.

Coronal Stop Deletion and -in in Washington, DC

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I look more closely at the linguistic and social correlates of two of the three features under study: Coronal Stop Deletion (CSD) and -in. I described their linguistic properties in Chapter 2 and will here focus on examining their social associations and situate my own investigations of the meanings of these variants in DC within the previous literature. An overview of the social meanings of CSD and -in allows me to compare the social associations of /l/ vocalization to CSD and -in, and facilitates the analysis in Chapter 5, which will consider the three features’ synergistic contribution to Washingtonians’ linguistic repertoires and interactional identity work.
4.2 CSD, -in and their social correlates

CSD and -in have known associations to ethnoracial affiliation, place, and interactional dynamics. Though both have received significant attention, they are not often studied together despite the fact that studies have revealed that they share a number of similar social meanings. One goal of this analysis is therefore to explicitly investigate the links and shared social meanings of CSD and -in and how they contribute – together with /l/ vocalization – to interactional meaning making among Washingtonians. Eckert (2008) points out that –ing (the velar variant) and released /t/ (whose relationship to CSD I discuss in Chapter 2) share many social meanings but have yet to be studied together toward a fuller picture of multiple features’ contribution to distinctive styles. This is also the case for CSD and -in, and I view this study as, in part, an answer to Eckert’s call for such research.

Patrick (1999) has aptly referred to CSD as a ‘showcase’ feature for sociolinguistic variation, due to the diverse insights gained from its patterning into not only language variation and change but also formal processes of morphosyntax (Guy and Boyd 1990) and phonological theory (Guy and Boberg 1997; Santa Ana 1996), as well as its long-standing association with social and geographic varieties of English. CSD was also one of the very first sociolinguistic features of African American Vernacular English to be discussed (Labov et al.
Like CSD, -\textit{in} has a storied history in sociolinguistic research, and shares many of its attributes in terms of phonological and morphosyntactic conditioning, acquisition, and social associations. Children acquire the variable patterning of cluster-final coronal stops and (ING) at around the same age (Roberts 1994). In additional to studies establishing its regional and ethnoracial associations, foundational studies such as Fischer (1958) established early on that (ING) is part of a complex system of social interpretation and categorization – even among children – patterning according to social categories such as social status, sex, and overall social persona (‘studious’, ‘rowdy’), in addition to the degree of situational formality (what would later become known as ‘style’ in Labovian variationist sociolinguistics).

I focus here on the most prominent associations of the two variants, and the associations that will become more important in my analysis of Washingtonians’ identity construction in sociolinguistic interviews. The next sections review research on the links between CSD and -\textit{in} and (1) ethnoracial affiliation, (2) class, (3) region, and (4) situational formality\textsuperscript{33}.

\textsuperscript{33} I do not address sex or age as correlates of CSD and -\textit{in} here as they have exhibited remarkable diachronic stability and have consistently demonstrated expected sex-and social class-based patterns. Women and higher social class groups have been shown to use less of these two variants and more of their counterparts with associations to standardness (i.e. non-deleted coronal stops and -\textit{ing}) across communities.
4.2.1 Ethnoracial affiliation

Studies of Coronal Stop Deletion and \(-in\) over the past few decades have established that the two variants are not exclusive to any ethnoracial variety, but rather are used by and associated with many communities across ethnoracial lines, though the most persistent social associations for the features remain with vernacular varieties of African American English. Early findings find CSD and \(-in\) to be prominent in African American English, especially its more vernacular varieties (Labov 1966; Shuy, Wolfram, and Riley 1968; Labov et al. 1968; Wolfram 1969; Fasold 1972; Anshen 1969). Labov et al. (1968) find that both CSD and \(-in\) are robust features of AAVE (then referred to as Nonstandard Negro English or NNE), Shuy et al. (1968) describe CSD in Detroit AAVE, and Anshen (1969) details the widespread use of \(-in\) in a small, rural, working-class African American community in the South.

However, Guy’s numerous studies of CSD’s linguistic and social conditioning in Philadelphia (1980, 1991, 1996) have considered primarily European American (EA) populations. Hazen’s studies in West Virginia show that \(-in\) (Hazen 2008) and CSD (Hazen 2011) have a strong presence among EAs and AAs in the state, so much so that CSD appears to have lost its social stratification in the community. Santa Ana (1996) has shown that CSD varies in Chicano English according to much the same phonological rules as in AA and EA
varieties of English. Neu (1980) demonstrates variation of \(-in\) among EA informants from across the United States, and links variability between the alveolar and velar variants robustly to situational formality. The participants in Kiesling’s (1998) investigation of the interactional meanings of (ING) variation – which I describe in more detail in section 4.3 – were mostly EA.

So CSD and \(-in\) share ethnoracial associations but are also not under the exclusive purview of any one group; the social associations between CSD and non-standard (often African American) speech often correlate with higher frequency of use among AAs rather than absence among EAs. Even early on, however, remarks were made that complicated the picture regarding the ethnoracial patterning of the variable. In particular, Wolfram (1969) noted the effects of ‘racial isolation’ on usage patterns of CSD, remarking that AAVE speakers who had significant contact with EAs, and thus contact with EA vernaculars, exhibited lower rates of deletion compared to their ethnoracial peers who were more integrated in exclusively AA social networks.

Because of CSD’s robust correlations with ethnoracial affiliation and related social attributes, it can be used stylistically by speakers to indicate affiliation with said groups or attributes. For example, because it often (though not always, and not always straightforwardly)

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34 The social network as a theoretical concept would not be theorized fully in sociolinguistics until Milroy and Milroy’s (1978, 1985, 1993) groundbreaking work on network-related patterns of language variation and change (or maintenance) in Belfast, Northern Ireland.
associated with AAVE, it can be used as marker of affiliation with this group, or character traits associated with African Americans. Guy and Cutler (2012) demonstrate that “white hip-hop\textsuperscript{35} affiliated youth (WHH)” (2012: 132) use significantly higher rates of CSD in interview talk compared to ethnoracial and age-peers that do not participate in hip-hop culture or proclaim their hip-hop fandom explicitly. The authors argue that it is the ethnoracial and cultural affiliation of CSD that conditions this variation, such that WHHs emphasize their affiliation with the AA community and AAVE partially through use of CSD. Guy and Cutler’s study shows that CSD has a strong indexical relationship to AAVE, and that it is available for stylistic work across groups.

Though ethnoracial correlates of the use of both CSD and (ING) are strong, ethnoracial identity always intersects with other facets of identity, and it is often the interactions among social factors that are genuinely illuminating regarding questions of group-associational and interactional meanings of linguistic features. Studies have shown that the factors that most often interact with ethnoracial affiliation in conditioning the variable realizations of (ING) and coronal stops are socioeconomic class, region and situational formality.

\textsuperscript{35} By hip-hop, Guy and Cutler mean the cultural movement broadly defined as a musical genre whose producers and consumers have historically been primarily African American (but which is now decidedly transracial and global in nature), encompassing various subgenres of rap, soul and r’n’b, as well as other cultural expressions including art (e.g. graffiti), clothing (e.g. baggy athletic wear), and related consumption patterns.
4.2.2 Socioeconomic class

Leaving speaker sex aside, socioeconomic class is perhaps the most often cited social factor affecting production of CSD and -in, and it is indeed the factor with the most robust patterning across speech communities. Trudgill’s (1972) study of (ING) in Norwich, UK, shows very clearly the typical correlation between social class and use of -in vs. -ing. Trudgill studied speakers from five social class groups (middle middle class, lower middle class, upper working class, middle working class, and lower working class) across a range of contextual styles (following Labov 1972; word list, reading passage, formal/careful speech, and casual speech). Results for the use of the –ing variant are shown in Figure 4.1.
On a scale from 0(%) to 100(%) –\textit{ing}, Trudgill found that the lower the social class of the speaker, the less –\textit{ing}, and so conversely the more –\textit{in}, was used. This pattern held even when fine-grained class distinctions were made, informed by observations about speakers’ income, educational level, dwelling type and location of residence, and occupation, as well as their fathers’ occupations. The lower working class (LWC) speakers therefore used more of the –\textit{in} form than middle working class (MWC), and upper working class (UWC) speakers, as well as the lower- and middle- middle class speakers. Regular patterning was also found across styles, such that all classes used the most –\textit{in} in casual speech, and subsequently less in formal speech, reading passage style, and word list style, as seen above.

CSD was also found, early on, to vary across class lines. Fasold (1972) studied tense marking in African American speech in Washington, DC. The study considered both CSD and
deletion of past tense marker [\textsuperscript{ɨ}d\textsuperscript{]} (in e.g. \textit{waited}). Fasold’s speaker sample included primarily working class African Americans, whose class was determined by considerations of income, source of income (e.g. inherited wealth vs. public assistance), occupation, house type and area of residence, as well as an ‘upper-class’ control group. Socioeconomic class was found to affect rate of CSD use, as seen in Figure 4.2.

\textbf{Figure 4.2.} CSD rates among DC AAs by class (reproduced from Fasold 1972: 201)

Both these early findings for CSD and (ING) mirror the patterns of social stratification established by Labov for a number of variables (1966), in which there is a positive correlation between social status and use of standard variants, as well as an increase in vernacularity with increasing casualness of speech event.
It should be noted that, despite the seemingly orderly social class-based findings, social class has proven itself to be a slippery and not easily operationalized social category. Fasold’s (1972) study itself includes a disclaimer about the difficulty of approaching subjects with questions about social status (which I quote in Chapter 2). Many questions can be raised about the validity of some of the heuristics that sociolinguists have used to operationalize social class, including those borrowed or adapted from sociologists and demographers, for example Warner et al.’s (1960) socioeconomic index. Although multiple measures contribute to the assessment of social class (including occupational category, wealth, and lifestyle elements), in late-modern communities there is often a much more complex relationship between social factors and socioeconomic class. This is particularly true in a longstanding service economy such as Washington, DC (Manning 1998), where blue- and white-collar labor categories are less straightforward, and the links between occupational category and earnings are frequently mediated by a mandated and not always strictly merit-based government payscale. Further, issues of actual wealth versus earning potential come into play, as do factors that are not always directly correlated with economics, for example social prestige and lifestyle factors such as dwelling type. A true analysis of social class in Washington, DC, falls outside the scope of this
dissertation, but the unique context of DC provides ample material for future study and can contribute to a productive reimagining of socioeconomic class.

4.2.3 Region

If CSD and -in are closely associated with African American vernacular speech, whether Northern or Southern (Anshen 1969, Summerlin 1972), they are equally frequently described as part of EA non-standard varieties, particularly in the Southeastern US. Hazen (2008) remarks that part of the motivation behind his large-scale quantitative study of (ING) variation in West Virginia are enduring ideological links between EA Southern English, vernacularity, and usage of phonological variants such as –in, which is widely attested by Wolfram and Christian (1976) in their thorough investigation of Appalachian English.

Hazen finds that (ING) usage is more diverse in Appalachia than the widespread ideology would have us believe, as individuals’ rates of –in range from only 1% to a near-categorical 96%. In his data, speakers from the northern part of West Virginia (closer to Pennsylvania) exhibit lower rates of –in (46%) than speakers from southern West Virginia (closer to Kentucky), whose overall –in rates were 59%. Hazen suggests that this result may stem from West Virginia’s place at a regional border: “perhaps the difference between West
Virginians and speakers farther south is a result of their status in a transitional zone (the Upper South), where they abut the North” (Hazen 2008: 128).

What we can take from this finding is that the alveolar variant of (ING) is associated with the South, but that the reality is more complex than the ideology might suggest, particularly in border regions. The more Southern the West Virginian, the more –in they use. Northern West Virginians, meanwhile, may produce less –in due to residing at the ideologically salient border between the South and the North, and thus attending more to ‘Northern’ (that is, velar) norms for (ING) usage.

The same sentiment regarding the Southern preference for –in is commented on by Labov et al. (1968) in their interpretation of the relationship between the non-standard features of AAVE (then NNE) and EA Southern varieties; the relationship between EA Southern varieties and AA varieties across the US can be traced back to the Great Migration, which I mentioned in Chapter 1. Thomas (2007), in charting the phonological features of contemporary AAVE, names (ING) and CSD as features shared by AAVE across the United States and a EA Southern variety that he dubs Southern White Vernacular English, or SWVE. However, it is important to remember that dialects are internally diverse, mediated by local and widespread ideologies of language, and social meanings may be different inside a community than how the
community is perceived externally. Hazen (2011) investigates CSD in West Virginia and finds that, while CSD is indeed widespread among many social groups in West Virginia, its social significance has diminished considerably, ironically most likely due to its extensive use across groups.

Hazen’s (2008, 2011, Hazen and Dodsworth 2012) insights into the patterning of -in, CSD, and /l/ vocalization in West Virginia provide a useful comparison to the patterns in DC. He shows that complex social factors, including language ideologies, population movement, alignment with supraregional norms, and most importantly border identity, are at play in determining variation for all three features in West Virginia, which is close to DC and no doubt orients to DC as a migration and commuting hub. These works are also important as they draw on a tradition of investigating the complex relationships between social mobility, personal and community ideologies, and language variation. Foundational works in sociolinguistics considered not just the spread of dialect features but also “the social forces and socio-psychological factors that motivate sociolinguistic variation” (Rickford 2011: 254), none more so than Labov’s (1963) study of variation as a correlate of identification with traditional fisher culture in Martha’s Vineyard and LePage and Tabouret-Keller’s (1985) investigation of
variation as self-expression and group solidarity in Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean diaspora communities in the UK.

Any investigation of language variation at a social or geographic boundary – such as this one about DC, or Hazen’s about West Virginia – is indebted to these findings: that language not only reflects but constructs and maintains identity, that place-linked language variation is inherently ideologically mediated (see e.g. Becker 2009 for a critique of ‘place’ in sociolinguistics) and that places, though we may take them for granted, are inhabited by vastly diverse individuals and groups who use language as acts of identity (LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985) and act as linguistic individuals (Johnstone and Bean 1997) while maintaining, contesting, and underscoring their similarity to or difference from particular groups. All these acts, necessarily, happen in interactions.

Among others, Schilling-Estes (1998, 2004) and Coupland (2001, 2007) show the intimate links between linguistic features, group-associational social meanings of the features (e.g. those of place and ethnoracial affiliation) and the social and self-expressive work that these meaningful variants can do in interactions. Studies have looked specifically at the social roles of CSD and -in, linking them primarily to situational formality and interactional functions.
4.2.4 Situational formality

Situational formality is a component of the broader notion of linguistic style. Here, I borrow the term “situational formality” from Campbell-Kibler (2006) to refer to that facet of stylistic variation – namely, the perceived formality of the event under study – that has often represented the entire notion of style in variationist sociolinguistics\(^{36}\).

As mentioned above, factors affecting the usages of the two variables often interact with one another. Although some factors may have greater effects than others, more than one significant conditioning factor suggests multiple social dimensions playing synergistic roles in the creation of social meanings for the features.

For the schoolchildren in his study, Fischer (1958) found that factors including speaker sex, their families’ social status, their social attributes, including playground persona, and the formality level of the interactional context, conditioned the production of \(-in\). Figures 4.3 and 4.4 summarize the findings. Fischer’s groundbreaking integrated approach to the social conditioning of the (ING) variable prefigures and lies at the heart of modern variationist sociolinguistics, in showing that a multitude of social factors influence language use, and,

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\(^{36}\) In the literature on stylistic variation, the view that focuses on situational formality is known as the ‘attention to speech’ model; it can be contrasted with Bell’s (1984, 2001) ‘audience design’ model of style and subsequent reformulations of the audience design perspective to reflect speaker-initiated, self-expressive functions of stylistic elements – i.e. so-called ‘speaker design’ approaches to stylistic variation (Coupland 2001, 2007; Schilling 2013a)
importantly, that language variation is situational as well as group-associational in nature.

Most important is the attention to the interactional context as well as speakers’ linguistic and extra-linguistic social presentation.

**Figure 4.3. Overall preference for –*ing* or –*in* (adapted from Fischer 1958: 484)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>-<em>ing</em> &gt; -<em>in</em></th>
<th>-<em>ing</em> ≤ -<em>in</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher family status</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower family status</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.4. –*ing*/–*in*, by social persona and context (adapted from Fischer 1958: 484)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instances</th>
<th>-<em>ing</em></th>
<th>-<em>in</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Model' boy</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Typical' boy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic Apperception Task</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal interview</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal interview</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of situational variation, Fischer found that the ‘thematic apperception tasks’ (TATs), “in which the children were asked to make up stories starting with short sentences provided by the investigator (Fischer 1958: 483)” occasioned the lowest usage levels for the informal variant –*in*, with usage levels for the –*in* variant increasing in the formal,
questionnaire style interview, and then increasing further in the informal interview focusing on the children’s recent activities.

Labov (1966), Trudgill (1972), and Cofer (1972), who all conducted large-scale studies of (ING) in urban and rural contexts (in New York City, Norwich, and Philadelphia, respectively) all found type of interaction – arrayed along a continuum from formal to informal, as determined by amount of attention paid to speech in the classic sociolinguistic interview (discussed in detail in Chapter 2) – to influence rates of –*in*. Cofer (1972) found that rates of –*in* were highest in the least formal context of the interview, in which participants recounted animated narratives of personal endangerment.

Early work on CSD and situational formality found a parallel pattern, in which a strong formality pattern and a strong class pattern intersect. Wolfram (1969) observed higher rates of deletion in ‘interview style’ (i.e. speech in semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews that falls short of absolute casual speech by virtue of being observed), than in read speech. This held across classes, with working class speakers deleting more than their middle class counterparts; the ethnoracial pattern also held, with AAs regardless of class deleting more than their EA counterparts. Figure 4.5 also shows the robust linguistic conditioning of CSD among AAs, with significantly higher rates of deletion before following consonants than before following vowels.
More recently, Podesva (2006) looked at both deletion of cluster-final /t/ and weakening of intervocalic /t/ (e.g., a flap, as in [səkjuərɪ] for security) for three speakers across situations varying in formality, purpose, and participants. Heath, a young male medical intern, was observed in three situations: a consultation with a patient, a phone conversation with his father, and a barbecue with friends. Unsurprisingly, Podesva found that Heath’s rates of both deletion and intervocalic weakening were highest in the barbecue interaction—a interaction in which he was most laid-back, most informal, and least bound by a professional role.

Taken together, we see evidence mounting for the relatedness of CSD and −in in their social distribution, as well as their situational appropriateness. While all the above studies are informative about the community-level patterning of the features, it is also necessary to
investigate the most local, interaction-level uses and evaluations of the features in order to get a full picture of their meanings.

4.3 Interactional meanings of CSD and -in

Although we have seen numerous studies of CSD’s variability according to situational formality, and thus its stylistic potential in particular kinds of interactions, few studies have explicitly looked at its more fine-grained interactional functions. One of the few studies of CSD in an interactional context informs the present study all the more because it interrogates the role of CSD in ethnoracially-linked identity construction. Podesva (2008) points out that traditional approaches to CSD (meaning, approaches from the community-level variationist literature) tend to “essentialize the use of nonstandard linguistic variants along racial lines” and calls for a non-essentialist approach to ethnoracially linked phonological variation grounded in interactional contexts. This is by no means a new proposition, and indeed this study is perfectly in line with speaker design-based approaches to stylistic variation (Schilling 2013a) that I describe in Chapter 1.

Podesva’s study of two speakers, one AA and one EA, was conducted under the umbrella of the Language and Communication in the Washington, DC, Metropolitan Area
(LCDC) project (described in Chapter 2). Previous study has found CSD to be frequent among African Americans in DC (Fasold 1972), and resting on this finding, Podesva asks the question – even if AAs use CSD more, what are the associations of CSD beyond AA identity? Podesva does predictably find that the African American speaker shows higher rates of CSD overall. Naturally, the European American speaker uses CSD as well, though at a lower rate. The real contribution of the study comes in the form of a close analysis of the distribution of CSD across interactional topics in their respective interviews.

The two speakers, an EA man and an AA woman, were chosen because their interviews were compatible in terms of types of talk and length. Though discourse topics vary across and within each interview, both speakers talk about matters of gentrification (both at the neighborhood and city-wide level), their careers, other personal topics, and language. The AA speaker’s highest rates of CSD (~65%) occur in talk about gentrification, and the second and third highest rates occur in talk about neighborhood change (~51%) and drugs and violence (~47%) – topics that are germane to the discussion of urban life and social change in DC. The EA speaker deletes at the highest rate (~59%) when discussing leisure activities, and his rates of CSD when discussing gentrification are lower (~35%) than in his discussion of other topics including family and career.
Podesva argues that the different correlations of topic and CSD rates in the two speakers’ interviews can be explained by examining locally salient narratives of social change and community concerns. At least part of the reason why the AA speaker deletes so much in talk about gentrification is the fact that she is affected by it, and uses CSD as part of an interactional stance against gentrification and toward solidarity with AA language and life in DC. Meanwhile, the EA speaker’s life is less negatively affected by gentrification, and so he is able to recruit the ‘laid-back’ and ‘casual’ associations of the feature in talk about leisure.

Podesva’s study demonstrates the different social meanings of CSD as they are used to further the interactional and ideological goals of speakers. It also underscores the necessity of interactional analysis even of the most well described features, as every interaction presents myriad opportunities for speakers’ self-identification and creative uses of linguistic features in concert.

The stylistic potential and interactional meanings of (ING) and its two variants –ing and –in are quite widely studied. (ING) is socially stratified even among young children. Roberts (1994) and Wald and Shopen (1981) show that children as young as 3–4 years old exhibit audience-related variation in (ING), with –in being used more frequently with child, toy, and family addressees than with adult and stranger addressees.
The stylistic potential of -\textit{in} is analyzed in detail in Kiesling’s (1998) work on interactions in a university fraternity in Virginia. Kiesling looks at men’s – particularly EA, ‘hegemonically masculine’ men’s – agentive use of the (ING) variable. He finds that while the members of the fraternity are indeed rather socially homogeneous, the group’s internal power structure and individual members’ social identities are differentiated in part through variation of (ING) across social interaction types. Figure 4.6 shows the group-level mean levels of -\textit{in} alongside individual speakers’ levels of -\textit{in} across three contexts of talk: socializing in the fraternity, sociolinguistic interview conducted by Kiesling, and a formal fraternity meeting.

\textbf{Figure 4.6. Rates of -\textit{in} by speaker and activity type (adapted from Kiesling 1998: 72)}
Part of the analysis looks at Speed’s and Waterson’s (represented above with the solid line/solid diamond and dashed line/outlined diamond) interactional uses of –in in the meeting context; these speakers were selected due to their high levels of the vernacular-linked –in variant in the meeting context, where we would (per the ‘style pattern’ described in section 4.2.4) expect higher levels of –ing.

Kiesling links these high usage levels of –in in a public and ‘formal’ context to the kinds of people Speed and Waterson are, as well as the kinds of roles they take up and project within the meeting context. Speed, whose –in is overall highest in the fraternity, aligns himself with roles and attributes such as rural Southernness, working class values, practicality, and rebelliousness. His use of –in contributes to criticizing the (hegemonic, arbitrary, and structural) fraternity hierarchy in the meeting context. Waterson whose –in rates are dramatically higher in the meeting context than in the other two situational contexts, aligns himself with similar values as Speed, and he uses –in to project a specific identity in the particularly public and performative context of making a speech to the fraternity members. Waterson’s –in indexes camaraderie and a hard-working ethic as he makes the case for the fraternity brothers electing him vice president – a position that certainly requires hard work and caring for the group – despite being a new member.
Kiesling’s study shows that community-oriented linguistic practices are full of internal intricacies that are unavailable to researchers unless we look closely at individual speakers’ variable linguistic patterns. Linguistic stylistic practice thus plays an important part in the construction and maintenance of personal and group identities. Interactional motivations and outcomes are always part of this construction, and we should be careful not to attribute inherent social meaning to the –in variant, or to attribute all of its meaning to its typical social group and situational associations. Indeed, variation study has always rested on the fact that linguistic variants are inherently indeterminate in their social meanings; and recent work by Kiesling and others (Eckert 2008a, Jaffe 2009, Chun and Podesva 2010) underscores that contexts, prior texts, ideologies, social types to whom speakers wish to orient, and other factors all contribute to endowing a variant like –in with its social meanings:

“[Social meanings of variables] are specifically indexed in conversation according to the context, including other indexes, such as other sociolinguistic variables […], discourse markers, propositional content, the activity type, and the preceding discourse. Thus, the variant in the abstract is only indexed to a very abstract role, and it is only when combined with context, in the full sense of the term, that specific parts of that role are instantiated. The variable alone has no ‘meaning’ as such; ‘meaning’ comes about only when an identity takes shape through the tension between text and context and the negotiation between speaker and hearer.” (Kiesling 1998: 93-94)
The indeterminate nature of sociolinguistic variables necessitates using several approaches in order to better understand what the most common or most often drawn on meanings might be. Above I have discussed how two such complementary approaches, community-level production study and close analysis of individual production in interaction, inform each other. But crucially, perception and evaluation methodologies in sociophonetic study also help illuminate the relationship between production of features like CSD and \(-in\) and what they might mean to both speakers and listeners.

4.4 Perception of CSD and \(-in\)

At the heart of sociophonetic inquiry – that is, the study of how segmental and suprasegmental phonetic features are produced and perceived within their social contexts (Hay and Drager 2007) – is the notion of ‘social meaning’. Though sociolinguistics is always concerned with the social associations between different kinds of language and different kinds of people, recent approaches take a specific view of what ‘social meaning’ in fact is.

Campbell-Kibler (2009: 136) suggests that “[s]ocial meaning … is social content tied in the minds of a given speaker/hearer to a particular piece of linguistic behavior”. Social meaning, then, encompasses the associations we all possess and negotiate as we navigate the
linguistic components of social life. In part, social meanings come about through repeated exposure to varieties of language used by particular kinds of people (a concern at the forefront of traditional variationist research). Social meanings are also negotiated in interactional contexts, where they are filtered through the individual experiences and convictions of speakers and hearers (as we saw in Kiesling’s and Podesva’s studies, above). Finally, social meaning resides in the perceptions of the “social content” associated with linguistic features (i.e. particular groups of people, particular individuals, and the social attributes of said groups and individuals).

Because CSD and -in are so well studied, we know a lot about their associations at the community level and their functions within interactional contexts, in particular relating to issues of situational formality. Campbell-Kibler’s (2007, 2009, 2010) studies on perceptions of the alveolar and velar variants of (ING) have shown that social meanings emerge out of perception as well as production of talk, through the use of experimental methodologies.

Campbell-Kibler conducted a modified matched-guide test to gain insight into perceptions of (ING) variants. The matched-guise methodology tests the perceptions of variants by presenting participants with a number of recordings whose varying element is the feature (or dialect, or language) whose associations are being tested, and asking the participants
to rate these different 'guises' along social dimensions, in this case including regional affiliation, ethnoracial affiliation, agreeableness, intelligence, and other dimensions. In Campbell-Kibler’s study, recordings from eight male and female speakers from the U.S. South and from California were used as stimuli. To create the guises that were played to participants, instances of (ING) were identified among samples of speech by the eight speakers, and the recordings were acoustically manipulated to construct two near-identical guises of each recording: one with an –ing variant and one with an –in variant. A control set of recordings that included no (ING)-containing words, but from the same speakers, were also added. Two groups of participants – some that participated in group interviews, and some that took part in an experimental evaluation task – were asked to listen to the recordings and evaluate the eight speakers on a number of social attributes including region, socioeconomic status, education and intelligence, and laid-back/uptightness.

Campbell-Kibler finds that (ING) realization is socially meaningful as participants' perceptions changed based on stimulus played, but also that the relationships between realization and social attributes is complex. While –in guises did promote lower intelligence/education ratings, they did so only when a speaker was also perceived to be working class, indicating a complex interrelationship between ideas of social class, education,
and perhaps region. Similarly, -ing raised intelligence/education ratings only for speakers perceived as working class. When a speaker was not perceived as working class, (ING) realization did not affect ratings of intelligence/education.

This suggests that a link between -in and education/intelligence does exist, but only when filtered through -in’s social class associations. A similarly complex interaction is found between the -in variant, class, and perceived regional accent of the speaker (Campbell-Kibler 2007, 2009). Utterances perceived as Southern, regardless of perceived socioeconomic class, were relatively unaffected by (ING) realization on measures of intelligence/education. The presence of -in in utterances perceived as ‘aregional’ only promoted ‘less intelligent/educated’ ratings if the speaker was also identified as working-class.

While foundational research on the meanings on -in suggested a fairly straightforward relationship between this feature and social class – so much so that -in likely is an example of what Labov (1972a) calls a linguistic stereotype – Campbell-Kibler’s work shows that this link participates in a more complex relationship between linguistic form, class, and regional affiliation.

In later work, Campbell-Kibler (2011) has shown that (ING) also interacts with other sociolinguistic variables, such as /s/ fronting or /s/ backing, in recordings of men’s speech to
engender nuanced percepts of different constellations of masculinity-related traits. An –*ing utterance was thus evaluated as more ‘gay’ if it was perceived as non-Southern, and also included tokens of fronted /s/ - a widely circulated cultural ‘marker’ of gay identity (Munson and Babel 2007). An –*in utterance’s ‘unintelligent’ ratings were boosted by the presence of a ‘country’ feature, backed /s/, but remained unaffected on intelligence ratings if the /s/ was fronted.

CSD has also been investigated using perceptual methodologies, particularly relating to the interrelationship between social and linguistic information, and their relationship to perceived ethnoracial identity. Staum Casasanto (2010) conducted two experiments. In the first, participants were presented sentences featuring a variety of non-standard or vernacular features, including orthographically represented CSD, e.g. *the mas’ lasted through the storm*. In addition, participants saw two faces – one white and one black, both men – and were asked to choose which of the two people was more likely to say the sentence featuring the non-standard form in question. Participants were more likely to select the black imagined speaker for the CSD sentence, and CSD was the only feature for which ethnoracial difference was statistically significant. In the second experiment, participants were shown either the white or the black face and were played a spoken sentence. In the stimulus that targeted CSD, the sentence was
The [mæs] probably lasted. After hearing the sentence, participants were asked to complete it from two options on the screen: either through the storm or for an hour. If participants chose the through the storm completion sentence, they were analyzed as having interpreted [mæs] as mast; those who chose for an hour interpreted [mæs] as mass. Reaction time – how quickly a participant picked one of the two completion options – was used to indicate how quickly participants correlated the face before them with the two phonetic options: CSD or not CSD. Participants were more likely – and quicker – to choose the mast completion when presented with a black face, indicating that the social information about a speaker’s African American identity makes speakers more likely to hear Coronal Stop Deletion in [mæs]. These two experiments deftly demonstrate the interrelationship between social and linguistic information in the construction and perception of the social meanings of CSD, particularly as they relate to ethnoracial identity.

Perception studies of both –in and CSD suggest that there are very robust associations between linguistic and social information, and therefore between linguistic form and social practice, of which perception is part. Campbell-Kibler argues that linguistic features act together with other social information to construct stylistic packages of different strengths and endurance, by recruiting features that ‘stand out’ to various degrees. Staum Casasanto’s work,
in which participants are exposed to highly controlled stimuli of both speech and social (and physical) characteristics, shows that perception of linguistic features as distinctive (and associated with a particular group) both depends on and promotes stronger association with social characteristics. These insight shows clearly the need to continue investigating interactions among features in production as well as perception, and combinations of linguistic and extralinguistic information in the search for social meaning in language, as well as for the investigation of what this social meaning can be used to do.

The discussion of Campbell-Kibler’s study of the perception of (ING) variants and Staum Casasanto’s experimental approach to CSD accomplishes two points for this dissertation: Firstly, it illustrates the breadth of inquiry on the variables’ social meanings, and secondly, it provides more evidence for the inherent indeterminacy and intricacy of social meaning, and how broad social associations observed at the community level take on more specific meanings in context (e.g. interview contexts, or in the experimental contexts where a participant is asked to describe what a speaker sounds like or what variant they are using). This dissertation does not incorporate perception methods to study phonological variation and its meanings in Washington, DC, but I want to underscore the usefulness of a combination of methods – community-level investigation of production of a given feature, its use in interactional contexts,
and the perception of the feature and its (idealized or real) users – towards a more complete understanding of the social life of sociolinguistic variation.

Having discussed some of the myriad studies of CSD and -in across English-speaking communities and interactional contexts, I now move on to describe the patterning of the two variants among European Americans and African Americans in Washington, DC.

4.5 Quantitative patterns of CSD and -in in Washington, DC

In the remainder of this chapter, I present the quantitative patterns of CSD and -in among the Washingtonians in my sample, in order to situate the two variants vis-à-vis their patterning in other communities, as well as within and across social groups in the DC community, and also to examine the relationship in the community among these two variants and /l/ vocalization.

4.5.1 Linguistic and social conditioning of CSD

Table 4.1 shows the factors that significantly affect the production of coronal stop deletion among Washingtonians. I tested for the effect of internal factors – segment voicing, preceding and following phonological environments, and morphological class – and external or
social factors. The external factors were speaker ethnoracial affiliation, sex, age and educational attainment, as well as discourse context (DC, personal, and language talk; but see Chapter 2 for a discussion of the difficulty in coding these categories). Unlike in the /l/ vocalization analysis in Chapter 3, RBrul reports centered factor weights for logistic regressions such as this one. A factor weight higher than 0.5 indicates that the independent variable (e.g. morphological class; sex; ethnoracial affiliation) favors CSD. A factor weight lower than 0.5 indicates that the independent variable disfavors CSD. The bigger the difference between factor weights for the factors in a given factor group, the larger the effect.

The total number of tokens for CSD was 1638. The number of tokens in a particular coding category is given in parenthesis following the category label (e.g. sibilant (378)), and the percentage of tokens that were deleted is seen in the third column from the left, %deletion.
Table 4.1. Significant factors conditioning Coronal Stop Deletion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor (N=1638)</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>%deletion</th>
<th>Centered factor weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preceding Phonological Environment (p &lt;0.001)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibilant (378)</td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>0.680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal (748)</td>
<td>0.179</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0.545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop (166)</td>
<td>0.145</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative (99)</td>
<td>-0.240</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0.440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid (247)</td>
<td>-0.838</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morphological Class (p &lt;0.001)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uninflected (1224)</td>
<td>0.396</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semiweak (52)</td>
<td>0.150</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0.537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular (362)</td>
<td>-0.545</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0.367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voicing (p &lt;0.001)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/d/ (661)</td>
<td>0.348</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>0.586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/t/ (977)</td>
<td>-0.348</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0.414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Following Phonological Environment (p 0.002)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative (215)</td>
<td>0.287</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>0.571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal (80)</td>
<td>0.283</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>0.570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glide (120)</td>
<td>0.194</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>0.548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop (218)</td>
<td>0.114</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0.528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid (36)</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0.517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schwa (257)</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0.514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibilant (67)</td>
<td>-0.092</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0.477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowel (242)</td>
<td>-0.439</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0.392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause (403)</td>
<td>-0.470</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>0.385</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

input=0.184 deviance=1635.976 DF=17 intercept=-1.489 grand mean 0.228

Among the internal factors, voicing, preceding and following segment, and morphological category were all found to be significant. Both regular past tense forms (e.g. passed, factor weight 0.367, 13% deletion) and irregular or semiweak past tense forms (e.g. went, 0.537, 15% deletion) are less favorable for CSD than uninflected or monomorphemic words (e.g. mind, test, 0.598, 26% deletion). This finding is in line with Guy’s (1991, 1996) robust findings on the morphological conditioning on CSD, in which he argues that deletion is less likely – i.e.
that the segment is retained – in environments where the segment is propositionally more important, for example when it is used to mark tense.

Phonologically, both preceding and following environment condition CSD. Preceding sibilants (mist, 0.680, 32% deletion), nasals (mint, 0.545, 25% deletion), and stops (licked, 0.536, 16% deletion) favor deletion while preceding non-sibilant fricatives (lift, 0.440, 13% deletion) and liquids (filled, 0.302, 12% deletion) disfavor CSD. Following non-sibilant fricatives (walked from, 0.571, 29% deletion), nasals (walked near, 0.570, 29% deletion), glides (last year, 0.548, 28% deletion), stops (rust colored, 0.528, 27% deletion), liquids (felt love, 0.517, 25% deletion) and schwa (walked and talked, 0.514, 25% deletion) favor deletion, while following sibilants (went shopping, 0.477, 22% deletion), stressed vowels (went out to, 0.392, 16% deletion) and pause (0.385, 18% deletion) disfavor CSD. Previous study (Santa Ana 1996) has shown that the more sonorous a preceding segment in a consonant cluster is, the higher the likelihood of the final stop being deleted. This resonates with the relatively strong favoring effect of preceding nasals.

The findings on the linguistic conditioning of CSD in Washington, DC, thus conform to the robust patterns found across English-speaking communities.

I also tested for the conditioning on CSD of the following social factors: speaker ethnoracial affiliation, speaker sex, speaker age, and speaker educational attainment, as well as
discourse context. None of these factors were chosen as significant by the model. The lack of robust social conditioning of CSD in Washington, DC, is in line with Hazen’s (2011) finding that CSD is in fact possibly losing its social significance due to its widespread use across communities in the United States.

4.5.2 Social diversity and CSD in Washington, DC

The fact that CSD is widespread in Washington, DC does not mean that its usage is uniform. In fact, there is some diversity both across and within the groups, shown in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.7, that warrants a closer look. Table 4.2 shows the overall rates of CSD among European American men, European American women, African American men and African American women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>18.5% (83/449)</td>
<td>31.5% (138/438)</td>
<td>25% (221/887)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European American</td>
<td>20% (74/375)</td>
<td>21% (79/376)</td>
<td>20.5% (153/751)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>19% (157/824)</td>
<td>27% (153/751)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 shows the overall proportion of deletion for African Americans and European Americans, as well as for men and women within each group. We see that African American
women delete the least (perhaps surprisingly given CSD’s association with African American speech) with an overall rate of 18.5%, followed by European American women with a rate of 20%, then European American men with 21% deletion, and African American men who use CSD the most at an overall rate of 31.5%. So the overall CSD rates in Washington, DC appear at first glance to be relatively uniform, with small differences within and between ethnoracial groups and between women and men. We also see that the overall rates are relatively low, compared to, for example, the CSD rates found by Hazen (2011) for EAs in West Virginia, whose use ranged between 40% and 80% CSD. Overall, then, CSD in DC patterns somewhat like /l/ vocalization in DC, that is, the usage levels are relatively low compared to neighboring communities for whom DC acts as an aerial and commuting hub.

Nevertheless, CSD shows some interesting intra-group variation that is worth noting, and the pattern of difference and similarity across individuals speaks to the necessity of considering intragroup diversity a key aspect of DC as a speech community. We see the individual distributions of CSD in DC in Figure 4.7.
In terms of their personal, sociocultural histories, the speakers whose deletion rates are highest, at 35% or over (Zara, Cassius, Peter, and Walter), represent a broad spectrum of Washingtonians.

Zara is a 21-year-old, African American college student with strong ties to AA activism who has chosen to participate in mostly AA social networks, though her family and the neighborhood where she currently lives (Columbia Heights, in Northwest DC) are more
diverse in racial composition and attitudes to race relations. Zara was interviewed by a close
friend, who is a young Afro-Caribbean woman.

Cassius’ story is similar to Zara’s in many ways, but different in others. At 29, he grew
up and still lives in a historic African American community in Northeast DC. He studied to be a
physical therapist and works in sports medicine at a university in DC. Cassius participates in
many personal, professional, and athletic communities of practice, and it is fair to say that his
networks are ethnoracially integrated. Cassius knows his interviewer—a young, European
American woman—from the gym where he works. Cassius’ participation in rather more
ethnoracially integrated social networks, despite living in a majority-AA neighborhood, sets
him apart from Zara and illustrates the diverse experiences of similarly-educated African
American age peers in DC.

Peter, a 57-year-old African American man, owns two well-established small businesses
in DC: one in the Southeast quadrant of the city and one in the Northwest neighborhood of
Takoma. He is 57 year old, has lived in African American neighborhoods both before and
following DC’s legal desegregation (though residential segregation in many ways persists, as
noted in Chapter 1), and serves a primarily African American clientele. Peter is highly
entrepreneurial and expresses commitment to making his community a more welcoming and
diverse place. Peter was interviewed by a pair of interviewers, both of whom are young women, one African American and one European American.

Finally, Walter is in many ways Peter’s European American peer. At 57, he also operates a small business in Takoma Park, Maryland, a neighborhood that borders Takoma, DC. He grew up in the poor Capitol Hill neighborhood in the 1950s and 1960s, and, having been an entrepreneur all his life, has devoted significant time and effort to contributing to making his community a better place. I interviewed Walter in his shop.

There is considerable diversity among the speakers with the highest rates of CSD in the DC sample. We may glean some associations between the speakers and the variable – the majority of speakers who delete most often are African American, male, and older. But Zara, who is neither older nor male, favors deletion the most.

Podesva (2008) argues that CSD can be adopted in discourse as a tactic to mark resistance to social change. In this case, Zara’s ideological stance may be contributing to her higher usage of CSD, a variant that is associated with male African American speech, and which is available as a stylistic tool to effect interactional outcomes such as expressing ideological resistance to gentrification. In Chapter 5, I discuss how three Washingtonians, including Zara, recruit CSD alongside /l/ vocalization and –in towards meaning-making ends such as this one.
Before moving on to discussing the synergistic contribution of the three variants to Washingtonians’ stylistic construction of identity, I discuss the quantitative patterns of –in in Washington, DC.

4.5.3 Linguistic and social conditioning of –in

I included several factors included in the analysis of –in’s patterning in DC. The internal factors were grammatical category and preceding and following phonological environment. The external factors were speaker sex, ethnoracial affiliation, age, educational attainment, and discourse context. I also included a separate factor for the interaction between sex and ethnoracial affiliation. Finally, speaker was added as a random effect. The significant factors affecting the patterning of –in are presented in Table 4.3. Age, educational attainment, and discourse context were not selected as significant, while sex and ethnoracial affiliation were more significant in their interaction than when considered separately, causing the separate factors to not be selected as significant.
**Table 4.3. Significant factors affecting –in**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor (N=1301)</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>%–in</th>
<th>Centered factor weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex*Ethnoracial Affiliation (p &lt;0.001)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA Men (343)</td>
<td>2.648</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>0.934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA Women (371)</td>
<td>-0.508</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>0.376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA Men (295)</td>
<td>-0.968</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0.275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA Women (292)</td>
<td>-1.173</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0.236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Following Phonological Environment (p &lt;0.001)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronal (296)</td>
<td>0.684</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>0.665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back vowel (106)</td>
<td>0.622</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0.651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schwa (185)</td>
<td>0.585</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>0.642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labial (182)</td>
<td>0.190</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>0.547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front vowel (147)</td>
<td>-0.033</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>0.492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid (46)</td>
<td>-0.090</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>0.478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorsal (96)</td>
<td>-0.400</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0.401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause (243)</td>
<td>-1.558</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>0.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preceding Phonological Environment (p &lt;0.001)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorsal (228)</td>
<td>0.569</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0.638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back vowel (188)</td>
<td>0.311</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front vowel (135)</td>
<td>0.247</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>0.561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labial (197)</td>
<td>0.126</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>0.531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid (61)</td>
<td>-0.452</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>0.389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronal (492)</td>
<td>-0.801</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0.310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammatical Category (p &lt;0.001)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive (609)</td>
<td>0.554</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>0.635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun (157)</td>
<td>0.381</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0.554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerund-participle (98)</td>
<td>-0.020</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>0.495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerund (323)</td>
<td>-0.247</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>0.439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective (114)</td>
<td>-0.668</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0.339</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*deviance=1071.46 DF=21 intercept=-1.0 grand mean=0.379 input=0.269*

Among the internal factors, preceding and following phonological environment as well as grammatical category are significant. As found previously by e.g. Hazen (2008), progressive forms of verbs are most likely to be realized with –in rather than –ing (running, factor weight 0.635, 47% –in), while adjectives most strongly disfavor –in (boring, 0.339, 16% –in). Counter to Hazen’s finding from West Virginia, nouns appear to slightly favor –in among DC speakers.
(morning, 0.594, 26% -in). Note, however, despite nouns apparently favoring -in (according to the factor weights) more than gerund-participles (I tried introducing, 0.495, 39% -in), and gerunds (swimming is fun, 0.439, 34% -in), gerund-participles and gerunds have overall higher rates of -in than do nouns.

Results for preceding environment show that preceding dorsals (lacking, 0.638, 50% -in), back and front vowels (going, 0.577, 50% -in; being, 0.561, 48% -in), and labials (keeping, 0.531, 38% -in) favor -in, while preceding liquids (feeling, 0.389, 31% -in) and coronals (betting, 0.310, 26% -in) disfavor -in. Following segment results show that following coronals (feeling tired, 0.665, 48% -in), back and central vowels (feeling old, 0.651, 50% -in; being and nothingness, 0.642, 48% -in), and labials (feeling brave, 0.547, 35% -in) favor -in, while following front vowels (filling in, 0.492, 38% -in), liquids (feeling low, 0.478, 28% -in), dorsals (feeling good, 0.401, 27% -in) and pause (0.174, 21% -in) disfavor it.

Following pause appears to function similarly for both CSD and -in, inhibiting both. Interestingly, this is the opposite trend from what we observed about pre-pause /l/ vocalization in Chapter 3, where following pause is correlated with higher degrees of vocalization. This indicates one way in which /l/ may have different social associations than -in.
and CSD, a difference that may affect the different contributions of the three features to the construction of Washingtonians’ styles in interaction.

Although ethnoracial affiliation and sex were not chosen as significant factors independently, the model did select the interaction group, Sex*Ethnoracial Affiliation, as a significant predictor of –in. While African American men use –in 76% of the time (factor weight 0.932), African American women (29%, 0.376) pattern with European American men (23%, 0.275) and women (19%, 0.236). African American men lead significantly in the use of –in, conforming to previous findings on the link between –in, sex and ethnoracial affiliation.

4.5.4 Social diversity and –in in Washington, DC

The significant distinction between AA men’s and everybody else’s patterns of (ING) does not mean that we should be content with saying that AA women’s speech is less African American or more like the European American norm. Figure 4.8 shows the rates of –in for all the speakers ordered by ethnoracial affiliation, and illustrates the wide range of usage levels of –in observed across and within the four groups.
Just as was the case with CSD and /l/ vocalization, there is a lot of diversity both across and within the groups, particularly among the African Americans. Zara, the 21-year-old African American college student, uses –in 74% of the time, more than twice as often as Carrie, the African American woman with the second highest –in rates. Zara’s rates are more comparable to many African American men’s (Peter 97%, Cassius 88%, Phil 90%, Imam 80%), than most African American women’s (Mona 9%, May 11%, Azza 17%).
In addition, though overall the analysis shows expected patterns of variation, we do observe patterns like Zara’s and Frank’s, the latter of whom, although he is a middle-aged African American man with strong ties to AA activism, community leadership, and social networks, shows overall lower usage of African American-linked phonological features. In Chapter 5, I consider the results for all three variables in concert, and suggest that an analysis that takes into consideration intra-group variation is absolutely necessary if we are to understand the role of phonological variation at the intersection of ethnorace, region, and style in Washington, DC.

4.6 Summary

In this chapter, we have seen evidence for numerous meanings at work with regards to CSD and -in. None of these links are novel, and indeed their robustness has been commented upon many times, for example by Labov et al. (1968):

“In general, we can say that the (-ing) variable is one of the simplest and most straightforward sociolinguistic indicators in [Nonstandard Negro English], and NNE differs from SE [Standard English] primarily in the wider range of style shifting. This probably can be attributed to the fact that uniform –in pronunciation is more regular in the South, which determines the form of the NNE vernacular; but since formal speech is associated with Northern patterns,
speakers move as far away from this Southern pattern as possible in reading word lists.” (Labov et al 1968: 121, original emphasis)

Ethnoracial affiliation, region, relationship to the standard variety, and situational formality are all implicated as conditioning -in and its perception. We can basically say that ideologies surrounding -in has been in circulation, available for interpretation, and described by sociolinguistics for at least four decades. On the meanings associated with CSD, Wolfram (1969) notes social class (and thus level of social stigma), level of integration with EAs (and thus with the standard variety), and situational formality as some of the conditioning factors. In sum, many different links exist between CSD and -in. The two features were initially viewed as markers of similar social groups – groups of lower socioeconomic status, African Americanness, Southern regionality, and men. As sociolinguists have become more involved with investigating more localized and shifting social meanings of language variation, however, a more nuanced picture has emerged.

The meanings of the features are available to much broader groups than those above. People are able to recruit linguistic features to effect stylistic outcomes, to portray themselves in certain ways, to take stances for or against propositions. The interpretations of the features, too, vary greatly, and depend not only on the (perceived) identity of the speaker and the
constellation of features each speaker uses, but also necessarily on the experiences of the hearer, their own stances and understandings of self.

It is interesting to note that the links strongly resemble those for variation in /l/, as described in Chapter 3. Just like CSD and –in, /l/ vocalization is often associated with African American speech, lower class speech, and Southern speech. We have, however, seen a pattern in Washington, DC, for /l/ vocalization that potentially speaks to the need for a more nuanced treatment of the feature.

A discussion of the relationship between these much-studied variables and their robust social meanings may seem unnecessary, precisely given the longstanding attention they have already received. However, relatively little work has been done to examine the synergistic contribution of these variables to creative meaning-making in interactions, and particularly to how these two variables combine with other race- and region-linked variables in the construction of selves. An integrated look at the contribution of multiple variables to the interactional creation, maintenance and contestation of speakers’ facets of self is always necessary in the study of style (Schilling-Estes 1998, 2004; Eckert 2008; Campbell-Kibler 2011).
Having charted some social meanings of two well-studied variables, and adding these insights to the findings on /l/ vocalization in Washington, DC (Chapter 3), Chapter 5 will consider the three variables in concert in the context of the sociolinguistic interviews, and in the larger social context of demographic and social change.

This exercise is particularly useful in a community like Washington, DC, where influences from North and South, AA and EA culture, middle and working class histories abound and contribute to a diverse, rich sociolinguistic environment in which stylistic recruitment of variants such as CSD, -in, and /l/-vocalization can shed much light on speakers’ construction of diverse, but intrinsically Washingtonian, identities.
Chapter 5.

Stylistic repertoires and styling a Washingtonian identity

5.1 Introduction

Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation have investigated the social meanings and associations shared by three phonological variants in American English: the vocalization of coda and syllabic /l/ (e.g. *coo*’ for *cool*), -*in* (the alveolar variant of the nasal in words ending in *<ing>*), e.g. *runnin’* for *running*), and Coronal Stop Deletion (CSD) in word-final consonant clusters (i.e. *wes’ coas’* for *west coast*). These variants are widespread across varieties of English and well known by sociolinguists.

To summarize, all three of these features share associations based on geography and ethnoracial affiliation in the United States. A long history of production study has uncovered robust social associations for the features, all three of which are among those shared by African American Vernacular English and Southern White Vernacular English (Thomas 2007). These shared meanings and associations motivate the study of all three features in concert in a place
like Washington, DC. As I describe in Chapter 1 on social history and change in Washington, DC, region, ethnoracial identity, and ideology are key aspects of Washington history and culture that contribute to its unique social landscape. The location of the city on the geographic and ideological North-South boundary, its status as a transitional city at the border of the South dialect region, its significant and long-standing population of African Americans, the rise – and fall – of Washington, DC, as a ‘majority-minority’ city, the rapid and ethnoracially-bound gentrification in recent decades, and the presence of the Federal government as a major player in DC’s labor market, are all factors affecting the ways in which language is embedded in the maintenance and contestation of social structures and groups in the city.

Like many other places in late-modernity, Washington is also an inherently diverse place, a fact remarked upon by Wolfram (1984) in a brief biographic sketch of DC’s sociolinguistic environment.

In this chapter, I will show that the three variants enter into Washingtonians’ *stylistic repertoires* to varying degrees (I define this concept below). In addition, the different repertoires displayed by speakers of relatively similar ‘social addresses’ (Eckert 2000) are perhaps unexpectedly diverse, particularly against the background of the regular ethnoracial patterns found at the aggregate level. This finding underscores previous calls from variationist
sociolinguists for further attention to the linguistic realities and self-reflections of individuals as an important part of our mission to understand the role language plays in human experiences of social life. A repertoire-based perspective on language variation (Benor 2010; Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985), and a phenomenological perspective (Johnstone and Kiesling 2008) that pays significant attention to less predictable factors such as the need for self-expression (Johnstone 1996; Johnstone and Bean 1997) and diversity of personal experience (Johnstone and Kiesling 2008), are particularly suited for the investigation of language in places like DC – places whose social and political histories are diverse and contested, that occupy transitional and boundary spaces, and whose residents do not "inhabit tightly focused speech communities analogous to those of Harlem, Detroit, or inner-city Belfast" (Johnstone and Bean 1997: 223).

The rest of this chapter is organized as follows. In section 5.2 I present an overview of studies on the community and the linguistic repertoire, and a justification for employing the repertoire perspective in an urban speech community like Washington, DC. Section 5.3 focuses on the interplay between focus on the group and the individual in sociolinguistics. In section 5.4 I discuss the variation of all three features among European Americans and African Americans, focusing on intra-group diversity and the different constellations of the three
features within and across individuals. Finally, section 5.5 showcases some ways in which the aspects of speakers’ stylistic repertoires become activated in interactions as part of each speaker’s displays and negotiation of a Washingtonian identity, especially Washingtonian-ness as part of a broader framework of social change and ethnoracial relations in the city. I will show the contribution of -in, CSD, and /l/ vocalization to one speaker’s performance of DC-specific slang terms, to another speaker’s performance of ethnoracial styles in DC, and to a third speaker’s anti-racist commentary on language and education in Washington, DC. First, however, a few definitions of key terms are necessary.

5.1.1 Definitions of key terms: Code, ethnolect, styling and stylization

**Code.** I operationalize the idea of a linguistic code as meaning a language or a language variety, particularly under the view that the language or variety is a bounded set of co-occurring linguistic features (Ervin-Tripp 1973[1964]) used (exclusively) by the speaker population with whom it is associated. Code-switching, then, is the practice of switching between two languages, varieties, or other codes, by multilingual and multidialectal speakers, often for some strategic purpose such as creating in-group solidarity, maintaining differences between interactional situations, marking distinction from an out-group, or humor (Blom and
Gumperz 1972; Poplack 1980). The important point for this dissertation is that viewing language varieties as discrete *codes* can be unwise because even populations that appear homogeneous socially and linguistically can exhibit a lot of linguistic diversity.

**Ethnolect.** The concept of *ethnolect* emphasizes the existence of *ethnoracially* distinctive ways of speaking, even among speakers of the same language. The concept is most often used in studies of urban language varieties in populations including immigrants and their descendants who are under some influence of substrate effects from their first languages (Carlock and Wölck 1981), looking at distinguishing characteristics of these ethnic varieties from an ambient majority population (Hoffman and Walker 2010). More broadly, however, under an *ethnolect* view of the relationship between ethnoracial identity and language, a homegrown variety of English like African American (Vernacular) English is conceptualized as a bounded and relatively unproblematic entity, leading to the unwise erasure of intragroup differences among the internally diverse populations under study (Becker 2013). In section 5.2, below, I discuss the relationship among and differences between the concepts of *ethnolect* and *(ethnolinguistic)* repertoire.

**Styling.** The concept of *styling* is particularly important to section 5.5, in which I show how phonological variants become part of Washingtonians’ construction of their identities in
interaction. Under Coupland’s (2007) view of style – that “[linguistic] style refers to a ways of doing something” (2007: 1) – styling is the process by which style is accomplished, in this case, in interactions. So I use styling as a near-equivalent of identity construction; I believe that styling affords us an analytical advantage through explicitly focusing on the process rather than simply the outcome of stylistic practice at a very local, interactional level.

Stylization. I also follow Coupland (2001, 2007) in discussing stylization of Washingtonians and Washingtonian speech, which is particularly relevant to section 5.5 of this chapter. Coupland defines stylization of dialect as “performing non-current-first-person personas by phonological and related means, sometimes in play or parody” (2001: 345). That is, stylization is explicitly performed speech (Schilling-Estes 1998) in which the current speaker evokes another person/kind of person/group of people through socially salient phonological variation and ‘related means’ including topics, lexis, et cetera.

I want to point out that this chapter in no way represents an exhaustive review of the relationships, differences, and similarities among the diverse approaches to the interaction between group-level and individual-level speech. Rather, it is my aim to briefly describe, operationalize, apply, and attempt to enrich the perspective of the ethnolinguistic repertoire, which is a very useful concept in analyzing language in diverse communities like Washington,
DC. Leaving this brief discussion of key concepts – code, ethnolect, styling and stylization – aside, I now move on to discuss a few different approaches to analyzing language in communities and among individuals.

5.2 The community, the individual, and the repertoire

The study of the linguistic repertoire as a construct in variationist sociolinguistics is relatively new, though the notion has been around for decades in research traditions related to sociolinguistic variation.

5.2.1 Early studies of intra-group variation

Blom and Gumperz’ (1972) seminal study of Hemnesberget in northern Norway helped establish some parameters of what constitutes a linguistic repertoire. They showed that residents of the village have access to two varieties of Norwegian, the local *Ranamål* and the standard *Bokmål*. These varieties are used by community members to varying degrees depending on many factors that govern style shifting, or as Blom and Gumperz refer to it, code switching (see section 5.1.1 above), including speakers’ individual and community orientations. Notably, style shifting between *Ranamål* and *Bokmål* occurs both as a direct consequence of the
social situation and its association with ‘local’ and ‘supra-local’ matters (situational switching), and in a more initiative fashion, as an indication of ‘metaphorical’ association with speakers’ stances (metaphorical switching) regardless of situation. Thus, speakers make use of features from their repertoires to varying degrees, depending on contextual factors, and are not bound to use one set of dialect features over another, as we may assume if we analyze ethnic ways of speaking as neatly bounded codes (discussed in section 5.1.1, above).

The finding that speakers’ exert control over their linguistic production based on stylistic choices was not necessarily a new one in 1972. Indeed, Gumperz’ earlier work on the verbal repertoire underscored the importance of recognizing the inherent variability and creativity in indexing particular facets of self. At the community level, Gumperz (2009[1968]) suggests that the verbal repertoire is the nexus of codes and their degree of intermingling:

“We speak of compartmentalized repertoires, therefore, when several languages are spoken without their mixing, when dialects are set off from each other by sharp isogloss bundles, or when special parlances are sharply distinct from other forms of speech. We speak of fluid repertoires, on the other hand, when transitions between adjoining vernacular are gradual or when one speech style merges into another in such a way that it is difficult to draw clear borderlines” (2009[1968]: 72).
Gumperz' assertion that languages and language varieties are intimately linked through the sociolinguistic lives of their speakers is an important one, as it showcases a different view of the speech community than that of traditional variationist sociolinguistics. Rather than viewing members of a speech community as unproblematically linked through their use of features (and, importantly, their shared valuation of features) that distinguish them from members of another (geographic, frequently) community, a repertoire approach holds that members of a community possess a range (Gumperz 1964) of features from which to draw.

These features can be features of different languages (in a multilingual context), of different dialects (perhaps, as in DC, in a dialect boundary context), of different genres or styles, et cetera. Repertoires are thus not only a community-level phenomenon, but certainly an individual and intra-speaker one, as well. The interactionally oriented approach to sociolinguistic variation has long held the position that "regularities in behavior can be analyzed as generated from a series of individual choices made under specifiable constraints and incentives" (Blom and Gumperz 1972: 432), and so it follows that there is much to be gained from investigating both patterns of talk in a community, and patterns of talk among the individuals comprising that community.
This stance is also taken by Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) in their seminal research on language variation and identity in diverse linguistic and social situations in Creole-speaking communities in the Caribbean and urban England. Le Page and Tabouret-Keller hold that all linguistic usages constitute “acts of identity”, acts which speakers perform with some degree of control, and which are designed to situate speakers as individuals in complex social environments, signaling solidarity with some individual or group, and difference from another or others. Crucially, the authors treat speakers both as individuals whose individual linguistic production warrants separate investigation, and as members of groups, the aggregate experiences of which form loose cultural and linguistic frameworks for individuals’ performance. In their work, the authors follow interactionally based approaches such as Blom and Gumperz’s but bring something rather unprecedented to more variationist approaches (as Rickford 2011 notes), foregrounding speakers’ social and individual identities as being of paramount importance in explaining motivations for convergence and divergence among speakers of a language or variety:

“In what sense are all [...] people members of linguistic communities? Their cultural gravitational forces operate in many directions; each of them occupies an individual position, and yet they give evidence of sharing various loyalties and hatreds and alliances and identities within many different spheres” (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985: 175).
Le Page and Tabouret-Keller emphasize the need to conduct linguistic research grounded in linguistic reality, though this reality may not be neatly segmentable into distinct languages, language varieties, or linguistic usages that correlate closely with speakers’ demographic categories. This perspective, which privileges intragroup diversity, greatly informs this dissertation’s position about doing sociolinguistic variationist work in communities whose members display a wide variety of diverse lived experiences.

Though I foreground Gumperz’ and LePage and Tabouret-Keller’s highly agency-oriented perspectives on intragroup diversity, I do not mean to imply that sociolinguistic variationist literature has neglected this type of analysis. On the contrary, variationist literature has always been concerned with explaining why and how language differs (or doesn’t) across and within groups. I would like to highlight two studies – one on community variation, and one on stylistic variation – that accomplish nuanced pictures of ethnolinguistic difference and its creative application.

Labov’s (1963) seminal study on the social motivations behind vocalic variation in Martha’s Vineyard compares the levels of centralization of diphthongs /ay/ and /aw/ among several age groups, occupational classes, and local ethnic groups: Vineyarders of English, Portuguese and American Indian descent. He finds that, among younger generations,
centralization of /ay/ and /aw/ – old, heritage features of Vineyard English, which is under attack from leveling influences of mainland speech – is increasing regardless of speakers’ ethnic heritage, despite longstanding social segregation among English, Portuguese, and Indian Vineyarders. Labov explains this trend as having originated with English Vineyarders’ rejection of mainland influence and renewed pride in the local, traditional fishing economy, while the convergence between ethnic groups may be attributed to the younger generation’s decreasing interethnic animosity and increased common identification as Vineyarders. Labov’s study shows that community-level change happens at the intersection between local, ethnic, and other social identities, and that features once reserved for one segment of a population can act as unifying forces.

Inter-and intra-group differences are also reflected and productively used in interactional settings. Schilling-Estes’ (2004) study of interactional management of ethnoracially-linked language varieties in a multi-ethnic speech community exemplifies some ways in which speakers’ overlapping repertoires are used to different social effects.

In a dyadic sociolinguistic interview interaction between Lou, a Lumbee Indian, and his friend Alex, who is African American, the two participants manage their ethnoracial identities and interpersonal relationship through (among other linguistic usages) variability in /r/
lessness, which is associated strongly with African American and Southern speech. While Alex overall shows higher use levels of /r/-lessness (as is to be expected), the two speakers’ usage levels converge in discussions about friends, family, and other aspects of their lives that they share. Meanwhile, their usage levels diverge dramatically in discussions of race relations in their home county. In this context, the two interlocutors’ different life experiences and ideologies are highlighted, and linguistic divergence reflects this tension. Schilling-Estes argues that while ethnoracial categories are certainly key to understanding the convergence and divergence of speakers within diverse speech communities, these categories are also interactionally constructed and motivated by interpersonal factors. In short, ethnoracially linked language forms part of speakers’ diverse linguistic and social repertoires.

Before moving on to consider the repertoires of the Washingtonians in this study, I discuss the notion of the *ethnolinguistic repertoire* which specifically foregrounds ethnoracial affiliation as a locus of repertoire-oriented meaning-making, and discuss why I choose to employ the term *stylistic repertoire* in my own analysis.
Ethnoracial affiliation and linguistic repertoires

Ethnoracial affiliation is one of the most studied, and most ‘regularized’, social factors in variationist sociolinguistics. Inspired by the notion of a community’s shared (and variably used) ‘verbal repertoire’ of linguistic codes and styles, Benor (2010) asks: “How can we discuss distinctively ethnic ways of speaking and still account for the variation and fluidity that characterize them?” (159). At the heart of Benor’s argument is the recognition of a need for methodological and conceptual flexibility in sociolinguistics, if we are to be able to reconcile the longstanding focus on language varieties and the regularization of language with the inevitable complexities, contradictions, and fluctuations in the linguistic behavior of individuals.

The concept of the ethnolinguistic repertoire is founded in part on the basis of work on style-shifting among speakers of a number of varieties of English, including Indian English in the UK (Sharma 2005), Chicano English in the US (Fought 2006) and Creole varieties and Caribbean English varieties in the UK (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985). Because speakers of these varieties have access and exposure to (a) several languages, whether they are multilingual or have access to more than one language through ethnoracial or immigrant heritage (e.g. monolingual English speakers in Spanish-speaking communities), and (b) several varieties of Englishes, instead of simply being speakers of a particular variety, these speakers
can be said to possess broad linguistic repertoires, features of which they draw on both systematically and sporadically (Benor 2010: 160). The repertoire, or collection of potential features, includes features from both the L1 and (heritage) L2. The ethnolinguistic repertoire, according to Benor, comprises the ‘distinctive’ constellation of linguistic features that is the hallmark of a particular ethnic group. Benor asserts that a repertoire approach to language and ethnicity solves the troubling rigidity of the ethnolect idea – that is, the idea that ethnoracially linked language varieties are monolithic and represent all speech by all members of a particular group – by honoring the fluidity and internal variation among speakers of any linguistically distinctive group.

Since the ethnolinguistic repertoire perspective views speakers’ language variation as often quite conscious, it must also necessarily incorporate analyses of speakers’ own metalinguistic awareness and commentary, that is, what speakers themselves think about their linguistic identities. Viewing language varieties as distinctive ‘codes’ has been common in sociolinguistics for a long time, and while this view can be shown to be limited, it should not be summarily dismissed, since it has had practical value in a very ‘real world’ sense, in particular within the paradigm of linguistic gratuity (Schilling 2013b; Wolfram and Reaser 2008). If it is incumbent upon sociolinguists to ‘give back’ by fighting for the rights and freedoms of
disadvantaged communities whose vernacular language we study, then it makes sense for linguists to characterize all varieties as full, rule-governed, living forms of language. However, it has been shown time and time again that speakers’ own attitudes and orientations towards ‘their’ language varieties are more complex.

Consider Frank’s response to a question about local language, below in Extract 10. Frank is a 40-year-old African American man, living in Takoma Park, MD, a neighborhood bordering Washington, DC. As a youth pastor, he situates himself as a central member of the local African American community, and holds several leadership and mentor positions with African American youth. The interviewer asks Frank if there are any differences in how people talk in his neighborhood and around the DC area, and Frank responds as follows.

(10) Frank, 40, African American, army reservist and youth pastor
1. Frank: I think it just comes with exposure and adaptation,
2. I don't think it's necessarily geographical? Uh, you know, but…
3. and I think you also learn different contexts, in different communities,
4. you can do different things.
5. Cause I still can, you know, go back and relate very well and talk.
6. If they wanna call it Ebonics or whatever, you know,
7. I – you know, I can do that, that's-
8. But, uh, I don't think we're around…
9. Even the other African-American families and people, most people are not…
10. talking that way.
While to a sociolinguist, Frank is quite easy to identify as a speaker of a more vernacular variety of African American English, he resists the idea of that his way of speaking is a distinct code by stating that *it just comes with exposure and adaptation, I don’t think it’s necessarily geographical* (lines 1-2). Instead, he emphasizes his own linguistic virtuosity, that he can *learn different contexts* (line 3) and his own effortless mobility between *different communities* (line 3) in which he can do *different things* (line 4) with language.

What is perhaps most interesting about Frank’s metalinguistic commentary is that he evidently quickly draws a link between being asked about linguistic difference, and the concept of the stigmatized variety of African American English that is frequently called “Ebonics” in the popular media. Although Frank never disparages African American speech, he is quick to point out that it is very diverse. He takes an indifferent and perhaps somewhat negative stance toward the term *Ebonics* by saying *If they wanna call it Ebonics or whatever* (line 6). Several discourse tactics are part of this stance taking. Frank attributes the term *Ebonics* to a third party, *they*, a distancing tactic making it clear that Frank is not the principle behind or the author of this term but merely the animator (Goffman 1981b). In addition, the tag *or whatever*
further indicates a lack of commitment on Frank’s part as to whether or not *Ebonics* is an accurate characterization of African American speech.\(^{37}\)

In short, metalinguistic awareness and commentary form useful backgrounds for an analysis of a speaker’s linguistic repertoire, because they can show a speaker’s orientation not only towards particular languages and varieties but also towards the very notions of varieties and repertoires themselves. Frank, in this case, takes a position in favor of a repertoire- and style-based analysis of dialect in DC and against a static code-based approach.\(^{38}\)

If Frank were versed in the linguistic anthropological literature, he might concur with Cameron and Kulick’s (2003: 88) emphatic statement about the relationship between language and sexuality: that “the fact that gays [or in this case, African Americans] do X doesn’t make X gay [or African American]”. As mentioned above, it is incumbent on linguists to work towards public understanding of and respect for the vibrant, living variety that is African American English, and so the statement about gay speech is not totally analogous here. Nevertheless, a

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\(^{37}\) This discourse marker appears to operate similarly to the ‘set-marking tags’ such as *and everything* analyzed by Dines and Mendoza-Denton (2008), which indicate that the preceding items referred to are part of a more general set. *Or whatever*, in Frank’s case, might be indicating that *Ebonics* is one of the names he has heard for non-standard speech, about whose validity he remains skeptical.

\(^{38}\) Of course, in situations where people’s linguistic varieties are stigmatized, dying, or moribund, linguistic distinctiveness can become a key aspect of identity, leading to speakers emphasizing distinctiveness and rigidity of difference. Though Frank is not, many speakers may well be resistant to the idea of the repertoire.
practice-based approach to language variation\textsuperscript{39} – a view under which the repertoire perspective on language variation naturally falls – holds that ideology mediates all language use. In order to examine the ideologies that underlie language variation, we must look closely at variation within groups as well as across them, and seek an explanation for why Frank doesn’t redefine “Ebonics” as an empowering notion or as a point of pride, but chooses rather to dispense with the designation, or at least remain unconvinced of the validity of a monolithic Ebonics ‘code’.

5.2.3 Intra-group variability and ideology

Intra-group variability in use of linguistic features can be explained in a variety of ways. Work on creoles and their continua (see Rickford 1991, 2002 for a detailed overview) has frequently made use of the implicational scale, an instrument ordering the variable presence of features across speakers and smaller communities to explain the spread and co-occurrence of features. Rickford (2002) urges sociolinguists to seek explanations for the patterns uncovered at the aggregate level, suggesting that the reasons for intra-group variability should be explained by means other than merely by group membership.

\textsuperscript{39} Including such approaches as the ethnography of communication (Hymes 1964), sociocultural linguistics (Bucholtz and Hall 2004), interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1982), and approaches to style in sociolinguistic variation (Bell 1984, 2001; Coupland 1980, 2001, 2007; Eckert 2000, 2008)
Some research on variability in African Americans’ speech has suggested that the use (or non-use) of certain kinds of AAVE features has an ideological basis. Taylor (1971), Spears (1988), and Rahman (2008) show (among others) a variable pattern of use of AAVE features among middle class and upwardly mobile African Americans. The variety proposed by Taylor, Black Standard English, is similar to ‘regional standards’ of white varieties. BSE speakers systematically avoid stigmatized, morphosyntactic features of AAVE, and use the phonetic features (such as /ay/ monophthongization) variably.

Rahman’s (2008) attitudes survey confirms that while middle class African Americans have solidarity with the historical roots of AAVE and its importance to the community, upwardly mobile individuals are likely to report using ‘black talk’ only in intimate situations, while adhering to a ‘white’ or ‘mainstream’ standard in more public talk. This certainly presents a more style-oriented, self-conscious and agentive picture of the use of AAVE features than would a study of variation at the aggregate level, though we must of course remember that some speakers do not have access to elements associated with different varieties, such as residents of highly segregated neighborhoods with limited out-group contact.

The repertoire-oriented perspective is also useful because it problematizes the distinction between ethnoracial and regional ways of speaking, which is an important point...
because ethnoracially linked varieties of languages are often deeply embedded in place and need to be paid as much attention in a place-oriented variation paradigm as ‘majority’, often ‘white’, varieties. Not only do ethnoracial minorities participate in majority language change (Fought 1999); ethnoracially linked linguistic features become, over time, intimately linked with the places of minority settlement (Hall-Lew 2009), and speakers of minority varieties can and do use aspects of their ethnolinguistic repertoires toward place-linked, rather than ethnoracial, alignment and identity claims (Becker 2013).

5.2.4 Why repertoires in Washington, DC?

The finding that ethnoracial repertoires are composed of a collection of indeterminate variables whose associations can be recruited towards a variety of goals speaks very strongly to the importance of the repertoire in a city like Washington, DC. Many African Americans in Washington, DC, are middle class residents of a middle class city saturated by civil servants. DC’s African American population has intimate, enduring ties to the descendants of slaves who lived in Washington, DC, until the abolition of slavery⁴⁰ and those who migrated to DC from the South in the years immediately following. DC’s status as a “Chocolate City” has drawn

⁴⁰ Washington, DC abolished slavery in April 1862, nine months before the Emancipation Proclamation was issued.
African Americans here for decades, while more recent migrants into Washington are East African, European and European American, or Hispanic. African American Washington, DC, comprises myriad experiences, histories, and ideologies. It is a rich community with a deep and turbulent history.

A repertoire-based approach necessitates increased attention to the important individual dimension of language variation. The sociocultural landscape of African American life in Washington, DC, is a complex web of interactions between ethnoracial identity, class, mobility, region, history, and pride.

This is precisely why we need to consider individual speakers and their deployment of socially meaningful linguistic features: an understanding of the role language plays in how individuals locate themselves and others in social space can help us along the way towards an understanding of the complexity and intersectionality of social life in a contested place like Washington, DC.

In the next section, I briefly review the motivation behind the focus on individuals’ moment-to-moment stylistic practice within the linguistic repertoire paradigm, and introduce the concept of *stylistic repertoire*, which I use throughout the rest of the analysis.
5.3 Self-expression and the stylistic repertoire

Johnstone and Bean (1997) present an "approach to variation that acknowledges and explores the role of the individual speaker in selecting and shaping the linguistic resources that are provided in his or her environment by a variety of models for talk and action" (222). This proposition may not seem controversial or special in light of the more recent developments in the study of stylistic variation (Coupland 2001, 2007; Eckert 2001, 2005, 2008b; Schilling 2013b; Schilling-Estes 1998, 2004, 2008), and in the study of individuals' uses of outgroup varieties such as ‘crossing’ phenomena (Rampton 1995), including the strategic use of AAVE features and styles by EAs, Latino/as, and Asians (Bucholtz 2001, 2011; Chun 2001; Cutler 2003; Guy and Cutler 2011). Nevertheless, the principles outlined are important pieces in understanding the interplay between group and individual, and this chapter benefits from a reproduction of the authors’ rationale in its entirety. Johnstone and Bean (1997) outline a sociolinguistics of self-expression and language variation as follows:
(a) Speakers choose how to sound\textsuperscript{11}. Their choices are usually made unconsciously, though they can be the result of conscious adoption of a strategic style…

(b) Speakers' choices, made from among the sociolinguistic resources available to them, may be ways of speaking associated with large groups (e.g. AAVE), or they may be ways of speaking associated with smaller groups or even individuals (e.g. the way one's mother, teacher, or uncle talks).

(c) Linguistic choices are made on all levels, from how to sound to how to tell stories, be polite, etc. Thus analysis of linguistic variation must be theatrical as well as linguistic in the traditional sense.

(d) Speakers' linguistic choices express one or more self-images… Self-images may partly coincide with images of one or more groups… but self-images also reflect individuals' senses of themselves as different from others.

(e) Relatively public speech - speech which is relatively planned and self-conscious, and whose audiences are not limited to family, peers, and immediate community - highlights linguistic choices expressive of self-image. If 'vernacular' speech is best for showing how people's choices are influenced by social facts, public speech is best for showing the ways in which people's choices are self-expressive.

(f) Case studies - detailed ethnographic and linguistic analyses of individuals' talk and writing, and how they understand what they are doing with language - are a good technique for seeing how the individual enters into the set of factors that explain sociolinguistic variation.

(reproduced and modified from Johnstone and Bean 1997: 222-223, my emphasis)

This approach, in sum, states that speakers are to some extent in control of their linguistic production, that they exert said control to construct facets of who they are in

\textsuperscript{11} ‘Speakers choose how to conduct themselves linguistically’ may be a more accurate way of describing the individual basis for stylistic variation, since of course language styles encompass morphosyntactic, lexical, and other elements in addition to phonological, and importantly, because stylistic variation happens in signed as well as oral languages.
interaction. And even though sociolinguistic interviews are not public speech events per se, they are prime sites for speakers to voice opinions and to *style* aspects of themselves and others (despite persistent belief that they are sites of *unaffected* speech). Thus, within sociolinguistic interviews, speakers can use features that are associated with particular groups, individuals, character types, stances, moods, ideas, and convictions to effect interactional goals of myriad types, whether presenting oneself as a certain type of person, expressing solidarity with one’s interlocutor or with a non-present person or group(s), affecting stances toward or against a topic of discussion, or some other goal that is at once reflective of social facts as well as deeply personal and self-expressive.

### 5.3.1 The stylistic repertoire

In section 5.1.1, I describe Coupland’s notion of *styling* as the process by which the kind of identity construction or self-expression in which I am interested happens, and not just the fact that it happens. *Styling* thus refers to the process of employing socially meaningful phonological (or other) features in interactions in order to accomplish something socially – in the case of this dissertation, how Washingtonians *style* facets of their own selves, of others, and of salient kinds of Washingtonianness in metalinguistic commentary.
Because of my focus on the links between community patterns, social meanings, and interactional uses for the three phonological features under study, it is important to this study to foreground the *stylistic* potential of socially linked linguistic features; all sociolinguistic features have stylistic potential and become activated in interactional contexts, towards a variety of social goals. Therefore, the stylistic aspect of phonological variation is central to my inquiry, and I want to further highlight the importance of the stylistic dimension of language variation within and across groups.

I do so through calling the constellations of features under study *stylistic repertoires*, a concept that I believe bridges the gap between ideas of the *(ethno)linguistic repertoire* and *styling*. The ethnolinguistic repertoire encourages variationist study to describe the various degrees to which speakers use ethnoracially linked features and to think in a more nuanced way about what it means to be a speaker of a variety. The approach reflects ever-shifting and complex social realities in which speakers participate, and in which language use (strategic and less self-conscious, individual and group-oriented) plays an important part.

But the ethnolinguistic repertoire approach does not necessitate attention to *how* language is part of speakers’ shifting alliances and forms of self-expression. So recruiting the notion of styling – interactional enactment of identities – as an integral component of a
repertoire-oriented view of language variation and identity helps bridge the gap between the study of the group and the individual, primarily by necessitating attention to moment-to-moment styling.

In addition, shifting the focus from simply determining ranges of repertoires to also incorporating interactional activation and use of the components of the repertoires aligns this study closer to the speaker design perspective on stylistic variation, which I discuss in Chapter 1. The speaker design perspective views the interactional embedding of socially salient features as primary for their analysis and interpretation, and underscores the importance of considering the complex interplay between the group and the individual that may derive from myriad social and interactional goals, for example, individuals’ desire for self-expression, to subvert convention, to amuse, to confuse/clarify, and to act for oneself, as well as the desire to align with or diverge from a particular group. For these reasons, I talk about stylistic repertoires rather than ethnolinguistic repertoires for the remainder of the dissertation.

Next, I will describe the combined patterning of /l/ vocalization, -in and CSD among the 21 Washingtonians that form the sample of this study, and show the stylistic repertoires of the speakers and speaker groups as they are crafted in interaction. In doing this, I show how
internally linguistically diverse Washingtonians are, as well as some of the many reasons why, including individually centered, group oriented, and ideologically driven factors.

5.4 Stylistic repertoires: Social similarity, linguistic diversity

In the rest of the chapter, I will look more closely at the stylistic repertoires of the 21 speakers, and show that speakers’ social histories, particularly those of their race, do predict usages of race-linked variables to some extent, but also speakers do not always align linguistically. This may be due to speakers’ own dynamic, changing ideologies and to the various social roles they occupy in the interview encounter. This analysis also forms the foundation for the necessary examination of interactional uses of the features, and their role in Washingtonians’ styling of their own identities.

5.4.1 Stylistic repertoires among Washingtonians

The stylistic repertoires of the speakers\textsuperscript{42} show us that individual rates and aggregate patterns according to some social characteristic often do coincide, but on occasion do not. It is this space between the social dialect and the individual style that bears further investigation.

\textsuperscript{42} Ellen is included in this analysis despite her qualitatively different (ING) realizations, as her CSD and /l/-vocalization rates are informative of the overall repertoires of European American speakers.
The stylistic repertoires in Figure 5.1, below, are ordered by –in rates. I chose to organize the visualization by –in rates due to the overall robust effect of ethnoracial affiliation and sex on the variable (cf. Chapter 4). In addition to showing the overall cline of –in usage, Figure 5.1 can be likened to an implicational scale of race- and place-linked features in Washington, DC, in that it “privileges individual differences while identifying relationships among variables and among speakers” (Sharma 2005: 199). By looking at how –in rates interact both with CSD rates, /l/-vocalization rates, and speakers’ ethnoracial racial and sex categories, we may see a picture of the linguistic and extralinguistic styles that speakers make use of as they create their identities as Washingtonians in interviews.
Reading Figure 5.1 from left to right, we see that the relatively neat division among African American men and all other groups (European American men and women, and African American women) observed in the quantitative analysis of \(--in\) holds less well when we observe the individual patterns of speakers.

5.4.2 Stylistic ranges and ethnoracial affiliation

Rates of \(--in\) range from 2\% (Mark, a 54-year-old European American man) to 97\% (Peter, a 57-year-old African American man). Among European American speakers, excepting
Ellen, who was excluded from the quantitative analysis due to the qualitative differences between her –in and other speakers’ –in, Walter (a 57-year-old man) leads with 53% –in. We could therefore say that the stylistic range of –in for EAs is 2-53% - a not insubstantial difference, and one that certainly underscores Hazen’s (2008) point about the necessity of examining intra-group differences. While the Appalachians in Hazen’s study do display overall relatively high rates of –in (as a rural, working class community may be expected to based on prior research), individual rates range from 1% to 96%.

Among African Americans, the speaker with the lowest rates of –in is Mona (a 40-year-old woman) with 9% –in. Peter (57 years old) leads with an overwhelming 97% –in. This echoes the strong interaction between speaker sex and ethnoracial affiliation found in the quantitative analysis in Chapter 4, which showed that AA men have a stronger preference for –in than AA women. The stylistic range for –in among AAs in this DC sample is 9-97% - a much broader range than for EAs, suggesting that –in as a variant is used throughout the community, but also that the feature is a robust feature of AAE in DC.

Although AA men like Peter conform to the expected pattern of (ING) variation, other AA speakers do not. Frank, who is 40 years old, has an –in rate of 26%, and patterns much
closer to the AA women. Meanwhile Zara, who is 21 and a college student, leads the AA women with 74% -in.

5.4.3 *Stylistic ranges and correlations between the features*

The quantitative analyses of the three features showed that ethnoracial affiliation conditions /l/-vocalization and -in, while CSD is more robustly governed by internal factors such as phonological environment and morphological class. Thus we may conclude that CSD plays a less significant role as a marker of ethnoracial identity, though Podesva (2008) shows that the variant is available for stylistic deployment in interactions where ethnoracial and other social issues are salient topics. Another way to represent the different associations of the variants in Washington, DC, is to look at the breadth of the stylistic ranges exhibited by speakers of different salient categories (in this case, ethnoracial affiliation). Table 5.1, below, shows the breadth of the stylistic ranges for all three variants, according to speaker ethnoracial affiliation. Thus, we see the highest and lowest usage rates for CSD, -in and /l/-vocalization among both EAs and AAs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Lowest</th>
<th>Highest</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSD</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>10% (Turing/F/65)</td>
<td>35% (Walter/M/57)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>15% (Mona/F/40)</td>
<td>42% (Peter/M/57)</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–in</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>2% (Mark/M/54)</td>
<td>53% (Walter/M/57)</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>9% (Mona/F/40)</td>
<td>97% (Peter/M/57)</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/l/-vocalization</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>1% (Turing/F/65)</td>
<td>22% (Curtis/M/57)</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>5% (May/F/53)</td>
<td>75% (Fahad/M/59)</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 5.1, we can make four separate observations. One, that older speakers (except Mona, who is 40) consistently show both the highest and lowest usage rates for the features. Two, that male speakers consistently show the highest usage rates for the variables, while the lowest users include both men and women. Three, the EA rates of usage are consistently lower than the AA rates. Finally, the EA ranges for CSD (25%), –in (51%), and /l/-vocalization (21%) are all consistently narrower than the ranges of the AA speakers, which are 27% for CSD, 88% for –in, and 71% for /l/-vocalization.

We saw in Table 5.1 that the individual features behave differently among the two groups. Overall, there is greater variability in the use of each for the AA speakers. This finding confirms the foundational point of the repertoire perspective – varieties are not monolithic entities but in fact encompass great internal variability. Figure 5.1, above, shows that the relationship between features that share social associations are not always straightforward. Some speakers show high rates of –in and low rates of CSD and /l/ vocalization, for example. Figure
5.2, below, shows the statistical relationships between pairs of the three features. Each point represents a speaker’s usage of the two features. The R^2 or r-squared⁴³, shown alongside trend lines, indicates the degree to which the two features are related; whether use of one goes alongside use of the other. An R^2 closer to 1 indicates a more robust relationship.

⁴³ The R^2 statistic is derived from an ordinary least squares regression
Figure 5.2. Correlations between CSD/-in, /l/ vocalization/CSD, /l/ vocalization/-in

$R^2 = 0.20895$

$R^2 = 0.69057$

$R^2 = 0.33016$
The analysis in Figure 5.2 shows that the relationship between CSD and –in is the most robust; given the $R^2$ value of 0.69, the speakers’ usage levels of CSD and –in are related. Speakers who have higher levels of CSD also have higher levels of –in, and the same is true for speakers whose usage levels of both are low. The relationships between CSD and –in on the one hand and /l/ vocalization on the other is less predictable. The correlation between CSD and /l/ vocalization has an $R^2$ of 0.21, and the association between –in and /l/ vocalization has an $R^2$ of 0.33, indicating that higher usage levels of CSD or /l/ vocalization are much less strongly associated with higher usage levels of the other feature. These correlations help reveal the composition of the individual repertoires of the speakers in Figure 5.1. In sum, overall the relationship between CSD and –in is much more robust than those between CSD and /l/ vocalization or between –in and /l/ vocalization. This confirms the myriad findings of similarities between CSD and –in from production and perception study, as discussed in Chapter 4, but also indicates that a lot of variability exists in the usage patterns among the speakers in this sample, particularly with regard to /l/ vocalization.
5.4.4 Ethnoracial groups and the stylistic repertoire

I now turn my attention to the intragroup variation that is evident in Washington, DC. Not only are there differences in stylistic repertoires between AAs and EAs, but there are also differences within each group. The individual repertoires are shown in Figure 5.3, where I show the speakers’ stylistic repertoires alongside those of their age and ethnoracial peers.

Figure 5.3. Individual stylistic repertoires, arranged by ethnoracial affiliation and age

Figure 5.3 shows wide group-internal variation in the use of the place- and ethnoracially-linked features, aligning these results with those of many other researchers.
Multilingual and language contact situations can be productively viewed through the lens of the repertoire (Newman and Wu 2011; Sharma 2005), preferences differ among speakers of African American English between phonological and morphosyntactic variants (Rahman 2008; Thomas 2007), and rates of predictable variants like -in vary greatly even among traditionally working class and ‘non-mobile’ rural communities (Hazen 2008). Benor (2010) sums up the need to emphasize internal diversity thus:

“

Even African Americans with ‘minimal contact with other dialects’ exhibit variable use of copula deletion, verbal marking, and other features. And there are certainly ‘working-class African Americans in inner-city areas’ who use most of the distinctive features of AAVE but avoid some of them categorically for ideological reasons. Even the most ‘vernacular’ speakers exhibit a continuum of distinctness” (2010: 165).

5.4.5 Stylistic repertoires among DC African Americans

Figure 5.4 shows the overall usage levels for CSD, -in and /l/ vocalization among the African American Washingtonians in my sample. As we can see, there is a great deal of variability among the speakers’ constellations of usage.
Rates of \(-in\) and /l/-vocalization vary widely among the AA speakers. Overall, low rates of \(-in\) co-vary with lower rates of CSD, while speakers whose deletion rates are higher also tend to exhibit higher rates of CSD. For speakers with low rates of both CSD and \(-in\), /l/-vocalization rates are also low. Despite the fact that some individuals thus show similarities in terms of linguistic repertoire, we find a diverse group of people whose biographies and motivations for linguistic self-expression vary greatly. The following examples illustrate some of the different types of experience among DC AAs (of course with the caveat that I am only
able to capture a small part of each person’s biography, and that these speakers represent a tiny sliver of Washingtonians).

May, the speaker who makes the least use of the vernacular variants – notably, May hardly vocalizes /l/ at all – is 53 years old, college educated, and grew up in the Crestwood neighborhood, part of Northwest Washington’s historically affluent, African American ‘Gold Coast’. In her interview, May talks at length about DC’s history of racial segregation, which she experienced firsthand and which affected her experience of being a Washingtonian greatly.

Mona is a 40-year-old mother-of-two who works in the cosmopolitan, international not-for-profit sector in downtown DC, who was raised in a tightly knit African American community and whose husband, Frank, is a youth pastor to African American kids in a black enclave of a predominantly white neighborhood. Her usage levels of the vernacular features is overall low, with /l/ vocalization being the most prominent at 20%.

Azza, a 53-year-old, was raised in Anacostia, Southeast DC, during the 1950 and 1960s, and works in a large, African American Islamic congregation in Northeast DC. She is a college-educated speech pathologist by training and a grade-school teacher by trade. She has keenly observed Washington, DC’s transformation from a forgotten and blighted community to a segregated, gentrifying, and bustling metropolis particularly since the 1990s when the city’s
crack cocaine trade was concentrated in Azza’s neighborhood. Azza talks proudly about sounding like a Washingtonian, and even admits that people think she sounds Southern, though her usage of the three features falls between 15% and 20%.

Carrie, who is 31 years old, participates in integrated social networks in her job as an audio technician and her other life as a singer-songwriter, but takes a strong anti-gentrification stance, particularly against interloping property developers in her neighborhood in Northeast DC. Carrie’s linguistic self-expression varies greatly throughout her interview, shifting between frequent use of AAVE-linked phonological features in talk about inequity and her community’s history, to hardly any at all.

These speakers may not appear vernacular linguistically, but they have strong ties to the long history of African American life, heritage, and language in Washington, DC. All but May went to college at HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities). Though the role of morphosyntactic features (except (ING), which is both phonological and morphosyntactic) in Washingtonians’ linguistic styles fall outside the scope of this dissertation, this finding suggests that at least these speakers might be orienting to ideas of Black Standard English (Rahman 2008), evident from their overall low, but variable and perhaps selective use of phonological features associated with vernacular varieties of AAE.
Among the speakers with higher CSD and \(-in\) rates, the relationship between these features and /l/-vocalization is less straightforward. The speakers with the highest overall rates of \(-in\) (Phil, Imam, Zara, and Peter) show both different rates of /l/-vocalization, and different social histories. Phil and Zara are younger (32 and 21, respectively) highly educated AA Washingtonians. Imam and Peter represent an older generation, with personal experience of segregation, the 1968 riots, and other important moments in DC African American history.

Zara, in particular, has a strong ideological conviction, speaking of being raised in Afrocentric environments both at home and in school. She is a politically active college student at an HBCU.

Phil went to a majority-white high school, is married to a white European woman, works as an architect, and by all accounts is a gentrifier, having recently bought a home in a Northeast DC neighborhood.

Imam, 55, was politically engaged during crucial years for the Civil Rights movement, and was a long-time member of the Nation of Islam. He is currently head of an African American Islamic congregation.

Peter, 57, owns two small businesses, where he serves a majority-African American clientele and is steeped in African American culture in DC. He is in many ways a traditionally
blue collar Washingtonian, but is also careful to emphasize his entrepreneurial success in his interview.

While higher rates of CSD, -in and /l/ vocalization co-vary somewhat, /l/-vocalization in particular is less predictable than the others. Imam and Phil have similarly high rates of vocalization, which might be unexpected given that Imam has devoted his life to African American cultural and religious practice, while Phil’s profession, educational history, and personal relationships have made his social networks highly integrated and his participation in the (white) mainstream. In Phil’s case, then, /l/ vocalization may indeed function as a marker of African American identity. Peter, who may be predicted to pattern with Imam owing to their social histories, shows rates of /l/-vocalization much more similar to the least ‘vernacular’ of the speakers. Zara’s rates are significantly higher than any other AA woman, but they are also comparable both to older, less upwardly mobile AA men, and younger, highly educated AA men like Phil and Cassius. We can conclude that –in and /l/-vocalization participate quite differently in the stylistic repertoires of different AA speakers.
5.4.6 Stylistic repertoires among DC European Americans

Before moving on to consider how aspects of stylistic repertoires are used in interactions to style Washingtonian identities, particularly related to language and linguistic identity, I describe the stylistic repertoires of the EA speakers. The speakers are ordered by age in Figure 5.5.

**Figure 5.5. European American stylistic repertoires by speaker age**

In Figure 5.4, in section 5.4.5, I showed that AA speakers’ stylistic repertoires vary in terms of usage levels for the three features examined in this study. While higher rates of
vernacular variants correlate with older, male speakers, younger, female, and highly educated speakers also have repertoires in which vernacular variants feature prominently.

Among the EA speakers in Figure 5.5, above, a different picture emerges. There is a less straightforward relationship between rates of CSD and rates of –in, as can be seen in particular in the stylistic repertoires of Fred, Carla, and Gillian, all of whom have a CSD rate of 21-22%. While Fred has a 28% –in rate, Carla’s rate is 17%, and Gillian’s a negligible 5%. In addition, speakers make use of /l/-vocalization at variable, though usually low, rates.

How do we decide who is the most vernacular speaker among the EAs when what we see is a relatively homogeneous sample that nevertheless shows multidirectional internal diversity? Just as the AA results underscored the dramatic intra-group variation within the DC AA sample, a similar argument can be made for the EA speakers. Very little work has been done on European American life-long Washingtonians’ language; the few studies on the city have generally tended to focus on African Americans (e.g. Fasold 1972). What we see here is set of stylistic repertoires that make varying use of vernacular features, two of which are associated with EA vernacular varieties, including in DC, but the third of which does not appear to be particularly characteristic of DC EA speech.
EA Washingtonians’ repertoires with respect to CSD, -in and /l/-vocalization overall show less usage of vernacular variants, and they are narrower than the repertoires of AA speakers. We also see that some speakers make the most use of /l/-vocalization (Fred, Curtis), while others show particularly high –in rates (Casey, Walter), and a third group whose rates for all the features are low, with CSD being somewhat more prominent.

The only significantly divergent speakers, whose patterns differ from the other EAs, are Casey and Walter. Casey and Walter have the highest rates of –in and CSD among the EAs. Recall that Ellen’s –in rates are shown for illustration purposes only, as they are qualitatively different from the canonical –in realization studied in sociolinguistics.

Casey and Walter represent an interesting intersection of social factors that is not often discussed in sociolinguistics. It would be tempting to consider both of them somewhere on the working class end of the class spectrum, owing to the fact that neither of them went to college. This might correlate with widely held beliefs about language and class – that working class speakers have higher rates of vernacular features – but represents neither the linguistic nor social facts of either Casey’s or Walter’s lives that well.

Just like Peter, whom I describe earlier in this chapter, Walter is older, self-employed, and grew up during a time of social unrest and segregation in Washington. Though not college
educated, Walter is very clear in his interview about the level of specialized knowledge in many arenas that goes into running a successful business. He expresses a commitment to the importance of education, and is sure to point out that he is putting his daughter through college. Walter is the kind of ‘self made’ person and community-oriented entrepreneur often lauded in American culture. This can-do attitude and blue-collar pride has been shown to manifest itself linguistically in high levels of vernacular, ‘covertly prestigious’ features like –in (Trudgill 1972).

Casey, meanwhile, comes from a solidly middle class and white-collar family, with parents who both had successful careers as teachers. All her immediate family members, as well as her husband, went to university. In her interview, Casey talks about having difficulties in elementary and secondary school due to a learning disability, and after graduating high school in the late 1980s she opted to attend punk shows in Georgetown basement apartments and to continue working in and building the craft shop business she had been involved with since the age of 14. Casey and her husband, who also operates a local business, are planning to send their daughter to private school and lead a comfortable, relatively well-off lifestyle.

So what do we do with speakers like Casey and Walter, for whom education- and class-oriented explanations for high rates of vernacular feature are inadequate? For that matter, how
do we analyze the AA speakers who share linguistic expressions but diverge on social dimensions? These concerns are the reason to evoke the concept of the *stylistic repertoire*, in that they underscore why it is important to examine situated, interactional applications of the three phonological features as well as the ideological and self-expressive work that they do in the sociolinguistic interview.

### 5.5 Styling Washingtonianness in the sociolinguistic interview

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I give three examples of how /l/ vocalization, CSD and –in contribute to moment-to-moment styling different kinds of Washingtonianness among three different speakers from my sample. All the speakers have access to – and opinions about – the sociocultural and ethnoracial issues at play in DC, and phonological variation contributes to their interactional enactments of identity vis-à-vis the issues of race relations, prejudice, and authenticity in DC.

#### 5.5.1 Zara

First, I look at how Zara, a 21-year-old African American woman who expresses a significant amount of ethnoracial solidarity in her interview (for example, she talks at length
about her desire to continue living in majority-African American neighborhoods), uses /l/ vocalization in conjunction with other aspects of AAVE in her characterization of what authentic DC language is like. Zara was a student at an HBCU at the time of the interview, which was conducted by a friend of hers, a young, Afro-Caribbean woman also living in DC. Zara was born and spent her childhood in Brentwood, a majority African American neighborhood in Northeast DC. At the time of the interview, Brentwood was beginning to become gentrified but still retained some of the characteristics of a ‘real’ DC neighborhood that Zara was nostalgic for: a majority African American population, kids playing outside, and a strong community feeling. Around the time that Zara entered middle school, her family moved to a wealthier neighborhood in Northwest DC, that Zara thinks is ‘nice’. However, she also comments on its distinction from the authentically DC neighborhood that Brentwood represents to her.

44 Of course, various aspects of the interviewer no doubt impact the usage levels of vernacular variants in any sociolinguistic interview, and the fact that Zara was interviewed by an age peer and a friend may be linked to her high levels of vernacular variants in her interview. An interviewer to whom she is close, and with whom she is comfortable, can encourage higher levels of vernacular, and familiar features (c.f. Rickford and McNair-Knox 1994). The fact that the interviewer is also black less obviously promotes AAVE-linked variants in Zara’s case. The interviewer is not a longtime Washington resident or even an American, rather, she is a Caribbean immigrant to the area, and thus can be seen as a speaker of Trinidadian English rather than African American English. This difference is remarked on a few times in the interview, notably when Zara jokingly imitates the interviewer’s accent.
Zara is politically active at her college, dealing particularly with issues of racism and countering white supremacy in the mainstream culture, and has a keen sense of the intersectional relationships among ethnoracial affiliation and nationality; the African guys that she talks to don’t understand what it means to be African American socioculturally. Zara takes a firm stance of solidarity with African American women, who are in a particularly tricky double bind: AA women’s responsibility for the collective has made them exceptionally successful and hardworking, but has also driven away men, giving rise to a class of strong, single, determined, but often lonely women. Zara does not consider herself a feminist.

Zara’s identity as a Washingtonian has meant a lot to her, and she explicitly makes a connection between DC and ethnoracial issues in her interview; when talking about community building and neighborliness, she says that “DC people are really nice, but they’re not nice to white people.” She is also one of the few speakers in my corpus to offer extensive metalinguistic commentary displaying specific rather than global levels of detail (Preston 1996) – that is, she comments on specific aspects of DC area language beyond the relatively vague and non-committal references to potential Southernness and AAVE that I have exemplified throughout this dissertation.
Zara’s specific details about DC language indicate that language is, in her mind, part of what it means to be a Washingtonian. In the interview talk preceding Extract 11, below, Zara is talking about a person she does not like and refers to them as *unc*. She then goes on to explain that *unc* is DC slang for a homeless person, and tells a narrative about the word being used in a public service announcement by the locally famous band, Mambo Sauce. Mambo Sauce play go-go, a music genre unique to the DC area that is best described as a mix of funk, r’n’b and rap. Go-go has been part of DC-area African American cultural life since the mid-1970s, and Zara is a fan. Mambo Sauce participated in an anti-smoking campaign on local radio, and recorded a message for young listeners that said “you better put those cigarettes down, cause you don’t want your teeth to be black like that *unc* you be laughing at”. Hearing this usage in a public forum by a well-known group made her feel embarrassed, probably because it indicated a try-hard attempt at fitting in with the young, hip radio audience.

Zara then initiates a description of what DC vernacular is actually like, by exemplifying some lexical items and their appropriate uses. The appropriateness of use and the proper ways of pronouncing these terms are in part illustrated through her use of the phonological variables
under study in this dissertation, in particular /l/ vocalization. This discourse is found in Extract 11⁴⁵.

(11) Zara

1. Zara: DC vernacular is so funny, cause like it be real[V] like big words,
2. like “crucial[L]” (.) became a part of the- this is an SAT word! “Crucial[V].”
4. Okay so if I'm looking[n] at a pair of jeans and I like them,
5. I'll be like “That jont[p]’s vicious”.
7. This is a jont[p], you are a jont[p], <taps plastic bottle on table>
8. this is a jont[p], that jont[p], pass me that jont[p],
9. it's everything, all[L]-encompassing[g].
10. I like to call[L] it- it's an African word[d], I like it.
11. It-it expands the ideology @@@
12. So everything is a jont[p]. They be like “Yeah, that jont[o]”.
13. Dudes use “jont[o]” for a girl... which you know speaks to the craziness.
14. Um, so yeah, “vicious”, “crucial[V]”...

Zara begins her showcase of DC language items by identifying that she is talking about DC vernacular (line 1), a kind of language that she observes in DC and nowhere else, and on which she is an authority. The reason why DC vernacular is so unusual, according to Zara, is

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⁴⁵ The notation in brackets indicates the realization. For /l/, [L] = /l/-ful, [V] = vocalized. For coronal stops, [t] or [d] = released, [p] = present, [o] = deleted. For (ING), [g] = -ing, [n] = -in
that its lexicon *be real like big words* (line 1), SAT\textsuperscript{46} words rather than colloquialisms; items she identifies include *vicious* (line 3) and *crucial* (line 2).

In the first three lines of Zara’s metalinguistic commentary, /l/ vocalization contributes to the construction of a Washingtonian identity in the sense that Zara /l/ vocalizes when demonstrating characteristics of DC language. She vocalizes the /l/ in *real like big words* (line 1); not only does intensifier *real* point out the elevated quality of the big words that are part of DC language, but the vocalized token of /l/ is also in a dispreferred environment (we saw that preceding front vowels inhibit /l/ vocalization in Chapter 3). The combination of dispreferred environment and the emphatic nature of the intensifier allow *real* to function as a kind of phonological contextualization cue for the remainder of Zara’s metalinguistic commentary. Gumperz (1982: 131) defines contextualization cues as “any feature of linguistic form that contributes to the signalling of contextual presuppositions” – in this case, the contextual presupposition is that Zara is an authentic DC speaker, and that her speech and commentary on speech are authentically DC. In this way, /l/ vocalization is implicated in the construction of a Washingtonian identity.

\textsuperscript{46} SAT words are words that, in Zara’s view, would be likely to appear on the standardized “Scholastic Assessment Test” which US high school students take as a prerequisite for applying to university.
Its role becomes even clearer in Zara's explicit performance of the kinds of words that are part of DC language. In line 2, she says that crucial (.) became a part of the- this is an SAT word! Crucial. The first mention of crucial is produced with a non-vocalized token of /l/, followed by a rapid, local style-shift (cf. Schilling-Estes 2002 on different kinds of style shifting) from the /l/-ful form to the vocalized form of crucial, which is produced in isolation and with emphatic prosody. A second, vocalized mention of crucial may indicate that the vocalized pronunciation is indeed the real DC pronunciation.

Zara continues by exemplifying an everyday situation in which the DC vernacular terms vicious and jont can be used felicitously: Okay so if I'm looking at a pair of jeans and I like them, I'll be like “that jont's vicious” (lines 4-5). This utterance can be analyzed as 'performance speech', which Schilling-Estes (1998) defines as “a register associated with speakers' attempting to display for others a certain language or language variety, whether their own or that of another speech community” (1998: 53). Zara is putting jont and vicious within an appropriate context of their use, thereby performing a situation in Washington, DC, where they would be used. One such context is looking at a pair of jeans, where looking is produced with the –in variant. While this is not unexpected – given the promoting effect of progressive verb forms on –in – the fact that Zara uses –in in overtly performative speech may indicate –in’s role in DC language and
thereby a Washingtonian identity, though we should of course remember that Zara’s overall use level of –in is high (74%). Nevertheless, -in is part of Zara’s stylistic repertoire, and given its association to African American, casual speech (like that of young people shopping for jeans) has the potential to be used toward Washingtonian, rather than merely African American, alignment.

The item jont, which Zara identifies as being an African word that means everything (line 6) also contributes to Zara’s performance of different kinds of Washingtonianness, all of which are closely linked to African Americanness in accordance with Zara’s own stance on the ethnoracial aspects of local identity. Although most tokens of jont are produced with a present but unreleased /t/ (lines 3, 7-8, 12), Zara also produces a released /t/ in Jont… means everything (line 6). The release of /t/ is often associated with articulate speech (Podesva et al. 2008) and may help Zara introduce jont explicitly as an object under discussion, after she has talked about it without introducing it. In addition, the explicit definition of jont as ‘everything’ serves to position Zara as an authority on its meaning.

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47 I disagree with Zara on this point; from intuitions offered by commenters on local media discussions of ‘jont’ as a uniquely DC slang term, it seems that people typically analyze ‘jont’ (or sometimes ‘jonk’) as a variant of ‘joint’ or ‘junk’ depending on how they spell it. It also appears to be a cognate of ‘jawn’, which is often talked about as a Philadelphia slang term that can stand in for any noun. Nevertheless, the fact that Zara analyzes it as an African word is informative about her own ideology and the kinds of links she makes between authentic DC speech and its speakers.
In line 12, Zara says: *So everything is a jont. They be like “Yeah that jont”*. The token of *jont* in constructed dialogue (Tannen 1986, 1989, 2007) is produced with a full deletion of the coronal stop, i.e. the variant discussed and measured in Chapter 4. A deleted token of *jont* in constructed dialogue distinguishes it from other tokens, because constructed dialogue can be analyzed as “a means by which experience surpasses story to become drama” (Tannen 1986: 312). In other words, constructed dialogue is an explicitly performative type of talk, in which the speaker transforms an experience into a deliberate and dramatic performance.

Constructed dialogue is a prime environment for dialect stylization (Coupland 2001); it allows the speaker to ‘report’ the speech of another while infusing it with their own authorial intention, by engaging in double-voiced discourse (Bakhtin 1984). As stylization often has an ideological dimension (e.g. Coupland 2007 on political oratory), constructed dialogue can contribute to ideological intention because it allows a speaker to “project personas, identities and genres other than those that are presumably current in the speech event; projected personas and genres have well-formed socio-cultural profiles and derive from known repertoires” (Coupland 2001: 350). Zara, in this case, situates coronal stop deletion in a socioculturally salient item (*jont*) in constructed dialogue attributed to *they*, rather than herself.
Why might Zara be distancing herself from the vernacular realization she is performing? Her use of *jont* with CSD in line 13, *dudes use jont for a girl… which you know speaks to the craziness*, offers some illumination. Although here *jont* does not occur in constructed dialogue, it does occur in a context suggestive of distancing on Zara’s part. She has previously talked about having issues with young men earlier in life, has vented her frustration with young men’s lack of respect for women, and considers herself to be perfectly justified in questioning why a ‘dude’ would substitute *jont*, a word usually applied to inanimate objects, when talking about women. In the context of Zara’s DC-centric discourse, then, the meanings of coronal stop deletion that may be foregrounded are those of masculinity, and in particular of a negatively-evaluated kind of masculinity that Zara does not endorse but does attribute to others.

In sum, the presence of *-in, /l/* vocalization and coronal stop deletion in Zara’s performative and authoritative talk about DC language situates them as the phonological contributions towards Zara’s construction of various Washingtonian identities in discourse alongside lexical items and discourse tactics such as constructed dialogue and stylization (see section 5.1.1) of dialect features that serve such various interactional purposes as positioning herself as an authority of DC language and identity and as opposed to young men’s lack of respect for women.
5.5.2 Mona

In Extract 12, I turn my attention to Mona, who is a 40-year-old African American woman with overall low levels of use for the three features. Nevertheless, Mona’s politically charged discourse touching on issues that are relevant to Washingtonians – ethnoracial affiliation, education, and diversity – is in part achieved through the use of /l/ vocalization as a tactic for referring to social actors.

First, a little background on Mona: 40 years old and a lifelong resident of Northwest DC, she holds a Master’s degree in management and is a longtime non-profit sector professional, like so many white collar Washingtonians. She grew up in the Takoma neighborhood in Northwest DC, at the very top of the diamond. Takoma directly abuts Takoma Park, a border community in Montgomery County, MD; after many years in Takoma, Mona has settled in with her husband and two kids in Takoma Park. In her interview, she discusses both similarities and differences of the two neighborhoods. Both Takoma and Takoma Park are very family friendly, quiet neighborhoods. Takoma, DC, has always been a majority African American neighborhood while Takoma Park is more diverse but also dominated by newer residents, mostly hippies who moved there in the 1960s and 1970s and who have had a strong influence on the identity and cultural flavor of Takoma Park. Its environmentalist
identity and Nuclear-Free Zone designation, for example, do not come from the long-term African American segment of the community. Mona also notes subtler sociocultural differences that touch her everyday life; although she only lives a couple of miles away from her childhood home, whenever she crosses the cultural border between Maryland and DC at Carroll St and 4th St NW (the geographic border is a couple of blocks away), she knows she’s not far away from real DC comfort food, which is different from what you get in Maryland.

Mona is a proud Washingtonian with a keen sense of the subtleties that unite and divide Washingtonians both in the city and across the region. She talks at length about changes that her neighborhoods have undergone, through integration and gentrification. She sees the distinctions among Washingtonians as primarily being ethnoracially based, and for good reason: white people moving into Takoma, with its mix of grand 1910s homes, smaller Cape Cods and cute little 1950s ranch homes, changed the neighborhood: this change was ultimately for the better, but a change nevertheless.

Language also plays a part in Mona’s sociocultural imagination and the ways in which she conceptualizes social change and inequity. In the discourse preceding extract 12, the interviewer asks her whether she is ever made conscious of the fact that she lives on the Maryland side rather than the DC side of the border. Mona explains her position:
Mona

1. Mona: I do, but only when I tell someone where I'm from.
2. And they tell me - and I hate this –
3. “You're so well spoken to be from DC!”
4. And I hate that.
5. Int.: Well that’s shocking @@
6. Mona: Because- but… I started off going to college at Howard University and I would tell people that... and that's what they would say.
7. I'm thinking...
8. “Okay, well, I'm in college. What would you expect?”
9. I can put my verbs together and that sorta thing, but...
10. but I mean just surprisingly,
11. people are surprised because I - I guess it doesn't fit with the television stories on the news that you see of people in DC and that sorta thing.
12. So I think people have a view of it that they really haven't thought about,
13. “Wow! DC has people like... everywhere else in the world.
14. People that are... you know, have attained a certain education and people that just have not.”

Even before beginning to analyze this extract, we can see that Mona's metalinguistic commentary touches on more than just language – an indication that metalinguistic commentary is in fact a prime locus for style research. Mona responds negatively to being told that she’s well spoken to be from DC (line 3), particularly because her level of education is being questioned and erased from the assessment of her linguistic practice. This passage is subtly
indicative of ethnoracial identity being the elephant in the room in much public discourse about DC – when Mona gets told that she’s “well spoken to be from DC”, “DC” is quite clearly a stand-in for being African American. Mona bristles at the suggestion that African Americans are not well spoken, and expresses strong solidarity with Howard University and those Washingtonians who are at the receiving end of racist caricatures of an uneducated DC.

Aside from Mona’s negotiation of the tension between misinformed notions of lack of ‘well-spokenness’ and African Americanness, and her strongly articulated resistance to ignorance about DC’s diversity, Mona puts the phonological aspects of her stylistic repertoire to work in expressing her identity as an African American, as a Washingtonian, and as an educated person – all of which are important aspects to her self-image. In particular, style shifts in her use of vocalized /l/ – a feature that she overall uses quite rarely (20% including both fully vocalized and significantly vocalized tokens) – factors into Mona’s stylistic practice in this extract.

In particular, it appears that style shifting in the tokens of the word “people” works together with discourse-pragmatic elements, more specifically with referring expressions, in order to achieve aspects of Mona’s anti-racist commentary. More precisely, the referent of the word “people” interacts with variants of /l/ and their associations.
Schiffrin (1994, 2006) discusses referring expressions quite extensively, in particular the organization of referring terms and their pragmatic role in discourse. Some relevant aspects of reference for the purposes of this analysis include scale of information status (2006: 143) or the different levels of familiarity with a referent that a hearer reasonably needs to be able to interpret a particular referring expression and referring sequences (1994: 202), or the progression of the sequence referring terms from a minimally context-dependent referent to a more context-dependent referent over time. The scale of information status and referring sequences are interdependent, such that a speaker will typically use the minimally context-dependent \( a + \text{NP} \) structure to introduce an unfamiliar referent on first mention (e.g. “a man”) and then gradually move on to more context-dependent referring terms such as “the man” which picks up on a specific individual that should already be familiar, and all the way to pronominal referents such as “he”, or even zero referents.

Applying this organization of referring terms to Mona’s discourse of the tension between Washingtonians and ignorant non-Washingtonians, we might expect her to refer to the antagonists in this story (the ‘people’ who tell her she is well spoken) and her peers whom she is defending (the ‘people’ about whom there are unflattering television stories) differently, to minimize confusion on the part of her interlocutor. But she does not, and instead the
phonological aspects of her stylistic repertoire contribute to the distinction between these two groups, particularly by recruiting some of the social meanings that are attached to vocalized versus non-vocalized /l/, alongside the variants of CSD and (ING) as well.

Mona begins this discourse by saying *I do [feel conscious of living in MD rather than DC] but only when I tell someone where I'm from. And they tell me – and I hate this – “You’re so well spoken do be from DC!”* (lines 1-3). The reason she *hate[s]* (line 4) being told by ‘someone’ that she is well-spoken is *Because- but… I started off going to college at Howard University* (line 6). Mona is expressing a language ideology linking educational premium with linguistic finesse, which is not unusual at all given the prevalence of the standard language ideology in public discourse about language (Lippi-Green 1994).

Line 7, *I would tell people that … and that’s what they would say* features a rapid, local style-shift from the /l/-ful token of *tell* to the vocalized token of *people* which refers to people whom she tells that she is a native Washingtonian. This may be explained by phonological conditioning; as we saw in Chapter 3, preceding front vowels (like in *tell people*) disfavor vocalization while preceding labials (like in *people that*) have a slight preference for vocalization. However, following coronals show a slight dispreference for vocalization, making it a bit difficult to assess which of the environments has the strongest effect. However, it might also be
explained stylistically, in that Mona may be using vocalized /l/ in people to indicate that she is referring to people who are not from DC and who have grave misunderstandings about it – and about African Americans and their speech.

In lines 8 and 9 – *I'm thinking... “Okay, well, I'm in college. What would you expect?“* – Mona continues to mix and match variants with similar and different social meanings. She introduces her rebuttal to the (vocalized, and misinformed) *people* through constructed thought, which like Zara’s constructed dialogue in Extract 11 works to foreground the proposition and infuse it with stylistic flair. *I'm thinking* (line 8) is produced with a velar variant of (ING), which may be explained by the phonological effect of following pause or may be picking up on the ‘fully articulated’ and ‘articulate’ meaning of velar (ING) (see Chapter 4). The constructed thought itself pairs a vocalized realization in a dispreferred environment with an emphatic coronal stop release. Mona thinks, “*Okay well, I'm in college. What would you expect?“* indicating that a college educated person can be expected to be well-spoken. *Well* is vocalized despite being preceded by a front vowel, indicating that it might have stylistic significance. Because Mona is still talking about college, and therefore about Howard University, the vocalized /l/ in *well* might be contributing to alignment with this institution and therefore with African American identity, similar to the potential function of –*in* in line 6.
Returning to the discussion of *people*, Mona follows up on her indignant constructed thought with *people are surprised because I-I-I guess it doesn’t fit with the television stories on the news that you see of people in DC and that sorta thing* (lines 12-14). The first *people*, which is yet another reference to the ‘someone’ and the ‘people’ whom Mona tells that she is a Washingtonian, is */l/-ful, as is the *people* which refers to the Washingtonians who are being unfairly portrayed as uneducated in media reporting. In this part of Mona’s talk, the two variants do not distinguish between referents; phonological variants can be imbued with great stylistic and social meanings, but it is unwise to treat them as though they are *always* and quite *specifically* meaningful. Indeed, a phonological and stylistic distinction between referents may be salient at one point in an interaction, for example when introducing new referents and providing evaluative information about them on first mention, but perhaps less salient in other parts of the talk. When Mona mentions that *people are surprised*, she may intend to be emphatic, to underscore the degree of this surprise, and may be using ‘fully realized’ tokens of both *people* and *surprised* in order to achieve this effect.

In lines 15-16, Mona suggests *I think that people have a view of it that they haven’t really thought about*. This vocalized token of *people* refers again to non-Washingtonians who are misled by media reporting and who cannot be bothered to look deeper at what DC really is.
An interesting contrast between Mona’s apparent negative evaluation of non-Washingtonians, and the /l/ vocalization which she uses to indicate it, comes in lines 17–20. Having expressed the opinion that she disapproves of the expectations others have of Washingtonians – that they are not well-spoken, and not well-educated – Mona presents a stretch of constructed dialogue, which can be interpreted as “what I wish others would recognize about Washingtonians”: Wow, DC has people just like... everywhere else in the world. People that are... you know, have attained a certain education and people that just have not (lines 17–20).

The subjects of these clauses, the ‘people’ who are just like everywhere else in the world, the ‘people’ who have attained a certain education, and the ‘people’ who have not, are Washingtonians, and each reference to people is produced with a non-vocalized /l/. In this instance, Mona appears to be using /l/ vocalization to mark the distinction between the Washingtonians who are misunderstood and the ones who are misunderstanding them.

So while /l/ vocalization, due to its social association with African Americans in Washington, DC, is readily available for interactional ethnoracial solidarity (i.e. it wouldn’t be surprising if Mona used /l/ vocalization to express solidarity with African American
Washingtonians), instead we see that she draws on some other meaning of /l/ vocalization to refer to non-Washingtonians and perhaps non-African Americans.

So Mona is employing the phonological aspects of her stylistic repertoire – in a way violating assumptions about reference sequencing and the scale of familiarity that governs the organization of reference – in order to tell the two kinds of people apart. And she does so through the use of vocalized /l/, a phonological feature whose social meanings include ‘African American’ and ‘male’. However, she does not use vocalized /l/ exclusively (or indeed frequently) to refer to (implicitly African American) Washingtonians.

This finding is particularly interesting, I believe, because it calls into question aspects of the ethnolinguistic repertoire and supports the argument for a stylistic repertoire instead. Under an ethnolinguistic repertoire view, the use of variants that hold ethnoracially-linked social meanings (i.e. /l/ vocalization is linked to African Americanness) is observed more frequently in contexts where the ethnoracial identity of a person is primary, or to express ethnoracial alignment (see e.g. Benor 2010 on Orthodox Jews’ repertoire-based practice). Mona’s case is slightly different. While it is entirely possible that the underlying message in her discourse is that white people think that African Americans are uneducated, infrequently used facets of the stylistic repertoire – such as /l/ vocalization for Mona, who does not vocalize often overall –
carry stylistic potential toward other goals than simply ethnolinguistic solidarity. Although she does not discuss /l/ vocalization explicitly in her metalinguistic discourse, Mona might be attending to the associations between /l/ vocalization and ideas of ‘deletion’, ‘dropping’, or other negatively-evaluated associations that are often part of people’s metalinguistic awareness of reduced or otherwise transformed variants. Vocalizing /l/ in people when discussing outsiders who don’t understand DC, then, might contribute to an overall stance of righteousness and place-related pride. Mona’s dislike of misinformation about Washingtonians is a fundamentally Washingtonian, rather than simply African American, position, though the two are so entwined in DC that they are difficult to separate. This very fact also speaks to the necessity to caution against the division of ethnoracial and place-linked ways of speaking, since ethnoracial concerns and relations are often deeply embedded in place.

This analysis of Mona’s use of /l/ vocalization in reference to non-Washingtonians has shown, I hope, the strength of combining approaches when searching for social meanings of phonological variation at the intersection of ethnorace, place, and style. Just as the community-level patterns inform us about the overall extent of use for the three variables among different groups in DC, the notion of the stylistic repertoire helps contextualize the features among a
diverse population, and the close stylistic analysis helps to fine-tune our understanding of the meanings at play in interactional contexts.

5.5.3 Mick

In the final analysis of this chapter, I turn my attention back to dialect stylization that was first discussed in Zara’s speech. This time, I look at the ways in which /l/ vocalization, -in and CSD allow Mick, a young European American man, to performs several kinds of Washingtonian accents.

At the time of the interview, Mick was a 23-year-old college senior at a private university in Washington, DC. He was born and raised in Northwest DC, and spent most of his childhood and adolescence – just like Zara – in Columbia Heights, which he too saw transform from a majority African American, quiet residential neighborhood to a gentrified, and diversified, hotbed of commercial activity.

In his interview, Mick seems aware that he is a ‘rare’ type of person, being a European American native Washingtonian who has stuck around close to home, and who is a witness to gentrification from a different position than African American Washingtonians are. Mick is quick to point out that he participated in integrated social networks as a child, going to a
diverse school and having a lot of friends despite his being one of the few white families on the
block. Still, both social and linguistic distinctions between European American and African
American Washingtonians are made clear in his talk about DC. He tells stories of some
neighborhood kids, two African American brothers, whom his parents hired to help with their
yard, and with whom Mick became friends. In their teens, one of the brothers was killed and
the other has been in trouble with the law numerous times.

Mick uses this story to instantiate the kinds of social problems faced by African
American Washingtonians, though he makes it very clear that he does not count himself among
them, implicitly underscoring the difference between the EA and AA experiences of
Washingtonianness. Another instance of discursive distinction comes as Mick is discussing his
hobby – improvisational theater\textsuperscript{48}. He says that being a Washingtonian has greatly helped his
improv, because having grown up in a diverse area he was exposed to many varieties of
English. His biggest trump card, he thinks, is his familiarity with how his AA neighbors talked,
and therefore his understanding of how AA speech works. In the discourse preceding extract
13, below, the interviewer has asked Mick about different kinds of speech in DC, and Mick

\textsuperscript{48} Improvisational theater, or improv, is a type of unscripted performance in which a group of performers invent and perform characters and stories on the spot, in live performance.
offers to demonstrate how AA Washingtonians speak and the difference between AA and EA Washingtonianness as it is manifest linguistically.

(19) Mick
2. And you drop your voice a little[^V].
3. You allow your- your ‘s’s to kinda ‘shlide’ off.
4. Man… man that’s- that’s some… hm.
5. Like, Redskins⁴⁹, right, I’m a Redskins fan,
6. I’ve been a Redskins fan all[^L] my life.
7. See. And this year… This year the Skins aren’t doing[^n] so well[^L].
8. But man @@ Like I- I think they're gonna do alright[^V]
9. I think that they got a shot at the playoffs,
10. they gotta beat Dallas, they gotta beat Dallas, two games, and mm…
11. That's that's bringing[^g] some of the J- some of the...
12. ech, the other weird[^d] voices in but um…
13. If I'm doing[^g] my own voice like that like if I'm,
14. if I'm making[^n] my own voice like localized[^ʔ]
15. Um… Man, I'll just[^o] kinda, I'll kinda talk with a little[^V] bit more "mm".
16. How to… That's some bullshit[^L], man.
17. Like… Like, like I drop my own voice a little[^L] bit
18. I don't do the "shush" thing as much…
19. but I'll be like "damn, man that's some f-"... messed[^t] up stuff.
20. @ Like- uh @@ oh man…
21. Little[^L]- a little[^L] bit of the Southern comes in like it

⁴⁹ I want to add a note to this transcript about Mick’s use of the team name of the Washington NFL team. I had originally wanted to omit the name, in agreement with several local and national media outlets that have recently done so in protest against the racist nature of both the name and the team’s use of stylized American Indian imagery. In the interest of preserving the data, the team’s name is spelled out in the transcript, though in opposition to it I will refer to it as the Washington NFL team in the discussion of Mick’s discourse, below.
Mick’s talk throughout this extract is explicitly stylized and performative. In Schilling-Estes’ (1998) sense, this extract exemplifies the performance register very well, since Mick initiates a performance of a particular variety of speech. His mention of the Washington NFL team in line 5, in particular, clues us into the stylized nature of the talk; its inclusion marks the talk as being a performance of a particular kind of Washingtonian who not only talks a certain way but also talks about certain things. Coupland (2001: 350) defines stylized utterances as being imbued with many different kinds of elements, all designed to construct a heightened, even hyperbolic version of the kind of speech performed: “Since their performer needs to cue frame-shift and emphasize dissonant social meanings, stylized utterances are often emphatic and hyperbolic realizations of their targeted styles and genres”.

In addition to the content element of a beloved local sports team (most of whose hardcore fans are indeed African American), Mick recruits elements from his stylistic repertoire of phonological features in order to construct different kinds of Washingtonianness.

This extract is particularly interesting as it features stylization of three distinct local characters. In lines 1-10, Mick explicitly constructs an African American speaker; lines 11-14 provide external evaluation of the preceding talk, after which he launches into a performance of a European American local speech style in lines 15-21. I will analyze the phonological
components of these three styles – the AA, evaluative, and EA speech performances – in the order that they appear.

In lines 1-2, Mick cues the interviewer that he is about to begin a performance of local speech by saying It’s like… you, you kinda, you kinda add a little bit of a overtone. And you drop your voice a little. Both tokens of little are vocalized despite preceding coronals’ disfavoring effect on /l/ vocalization, indicating that Mick is doing something stylistic with these; that he is performing a speech style. The vocalized tokens come alongside other non-standard elements in Mick’s performance of an AA Washingtonian, many of which are shown in lines 3-4 in which Mick explicitly references a phonological feature of his performance, the backing of /s/ to /ʃ/ in the sound symbolic slide. The /n/ in overtone and man is reduced and he uses non-rhotic variants in your throughout. In line 5, Mick introduces a topic relevant to AA Washingtonians – the local Washington NFL team – as a semiotic vehicle (Mendoza-Denton 2011) for his phonological styling of an AA Washingtonian. Not only is the team itself relevant, but Mick foregrounds the team’s lack of success in recent seasons in line 7, This year [the Washington NFL team] aren’t doing so well. The token of (ING) in this line is alveolar, while the token of /l/ is /l/-ful despite being pre-pause. Mick’s character expresses the team’s fans’ unwavering support in line 8, I think they’re gonna do alright, where the vocalized /l/ in alright represents a
local, rapid style-shift toward a more, rather than less, vernacular realization, a shift which again highlights the stylistic power of this performance. Overall, Mick’s performance of an AA Washingtonian style includes numerous vernacular realizations of phonological variables, including /l/ vocalization, -in, and other phonological and phonetic features of AAVE (Thomas 2007), in addition to a locally relevant subject matter that contributes to the explicitly performative nature of his talk.

In lines 11-12, Mick breaks character and steps out of the stylization of AA Washingtonian speech by commenting that That’s that’s bringing some of the J- some of the… ech, the other weird voices in but um… Mick indicates that what he just performed was a ‘voice’, and part of the contextualization cue that the performance is over could be the use of velar (ING) in bringing and a released /d/ in weird. These stand in contrast to the mostly vernacular realizations in previous lines.

Mick then introduces that he is about to perform a contrasting voice, If I’m doing my own voice like that (line 13) and specifies what ‘like that’ means in this case: if I’m making my own voice like localized (line 14). In the general introduction of the new voice, doing features a token of –ing, which is followed by a token of –in in making when Mick has established that his new
performance is that of a European American Washingtonian. The use of –in might contribute to cluing the hearer in on the Washingtonian element of Mick’s performance.

Mick’s European American Washingtonian is evidently not a fan of the Washington NFL team, as Mick does not set up a scenario in which the EA DC voice is being performed and instead offers explicit metalinguistic commentary on how this voice is different from the AA voice: That’s some bullshit, man. Like… like I drop my own voice a little bit, I don’t do the ‘shush’ thing as much, but I’ll be like ‘damn, man, that’s some f-‘ messed up stuff’ (lines 16-19). Evident in this performance is that Mick’s Washingtonian self (rather than his improv self, or his college student self) is quite gritty, does not shy away from swearing or calling things as he sees them: It is less clear what features Mick is commenting on in line 21, a little bit of the Southern comes in, but presumably he does not mean /l/ vocalization, since four out of five tokens of /l/ in the EA Washingtonian performance are /l/-ful, compared to two out of five in the AA Washingtonian performance.

In Mick’s case, then, /l/ vocalization in particular picks out an African American speaker, while –in is present in both AA and EA performances (in lines 7 and 14, respectively) though notably not in the evaluative portion of the talk (in lines 11 and 13). This example is particularly instructive in showing how phonological aspects of Mick’s stylistic repertoire work
together with other resources, both features of AAVE and thematic elements (like local sports and a tough persona not averse to swearing) in order to create a stylistic whole, the kind of hyperbolic performance that Coupland references as an essential part of stylization in interaction.

So while Mick belongs to a non-vernacular social group under a traditional community-level analysis (that I conduct in Chapters 3 and 4), he has access to vernacular features such as /l/ vocalization and –in, and he recruits them towards very specific social goals: to showcase some of the elements of the distinction and division between EA and AA Washingtonians. Mick’s talk, then, is as much inherently Washingtonian as it is simple dialect performance. The fact that he spells out social as well as linguistic characteristics of the two populations indicates that he thinks himself attuned to the kinds of characters one finds in Washington, DC. This example has shown once again how a speaker is able to mobilize infrequent elements of his stylistic repertoire towards social goals that are more complex than simple ethnoracial alignment or distinction.
5.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have argued that the stylistic repertoire is a useful framework when discussing the ranges of variation in three phonological features: CSD, the –in variant of (ING), and vocalization of coda /l/.

Seen individually, the variants pattern relatively predictably along both linguistic and social dimensions. In particular, –in and /l/-vocalization show predictable and significant ethnoracial and sex conditioning. Ethnoacial affiliation and speaker sex predict higher rates of vernacular variants for African American speakers. However, and very importantly, some speakers counter the predicted pattern of variation. Zara, a young, highly educated woman, is highly vernacular and patterns more closely with older, less well-educated male speakers. On the other hand, Frank, who is older and expresses a very strong commitment to the African American community, consistently patterns with the less vernacular speakers, both African American and European American.

There exists, as reflected in this finding, significant diversity within as well as across ethnoracial, sex, and age groups in the sample, prompting a comparison of the aggregates of speakers’ overall rates of the three variables under investigation. Though we might expect, under a traditional sociolinguistic approach, that more ‘vernacular’ speakers will have overall
higher rates of ‘vernacular’ features, a look at the repertoires of speakers suggests that this is not always the case.

CSD and -in often co-vary among the African American speakers, such that a higher rate of CSD co-occurs with a higher rate of -in. The relationship between these two variants and /l/-vocalization is less straightforward, however, as evidenced by the dramatic difference in the /l/-vocalization rates even among the speakers who use vernacular variants the most, some of whom have /l/-vocalization as their most prominent vernacular feature, while others hardly vocalize at all.

Among the European American speakers, the features are overall less frequent, and /l/-vocalization in particular (as found in Chapter 3) is rare. Nevertheless, this less vernacular group also shows internal diversity. Some EA speakers have very low rates of CSD, -in, and /l/-vocalization, while others vocalize /l/ at slightly higher rates while maintaining low rates of CSD. A few of the speakers exhibit higher rates of CSD as well as -in, making them more comparable to some of the more vernacular AA speakers than the majority of EAs. However, while the two speakers with the highest overall rates of vernacular features both share a level of education – which may provide a clue as to their socioeconomic status – they both also have personal stories that complicate the picture of the working class Washingtonian, and that
suggest a different approach to explaining the interplay between vernacular language use, vernacular lives, and personal life and language ideologies may be necessary to understand some of the motivations behind the differences in the stylistic repertoires of EAs and AAs.

The major point of this analysis is that just like Washingtonians have complex social histories and social/linguistic ideologies, their linguistic production also aligns with ethnoracially linked speech norms to varying degrees. Ethnoracially linked language thus forms part of a repertoire of linguistic features that enter into speakers’ interview talk about Washington, DC, and helps them – in a variety of ways – to situate themselves in the complex urban landscape though linguistic means. Were we to view Washington, DC, use of ethnorace-linked language as a diagnostic for speakers as either AAE speakers or not – that is, if we looked for *ethnolects* only in the Washington linguistic landscape – we would miss a lot of the linguistic and social nuance that speakers’ talk about themselves, their communities, their biographies, and their ideologies provides us as analysts. Viewing the community patterns of variation as a baseline for Washingtonians’ individual linguistic practices, while attending to the intimate and sometimes unpredictable links between speaker biography and language use, allows us to better understand Washington, DC, as a full sociolinguistic place, and African American Washingtonians as a complex and diverse group, united by a long and turbulent
social history, but also by an understanding of the community itself as containing a multitude of perspectives on language and social life.

Finally, the stylistic repertoire perspective is in line with the research on *styling* and *ethnolinguistic repertoire*, bringing the two together and perhaps enhancing them both. We see in the analyses of the stylistic enactment of a wide variety of identities and meanings associated with Washingtonianness by Zara, Mona, and Mick that phonological variation certainly plays a role in the construction of social categories, alignment with ethnoracial groups, and the social distinctions that are discursively created.

In particular, I think it is important to emphasize that *place identity* in DC is accomplished discursively under certain conditions that are brought about by the sociocultural discourses at play in the community as well as by speakers’ own experience and intentions. So linguistic enactments of Washingtonianness in contexts where Washingtonian identity with all its nuances is made salient informs us about what kinds of issues are important to the speakers in a community. While ethnoracial affiliation and identity is the primary social meaning of the three features under study, speakers use them towards rather disparate goals in the context of talking about Washington, DC.
While CSD, -in and /l/ vocalization are robustly associated with African American speech and thus are readily available for use towards goals of ethnoracial solidarity, in the talk analyzed in section 5.5 they are also used to emphasize the local character of speech (Zara), to negatively evaluate outsiders who are misinformed about Washington, DC (Mona), and to demonstrate differences and similarities between the speech of both AA and EA Washingtonians (Mick). Thus, investigating the discursive enactment of social meanings allow us a closer look at how socially meaningful phonological variation is contextualized in ‘real life’ practices such as talking to people about yourself and your city.

I want to emphasize that the analysis in section 5.5 falls short of a full and deep engagement with discourse analytic methodologies and tools for understanding the interactional achievements of speakers. The focus of this analysis has been to present data that show the role of ethnoracially- and place-linked phonological variation in the enactment and negotiation, by speakers, of aspects of local identity. Many questions remain unanswered about how such variation is shaped by the data itself as well as by the interpersonal and intertextual dimensions of talk-in-interaction, of which the interview is a very particular kind. I discuss the limitations of this study and some avenues for future work towards integrating variationist and interactional perspectives in section 6.2, below.
In Chapter 1, I discussed some aspects of Washington, DC, that make it tricky to analyze as the locus of linguistic practice: Its location at the margins of two dialect regions, its complicated social history and inherent diversity and contestation make DC a place that is difficult to grasp, and thus a place where sociolinguists might struggle to discover locally salient social categories toward which residents orient. Though ethnoracial affiliation and race relations are the most prominent social issues debated in DC, it is unwise to suggest that only ethnoracial issues are important in DC, thereby implying that the work done by speakers as they negotiate ‘localness’ is only accomplished in relation to ethnoracial alignment or identity construction. I hope to have shown in these analyses that the links between ethnoracial identity and Washingtonian place identity are strong, perhaps inextricable and deeply embedded within each other. Finally, I view these analyses as contributing to the emerging consensus about the diversity of social meaning and about the necessity of considering the links among, rather than the distinctions between, place-linked and ethnoracially-linked ways of speaking.
Chapter 6.

Conclusion

I began the work that became this dissertation back in 2010, driven by two observations that made me wonder where Washington, DC, fit in within the sociolinguistic mission. First, it appeared to me that DC was unique in its place-related marginality, its almost chameleon-like slipperiness among the kinds of communities that sociolinguists have typically studied: long-settled, majority-white or majority-black urban and rural communities with strongly enregistered speech varieties or associations with particular dialect regions. I wanted to see, then, what the possible correlations were between DC’s sociohistorical and sociocultural profile and its linguistic profile.

My second observation was that Washingtonians do talk an awful lot about the relationship between language and social change despite lacking the kind of unifying enregisterment story that many other communities can draw on. There are no t-shirts sold on the National Mall with DC slang on them, no postcards with definitions of words like *unc*,
vicious or crucial. Nevertheless, asking people about local language practices yields nothing short of spectacular commentary on so much more than simply dialect features; metalinguistic commentary in the interviews gathered by the LCDC team over the years gives us as sociolinguists unprecedented insight into DC residents’ own conceptual links between linguistic practice and social practice. Based on these two observations, I have attempted to take an integrated and holistic approach to the relationship between language and social life in Washington, DC, looking at community level patterns of phonological variation, patterns of similarity and distinction within locally salient social groups, and the interactional uses of the features towards local identity performance and creative meaning-making.

6.1 Chapter summary

In Chapter 1, I lay the foundation for an integrated sociolinguistic analysis of phonological variation in DC by describing DC’s social, political, and ethnoracial history as well as some current discourses that are at play in the city and consequently in the sociolinguistic interviews that I analyze. I conclude that we must analyze DC as an inherently diverse place, and one different from many industrial and post-industrial cities in the US, due to its longstanding service economy, unique African American settlement, and rapid
gentrification. I also stress that despite places like DC not fitting neatly into the traditional variationist paradigm, we must consider speakers within any community – even one that is not clear-cut and whose history and identity is contested – as fundamentally authentic speakers. As Coupland (2003) comments, in late-modern service economies characterized by migration and mobility, we have to work a little harder to define the ‘authentic’ speaker (including taking into account both academic and non-academic definitions), but they are out there for us to find. And in order to analyze linguistic practice in an inherently diverse community, an integrated approach is necessary, specifically an approach that stresses the stylistic potential of linguistic variables for a range of social purposes. These purposes and effects do of course not exist in a vacuum, and so it is important to consider interactional and creative work done by speakers using phonological variation in its sociocultural, sociohistorical, and ideological context, as well as even more locally, in unfolding discourse.

Chapter 2 describes the data and analysis methods that I use in the dissertation. The 21 interviews used for my analysis are all with lifelong Washington, DC residents. I collected four interviews myself and used 17 from the Language and Communication in the Washington, DC, Metropolitan Area (LCDC) corpus. All interviews included modules about speakers’ personal
experience, their neighborhoods, Washington, DC, including its history and change, and language itself, including language use in the local community.

In this chapter I describe the quantitative sociolinguistic analysis that I conducted on the variable patterning of three phonological variants: Coronal Stop Deletion or CSD (eas’ en’ for east end), -in (e.g. runnin’ for running), and /l/ vocalization (e.g. coo’ for cool). I analyzed the variable patterning of the three features among Washingtonians and how several linguistic and social factors influence the patterning of the three features. The linguistic factors I considered were preceding and following phonological environment, grammatical category (for –in), morphological class (for CSD), and syllable structure (for /l/ vocalization). The social factors I consider are speaker ethnoracial affiliation, speaker sex, speaker age, speaker educational attainment, and the discourse context within which the token occurs. I considered whether talk about DC, personal talk, and language-focused talk had any influence on the patterning of the features.

Regarding the social factors considered, I also discuss the choice of category labels; I choose to use ethnoracial affiliation over ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ due to the strong and inextricable links between two concepts. I choose to use European American and African American over ‘white’ and ‘black’ because these labels pick out two subsets of Washingtonians: Lifelong
residents and multigenerational Americans who are white (admittedly this is an act of erasure of ethnic categories among white Washingtonians), and lifelong residents who are black and who have deep ancestral roots in the US and the Americas rather than those black residents who are part of DC’s East African immigrant community.

Chapters 3-5 focus on finding out what the integrated community/individual approach tells us about DC, and more specifically, what it can tell us about the role of phonological variation at the intersection of ethnoracial identity, place, and style.

Chapter 3 focuses on /l/ vocalization, a widespread phonological variant in American English. While it is found among European Americans in many communities both in the South and Midland dialect region, in Washington, DC, it is first and foremost a robust feature of African American English. I analyze /l/ vocalization as a place-linked feature among EAs in particular; DC EAs’ avoidance of /l/ vocalization surely has links to its identification with African Americans, but vocalization’s absence among DC EAs may also have to do with DC’s position as a commuting hub on the margins of the South, and in the transitional space between North and South. DC is the kind of urban center that can be at the heart of dialect leveling, and indications of /l/’s recession from surrounding areas, particularly West Virginia, are in line with this analysis.
Chapter 4 considers the shared social meanings of the other two features under investigation, Coronal Stop Deletion and -in. The two are well studied in many varieties of English and can contribute to finding a vernacular ‘baseline’ for DC. Their well-charted social meanings relating to interactional factors also help situate /l/ vocalization as a socially meaningful variant in DC. While I find that CSD is not conditioned by any social factors, -in is most strongly conditioned by the interaction between ethnoracial affiliation and speaker sex, with AA men producing most of the tokens. Ethnoracial affiliation is one of -in’s and /l/ vocalization’s shared social meanings.

In Chapter 5, I consider the contribution of all three features towards what I call the stylistic repertoires of Washingtonians. Because Washingtonian identity is inherently multivalent, I ask to what extent the three features contribute to speakers’ self-expression in the sociolinguistic interview. The repertoire perspective helps us move away from an essentializing view of ethnoracial ways of speaking; while at the community level the patterns show clear ethnoracial conditioning of both /l/ vocalization and -in, group-internally the usage patterns for all three features are highly diversified, and resist simple explanations in terms of age, sex, or educational attainment. In addition, I show that speakers employ the features for interactional purposes beyond ethnoracial solidarity or alignment, but that they do use the
features in concert with discourse-pragmatic elements towards the enactment of Washingtonian identities.

6.2 Contributions

This dissertation contributes to sociolinguistic inquiry a few different ways, relating both to analytic concerns and to diversifying community-based studies. First of all, the locus of study, Washington, DC, provides a perfect example of a little-studied but increasingly important type of community for variationist sociolinguistics focused on urban settings. It is a marginal and transitional place whose sociohistorical profile differs from the most-studied urban localities in its unique African American settlement history, as well as its longstanding participation in the service and knowledge economies, as well as of course US and world politics. I hope to have shown that sociolinguistics can gain a lot from exploring ordered heterogeneity in communities like DC, and that transitional cities tell stories of sociolinguistic identity that are very current, considering the ever-growing service economies across the US (and the world), as well as the overall shifting character of US cities toward diversity, mobility, migration and gentrification, all of which complicate the picture of the urban speech community.
This study also contributes to the social dialectology of the US Eastern Seaboard. It is the first study, to my knowledge, to consider language variation among Washington, DC, area European Americans, a community that epitomizes Coupland’s comment about the elusiveness of the authentic speaker. This is a social group whose place-linked identities are no doubt complex, and they demand further attention.

Additionally, I consider intra-group diversity to be an inherent characteristic of DC-area African American English, and one that is conditioned by individuals’ interactional goals, personal ideologies, and creative uses of phonological variation in concert with discourse-pragmatic elements, as well as by individual’s life experiences and group membership in social categories like young, highly educated, African American, or female. This group-internal diversity is a key aspect of Washingtonian identity in any case, seeing as Washington DC is ideologically a contested place in which notions of social class, ethnoracial affiliation, place of residence, and what it really means to be ‘native’ all collide and form a living, heterogeneous community.

Finally, I hope that this study has contributed to sociolinguistic inquiry by highlighting the *stylistic repertoire* as an analytical tool for our discipline. I view the stylistic repertoire approach as a two-step process; first, we must identify the group-level patterns of variation,
which inform the shapes that speakers’ repertoire constellations can take. Because repertoires are *stylistic*, that is, they have the potential to contribute towards speakers’ social and interactional goals, interactional analysis of stylistic work towards social goals is a necessary second step in a stylistic repertoire-based analysis. Though it is grounded in the notion of the ethnolinguistic repertoire, which captures community diversity and creativity, I believe that the *stylistic repertoire* better captures the interaction between the community and the individual, as well as the process rather than just the end product of meaning-making, when it comes to linguistic resources that contribute toward speakers’ and communities’ sociolinguistic identities.

### 6.3 Limitations and future directions

Naturally, this study has its limitations and leaves questions unanswered. I will address two limitations of particular concern in this section: the difficulty of devising an accurate and complete measure of socioeconomic class in this study and perhaps in Washington, DC more generally, and the necessity for discourse-oriented perspectives in variation research, for which this study lays some foundation but does not fully achieve.
6.3.1 Socioeconomic class in Washington, DC

Though my own struggle to define socioeconomic class in Washington, DC, is a reflection of longstanding difficulties for sociolinguists (e.g. Fasold’s own admission that he found defining class among Washingtonians difficult in the 1960s), class remains a strong predictor of sociolinguistic variation and change, and thus merits further attention in DC.

One of the issues at hand is the absence of an adequate measure in sociolinguistics for socioeconomic class in late-modern communities and service economies. Many works rely on somewhat outdated socioeconomic class taxonomies that categorize people into industrial-age categories: working class, middle class, and upper class, with internal distinctions within the three major classes. As I hope to have shown, however, Washington, DC does not lend itself well to this kind of class categorization due to its government-centered, and service-oriented rather than industrial (or post-industrial) economy. In addition, DC, as with many major US cities, has large population segments that fall outside of any sort of mainstream economic order, for example people whose main source of income is government assistance, or who work within the ‘black market’ economies associated with criminal and prison-based economic orders\textsuperscript{50}.

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\textsuperscript{50} Full analysis and discussion of these types of economies lies far beyond the scope of the present dissertation, though more informed understandings, including those from sociological studies, will need to be incorporated into continuing sociolinguistic studies of DC.
One avenue for future work in the sociolinguistics of late-modern socioeconomic class is to apply new social theoretical constructs to the kinds of populations we are now studying. Recent work in sociology (Savage, Devine, Cunningham, Taylor, Li, Hjellbkke, Le Roux, Friedman and Miles 2013) suggests some more fine-grained ways of looking at class, specifically in the contemporary UK, though their categories are also instructive for post-industrial and service economies in the United States. The authors propose seven class categories which encompass not only the precarious proletariat ('working poor') and the traditional middle and working classes, but also such classes as the ‘emergent service worker’ whose background is middle-class and who is probably a young, highly educated, but perhaps not well-paid urban dweller. As a higher education professional with many letters after my name but with a relatively low salary, I could fall into this category. Zara, who by now has graduated and could reasonably work within the non-profit sector in DC or some other major city, could also fall into this group.

What is particularly promising about this categorization scheme for sociolinguistics is that its adherents triangulate socioeconomic class from three sources: cultural capital, economic capital, and social capital, or roughly, the kinds of cultural products a person consumes, the level of personal wealth and economic stability that characterizes a person, and the diversity of
a person’s social networks. Because sociolinguistic fieldwork often includes aspects of ethnography such as participant observation and intimate interviews where speakers reveal a lot about their social lives, researchers have the potential to gain access to a lot of information about speakers’ different sources of economic, cultural, and social capital from the speakers themselves. Developing this kind of method for the sociolinguistics of late-modern communities is a fruitful direction that I hope to take in future work.

6.3.2 The necessity of discourse-oriented perspectives on variation

The attempt to integrate variationist and discourse analytic methodologies in this dissertation is, I believe, a necessary first step in laying the ground for future work towards a truly discourse-oriented perspective on sociolinguistic variation, but it is also limited in its scope. What I have done in this dissertation is take two methodologies – the variationist analysis of phonological variation in a community and among the individuals who comprise it, and the analysis of style-shifting in interaction – and apply both toward the goal of gaining an understanding of the role of some aspects of language in the broader sociocultural sphere of Washington, DC, as well as in individuals’ reflection thereof in metalinguistic commentary in sociolinguistic interviews. The major focus of the dissertation has indeed been to explore
Washington, DC, as a sociolinguistic place, and to propose ways to engage with unexpected and complex aspects of the communities that we study through a particular lens, one that critiques part of the treatment that sociolinguistic interview data receive in more community-oriented studies of social meaning.

However, there is significant room for more refined and truly integrative engagement with discourse analytic perspectives and methodologies in the variationist paradigm. One primary issue that this dissertation does not address, but that is crucial to an understanding of how stylistic variation fits into discourse practice and social life, is the fact that talk-in-interaction is inherently dialogic (Bakhtin 1981). The dialogicality or dialogism of everyday language means that linguistic practice is constantly in dialogue with previous talk, previous encounters, a speaker’s own convictions, the speaker’s current interlocutor, et cetera, and through discourse analytic theories and methods we are able to access the myriad meanings that are constantly created, recreated, contested, and transformed, in discourse of various types, including ‘everyday discourse’ (itself an endlessly diverse ‘type of talk’, encompassing a wide range of situations, genres, types of relationships, et cetera) and interviews, including sociolinguistic interviews.
This brings me to my second major issue: In order for sociolinguistic variation to be able to benefit from the powerful tools of discourse analysis, we need to re-examine what the sociolinguistic interview, as a primary source of data for both community-oriented and individual-oriented variation study, is and what it does.

It is usual in sociolinguistic variation to view the interview as representative of how people actually talk – due to its design, it engenders ‘real’ speech, and the parts of it that don’t are parts that cannot be employed as material for accurate analysis. However, as Schilling (Schilling 2013b; Schilling-Estes 2008) points out, the sociolinguistic interview is much more than a finely-tuned data collection instrument; it is at once a stage for performance, a by-turns formal and entirely mundane conversation, an event where people get to know each other, and a space for narrative practice and identity negotiation (Bamberg 2011). Acknowledging the complexity of the sociolinguistic interview as a type of talk is one step towards integrating qualitative methods into the study of sociolinguistic variation, and I have attempted to do so in this dissertation. The next steps will necessarily involve creating methods for treating the sociolinguistic interview – which does remain an effective way of gathering the types of data that variation analysis demands – as truly interactional data. More bluntly, we will not be able to access the rich meanings of stylistic variation if we continue to treat talk in sociolinguistic
interviews as representational data rather than the product of particular stances, positionings, intertextual links, and ideological choices that are always at play in different kinds of interactions. A commitment to rethinking the interview as interactional necessitates attention to several dimensions of discourse analytic theory and method.

One is the fact that elements of style can unfold across and within interactions, across different situations, interlocutors, and topics, and towards a variety of goals. The intertextual links of such elements within and across interactions can be thought of in terms of entextualization, decontextualization, and recontextualization (Bauman and Briggs 1990). Entextualization is the practice of making some linguistic object or idea a ‘text’, or foregrounding it as a ‘thing’ within an interaction – what Zara (in section 5.5.1) does when she mentions the lexical items crucial and jont is entextualization; by initiating this discussion, by performing the appropriate way of pronouncing crucial and exemplifying the uses of jont, Zara creates a shared object of knowledge between herself and the interviewer. Entextualization allows for decontextualization (lifting a discourse object out of its context) and recontextualization (reuse, repurposing of a discourse object in a different context toward the same or another goal) within and across interview encounters. Knowing whether crucial and jont recur elsewhere in the interview, outside the metalinguistic context, whether the
interviewer ever utters them, and whether any further uses exhibit /l/ vocalization or CSD, to boot, would go a long way towards understanding how participants actually engage in this social encounter, as well as how they and others engage in other sociolinguistic interviews and beyond. So, more attention to variation and its repurposing across interviews will be a useful addition to analysis of single types of talk in the interview, such as narratives or metalinguistic discourse. This necessitates a type of study that pays close attention to the nuances of single interviews, or of several interviews with the same speaker, like Schiffrin’s (2003, 2009) studies of the transformation of events across several tellings and retellings of personal stories.

Another dimension to pay attention to is the ways in which stylistic variation is mobilized towards interpersonal as well as self-expressive goals in sociolinguistic interviews. After all, the sociolinguistic interview is at its heart an interactive discourse context, which, while bound by some expectation of a question-answer format, also has plenty of room to be a conversation. Schilling-Estes’ (2004) study of one sociolinguistic interview in which a young man interviews his age-peer friend (rendering it somewhat different and perhaps more interactive than a typical interview in which an interviewee is interviewed by a relative stranger) is a great example of a variationist study examining the role of phonological and morphosyntactic variation in unfolding discourse towards self-expressive and solidary ends. By
looking more closely at discourse tactics typically examined by discourse analysts but less often by variationists, including turn-taking sequences, repair, floor management, as well as the aforementioned intertextual links, we can understand not only the self-expression and identity claims of the interviewee, but also how the interviewer factors into the equation in a way that can fruitfully complement existing ways of considering the sociolinguistic interviewer, for example in terms of facilitating linguistic accommodation and/or distinctiveness (Bell and Johnson 1997; Rickford and McNair-Knox 1994). This kind of research can of course be a challenge, and two reasons why my own analysis errs on the side of the ‘representational’ are that the corpus of interviews that I worked with is highly diverse, and since I did not conduct the majority of the interviews myself, I felt that I was not equipped with all the metadata and other knowledge of the parameters of the encounter to be able to fully analyze its interactional aspects. Nevertheless, these interviews still allow for highly fruitful integration of interactional sociolinguistic and variationist perspectives, and this dual perspective promises to greatly enrich our understanding of sociolinguistic interviews as dialogic, multifaceted, and intertextually situated speech events. In order to understand what types of talk sociolinguistic interviews can encompass, we need to consider the myriad interactional aspects that are inevitably shaping the data, beyond the accepted influences of interlocutors’ social
characteristics and the level of formality associated with various sub-contexts within the interview encounter.

In short, I believe that there is a lot to be gained for sociolinguistic variationist inquiry by integrating theories and methods from discourse analysis, including ideas of intertextuality, meaning-making in and across unfolding discourses, attention to the interpersonal aspects of interview discourse, and so on. Given the richness of the interviews with Washingtonians that I have been exploring from a community- and individual-level variation perspective, such work will follow from this dissertation.

6.3.3 A vernacular baseline for DC? Future work on language change

Finally, this dissertation indicates the need for continued study of language change in the Washington, DC, sociolinguistic community. In this dissertation, I looked at variables that have been shown to be stable in other varieties and appear stable in this community. Looking at stable variables can help us establish a ‘vernacular baseline’ for the community, like Hazen (2008, 2011) has done in West Virginia. But of course Washington, DC, is a community undergoing constant – and currently rapid – social change, and this can correlate with linguistic changes within and across social groups. Some work on vocalic variation and change
has already been initiated by S. Lee (2011), Jamsu et al. (2009) and Schilling and Jamsu (2010).

In addition, variation in morphosyntactic features especially in AAE, can help us understand the relationship between ethnoracial affiliation and social class, following up on Spears’ (1988), and Rahman’s (2008) work on middle class African Americans, on the performative power of AAVE features for stylistic purposes, on regional diversity in African American speech, and of course on Fasold’s (1972) foundational study of several key morphosyntactic features of DC AAE.

Although many questions remain open as I conclude this study, it is my hope that this dissertation has shed light on some aspects of sociolinguistic inquiry: on the analysis of language variation in marginal, transitional, and contested communities; on the linguistic identity of Washington, DC, area African Americans and European Americans, two populations who are rarely considered in the sociolinguistic literature; and on the links between community-level, intra-group, and individual-level linguistic practices in diverse sociolinguistic spaces. In short, this dissertation has investigated the role of phonological variation at the intersection of ethnoracial identity, place, and style, and I look forward to asking the outstanding questions against the backdrop of everything that the Washingtonians whose voices I have analyzed in this dissertation have taught me about authentic language and life.
Appendix 1.

Transcription conventions

. a full stop indicates falling intonation
, a comma indicates continuing intonation
? a question mark indicates rising intonation
! an exclamation point indicates raised pitch and volume throughout intonation unit
CAPS capitalized words indicate emphatic stress
= an equal sign indicates a latched sequence; no pause between intonation units
- a dash indicates self-interruption or a break in the intonation unit or word
(,) a bracketed dot indicates a micro-pause shorter than 0.5 seconds
… ellipsis indicates a pause over 0.5 seconds
[ ] square brackets indicate overlapping utterances
@ at-signs indicate laughter; each sign marks one pulse
<> inequality signs indicate transcriber comment on non-linguistic sound
“ ” quotation marks indicate constructed dialogue

Adapted from Bucholtz (2011) and Tannen, Kendall and Gordon (2007)
Appendix 2.

LCDC interview modules

**Topic: General life in Washington** (*italics are instructions for Interviewer*)

What brought you to Washington?

*If born here* Any idea why your parents came here?
- Did they move around in the area? If yes, where did they live? Any ideas which area they liked the most… and why?
- Have you always lived in this neighborhood? In this house?
- What’s changed in the area since you were a child?
  - e.g. more crowded, more (or less) safe, more (or less) expensive, better (or worse stores)
  *probe for details*

*If not born here* How many years have you been here?
- If you can remember, why did you decide to live in _____?
- Where else did you look?
- How did you find this house/apartment?
- How does it compare with where you lived before? *probe for details*

One of the things we want to learn about is how much time you spend in your neighborhood, in the general area, in the city itself, in Virginia and in Maryland, and what you do where.

So, on a typical week day, for example, what do you do? *use follow up questions*

*If they work:* how do you get to work?

*Ideas for follow up questions*
Ever have any problems on the Metro?
What do you think about the new rules about not eating on the Metro?
I’ve hear that the daily commute here is one of the worst in the country… have you found a way to get around it? What do you think of the new ‘cell phone’ ban in the area? [in…try to get them to ‘name’ the area, as D.C., the District, etc.)

What do you do on a typical weekend day? develop some follow up questions.

Where does your family (or the rest of your family) live?
How often do you (get to if far) see them?
And where do most of your friends live?
How about in the neighborhood… are there people around here that you’re friendly with?
   If so, how did you meet them?

Suppose you wanted to go out, to a restaurant, movie, theater… where might you go?
How often have you visited the National Mall? What do you (generally) do there?
Where do you go to see the fireworks on July 4th?


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Savage, Mike, Fiona Devine, Niall Cunningham, Mark Taylor, Yaojun Li, Johs Hjellbekke, Brigitte Le Roux, Sam Friedman and Andrew Miles. 2013 "A New Model of Social Class: Findings from the Bbc's Great British Class Survey Experiment." *Sociology*.


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