THE LANGUAGE OF PROFESSIONAL BLACKNESS: AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH AT THE INTERSECTION OF RACE, PLACE, AND CLASS IN SOUTHEAST, WASHINGTON, D.C.

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ABSTRACT

Increasingly, studies of African American English (AAE) include in their scope the speech of upper and middle-class African Americans (Rahman 2008; Weldon 2011; Alim and Smitherman 2012; Weldon and Britt forthcoming), rather than focusing on the working class males historically privileged as the most authentic speakers of the variety (Labov 1966, 1972; Fasold 1972). Relatively little scholarship, however, has focused on the speech of African Americans in a heavily class-mixing environment.

This project takes a mixed-methods approach to examining the ways in which professional class speakers in a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood in Washington, D.C. use African American English in identity construction. It undertakes the study of one phonological variable, final consonant devoicing (FCD), and additionally studies quantitatively and qualitatively those speakers’ use of morphosyntactic features of AAE.

The statistical results for FCD are consistent with other findings: individual speaker variation accounts for the majority of the data. The intraspeaker patterning of FCD, however, suggests that professional class African Americans orient to an iconized idea of devoicing as precise pronunciation, allowing them to recruit a second-order indexical meaning (Silverstein 2003) of “correctness,” which they then use to enact the identity of “professional class.”

The further examination of morphosyntactic variation reveals that the ways the speakers use AAE in specific stancetaking about the race, class, and gentrification suggests that for these speakers, the use of an ethnoracially marked dialect is a means of affirming the positive affiliation with the predominantly African American neighborhood. This strategic employment of AAE features as part of their ethnolinguistic repertoires (Benor 2010), allows the speakers in this study to merge identities of African Americanness with professionalness in a way that helps stake their claim as longtime residents of a community that is rapidly changing.

This dissertation makes contributions to the field of African American Language study in its use of mixed quantitative and qualitative technique, and its examination of an understudied region and an understudied African American population. Further, it finds that the social meanings of features of an ethnolinguistic repertoire are not always the same, nor do they necessarily stem from group-associational meanings. Rather, languaging in interaction means drawing on the multiple indexical meanings of any given variable in order to construct multiple—and at times, conflicting—identities of race, place, and class.
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DEDICATION

For Mom and Dad
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1  
Introduction.................................................................................................................. 1  
1.1  
The Myth of Homogenous Black America................................................................. 1  
1.2  
1.3  
The Iterative Nature of “Flight”................................................................................ 7  
1.4  
Reversing the Flight: Gentrification............................................................................. 9  
1.5  
D.C.’s White and Black Flight: Change across the Quadrants.................................. 11  
1.6  
Anacostia, D.C., as a Seat of Gentrification............................................................... 20  
1.7  
Research Questions and Scope of the Dissertation................................................. 25  

Chapter 2  
African American English and Its Intersections.............................................................. 28  
2.1  
Studying African Americans’ English........................................................................... 29  
2.1.1  
Naming the English of African Americans.............................................................. 29  
2.1.2  
Cataloging the English of African Americans........................................................ 34  
2.1.3  
Studying the Diversity within African Americans’ English................................... 37  
2.2  
Meaning-Making with African American English....................................................... 43  
2.2.1  
Associating African American English with African Americans......................... 45  
2.2.2  
Variationist Study and the Three Waves: Making Meaning Local.......................... 47  
2.2.3  
How language comes to mean.................................................................................. 49  
2.3  
Intraspeaker Variation: Style, Stance, and Repertoire.................................................. 56  
2.3.1  
Defining stance........................................................................................................ 60  
2.3.2  
Studying Style to Understand Repertoire ................................................................ 62  
2.4  
Style-shifting as an Indicator of Identities of Race and Place .................................. 65  

Chapter 3  
Data and Methodology ................................................................................................... 71  
3.1  
The usefulness of the sociolinguistic interview............................................................ 71  
3.2  
Speakers and Data .................................................................................................... 74  
3.2.1  
The Interviewees .................................................................................................. 75  
3.2.2  
The Interviewers ................................................................................................... 77  
3.3  
Class-based identity ................................................................................................... 78  

Chapter 4  
Correctly Black: Final Consonant Devoicing ................................................................. 83  
4.1  
Studies of Stop Devoicing and Similar Phenomena ...................................................... 83  
4.2  
Procedure ................................................................................................................... 89  
4.2.1  
Coding procedure and measurement of VOffT ......................................................... 89  
4.2.2  
Statistical Method ..................................................................................................... 94  
4.3  
Hypotheses ................................................................................................................ 102  
4.4  
Results ........................................................................................................................ 103  
4.4.1  
Linguistic Factors .................................................................................................... 106  
4.4.2  
Social Factors .......................................................................................................... 107  
4.5  
Discussion .................................................................................................................... 107  
4.5.1  
Coronal stop deletion and Final Consonant devoicing ............................................ 107  
4.5.2  
Speaker Individuation ............................................................................................... 110  
4.5.3  
Fixed effects ............................................................................................................. 112
4.5.4 Topic-based patterning .......................................................... 114
4.5.5 Metalinguistic awareness on the part of the speakers ...................... 119
4.5.6 Hyperarticulations as “Correctness” .......................................... 129
4.6 Conclusions .............................................................................. 134

Chapter 5  Topic-Based Style Shifting and Identities of Class and Place .......... 137
5.1 Awareness, markedness, and AAE .................................................. 138
5.2 Stance, positioning, and alignment in uncovering identity in interaction .... 140
5.3 Methodology .............................................................................. 144
  5.3.1 Coding methodology: AAE features ......................................... 144
  5.3.2 Coding methodology: topic ...................................................... 147
5.4 Hypotheses ............................................................................... 150
5.5 Quantitative Results .................................................................... 150
  5.5.1 PC-aligned ............................................................................. 150
  5.5.2 PC non-aligned ...................................................................... 153
5.6 Qualitative Results ..................................................................... 157
  5.6.1 Speaker-initiated topics .......................................................... 157
  5.6.2 Race ..................................................................................... 161
  5.6.3 Work ................................................................................... 168
  5.6.4 Neighborhood change ........................................................... 173
5.7 Conclusion ................................................................................. 198

Chapter 6  Conclusions .................................................................. 201
6.1 Research Questions .................................................................... 201
  6.1.1 Features ............................................................................... 201
  6.1.2 Gentrification ........................................................................ 203
  6.1.3 Social Meaning of AAE and Professional Class ......................... 204
6.2 Limitations ................................................................................. 207
  6.2.1 The sample ............................................................................ 207
  6.2.2 The interviewers .................................................................... 208
6.3 Contributions ............................................................................ 209
  6.3.1 Focus on middle class AAE....................................................... 210
  6.3.2 Washington, D.C. .................................................................. 210
  6.3.3 Class-mixing ......................................................................... 211
  6.3.4 Combination of qualitative and quantitative methods .................. 212
  6.3.5 Varied meanings of the same variables ..................................... 213
6.4 Future directions ........................................................................ 213
  6.4.1 Gender and PC-alignment ....................................................... 213
  6.4.2 Defining markedness .............................................................. 214
  6.4.3 Separating PC-alignment from upward mobility ......................... 215
  6.4.4 Larger corpus ....................................................................... 217
6.5 The Language of Professional Blackness .................................... 217

APPENDIX I: Speakers ..................................................................... 219
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 D.C. Census Poverty Data, by Ward 1980-2011......................................................... 18
Table 2 Social Factors .................................................................................................................. 103
Table 3 Linguistic Factors ............................................................................................................ 104
Table 4 CSD Predictions for FCD ............................................................................................... 108
Table 5 Morphemic Status ........................................................................................................... 108
Table 6 Following Phonological Context .................................................................................... 108
Table 7 Speaker Intercepts .......................................................................................................... 111
Table 8 Fixed Effects of Social Factors ....................................................................................... 112
Table 9 Tana and Grey VOffT Compared ..................................................................................... 128
Table 10 PC-Aligned Speakers’ Rate of Usage by Topic ............................................................... 151
Table 11 PC-Aligned AAE Features ............................................................................................ 153
Table 12 PC-Nonaligned Speakers’ Rate of Usage by Topic ....................................................... 154
Table 13 PC Non-Aligned AAE Features .................................................................................... 156
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 D.C.'s Four Quadrants ........................................................................................................... 12

Figure 2 Percentage of Residents Identifying as "Black Alone" on U.S. Census, by Neighborhood .................................................................................................................................................................................. 14

Figure 3 Surrounding Counties of Washington, D.C........................................................................ 16

Figure 4 The Indexical Cycle as conceived by Bell (2013) ................................................................. 53

Figure 5 The Indexical Field of IN(G) based on Campbell -Kibler (2007) ....................................... 55

Figure 6 VOT delay effect on stop perception (from Clark et. al 1995) ........................................ 90

Figure 7 Glottal pulses and automatic voicing measurement in PRAAT ........................................ 93

Figure 8 Preceding Context ................................................................................................................. 97

Figure 9 Following context .................................................................................................................. 98

Figure 10 PC-alignment and Age ....................................................................................................... 100

Figure 11 Mean VOffT, PC-Aligned .................................................................................................. 116

Figure 12 Mean VOffT, PC Nonaligned ............................................................................................. 117

Figure 13 Tana and Grey VOffT compared ........................................................................................ 128

Figure 14 The Stance Triangle (adapted from DuBois 2007) ............................................................ 141

Figure 15 PC-Aligned AAE Feature usage rates by Topic and Feature ........................................ 152

Figure 16 PC-Aligned AAE Feature usage rates by Topic and Feature ........................................ 155
1.1 The Myth of Homogenous Black America

In his 2010 book, *Disintegration: The Splintering of Black America*, *Washington Post* and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Eugene Robinson puts forth an argument which runs counter to the standard narrative about racial segregation in the U.S. "Racial apartheid," he argues, "imposed and reinforced by others, ironically had fostered great cohesion among African Americans, binding together social and economic classes that otherwise might have drifted apart." (2010: 43) The apartheid Robinson refers to has led to a situation where cities and towns were incredibly (and detrimentally) racially segregated, but in which the segregated communities of racial minorities were remarkably integrated across different socioeconomic classes. In the years since the Civil Rights era, U.S. communities have become increasingly racially integrated. Yet, Robinson argues, while "Black America" is still widely considered a homogeneous entity in the narrative of race in America, what has actually occurred over these decades of racial integration is a splintering of the U.S. Black community into several facets: the *transcendents*, elites such as Oprah and President Obama, who lead lives most Americans, regardless of race, never will; the *mainstream*, the middle-class majority with a "full ownership stake in American society;" the *abandoned*, those who are mired in increasing obstacles that render it nearly impossible to escape poverty; and the *emergent*, mixed-race individuals and communities of more recently-immigrated Black peoples who challenge the very notion of "Blackness"\(^1\) as a singular coherent concept (5).

\(^1\) As this dissertation seeks in part to explore the ways in which racial identity is complex in its construction and its linguistic expression, I follow Robinson’s example in separating “Black” from “African American.”
Yet very few scholarly fields have begun to take on the task of treating the U.S. Black community as though it is anything but a singular entity. Even the NAACP, as Robinson points out, often works in search of a (fictitious, according to Robinson) single agenda around which all who consider themselves part of the U.S. Black community can rally. The overarching narrative of race in the United States has for so long been ingrained as a dichotomy between "white" and "nonwhite," that, even while in the last half of the last century, we have teased out a greater number of minority groups from the "nonwhite" category, still relatively little work has been done to break the assumption of homogeneity within any one of these minority groups.

This trend has been as true in the field of Linguistics as it has been elsewhere. Studies of the variety known as African American English make up some of the earliest sociolinguistic work (Fasold 1972, Labov 1966, 1972b). Yet even as some of these earliest studies took into account the effects of class and social network on usage rates of variables (cf. Labov 1972b), the variety was at the same time largely considered to be somewhat homogenous in nature, with the "Black English Vernacular" studied by Labov and his contemporaries standing in as the yardstick against which any variability within the variety is measured. I would argue that this treatment of the English of African Americans as a homogenous entity is caused not by any conscious desire on the part of the researchers to overlook the incredible diversity of the speakers they study, but rather is attributable to the same forces which Robinson identifies: the pervasive tendency to categorize as "colored" and "not colored." Although some early sociolinguistic studies took into account the ways subgroups within races and individual speakers varied in their linguistic practices (for instance, Labov 1972's discussion of the "lames"), only a few studies

Throughout, I use "Black" to refer to the racial category as defined by external groups such as the government and schools, and "African American" to refer to the sense of shared cultural identity among those whose skin color places them in that Black racial category.
have begun from a standpoint of assuming an inherent heterogeneity within the Black community itself and taking speakers’ linguistic maintenance of that heterogeneity as the object of study.²

Some have argued that such homogenous consideration served an important purpose in the times it was employed. Bucholtz (2003) argues that during the time that studies of African American Vernacular English³ were beginning to become commonplace, it was important sociopolitically that the dialect be reframed as rule-governed and linguistically valid, and that its speakers be recognized as competent users of a variety which was linguistically distinct from, but in no way substandard compared with, mainstream varieties of American English. Presenting the African American linguistic community as a homogenous entity allowed linguists to provide a clear description of AAE and to press for its understanding and acceptance. Such "strategic essentialism" allows for a necessary argument to be made--if instead of working class male speakers who use the vernacular almost exclusively, the discussions of AAE were centered around middle-class African Americans who are successfully bi-dialectal, the reframing of the working class speakers as successful speakers of a different dialect instead of deficient speakers of a standard dialect would not have as easily taken place.

This ideology of strategic essentialism, however, codifies the same myths that Wolfram (2007) debunks—that a strict dichotomy exists between different classes of African Americans with regard to their use of African American English, and thus instead of wrestling with this diversity or acknowledging that the talk of middle class African Americans might be an object of

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² See Wolfram 2007, discussed in the next chapter, for several notable recent exceptions.
³ I discuss the use of the term “Vernacular” to describe African American English in the following section, as well as motivate my reasons for not using the term in this study. However, Bucholtz refers to the variety as AAVE, and so I follow her convention in this discussion of her argument.
study unto itself, the linguistics community overlooked populations which did not fit the definitions of the kind of vernacular speech that scholars wished to highlight.

In the twenty-first century, this gap in scholarship is slowly beginning to be acknowledged and addressed head-on, such that now the intellectual gaze does turn to the bi-dialectal middle-class African Americans whose talk was thought to distract from the argument of dialect systematicity and non-inferiority. Aligning with Robinson's arguments regarding the U.S. Black community more generally, the study of speakers of African American English needs to move away from “speakers of African Americas English” versus “nonspeakers of African American English”; instead, we must recognize that "African American English speakers" is a group made of many different groups, each with particular identities and agendas which exist not only in contrast with speakers of other language varieties but in contrast with other groups of speakers of African American English as well.

This dissertation undertakes this de-essentialized study of African American English (AAE). It is a variationist study which combines quantitative analysis of phonological and morphosyntactic variation with discourse analysis of stance and positioning in order to unearth the possible social meanings of several features of AAE and to explore the function of AAE generally as it is used by a group of African Americans in a gentrifying neighborhood in Washington D.C. to position themselves vis-à-vis other African Americans, and specifically as its use relates to those speakers’ professional class identities and identities of place. In the next sections, I provide sociohistorical background on the site of this research, the neighborhood of Anacostia in Washington, D.C., and argue for why it provides a unique site at this moment in time to understand how people in the area use African American English to position themselves...
vis à vis other African Americans in DC and beyond, as well as other African Americans in the Anacostia neighborhood.

1.2 Chocolate City: Washington D.C. Before 1970

Washington, D.C. is often referred to as the "Chocolate City," a moniker given to it by the funk band Parliament in their 1975 hit song of the same name. The name is a nod to its wide recognition as a region highly populated by and, to a great extent, run by African Americans. Although currently the city is very racially diverse, historically it has been home to a large and vibrant population of African American residents, many of whom made important contributions to African American history and culture. D.C. was the birthplace and home of famous Black abolitionists such as Sojourner Truth and Fredrick Douglass (the latter of whom has a museum in his honor in the neighborhood under study in this project), to political giants such as Thurgood Marshall and Colin Powell, poets Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Langston Hughes, musicians Duke Ellington and Marvin Gaye, and many, many others who have had a profound effect on not only African American history but U.S. history as a whole.

"The District," as it is referred to by a number of residents, has also been long recognized as a mecca of sorts for the Black middle and upper classes from across the U.S. who came to Washington, D.C. in the 1940s and 1950s to take advantage of its economic opportunity and the vibrant community of Blacks who lived there (See Graham 1999, Robinson 2010 and Wilkerson 2010 for discussion of the various migrations of African Americans to D.C.). Neighborhoods such as upper 16th Street, known to many of the capital's African American residents as "The (Black) Gold Coast" was until the late twentieth century populated with some of the nation's wealthiest Blacks, often graduates of the nearby, very prestigious Howard University, an HBCU
(historically Black college/university). D.C. was where the nation's Black doctors, lawyers, and business elite came to settle amongst their own.

The name “Chocolate City” seems to imply that Washington, D.C. has been a majority African American city throughout its history, but that is not the case. What is now known as Washington, D.C. was formed as a federal territory in 1790, encompassing ten square miles of land carved somewhat equally from lands in the state of Maryland and the Virginia Commonwealth. At the time, the federal district encompassed several pre-existing settlements, the largest of which were Alexandria, in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and Georgetown, in the state of Maryland. Until Alexandria was returned to Virginia in the Virginia Retrocession of 1846, and Washington, D.C. was unified in 1871, the populations of these cities were counted separately, so that the City of Georgetown, the City of Washington, and the City of Alexandria were three separate entities. (Washington Historical Society)

From 1871 forward, the US Census counted the populations of the former cities of Georgetown and Washington as one, the city of Washington, District of Columbia. After the Civil War, a number of ex-slaves purchased land from the Freedman’s Bureau and established African American communities throughout the city, particularly in the areas surrounding present-day Georgetown and, notably, in the community of Hillsdale, now part of the neighborhood of Anacostia which is the object of this present study. These communities meant that the District was home to a sizeable African American population throughout its history, though until World War II in 1941-1944, it was majority white.

Like many cities in the U.S., post-World War II demographic shifts occurred in Washington, D.C., as many of the city’s white residents began to flee the city for the suburbs of Virginia and Maryland. In the years leading up to World War II, the population of whites in
Washington ranged between 69 to 75% of the total population. In the first postwar census of 1950 however, the white population had dropped to 65%. This trend would continue at an even steeper trajectory over the following two decades: the white population dropped to 45.2% by 1960, and by 1970, only 27% of Washington D.C.’s residents were white. The song naming D.C. among the United States’ “Chocolate Cities” would be released five years later.

1.3 The Iterative Nature of “Flight”

This transformation of a region from majority white to majority Black is a pattern that has repeated itself in urban cores around the entire United States. After World War II, returning soldiers were encouraged to leave the city for generally all-white suburban communities which offered residents the promise of inexpensive homes with property values all but guaranteed to rise and, through discriminatory housing practices, a subtle promise of racial homogeneity in a time in which segregation was slowly ceasing to be the law of the land. This led to an entire generation of white urban dwellers to make a mass exodus of the cities, leaving the city’s African American residents to take their places.

In her book White Flight/Black Flight (Woldoff 2011), sociologist Rachael Woldoff traces a Northeastern US city through two stages of change which characterize the shift from white to Black, arguing that often, urban change is only studied through this first part of its evolution, usually characterized by white residents moving out of neighborhoods and being replaced by Black residents, when the ‘flight’ process is considered to be complete. However, in her study of an urban neighborhood she gives the pseudonym "Parkmont," through two waves of

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5 In order to maintain an extreme level of confidentiality for her subjects, allowing them to expound at great length about the processes taking place in their neighborhood without fear of identification of either the
demographic changes during the 1990s and early 2000s, Woldoff finds a multi-wave pattern, characterized first by a wave of white flight as African Americans move into the neighborhood, followed by a second wave of what she terms “Black flight” as a second wave of Black residents comes in and displaces the first.

Woldoff identifies the "stayers," the elderly white residents who stay in the neighborhood, even at the behest of other former residents (and often their children and grandchildren) to move. These stayers' openness to racial change and to a diversifying neighborhood, she argues, lays the groundwork for harmonious racial relationships as the first wave of Black "pioneers" moves in.

The pioneers, who mostly are of similar socioeconomic status as the stayers, form an important part of the community; although fears of property values and degradation of the neighborhood drive out a wave of white residents; the pioneers and stayers often form strong neighborhood friendships and ties. Indeed, the pioneers in many ways enable the stayers to stay; providing assistance with care, errands, lawns, and other details which allow the stayers to remain in the neighborhood longer than they might otherwise be able, resulting in increasing amicability between the stayers and the pioneers.

A second wave of change follows the pioneers, however, as a different set of African American residents moves into the neighborhood. Often these new residents do not share the values of the stayers and the pioneers and have less stable incomes relative to the two first-wave groups. This difference is felt most acutely by the pioneers, many of whom, refusing to accept

neighborhood or themselves. Woldoff takes the approach of obscuring both the neighborhood under study and the city of which it is a part, because the neighborhood would be identifiable were the city identified. She identifies the city as one which is “known as a Black/white city” (p. 2) and located in the Northeast. Thus it is similar in nature to Washington, D.C. in being a large metropolis strongly identified as being one in which racial distinctions and segregations have been a vital part of its history.
this second wave of change, choose to leave the neighborhood in a wave of Black flight which ultimately destabilizes the neighborhood's economy and its school.

Woldoff's work is unique in that it looks not merely at what happens in a white neighborhood when the white residents leave it, but remains for one more shift, looking at what happens to the first wave of Black residents who move in. This is directly parallel to what has happened to parts of Washington, D.C., as middle-class African American populations moved first out of segregated neighborhoods into wealthier neighborhoods, making them majority-Black, but then did their own Black flight from those neighborhoods to the suburbs. However, even though Woldoff provides a very nuanced description of the iterative nature of flight from the city, there is yet another wave which often follows. This wave is the wave which takes many names: “revitalization,” or “urban renewal,” “rehabilitation,” or “renovation;” or is often known simply known as gentrification.

1.4 Reversing the Flight: Gentrification

Gentrification is most often defined as the repurposing of an often blighted urban core to serve the needs of the middle or upper class. The process often involves the renovation of buildings to make them more attractive and valuable, and the investment of human and monetary capital in the re-creation of a city which has fallen victim to the flight processes described by Woldoff. The term itself arises from the term “gentry,” the propertied upper-class of England (and other European countries), indicating the class shift that is the hallmark of the gentrification process.

In one of the foundational works on gentrification, political scientists Palen and London (1984) explore that the process can be explained by a number of different theories, each of which
privileges a different aspect of the reasons for neighborhood change. They organize these theories into five broad types. The first type is *demographic-ecological*, which explains the process via shifts in demographics. Under this explanation, for instance, the widespread gentrification seen in the 1970s and 1980s in urban centers in the United States and England is attributed to the demographic shift of the baby boom generation. As boomers needed places to live, their housing needs outstripped what was available in suburban areas, causing prices to rise in the suburbs, which in turn encouraged the previously emptied city centers to be “recycled” to less expensively meet the demand.

A second set of theories are *sociocultural*, explaining the movements of people through shifts in values and ideologies. For instance, in the post-Civil Rights era United States, the prevailing sentiment shifted toward favoring integration and thus many of the educated, middle class Americans developed decidedly pro-urban attitudes which encouraged them to move back into the city core.

Then there are the *political-economic* theories of gentrification, which hold that economic and political factors have led to the “invasion” of the inner city. Like the sociocultural theories, political-economic theories hold that ideology shifts such as decreases in racial prejudice explain why people move into the inner city, but say that in order to fully create a gentrification situation, economic factors must also come into play, such as the rent-gap (Smith 1987). The *rent-gap* is the theoretical difference between a property’s current value and what a property could rent or sell for if it were put to its best use (modernized, made accessible to transportation, etc.) Until the gap opens, blighted buildings will remain blighted, as the time and money to fix them will be perceived as a poor investment. When this gap between current value and perceived possible value is sufficiently wide, however, landlords and investors see fit to buy and possibly
rehabilitate properties to bring in higher-paying tenants and realize the full economic opportunity provided by the space.

The last two theory types which London and Palen categorize are community-network theories, which hold that as neighborhoods undergo gentrification, community activity increases, and social movement theories, which hold that gentrification is in part led by forces such as city leaders and others who actively encourage people to revive the inner city.

Even this short summary of London and Palen reveals the interconnectedness of each of these types of theories with regard to the explanatory power they have over the process; sociocultural shifts in attitudes may be ideologically driven in nature, demand for more housing which shifts demography may also contribute to the economic force of the rent-gap. Thus explaining the process requires thinking through the ways in which each of these factors has an additive effect: a wide rent-gap, pro-urban attitudes, political figures encouraging city revival, and scarce and expensive suburban land all work collectively to encourage the gentrification of the city.

London and Palen are quick to point out that gentrification is often not a “back-to-the-city” pattern but rather a “stay-in-the-city” pattern. That is, it is often not the suburbanites who have left the city who return to the city as part of gentrification, but that at least in the initial stages, it is often that a new generation of city residents choose not to leave.

1.5 D.C.’s White and Black Flight: Change across the Quadrants

These waves—the flight of white residents to the suburbs, followed by the flight of the Black residents who initially replaced them, and then followed by a wave of gentrification as the city again becomes the choicest place to live for white and Black residents alike—have shaped
the racial and socioeconomic geography of Washington, D.C. These shifts in social geography have been reflected across the city’s physical geography over time. By design from the city's planner, Pierre Charles L'Enfant, Washington, D.C. is divided into four quadrants, with north-south and east-west dividing axes which intersect at the United States Capitol. Because the Capitol is not the geographical center of the city, and due to the loss of district land because of the 1846 retrocession of the land Virginia contributed to the Federal district, these dividing lines result in four unequally-sized and unequally-populated quadrants. In the 2010 census, 323,689 residents called the Northwest quadrant home, 128,673 Northeast, 20,756, Southwest, and 128,605 Southeast. A map of the four quadrants showing their relative sizes is in Figure 1.

Figure 1 D.C.'s Four Quadrants
In the 1970s, seven out of ten District residents were African American and that population was spread throughout all four quadrants. (Morello & Melnik 2013). Since the 1970s, however, the population of Black residents in the District has rapidly shrunk, with some quadrants of the formerly almost ubiquitously Black city becoming majority white, and others seeing a major influx of residents of other ethnicities, such as the growing Hispanic (mostly Salvadorian) population in the Northwest quadrant neighborhood of Mt. Pleasant. As white residents encountered skyrocketing housing prices in other, Northwest majority white neighborhoods such as Dupont Circle, they moved into the eastern neighborhoods of the Northwest Quadrant which were formerly primarily occupied by the District's Black residents, pushing those residents into quadrants further east and south. The result has been a city which is increasingly racially and socioeconomically stratified: maps which plot the location and reported ethnicity of 2010 census respondents show sharp divides in populations corresponding to the geographic boundaries within the city, including the aforementioned "Gold Coast" of sixteenth street (2010), the main thoroughfare which cuts the District in half geographically. Indeed, the 2010 US Census numbers reveal that Black residents are only slightly in the majority: just over 301,000 of the District's 602,000 residents. The exodus and replacement of the District’s Black population by whites and others is occurring in conjunction with the largest growth in the city's population in a half century, as the population living within the city has grown almost ten percent between 2000 and 2010. (Morello & Melnik 2013) Figure 2, from the website “Z Geography,” shows the change in the District’s concentration of residents who claim to be “Black alone” (i.e.,

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As mentioned in the previous section, the U.S. Capitol serves as the boundary which divides the city’s quadrants into east and west. However, because the Capitol does not sit at the geographic center of the city, Sixteenth Street, which is 1.6 miles (sixteen-tenths miles) west of the Capitol, is the true geographic dividing line.
a person indicating having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa and indicating no other race), based on US Census data.

Figure 2 Percentage of Residents Identifying as "Black Alone" on U.S. Census, by Neighborhood

These maps show two things. One, they show the already extreme divide between the different races in the District in the year 2000, with very low concentrations of Black residents in the upper Northwest quadrants, changing to a middling concentration right at the dividing line of Sixteenth Street, and the concentration becoming almost immediately high in the Northeast and
Southeast quadrants. Perhaps more importantly, they show the classic pattern of gentrification—minority populations decreasing as white populations take their place. Comparing the 2010 map to the 2000 map, it is possible to see the influx of non-Black residents moving eastward across the city: looking at the reduction of dark red (76%+ “Black alone” residents) it is evident the density of “Black alone residents” in the middle part of the city, the western parts of the Northeast quadrant, and on Bolling Air Force Base (the grey-turned-blue stripe just east of the Potomac River at the bottom of both maps) is declining steadily. Similarly, we see areas which have lower concentration of “Black alone” residents have flipped to fewer than 50% or even fewer than 25%. The movement of whites through the city is thus proceeding clockwise, with boundaries shifting further east and south as Black residents leave the northern and western neighborhoods.

But where, then, are the Black residents going? The answer is: not far. Washington is surrounded by a number of suburbs, many of which serve as home to many of the region's hundreds of thousands of government employees. These government jobs have historically provided an attractive opportunity for the District's Black residents and for Black people from other parts of the country who chose to migrate to the area. Over the decades, this has resulted in the metropolitan D.C. area serving as home to one of the largest and most financially successful populations of Blacks in the United States (Gale 1987). Like the area's white population, and in fact, to an even greater degree than has the area's white population, the Black population of the metro D.C. area has seen striking shifts over the decades in movement of residents from the city to the inner tier of suburbs: Prince George's (PG) and Montgomery counties in Maryland, and Arlington and Fairfax counties in Virginia (see Figure 3). However, the distribution of the area's Black population varies significantly across the counties, townships, and cities which surround
the District, with the bulk of the area's affluent Black residents living in Prince George's County, Maryland (Gale 1987), which borders Southeast DC, the site of the current study.

In his 1987 work, *Washington, D.C.: Inner City Revitalization and Minority Suburbanization*, urban studies scholar Dennis Gale hypothesizes several reasons for the racial differences among DC’s suburbs. One possibility may be the greater hostility to Black residents in the Virginia suburbs than exists in Maryland. A federally funded study reported in the *Washington Post* in 1986, (Mariano 1986, cited in Gale 1987) presented landlords with fictitious prospective renters who were matched for income and background but differed in race. Although across the board, landlords preferred to rent to prospective white renters, the landlords in Northern Virginia chose white renters 12% more often than did the landlords in PG County (which was also the only county adjacent to D.C. whose landlords showed a less than 50% preference for white residents).
In addition to PG County simply being friendlier to Black residents, another possible explanation Gale offers lies in the county’s geography with relation to the District. Unlike the three other border counties, which are either adjacent to the northwest, or exist across the Potomac River from the district (see the figure above), PG county immediately abuts the Northeast and Southeast quadrants, two areas of the District which have historically had the highest concentration of Black residents. Moving to Prince George's County, therefore, gives Black residents easy access to the areas within the District where other Black people are likely to live.

These patterns of movement do not go unnoticed by the residents of the District. In one interview for this study, conducted with Tana, a 44-year-old professional woman from Southeast D.C., the interviewee describes the movement of people from her neighborhood to PG County which she observed during her childhood and adolescence in Southeast:

**Excerpt 1.1 Tana, “Moving to Maryland.”**

1) well there were certain
2) I think there were certain age groups of people that were staying
3) like older people
4) were staying
5) but younger people with children were moving to Maryland
6) that was the big thing.
7) You know, "We're moving to Maryland.
8) "We're moving to Maryland.
9) "We're moving to Maryland."

These sorts of movements: the middle and upper class residents of an area move to the suburbs, leaving the urban core without the personal and financial investment of its former residents. Sure enough, in the years that Prince George’s County has been growing with wealthy

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7 Following standard sociolinguistic practice, all participants in this study are referred to by pseudonym.
Black residents, the wealth in the northeast and southeast quadrants has been dropping accordingly. Table 1 shows the data on poverty and unemployment from the 1980, 1990 and 2000 censuses for the D.C. Wards\textsuperscript{8} 5, 6, 7, and 8, which make up the Northeast (5 and 6) and Southeast (7 and 8) quadrants, respectively, and compares them to the average across the District, as well as the low and high figure for the District. Note that across the board, Ward 8 (the locus of the present study) contains the DC High figure for each time point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 D.C. Census Poverty Data, by Ward 1980-2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ward 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty rate (%), 1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty rate (%), 1990</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty rate (%), 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty rate (%), 2007-11</td>
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<td>Unemployment rate (%), 1980</td>
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<td>Unemployment rate (%), 1990</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (%), 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (%), 2007-11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is evident by this data, the post-1970 years which have seen a steady influx of whites into D.C. with a corresponding flight of middle-income Blacks to Prince George’s county, have created the opposite effect in the Northeast and Southeast quadrants. For every ward but Ward 6 (see footnote) the percentage of residents living in poverty has increased with each census data

\textsuperscript{8} The District of Columbia is divided up into eight wards, which are further divided into Advisory Neighborhood commissions (ANC). The wards, which further divide each quadrant, are used for neighborhood governance, and to elect equitable representation to the citywide government.

\textsuperscript{9} Ward 6 contains the neighborhood of Capitol Hill, a neighborhood which has grown which is one of the only eastern neighborhoods which is blue in the 2000 map in Figure 2, indicating that it was less than 25% African American. By 2010, that area has an even smaller density of African American residents. It is likely that the reduction in poverty in this ward between 2000 and 2007-2011 is attributable to middle-income whites moving to that neighborhood, one of the few in the Southeast and Northeast quadrants considered to be gentrifying at present.
point. This creates a stark divide across the District of Columbia/Maryland border, as the wealthy Black residents who’ve left enjoy lower poverty and unemployment rates in the county immediately adjacent to those they’ve left behind.

Prince George's County, meanwhile, is growing increasingly segregated: a 2011 *Washington Post* articles finds that over 27 percent of PG county neighborhoods have 85% or more same-ethnicity residents. (Wiggins, Morello & Keating 2011) This is even while it continues to house many of the most affluent Blacks in the country: in PG County, of the neighborhoods where the average annual income surpasses $100,000, three-quarters are majority Black. The Washington, D.C. which has resulted is one where unique processes combine to create an African American community that is at once cohesive and divisive: where nearly-impoverished majority Black neighborhoods within the city sit adjacent to a county where class-based flight to the suburbs has created the highest concentration of affluent Blacks in the United States. It is a city undergoing rapid change from within, with an influx of young, non-Hispanic white residents taking the place of Black residents whose D.C. lineage stretches back several generations.

And it is a city, importantly which defies essentialism. The D.C. African American community is not the homogeneous, easily-categorized whole it once was thought to be. Instead D.C. is home to an African American community that is no longer by law separated from white communities by race, but increasingly by choice separated within itself by class, and whose members must engage in practices of identity formation and maintenance in order to fit in the D.C. that is instead of the D.C. that was.

1.6 Anacostia, D.C., as a Seat of Gentrification

In July 2011, the Washington Post published a feature article looking at the ways in which gentrification processes are affecting the D.C. neighborhood of Anacostia. In the quadrant of D.C. known as Southeast, and across the Anacostia River from the remainder of the city, Anacostia has long been an intensely segregated neighborhood (Manning 1998, Robinson 2010). Simultaneously, it has also historically been a neighborhood which holds a great deal of racial and community pride—the Smithsonian Institution runs its only neighborhood-specific museum in there, the Anacostia Community Museum, and the neighborhood is also home to the historic home of African American abolitionist Fredrick Douglass, now also a museum.

The Southeast quadrant is a particularly interesting area of the D.C. Metro area to study at present because it is one of the few areas of the city where gentrification processes are somewhat new. Prior to 1968, Anacostia was a racially diverse area, although its residents did not live in an integrated fashion. Two distinct communities housed the majority of Anacostia residents: Uniontown, a predominately white community which served as home to workers in Washington D.C.’s Navy Yard, just across the Anacostia river; and Hillsdale, a community made up of land purchased by freed slaves which was home to a thriving Black middle class (Dale 2011). After the race riots which ensued following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, many of the white residents of Uniontown fled to the suburbs. The white residents were replaced first by Black residents of the nearby Hillsdale, but over the decades those
residents, too, trickled out to the suburbs in the second wave of flight. With the reduction in socioeconomic resources among the population, the neighborhood began to decline: a noticeable number of homes and buildings in the area were abandoned and left so for decades, and violent crime became abundant (Dale 2011, Robinson 2010, Wax 2011). As pointed out in the section above, for the last four decades, Anacostia D.C. (represented by Ward 8 in Table 1), has seen increasing poverty and unemployment levels which have solidified the neighborhood’s international reputation as a place one simply is not to go.10

The exodus of the middle class, and the drastically lowered property values in Southeast however, created exactly the kind of “rent-gap” situation which London and Palen describe. This has been furthered by the rapidly increasing prices in the remainder of D.C. as neighborhoods in the Northwest and Southwest have seen increasing numbers of middle- and upper-class earners. As a result, the Southeast neighborhoods of Anacostia and Congress Heights, with their close proximity to the city and their accessibility via subway stops have, in very recent years (2008 and later), seen an influx of middle class residents. Houses in this area of Washington D.C. cost as little as a third of the going rate for comparable houses in other parts of the city (Wax 2011), and this difference is causing a shift in the socioeconomic demographics of the area.

Unlike other parts of the city, which have seen demographic shifts throughout most of the period from 1980 onward this change has happened almost entirely within the last five years as of the writing of this project, making Southeast an ideal place to study residents' reactions to this sort of neighborhood change, and their sensitivity (or lack thereof) to their own positions in the face of such change.

10 A 2013 post in the Washington Post blog Gov Beat, “16 American Cities Foreign Governments Warn Their Citizens About” (Wilson 2013) lists the following injunction from the French Foreign Ministry: Le quartier Anacostia n’est pas recommandable de jour comme de nuit. Translation: Don’t go to Anacostia, day or night.
Anacostia is also a fascinating place to study residents’ relationships to changing demographics of their neighborhood because of its history as a locus of great racial and local pride. It is the only neighborhood in Washington D.C. to have its own Smithsonian museum, the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum on the site of what used to be Fort Stanton. Although some interviewees in this project express views which indicate that they view as a snub the placement of the museum in the neighborhood rather than on the National Mall, in the vast majority of discussions of the museum, residents take positive stances toward it and toward the things it does for the community. Anacostia is also the location for the Washington, D.C. annual Martin Luther King Day parade, an event which celebrates African American achievements and the city's African American heritage.

As home prices have risen throughout the remainder of Washington, D.C., residents who might, a decade ago, have sought homes in neighborhoods which were undergoing gentrification processes at that time, such as Northwest quadrant’s Mt. Pleasant, are now buying homes in Anacostia, where a three-bedroom home which might run upwards of $750,000 in other parts of the city can be found for around $250,000 (Wax 2011). However, unlike most gentrification situations, where middle-and-upper class whites move into often formerly majority-minority neighborhoods, the racial pattern in Anacostia’s change is quite different: the new residents of the neighborhood are instead middle-and upper-class Blacks. Some are residents who grew up in Anacostia and are returning after living elsewhere, and others have never lived in Anacostia before. Either way, however, neither side is quite sure what to make of the situation--current

\footnote{When asked about the presence of the Anacostia Community Museum, Justin, a professional class aligned interviewee in this data, cites a number of positive things about the museum providing opportunities for children in the neighborhood, but then points out that its status as the only Smithsonian museum to not be in the downtown/Northwest quadrant strikes him as diminishing its importance relative to the other museums (which are all located around the National Mall or in other parts of Northwest, like Chinatown):}
residents of Anacostia are reluctant to classify same-race peers as "gentrifiers" and the upper-class transplants (and longtime residents who have moved away and returned) are just as unlikely to give this label to themselves.

The nature of gentrification is one deeply imbued with issues of local identity—people must negotiate the issues surrounding authenticity and belonging in their neighborhood: Who is an insider? Who is a newcomer? These sorts of questions make gentrifying communities an ideal place for exploring the ways in which both existing residents and newcomers negotiate these identities through talk: the kinds of things they talk about with regard to their neighborhood and the people in it, and how they talk about those things, from the use of phonological variables associated with certain race, class, or regional identities, all the way to the level of discourse and the ways in which speakers position themselves discursively with respect to the community in which they live.

From the earliest studies in sociolinguistic variation to present day, researchers have uncovered connections between patterns of speaking and speakers’ identities of place. I discuss many of these studies and what they reveal about those connections in the next chapter. Given these connections, it makes sense that the social situation of gentrification, which causes a great deal of identity negotiation for those involved, would similarly evince linguistic patterns related to those identities. Unsurprisingly, recent works by several linguists have explored the linguistic expression of identities as they relate to ongoing gentrification in the speakers’ communities. Longtime residents of the lower east side of New York City are found to display their localness through the retention of a stigmatized /r/-less pronunciation associated with the area (Becker 2009). In studies of the Northwest D.C. neighborhood of Mt. Pleasant, described above as one of the gentrifying communities, Black residents express their opposition to gentrification by
whether or not they simplify consonant clusters (Podesva 2008) and position themselves on multiple planes of discourse vis-à-vis the processes of staying and plight (Modan 2007).

Most studies of gentrification, including the linguistic studies cited above, view the process as one that is often characterized by the displacement of minorities by whites (for instance, pointing out that gentrifiers moving into a city populated by racial minorities are pro-integration implies that they are white). Even as a handful of studies like Woldoff’s have looked at what happens when Black residents choose to leave a neighborhood for many of the same reasons as the white residents before them, almost no research has been conducted which studies what happens when it is the Black residents who have become the gentrifiers, where they are the middle and upper-class residents moving into a formerly working-class neighborhood, or they are the ones who are choosing to stay in that neighborhood and thereby effect socioeconomic change within it. In Anacostia, both the “staying” and “returning” processes are occurring at once, making it a rich locale to study speakers’ use of language to index themselves along axes relating to their sense of place.

As mentioned previously, relatively little sociolinguistic research has been focused on the speech of the Black middle and upper class, possibly as a result of the "myth" of homogeneity of AAE as described by Wolfram (2007) as well as the perceived need for an essentialist strategy in arguing for the value of AAE study in the first place. Yet middle class African Americans speakers are a group whose presence is increasingly salient, especially when one considers that at the moment, the person in the seat of the most power in Washington, D.C., President Barack Obama, is a Black man whom it would be hard to classify as having ever lived a life below the middle class. As "Black America" becomes increasingly difficult to define in a hegemonic, monolithic way (Robinson 2010), a situation in which upper-class Black people are moving into
a neighborhood which has traditionally been defined by the presence of a large number of lower-middle and working class is an ideal place to study the talk of the both the working and middle/upper class Black D.C. populations, and the ways in which their ways of speaking might inform larger issues of place, race, and identity.

1.7 Research Questions and Scope of the Dissertation

In the above sections, I have argued for the need for a study of African American English which de-essentializes the African American community, and studies the ways in which the African American community is heterogeneous. I have provided justification for the site of this research; a rapidly-gentrifying neighborhood in a city where processes of change are disrupting a decades-old majority African American presence in ways which create unique situations, such as the extreme concentration of wealth in the African American suburb of Prince George's county, the movement of middle-class AAs back into SE DC, and the continued discussion of Washington D.C. as “Chocolate City,” even as the city’s African-American majority seems destined to slip away.

The remainder of this dissertation explores the situation within Anacostia, Washington, D.C., via interviews with several of its long-term residents, using their talk about their history and the change in the neighborhood to unearth evidence for the social meaning of features of African American English as they relate to identities of race, place, and especially, class. I place special emphasis on the speakers in my dataset who are what I term **professional-class aligned**, whose social networks, self-identification, and socioeconomic status combine to create a professional class identity. I discuss this term in greater detail in chapter 3.
A gentrifying neighborhood such as Anacostia serves as a site in which class- and race-based identities must be negotiated. Given that such identities are very often displayed linguistically, it is reasonable to expect that by examining the speech of residents of the neighborhood, both quantitatively across and within speakers, and qualitatively in the use and patterning of features in unfolding discourse, we will unearth evidence that will tell us more about how language, particularly an ethnically marked dialect like African American English, is connected to identities of race, place, and class.

Specifically, this project concerns itself with the following research questions:

1. Are features of African American English used by these professional class African American speakers in the negotiation and projection of their professional class identity? If so, which kinds of features are implicated: phonological features, morphosyntactic features, or both, and how are these features used?

2. Specifically, does the use of African American English facilitate the negotiation of identities related to gentrification processes, and if so, how? What does that use tell us about how these speakers use language to negotiate place and class related identities?

3. What does the study of the use of aspects of AAE in the speech of these professional-class aligned speakers tell us about the possible social meanings of African American English more generally? Is it the case that African American English is as heterogenous as the community that speaks it, or are there overarching patterns that can inform our understanding about the English of African Americans and how it is used?

This dissertation, therefore, aims to make two central contributions to the field. One is in its study of an understudied group, middle- and upper-class African Americans (which I am calling the professional-class-aligned; see chapter 3) in an understudied locale, Washington, D.C.
The other is in taking as a given that what we consider to be African American English is in fact a heterogenous variety used in different ways by different speakers, and that much is to be gained not by comparing the talk of African American speakers to the talk of speakers of other ethnicities, but by comparing the use of aspects of the variety as they vary within a group and within the speech of individual speakers to understand the way differences in the variety itself are implicated in the construction of identities that are African American, professional class, and local to Southeast, Washington, D.C.

In the next chapter, I explore the history of work on African American English and style shifting which form the backbone of the analysis in this study. Chapter 3 details the methods used to collect the data for this project, as well as provides the information about the nature of the speakers, their relationships to the community, and to each other. Chapter 4 reports on and discusses the results of the quantitative study of the variable patterning of one phonological feature of AAE, final consonant devoicing, which impressionistically seems to be in wide use among professional-class aligned African Americans, and explores how this feature patterns relative to other similar features of AAE and other English varieties. Chapter 5 presents analysis and discussion of the use of AAE morphosyntactic features in topic-based style-shifting, with particular attention to how speakers talk about race and neighborhood change and what their use of language in talking about these topics tell us about the ways speakers construct their identities of race and place. Finally, in Chapter 6, I discuss the implications of these results for our understanding of the possible social meanings of features of AAE, explain the limitations of this particular study, and provide possible future directions.
In his 2007 article, Walt Wolfram argues that the study of African American English has been hampered from its goal of unearthing the dialect's full complexity through a series of essentializations on the part of linguists which have emphasized homogeneity across social class and region at the expense of more nuanced explorations of the dialect. Although Wolfram does not explicitly identify the same sorts of divisions of new “Black Englishes” as Robinson (2010) does for new “Black Americas” the acknowledgment that researchers must consider the diversity within AAE is and its speakers is important, fair, and in this researcher’s opinion, overdue. In much the same way that Robinson argues that we are no longer in an era in which "Black America" can be considered a monolithic and homogenous entity, we are no longer in an era in which “African American English” can be considered monolithic either.

Yet of course this issue is no sooner unearthed than the question is raised as to how the scholarly community should best approach the study of diversity within African American Englishes. Certainly, a number of studies are beginning to investigate some of these overlooked aspects of AAE, such as regional and class variation, and I discuss these in greater detail in the next section. But there are also ways in which we can examine linguistic diversity within individual speakers — how speakers use features of AAE in unfolding discourse to create and reaffirm these various Black identities to which Robinson refers.

In the present study I argue that the study of AAE features among speakers in a rapidly changing community provides unique insight into the ways in which the features of AAE can function to express speaker identity on a number of indexical levels (Silverstein 2003, see section 2.2.3). The following sections will situate this project within the broader realm of
research on African American English, and motivate the choices of Washington, D.C., and Southeast Washington D.C. in particular, as a research site. I also argue for the value of incorporating intraspeaker variation into the study of variation within AAE and in understanding AAE usage as part of the creation of various African American identities. Ultimately, examining how AAE features are used in topic-based style shifting and in stancetaking about issues related to individual and community identity allows unique insight into the orderly heterogeneity within AAE, particularly how its features function for professional-class speakers in indexing identities which are local, class-based, and distinctly African American all at once.

2.1 Studying African Americans’ English

2.1.1 Naming the English of African Americans

Before even delving into what, exactly, makes up the variety of English in broad use among the African American population, the first difficulty encountered in the study of that variety has been the question of what one is to call it in the first place. There are two central issues brought up by the naming of the variety: one, what to call the people who speak it, and two, how to mark or leave unmarked its variation from standard—generally white—English varieties (leaving aside the question of whether a standard variety even truly exists outside of a potentially unhelpful theoretical construct, as some have argued [Benor 2010]). Thus the issues bound up in the choice of naming this dialect are both linguistic and sociologic in nature: are we saying this is a separate speech variety from other varieties such as Southern English (with which it shares many features) and if so, how separate; or are we arguing that it is a variety which is mainly characterized by the fact that is spoken by people who claim a particular ethnicity, which has historically gone by an evolving set of names? Or is it both—a variety used mainly by one
ethnic group, which also happens to be structurally distinct from other varieties of English? To say nothing of the fact that both of these questions are quite apart from how we name this variety: is it a dialect? An ethnolect? A language unto itself? I take up these questions throughout this section and the remainder of this chapter.

The naming of African American English shares a number of parallels with the naming of African American people more generally. Smitherman (1991) documents a number of changes to the terms used to refer to the African diaspora community in the United States, who Baugh (1991) refers to as the African Slave Descendants (ASD). Prior to 1800, the ASD population was largely referred to simply as “African,” a term which reflects the fact that in those pre-emancipation days, the number of free people of color was very few. The term “colored” arose during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Its popularity as a referring term at the time is reflected in the name of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, which was founded in 1909 (Smitherman 1991).

During the World Wars, the term “Negro,” which comes from the Latin root for “black” arose as the accepted term for the ASD population in the United States. This choice is reflected in the inclusion of this term in the official style guide of the New York Times in 1930 (Smitherman 1991).

In 1966, Negro activist Stokeley Carmichael called for the advancement of the “Black Power” movement, and within this movement’s advancement, a rejection of the term “Negro” in favor of the term “Black.” This signaled an “ideological shift—the repudiation of whiteness and rejection of assimilation” by the ASD population (Smitherman 1991: 121).

Baugh (1991) discusses the shift in terminology from “Black” to “African American,” a change which he attributes to the advocacy of Civil Rights activist Reverend Jesse Jackson. He
argues that while the term “African American” was used and advocated for by people, including him, writing about the ASD population prior to the 1980s, it was a highly-visible speech by the Reverend Mr. Jesse Jackson in 1988 which put the term very much into the public discourse. The term became widely accepted by the ASD population for a number of reasons. Baugh (1991) in his fieldwork in Black and White communities in Texas and California found in responses to a phone survey that there was an age-grading effect for ASD people who were surveyed about whether a variety of referring terms were respectful or disrespectful. A number of words exhibited substantial age-grading, or difference in acceptability across the age groups surveyed. However, African American was widely considered a respectful term, and none in the youngest age group of ages 12-17 felt it was a disrespectful term (the same true of this group for the terms Afro American and Black).

In a survey of 667 African American and White respondents in five cities with large African American populations, Smitherman (1991) found three central reasons cited for respondents’ preference for the term African American: one, that it emphasized the tie of the ASD population to Africa, two, the inadequacy of a color label such as Black to capture what was a lived cultural experience, and three, the aesthetic qualities of the term.

Thus over the decades, the terms of reference, by both self and other, for the African diasporic community in the United States have changed as the ability of that community to choose for itself its own referring terms has changed. These shifts in have occurred alongside linguists’ increasing understanding of the complex nature of the language variety used by this population, and so the names given to the variety have likewise changed over the course of its

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12 African Americans, Afro-Americans, Blacks/black people, Bloods, Brothers, Colored, Homeboys, Negroes, Niggers, Sisters
study to reflect both the changes in the naming of the ethnic community in which the variety is most commonly found, and to reflect changes in understanding the variety itself.

The earliest heavily-cited studies of AAE called it *Nonstandard Negro English* (Labov 1973) or *Negro Dialect* (Fasold 1972), using the referring term for Black people common among educated whites at the time. Both Fasold and Labov wrote about the dialect’s differences from white varieties, including white vernacular varieties, although Labov’s work additionally applies the adjective “nonstandard” to its description. The term *Negro English* is found in several of the studies published around this time (for example Bailey 1965, Loflin 1970). It was, however, used equally for studies of the talk of the United States-residing African diasporic community as well as that of African diaspora communities residing elsewhere.

In the 1970s, a group of psychologists coined the term “Ebonics” from the words *ebony* and *phonics*, encapsulating the fact that this variety was a language phenomenon specific to those who counted themselves as of the African diasporic community (Rickford 1999). This was an attempt to provide a word which could put into the popular parlance the notion that the language variety was a) unique to the community, b) encompassed the African diasporic community and not simply U.S.-based African descendants of slaves, and c) ostensibly provided a neutral, non-specialist term. However, it was not until the Oakland School Board controversy in 1996 (see section 2.1.2) that the term, which was used by the Oakland Schools to describe the variety and thus ended up in the mainstream media, truly rose to become part of the public discourse about the variety: outside Linguistics circles, the situation is often referred to as the “Oakland Ebonics case” or the “Oakland Ebonics controversy.”

As the term for African American people came to settle politically on the self-determined name “African American,” so the term Black English Vernacular changed to African American
English Vernacular or African American Vernacular English. The term African American Vernacular English (AAVE) has dominated the sociolinguistic literature about the dialect for the bulk of the last two decades (for instance, see Rickford 1999), however, it does not go without mention that while it represents a shift in how the people who speak the dialect are named, the word “vernacular” carries with it connotations which create an implicit contrast with standard varieties, and in so doing, does not necessarily change the perception among lay audiences that African American English varieties are deficient.

It is in order to combat this implicit contrast with standard English and actively assert that the language variety in common use by African Americans that, a number of scholars (Pollack 2000; (see Green 2002, Hinton & Pollock 2000, Wolfram & Thomas 2002 for a small, but hardly exhaustive, set of examples) remove the “vernacular” and refer only to African American English, or otherwise reserve “African American Vernacular English” to refer only to those varieties which differ markedly from standard varieties or to describe studies which do not consider the standard English spoken by African Americans (Rickford 2012). Some assert that not only is it not inferior with regard to its differences from standard English, but additionally point out the ways in which it is linguistically more complex than standard English.

Smitherman’s 2000 Black Talk and Rickford and Rickford’s 2000 Spoken Soul, to name two such works, both delve into the ways in which African American English allows for a wider range of expression than standard American English, for example, through its expanded tense and aspect system which can express things such as continual or habitual occurrence through the aspect of the verb, and which in standard English must be expressed through the use of adverbial modifier. They also highlight the important role the variety plays in the lives of its speakers as an indication of racial affiliation and pride. Further, the term African American English can carry
not only those morphosyntactic or phonological features but also convey the inclusion of prosodic structures, discourse styles, and other aspects of the English of African Americans at multiple linguistic levels.

The present study chooses to use the term African American English to emphasize that its object of study is broadly the English of African Americans, not only those varieties or features which differ from standard English varieties, but the ways in which race is embodied through language at the level of individual phonological and morphosyntactic features, and at the level of discourse as well. I follow the convention of referring to African American Vernacular English to highlight those features which differ from those of standard varieties.

2.1.2 Cataloging the English of African Americans

To begin understanding why we want to look at variation within African American English, we might begin by examining studies of the dialect itself. African American English (AAE) is the most studied variety of English, with dozens of books (cf. Alim 2004, Bailey et al. 2013, Baugh 2000, Fasold 1972, Labov 1972c, Rickford & Rickford 2000) and countless articles contributing to the knowledge base about its features and use.

Interestingly, despite the overall homogenization of the language variety that emerges from early studies, some of the earliest studies of African American English focused on its use along the axis of socioeconomic class. Labov (1972) looked at a number of class-based issues in relation to the study of African American speech in New York City. By using the sociolinguistic interview (Labov 1966) to obtain naturalistic speech from Black residents of the city, Labov was able to chart a number of syntactic and phonological features common to AAE speakers (which he called BEV, or Black English Vernacular), such as

• Absence of third-person singular-s: He live over here.
• Absence of auxiliary go or going: He 'a shoot you
• Negative concord: He ain't going nowhere.

as well as several phonological features, such as:

• Final coronal stop deletion: Wes' Side
• Intervocalic r deletion: [ca:l] for Carol
• Consonant cluster reduction: Tha's mine.
• L-vocalization: [to] for toll

Because of this careful inventory and analysis of variants common to BEV/AAE, Labov's study went a long way toward informing other studies. His 1966 and 1972 studies were conducted in New York City, and other researchers in subsequent studies built on those findings to examine AAE in other locations, for example Detroit (Shuy, Wolfram & Riley 1968), Washington D.C. (Fasold 1972), and southern cities (Wolfram 1974b, Wolfram & Thomas 2002). Some of these findings did take into account class differences between the speakers, or at least between the bulk of (working-class) participants and a (middle-class) control group in the case of Fasold (1972). I look more closely at these findings and more recent discussions of class in AAE in the next section. Despite this early consideration of social class variation in the study of AAE, relatively little early work focused on AAE outside the context of the urban, working class, who have traditionally been seen as speaking the most “authentic” version of the dialect (Labov 1972b).

The early feature inventories of AAE focused on large populations of non-southern, urban working-class African Americans, and often within that group, male African Americans. Thus a picture emerged of the dialect which was missing a careful exploration of the ways in which the dialect could vary across region, class, and gender. Labov, for instance, writes repeatedly in 1972 that the dialect is "relatively uniform," (pp. xiii, 96, 190) and Wolfram and
Fasold in 1974 make an explicit nod to working-class speakers as being the prototypical speakers of the dialect. In his later critique of this early erasure of intra-dialectal difference, Wolfram (2007) attributes some of this focus on homogeneity to the novelty of discovering a supralocal dialect—during the time in which the early AAE studies took place, the focus of dialectology in the United States was chiefly concerned with geographical boundaries between dialect regions. Thus the discovery of a dialect which seemed to be mostly uniform across several regions was of particular interest, and the similarities among the ways each African American community spoke were likely overemphasized.¹³

These sorts of studies were nevertheless fundamental in establishing AAE as patterned, and rule-governed just as any other English dialect, and made important strides in defending the importance of its recognition in the education arena in two landmark court cases, the Ann Arbor case of 1979, and the later Oakland Ebonics controversy of 1996. (Detailed discussions of these cases can be found in Baugh 2000; Perry & Delpit 1998; Rickford 1999 and Rickford & Rickford 2000.) Both cases were concerned with fundamentally the same question: to what extent should educators be accountable for being sensitive to and knowledgeable of their students' dialects?

In order to argue such cases effectively, it was important that AAE be presented as a dialect whose regular patterns educators ought to be responsible for understanding. Feature inventories such as those given above give linguists and others a clear understanding of along what axes this particular dialect might vary, and gives both linguists and non-specialists a set of hallmarks by which this variety might be identified. For these reasons, even as the scholarly

¹³ Wolfram (2007) notes that this perceived cross-regional homogeneity was in fact undone by the data itself; when Labov studied r-vocalization in New York City, where the feature was also a feature of the local white vernacular, he found nearly categorical r--vocalization; Wolfram, however, studying in Detroit where r-vocalization is not a part of the regional dialect, found much more variable results in his AAE speakers' use of this feature.
work on AAE has broadened to include studies of variation within the dialect, a number of studies continue in this vein of carefully documenting the syntactic and phonological features which comprise (at least most of) the dialect (cf. Thomas 2007).

The difficulty these types of inventories pose, however, is that while the identification of common features creates a neat package for linguists to present to educators, it also perpetuates an inaccurate image of homogeneity within the dialect. Importantly, as Wolfram (2007) points out, such a focus obscures variation within the dialect in three important areas: regional variation, variation in the direction and type of language change, and variation due to social stratification, the latter being of primary interest to the present project.

2.1.3 Studying the Diversity within African Americans’ English

More recent studies have made strides in problematizing the assumed homogeneity of the community of AAE speakers, and have explored ways in which the use of AAE features varies significantly based on class, region, interlocutor, and all of the other features along which American dialects have been known to vary. Some (Childs & Mallinson 2004, Cukor-Avila 2001, Mallinson & Childs 2007, Wolfram & Thomas 2002) have looked at regional variation, others (Kendall & Wolfram 2009) have looked at the ways in which AAE use may vary because of audience or referee. All of these studies aid us in moving toward a more complete understanding of the ways in which AAE functions for its speakers, with full consideration of differences which arise from their location, class, or what they may be trying to accomplish in interaction.

These three axes of variation, particularly the last two, are of principal concern to the current project. In studying interaction, we gain some of the most important insight into the ways in which AAE comes to "mean," which is to say, what kinds of identities, social characteristics,
or stances its use allow a speaker to signal. These things might be as straightforward as an identity of “African American” or as subtle as “I’m a longtime neighborhood resident and I oppose gentrification.” (Podesva 2008) Even further insight into the multitude of meanings attached to African American English comes from studies of its use by speakers who are not African American, where AAE features may allow white speakers to index toughness, urbanness, and youth (Cutler 1999) or a close kinship with African American peers (Sweetland 2002).

Rickford and Rickford (2000) point out that broad social perceptions of AAE are crucial when it comes to thinking about the meaning and use of the dialect, an assertion substantiated by several key studies. Baugh, Purnell, and Isardi (1999), for instance, use a matched-guise study to unearth linguistic prejudices against speech which uses a number of features of African American English. In the experiment, Baugh, who is tri-dialectal in AAE, Chicano English, and standard American English, adopted various guises in calling landlords to inquire after apartments for let. When he adopted a guise which employs more AAE features, he was significantly less likely to be offered a rental in a desirable neighborhood than when he used a guise which uses more standard English features. Knowing this, most speakers who use at least some features of AAE in their speech are likely to engage in audience-directed style shifting (Bell 1984), matching their level of AAE feature use to their interactional goals, for example displaying themselves as competent and educated, or as authentic and down-to-earth.

Of course, one very important way that the use of AAE varies is by speakers’ social class. Labov showed clear social patterning of linguistic variables among primarily white speakers in his earliest work in 1966 and 1972. Similarly, Shuy, Wolfram, and Riley (1968) show that for several variables in the speech of Detroit Whites and African Americans, such as third person
singular –s absence (*he run* for *he runs*) and */r/* deletion ([gad] for [gaɹd], there is a clear progression of lesser use of the nonstandard variant (–s absence and deleted */r/* in the cases above) as one moves up the class ladder from lower working class > upper working class > lower middle class > upper middle class. Fasold (1972), in his study of only African American speakers in Washington, D.C. similarly finds class stratification in third-person –s deletion, as well as in habitual *be* (which he terms distributive *be*). Both these show substantial differences between the working class and upper class speakers Fasold studies.

Fasold also examines two phonological features, final */d/* deletion (*wanted* produced more like [wan]) and what he calls cluster simplification, referred to in this work as coronal stop deletion, the deletion of coronal stops */t,d/* where they are the final segment of a word, particularly where they are preceded by another consonant segment, for instance, [tol] for told. He similarly finds there to be a difference between the two classes of speakers’ use of the nonstandard, deleted variants, with the lower class using more, but this difference is much less pronounced than it is with the grammatical variables of habitual *be* and third-person –s deletion, and is not statistically significant. Fasold notes that this data confirms the conclusions made by Wolfram (1969), that phonological features show a more gradient stratification than do grammatical features when compared across classes (1972:210)

This general pattern informs a broader observation by Taylor in 1971. Taylor notes that there is a variety of English spoken by African Americans of the middle and upper classes, which is neither the vernacular dialect which Fasold and Wolfram document, nor completely the English spoken by middle and upper class whites. Taylor names this variety **Black Standard English** (BSE), noting that it is characterized by relative absence of many of the grammatical features of more vernacular African American varieties (though some unspecified ones are
retained), but the retention of many phonological features. Importantly, this variety is used extensively along a gradient of code-switching, that is, shifting from one variety to another (or from one language to another). Those who were of higher socioeconomic status also were the ones who were the most prodigious code-switchers, leading Taylor to conclude that class differences in production of AAE are largely due to speakers’ relative ability to switch from one variety to another, but that nevertheless “a substantial core of Black English is known and used (particularly in communicating Black to Black) by most, and probably all, classes of Blacks.” (15)

Hoover (1978) takes this work a step further, in examining attitudes toward AAE more generally in an argument against the speaker deficiency model. This model, which was prominent in educational reform of the area, held that African American students spoke AAE in part due to being linguistically deficient, and hence lacking in the ability to acquire standard academic English, and needed special interventions in order to properly learn it. Buried in this reform model was the assumption that African American parents, given the chance, would want their children to master the standard variety, and a good amount of evidence seemed to exist to show that the parents did prefer that their children use the standard variety. Hoover, however, points out that such studies tended to present African American parents with only two choices: highly vernacular African American English and the English she terms “broadcast English,” the supralocal, superstandard variety in use by television broadcasters. She sets out instead to examine the attitudes of parents toward a spectrum of African American English varieties, including a highly vernacular variety consisting of a number of phonological and syntactic features, a Black Standard English variety consisting primarily of AAE phonological features but standard syntax, and a variety that matched the “broadcast” variety. Bidialectal speakers
recorded sentences in each variety, for example the vernacular sentence might be “This here the one in charge?” the Black Standard English version might be “Are you the person in charge?” with AAE phonology, and the superstandard version would be the same sentence but with “network broadcaster” type phonology. (75) Parents were then asked about the appropriateness of their children using or encountering these sentences in a variety of channels (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and in a variety of contexts such as “when he’s playing with his friends,” “when he’s giving a book report,” “when he’s reading a book with you at home,” and so on.

Across the board, Hoover finds a preference for the Black Standard English variety among the parents she interviews. Further, she finds that the parents value the ability to switch, and that bidialectalism is seen as a virtue which allows their children a greater ability to move throughout various parts of society. This runs counter to the standard educational narrative of the time that viewed parents’ preference for standard English to be indicative of a rejection of vernacular varieties; instead, Hoover shows that parents saw a distinct value for their children in being able to use African American Englishes along a continuum of standardness—recognizing that standard English has a great deal of prestige and value in certain channels and contexts, but that that more African American varieties were not without importance elsewhere.

Throughout the 80s and 90s relatively little work focused on Black Standard English and its speakers. The work that did emerge often focused on these issues of attitudes toward vernacular varieties among African American speakers. Lippi-Green (1997), for instance, discusses attitudes of middle and upper class African Americans toward AAE. She finds that in many instances the attitudes of some upper- and middle-class speakers toward the dialect are on the surface negative. It bears note that many of these speakers cite problematic grammatical
features, and most do not note as being part of the dialect the phonological features which characterize BSE (which many of these upper-class speakers use themselves). At times, such speakers side very strongly with *standard language ideology*— "a bias toward an abstract, idealized homogeneous language, which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class." (64) Yet even African Americans who champion the necessity of speaking standard English will, when confronted with opinions of those who conflate a perceived substandardness of African American Vernacular English varieties with a perceived substandardness African Americans themselves, begin to scale back the way they talk about the dialect. Still others will discuss the ways in which standard English varieties have caused them to be perceived as overly white. (192) Whatever the relationship may be between upper- and middle-class African Americans and varieties of African American English, it is obvious that that relationship is complex and full of internal conflict.

Rahman (2008) attempts to quantify some of this conflict. She argues that both AAE and standard English (SE) features are employed by middle-class African Americans, and explores the use of these features in the significance of "sounding Black" in the judgments listeners make with regard to standardness, class, and appropriateness of speech styles. Using a similar method to Hoover, Rahman conducts a two-part experiment among middle-class African American students at a university, composed of a survey to gauge subjects’ attitudes toward AAE and their understanding of it, and also a perception study, where subjects were asked to rank the situational appropriateness of speech of varying levels of vernacularity. Rahman finds significant effects of phonological and syntactic features of AAE on listener perception of others’ speech. She argues for a classification of Black Standard English (BSE), a variety which
employs the phonological features of AAE with SE syntactic features. As do Taylor and Hoover, Rahman finds not only a continuum in AAE feature use, but also a continuum in the perceptions of situational appropriateness, standardness, and social class which its usage conveys.

Weldon and Britt (forthcoming 2015) in their review of the work of a number of studies of middle class African American speakers, point out that middle class AAs fall on the boundary between multiple speech communities, and as such, “display the nuances and tensions of that experience in their linguistic choices.” (p. to come) As such, both African American English and Standard English are part of the speech of middle and upper class African Americans. Speakers participate in the mainstream linguistic marketplace, in which mainstream white varieties have more social capital than varieties like African American English where SAE is desired, but as Rahman shows, AAE still plays an important role in maintaining connection to the African American community. The linguistic practices of the middle-class African American community is complicated and this is evident on a number of linguistic levels: That phonological features tend to show more variability than morphosyntactic features (see the above discussions) means that both must be examined to gain the fullest picture of what it is that middle class African Americans are doing with the variety of varieties which make up their talk.

2.2 Meaning-Making with African American English

As discussed above, many modern scholars see the use of features of African American English in the English of African Americans as operating along a continuum. There are situations in which speakers are more likely to use these features, and in which other speakers are more likely to judge their use as appropriate. But why use AAE at all? This was the question
which was posed to early researchers of the dialect, particularly when the false-dichotomy surveys (which Hoover’s study debunks) seemed to show that African American parents wanted their children to speak the dialect they were being taught in school. The conclusion which is reached in various ways by every new study of AAE is that AAE, like all varieties of English, has social meaning—that is, that the use of the features of the dialect (or even a handful or even one) may be \textit{indexically linked} to social categories such as ethnicity and interactional meanings such as toughness or coolness or closeness to one’s family and culture. The exact workings of indexical linkage are as of this writing still of substantial debate in the literature, and this will be discussed further later in this chapter. However, briefly, to say a linguistic feature or a linguistic variety is indexically linked is to say that there is a connection between the features and a given social category or interactional meanings, for example African American ethnicity or coolness, such that the features can be used to indicate group membership, to display personal qualities associated with social groups, and/or to effect interactional moves related to these qualities. So for example, a speaker may use features of AAE to index affiliation with African American ethnicity, portray themselves as cool, and/or demonstrate authoritativeness in a discussion about authentic street culture. The ways in which these meanings come to be attached to the features of a language variety like AAE are multifaceted, layered, and importantly, contested. In the following sections, I will discuss the basic ways in which features of African American English can be said to come to have these sorts of meanings, from the large scale to the hyperlocal, and will conclude with a discussion of how this particular study undertakes to unearth the social meaning of African American English as it is used by the professional class speakers in this study.
2.2.1 Associating African American English with African Americans

The first step in making meaning of African American English has to do with its association with a particular speaker group, African Americans. Clear associations were established in the early studies of African American English, most discussed in section 2.1.2, which looked at the ways in which the speech of African Americans differed systematically from varieties spoken by whites. To briefly recap, studies such as Labov (1972), Fasold (1972), and Shuy, Wolfram and Riley (1968), established that the English of African Americans in three distinct geographic locations (New York City, Washington, D.C., and Detroit, respectively) differed from the English spoken by whites in those areas in ways which were governed by observable, systematic syntactic and phonological rules. These studies and other subsequent studies led to the feature inventories discussed in 2.1.2.

What these studies did was to reveal the link between the African American ethnicity and demonstrably distinctive variety of English. However, there existed observable intra-group differences even within this highly distinctive variety. For instance speakers who used nonstandard features were observed to use the features less and less as their attention was drawn closer and closer to the particular nonstandard features under study (Labov 1966, “Isolation of Contextual Styles”), a phenomenon which gave credence to the attention to speech model of stylistic variation, which I discuss in detail in Chapter 3. Similarly, these early studies found differences between different subgroups of African American speakers, such as speakers with extensive social networks of fellow users of the variety, who tended to use the nonstandard African American English variants more often than did the speakers whose social networks included only one or two such people (Labov 1972, “Linguistic Consequences”). Still more

14 I use “African American” to refer to the ethnicity of the speakers under study in these early studies, acknowledging, of course, that “African American” was not the term in use when those studies were conducted.
variation was found looking at class differences as discussed in Fasold 1972 in section 2.1.3, where an upper class control group could be seen to use almost none of a nonstandard, African American English syntactic variant like habitual *be* compared to the working class speakers under study, but were found to be less divergent from the patterns observed in the working class when it came to phonological variants like coronal stop deletion, which Fasold refers to as consonant cluster reduction.

From the early studies, several things were evident about the variety. One, it was systematic and could be both catalogued, and its presence within the speech of particular speakers could be quantified. Two, it could be seen to be associated with African American speakers, and while it shared some features with the English of white speakers of similar social classes, it also had features which were uniquely its own. And three, it was a variety whose use, like other varieties of English, varied between groups of speakers and within speakers who used it, correlating with other social factors such as class and social network, as well as with stylistic factors like attention to speech.

These sorts of correlations could lead one to associate the variety with broad social characteristics: the features map on to “African American,” yes, but also to smaller subgroups of “African American,” such as “working class African American,” and even “working class African American whose social network consists of a number of other working class African Americans.” Early studies such as these, therefore, did important work in defining some broad boundaries for speakers of this variety, and associating the variety with externally-defined group divisions such as class and race.

Such studies, connecting a language variety with these sorts of group divisions, are characteristic of what variationist scholars now commonly term **first-wave variationist study.**
This term was pioneered in the work of Eckert (2012), who uses the description of three waves of scholarship to organize the broader undertaking of variationist sociolinguistic study. These three waves provide an organized description of the progression of variationist study through its various incarnations and foci over the last half-century, and of course in so doing, provide an explanation for the progression of study of African American English as well.

2.2.2 Variationist Study and the Three Waves: Making Meaning Local

Variationist study began with many large-scale studies, such as the many discussed in the previous sections, as well as large-scale inventories of regional dialects, large-scale work on socioeconomic language differences and the like. As the decades passed, however, variationist linguists moved from these large scale studies to studies of difference not among broad regional or ethnic groups, but smaller, localized communities such as high schools (Alim 2004, Bucholtz 1999a, b, Eckert 1989) as well as studies of the ways in which speech varies in the speech of individual speakers (see Bell 1984 for a representative framework, and see section 2.3 for a discussion of several representative studies of this type). But how is it possible that a large scale study separating different ethnic groups in New York such as Labov (1972) can ultimately be after the same endeavor as the study of a single speaker, such as in Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994) (which I will discuss below)?

In her 2012 work, Eckert draws a through-line connecting all the various threads within the breadth of types of studies in variationist sociolinguistics by proposing that the studies can be organized into three waves of variationist linguistic study. Her argument that the waves of variationist study represent a roughly continuous—and importantly, an entirely logical—progression in unearthing the meanings of sociolinguistic variables helps explain why these kinds of studies appeared when they did.
The first wave of variation study linked features to broad social groups, these sorts of externally defined speech communities talked about in the previous two sections. Thus we find for instance that New Yorkers are more likely to delete post-vocalic [r] (turning car into [ka:]) as in Labov’s 1966 work, or that African Americans use negative concord (saying “He don’t got nothing” for “He doesn’t have anything”) as discussed in both Labov (1966) and Fasold (1972) and many other studies of that era. The link in a first-wave study is between linguistic practice and broad groups such as white speakers or African American speakers, male or female speakers, or speakers from Washington D.C. or speakers from New York City. As a result, these first-wave studies established patterns between broad social, regional, and ethnic groups and their aggregate linguistic practices.

The second wave of variation study used ethnographic methods to seek out the relationship between linguistic variation and locally defined meaning. It bears pointing out that while the waves of variationist study have been largely sequential, they have overlapped and second wave studies have preceded first wave studies—for instance, Labov’s (1963) Martha’s Vineyard study, where ethnographic observation tied the variation in the centralization of the [ao] diphthong not simply to “residents of Martha’s Vineyard” but to whether or not those residents had an orientation toward the island and planned to stay or had an orientation toward the mainland and planned to leave. Second wave studies thus shed more light on the ways in which the meanings of linguistic variants are locally defined, giving a greater depth and more locally-situated meaning to the more broadly and usually externally-defined categories in first-wave studies.

The third wave approach characterizes many more recent studies of variation, including the one in this dissertation. In third-wave variationist studies, it is linguistic styles, rather than
variables themselves, that are seen as being the primary link to identity categories. A linguistic style is not merely the variable itself being connected to a group, but rather is the result of a constellation of features being used together, each varying along a number of axes of identity categories. It is thus not simply that a speaker uses feature xyz, but when, where, and how she uses it, and in collocation with what other features, that explains how that feature comes to mean.

The progression of study thus moves from the supralocal—how do speakers, in this case, African American speakers, speak in a way that is distinctly African American even though some are in Detroit and some are in D.C.?—to the superlocal—how does this speaker, at this time, use variants of this variable in order to somehow embody “African Americanness” and the meanings which are associated with it? Third wave studies thus take linguistic style as being the primary object of study, which calls for a shift in the locus of study from the large, aggregate group to the individual.

2.2.3 How language comes to mean

But what does it mean to have meaning be locally situated? I mention above the concept of indexical links, the ties which get made between a language variety, or even a single variant, and its related social meanings, which might be membership in a group, traits such as educatedness or laziness, attitudes and stances, and others. Indexicality has been explained by a number of scholars in slightly different theoretical frameworks, many of which were recently married in Bell’s (2013) discussion of what he terms the indexical cycle. I first discuss each below, and then return to Bell’s cycle and how the various conceptualizations of indexicality, as conceived under these different theoretical frameworks, might be seen as working together as the same continuous process.
An index is a sign which bears direct relation to what it refers to, for instance, the pronoun “she” is an index which could point to the person mentioned in a previous utterance in an example like “My mother doesn’t eat red meat. She usually cooks fish.” In that sentence, she refers to “my mother,” connecting the subject of the second sentence back to the subject of the first. Similarly, one could imagine being in a room in which someone physically points to a female and utters, “She is my mother.” She here again refers to the speaker’s mother, but via a different route—the physical pointing, as opposed to being positioned in a sentence which follows one with the full referent.

Language in this way can obviously be used as an index. But it also can be the index, pointing to difference or sameness. Labov was the first to identify one process by which certain linguistic features could be understood to be acquiring meaning: the idea of social indicators, social markers, and social stereotypes. Indicator refers to a variable which varies according to observable social differences, but of which speakers do not seem to be aware, mostly evidenced by the fact that it does not vary within a speaker’s talk. This is in contrast to a social marker, where speakers can be observed using the variant at different rates based on the context of their speech, with “context” here being somewhat congruous with Labov’s styles varying along the dimension of attention paid to speech – in the case of the sociolinguistic interview, conversational speech (encompassing careful and casual styles), reading passage, word list, and minimal pair styles. I discuss these interview contexts and their function as a test of the attention to speech model more in Chapter 3, but here it is enough to point out that these contexts allow a researcher to observe a marker in action: speakers might signal their awareness of the social significance of a variant by using it more or less as their attention to speech increases throughout
these activities. Markers are also defined by their affect upon listeners: a social marker may cause a listener to make a particular social judgment about a speaker.

A social stereotype takes this process one step further—this is a feature which is overtly commented on by speakers and hearers alike; it not only differentiates speakers, but people recognize and comment on its meaning. Thus indicators, markers, and stereotypes can be viewed along the levels of awareness: each describes a progressively higher level of awareness of the connection being made between the linguistic feature and the social category. It is important to note, however, that this process is not directly iterative: not every feature which is an indicator will progress to being a marker, and not every feature which is a marker will become a stereotype. And to complicate matters further, at times social stereotypes may not correlate with genuine linguistic practice of those to whom the stereotype is ascribed.

An indicator, therefore, points, or indexes, a difference, and markers and stereotypes then become tools to use that index to point more deliberately. This maps to a second way of thinking about the ways in which language can be said to index social identity, introduced by Silverstein (2003). For Silverstein, an indicator is a first-order index, one which signifies membership in a group, such as “working-class,” or “New Yorker” in Labov’s studies.

However, groups of speakers themselves are not without social attributes. A working-class city-dweller might be perceived to be tough; a person who lives in the country might be perceived to be backwards or under-educated. A second-order index ties these perceptions to the linguistic difference which separates that group from another group; thus the feature ceases to mean only “working class” but can come, on its own, to mean, “tough.” For instance, Eckert (2008) identifies a pattern of indexical links in her earlier work (1989) at the suburban Detroit high school, Belten High. Students in the school, who do not live in urban Detroit, nevertheless
associate certain linguistic features (in this case, features of the Northern Cities Vowel Shift), with the urban youth who use them. Those youth, to the high schoolers at suburban Belten High, have a number of attractive social characteristics: toughness, coolness, street sense. Thus the style becomes associated not only with membership in that group of urban Detroit teens, but comes to also mean these other things as well. By recruiting the vowels used by the urban youth, the students of Belten High can tap into these other meanings, indexing themselves as “cool” or “streetwise” without necessarily indexing themselves as being a part of the group of urban Detroit teens.

Silverstein acknowledges that any given feature may acquire multiple additional meanings through this kind of association, and that those meanings may also themselves generate additional meanings, making the associative process even further iterative. Thus being an urban Detroit teen might also mean being tough and being tough might in turn be associated with having a certain disregard for authority. The language variety or the individual variant which has acquired these first- and second-order indexical meanings may then go on to acquire further meanings as it is used in interaction.

Bell (2013) brings Labov’s indicators, markers, and stereotypes, and Silverstein’s orders together in his concept of the indexical cycle. The indexical cycle has as its major advantage that it underscores the iterative nature of associating meanings with features, as well as that not every feature will go on to have every level of association. The indexical cycle is illustrated in Figure 4.
The cycle has 5 phases (4 phases and one half-phase). Paraphrasing from Bell (2013), they are as follows:

In the 0 phase, a group achieves a distinct identity which is valued by group members, and which is contrasted with and evaluated by others not in the group.
In **phase 1**, the group distinguishes aspects of its language from others, and a given variant can be documented to vary along the lines of the group distinction. This is Labov’s indicator stage, and Silverstein’s first-order: the linkage of a variant with a particular group.

**Phase 2** has two parts. In **Phase 2a**, both the group and outsiders put a social value on the group’s language and its forms; and then in **Phase 2b**, outsiders adopt these features to signal affiliation with or distance from the group and/or its perceived traits. This is Labov’s marker stage, and Silverstein’s second-order. Importantly, phase 2 happens iteratively, as features are evaluated, then used, then re-evaluated, then re-used, etc. In this way a single variant can go on to have multiple additive meanings.

In **Phase 3**, some variants “break loose” of the cycle of re-evaluation and become the object of overt attention and comment as linguistic variants: they are Labov’s stereotypes.

Bell’s indexical cycle has the advantage of showing how the indexical process, while always additive, is not necessarily always linear: he argues that while phase 0 and phase 1 are necessary for phase 2 to occur, phase 2 can continue to recur with the same variant, allowing it to acquire more meanings through ongoing use within groups. Further, Bell argues that most variants end at stage 2, and do not go on to become overtly commented upon as features unto themselves, but similarly, few variants only reach indicator status: once a group’s usage becomes associated with that group, it will generally go on to acquire some sort of second-order meaning. (271)

That the second phase is iterative and recursive means that a given variant can be evaluated, used to signal affiliation, then reevaluated, and used to signal something else. Thus any given variant can go on to acquire a seemingly infinite number of additive meanings, which can be co-present at any given instance of that variant’s use. Eckert (2012) takes a step further,
proposing that these sorts of indexical links operate within a constellation of meanings, whereby variants of a given variable might be associated not with a single set of contrasting meanings, but might be embedded in multiple such meanings at once. For instance, velar fronting, or the production of –ing [ɪŋ] as –in’ [ɪn], might index a lack of pretentiousness at the same time that it indexes uneducatedness, so that a speaker might use it to index one thing and a listener might get another index from that use. Figure 5, from Campbell-Kibler’s nuanced study of the social meanings of variants of (ING) illustrates a number of such meaning potentials for the IN and ING variants.

![Diagram of the Indexical Field of IN(G) based on Campbell-Kibler (2007)](image)

*Figure 5 The Indexical Field of IN(G) based on Campbell-Kibler (2007)*

Speakers, then, may draw upon any or all of these meanings when they use a particular variant, and when they combine the use of variants into a particular linguistic style.
So if it is the case that speakers can use variants to index certain meanings, how is it that we can tap into these meanings? Of course we can examine how different groups of speakers speak in order to unearth which variables may be able to do this kind of work, but as Bell and Silverstein point out, one cannot read a second-order meaning off a first-order distribution. The distribution may be enough to identify which variables are able to do the work, but not the meanings attached to any single variant. But we do have important evidence for the function of a variant and its meaning to a speaker, and that is how an individual speaker uses it variably within their own talk over different contexts, audiences, or topics. This is called studying intraspeaker variation, and it is one of the primary ways we have of accessing the links between variables, style, and social meaning that characterize the third wave.

2.3 **Intraspeaker Variation: Style, Stance, and Repertoire**

Intraspeaker variation, particularly a speaker’s use of specific linguistic styles to invoke the indexical associations those styles have with social meanings gives us a great deal of insight into the constellation of potential meanings for any given linguistic variant. These features may include features on all levels of language, including morphosyntactic features and phonological features, and even phonation. Dozens of studies have been published to date which take as their locus of inquiry the variation within a given speaker’s talk, and several of those have direct bearing on the present study.

One of the most-cited studies of style-shifting in African American English comes from Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994), in their study of "Foxy," a young African American woman in the then-heavily Black community of East Palo Alto, CA. They find that she varies not only the frequency of her use of AAE features when talking to an interviewer of her own race versus a
white interviewer, and even higher rates when talking to a same-age, same-race peer (the
daughter of the same-race interviewer), but also which AAE features and the kinds of topics she
will discuss. Her usage rates are overall quite high, or as Rickford and Price (2013) later term
them, “voracious,” and even outstrip the rates recorded by Labov (1972) in his study of young
African American men in New York City, which is often taken in subsequent studies as the
normative yardstick for measuring vernacular AAE. That Foxy varies measurably across these
interview contexts lends itself to support the theory of audience-based style shifting (Bell 1984).
Foxy also shows a high degree of topic-based variation within interviews, showing high usage
levels for AAE features even with the white interviewer when talking about topics closely
associated with her African American peers, variation which can be seen as derivative of
audience, or as indicative of the need for more multifaceted approaches to stylistic variation in
which topic, and stance toward topic, are seen as influences of their own. A follow up study
(Rickford & Price 2013) provides even more insight into the variability and possible meanings of
Foxy’s talk; I will discuss this follow-up study later in this chapter.

The study of Foxy’s speech focuses heavily on morphosyntactic variables within AAE;
however, phonological variables are often also involved in style-shifting as well. Schilling-Estes
(2004) examines the speech of two young men, one Lumbee Indian, one African American, in
Robeson County, North Carolina. In the study, Schilling-Estes compares the boys' usages of
phonological and morphosyntactic features with ethnic and regional associations (postvocalic /r/-
lessness, monophthongal /ay/, third person singular s absence, copula deletion, habitual be, and
nonstandard regularizations of past tense be) to more broadly established levels of usage by
others in the area in order to examine the degree to which these features are being actively drawn
upon by the two boys in the construction of their own ethnic identities. These features are also
examined in terms of their usage patterns in the boys’ unfolding discourse, to help understand their use in context, including across the various topics the boys discuss, as well as their stances toward these topics and toward each other. She finds that the boys pattern according to what might be expected usages, with “Alex,” the African American boy, using AAE features more often than his co-interlocutor, “Lou.” At the same time, however, the boys show different usage patterns at points in the interview corresponding to their alignment or disalignment on a variety of levels: for instance, linguistic differences occur where they wish to create what Schilling-Estes calls ethnic distance, that is, to emphasize the differences between their races. For example, they begin to diverge on features when talking about race, with “Lou,” the Lumbee boy, using fewer features of Alex’s AAE dialect when disagreeing with the ways Alex discusses race. Conversely, when the boys wish to show their agreement about other topics such as family and friends, their use of pronouns changes, so that they each refer to their own ethnic groups as the impersonal they instead of we, but also that simultaneously, their use of ethnoracially associated features converges, even to the point that Alex self-“repairs” some noticeably AAE features to more closely match Lou's style. Thus the use (or lack thereof) of ethnoracially marked variants is actively involved in the dynamic expression of macro-level identities of ethnicity and convergent and divergent stances within ongoing interaction. One possible explanation for Alex and Lou's styles of speaking, then, is that there exist indexical links between language practices and racialized identities, and interactional positionings and stances.

In another study about style shifting and AAE, Anderson (2008) explores how people justify "race talk": that is, the overarching discourse that links linguistic behavior to race and frames evaluative metacommentary on those links (Myers 2001). Drawing on Silverstein's (2003) orders of indexicality, Anderson finds that those listening to others’ speech make two
indexical links in order to comment upon what they hear: the first order indexical link connecting a particular linguistic practice with a particular style (i.e. that /ay/ monophthongization, /r/-lessness, etc. are features which collocate) and the second order link which forges a relationship between that style and a particular group (i.e. that this constellation of features make up "Black speech"). It is important to note here that Anderson’s indexical links correspond to links that would be considered one level lower in Bell’s indexical cycle as discussed in section 2.2.3. The collocation of features is almost a zero-order link; that there are features which differ. And the association of those styles with a particular group is then the first-order link, though Anderson calls it a second-order. In this work, I will consider such group-associational connections to be characteristic of a first-order indexical link, and consider the second order to be the linking of a linguistic variable to characteristics of that group, such as toughness or coolness, in such a way that the variable can be used by people outside that group and be understood to convey the characteristic, rather than membership in the group.

Anderson probes the two links she studies by having subjects comment on the content and style of interviews in which they did not take part, and finds that the commenters follow a distinct pattern when justifying race talk: They follow a continuum of explicitness, first merely identifying the collocating features, and then explicitly linking that style to a particular group (in Anderson's case, African Americans). In this way, listeners' metacommentary on linguistic practices and their links to race serves to show how the speakers organize patterns and relationships between specific behaviors, speech styles, and ethnic groups.

In a similar study, Podesva (2008) combines both inter- and intra-speaker analysis of a single phonological variable, coronal stop deletion (CSD). CSD, as discussed in section 2.1, involves the deletion of the sounds [t] and [d] where they occur word-finally. Although most
English speakers delete final coronal stops some of the time, one feature of AAE is the deletion of a final coronal stop when the next segment is a vowel, for instance, “cold egg” becomes [kol ɛg].

Podesva examines the speech of sixteen speakers, evenly split between White and African American speakers who are Washington, D.C. natives, in order to uncover the degree to which the presence or absence of CSD reflects (and creates) shifts in topics and stance. He finds that while rates of CSD do vary predictably along the lines of speakers' racial affiliations, those rates also vary based on topic and stance toward topic. One African American speaker, “Carrie,” deletes a great deal when speaking about gentrification: For Carrie, CSD is a means of showing that she has stake in the talk at hand. By resisting use of the variant more associated with white speech, Carrie’s speech becomes a linguistic means of resisting gentrification itself.

I highlight these three studies in particular because they make the close link between language practice as being indexical of racial identity, and the importance of the use of language styles, and the act of style-shifting, in projecting identities and traits, and taking stances in interaction. All of these studies show that the use of ethnoracially marked features can serve to indicate stance and stake in the talk at hand. But what does it mean to take a stance, and how can we evaluate which one is being taken?

2.3.1 Defining stance

For this I turn to DuBois (2007), who in his work defines what he refers to as the "stance triangle." In an interactional dyad, there are likely several things happening at once with regard to stance. The two interlocutors may take stances with respect to each other (agreement, disagreement, etc.) and with respect to that about which they talk, which DuBois terms the stance object (p. 147). The stances being taken by speakers in ongoing interaction are constantly
shifting: The stances taken with regard to the stance object affect the stances which the interlocutors take with regard to each other and vice versa. Thus the movement of stances along the "sides" of the stance triangle is fluid.

Speakers might show that they've taken a stance in a variety of ways, ranging from the subtle employment of specific linguistic features associated with particular social groups and character traits to the more explicit announcement of a stance taken, e.g. "I disagree with your position." Linguistic features might include phonological features such as vowel realization (Damari 2010), [t]-release (Nylund 2010) or coronal stop deletion (Podesva 2008); morphosyntactic features such as third-person singular -s absence (e.g. *He like dogs*), copula deletion (e.g. *He a good student*), or habitual *be* (e.g. *The coffee always be cold here*) (Schilling-Estes 2004), or even suprasegmental features such as falsetto (Nielsen 2009). A number of discourse features are implicated in stancetaking as well, including the tense that is chosen, negation, adverbs and adjectives, modals, hedges, verbs of certainty or doubt and many others, which I discuss in more detail in chapter five. Such discourse features enable the identification of stances and the exploration of the link between sociolinguistic variables and the stances being taken.

For speakers from a variety of backgrounds, the study of intra-speaker variation, with a particular eye toward how linguistic variation co-varies with the taking of particular stances, including stances of alignment toward or distance from ethnic groups/ethnic affiliation, gives valuable insights into the why of style shifting, and the conscious and unconscious decisions that speakers are making in ongoing interaction.
2.3.2 Studying Style to Understand Repertoire

One result of a focus on the study of style shifting is that it moves the locus of variation study from the macrosocial categories down to the ways in which language is used in interaction. In studying how speakers’ talk is modified based on variables like topic, stance, or co-interlocutor, we can begin to see Bell’s 2a and 2b indexical phases at work: the forms which have a social value in connecting with some aspect of group identity are used variably, highlighting their possible meanings with regard to group identity, and by extension, the characteristics of being associated with that group.

It is not surprising then that features of an ethnoracially marked variety such as African American English are found to vary in studies of intraspeaker variation. This then asks us to reconsider: when speakers move into a style with more AAE, are they then “speaking AAE,” and at other times, are they not?

I return to the discussion of “Foxy Boston,” the young African American woman under study in Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994). In her interviews at various points throughout her teenage years, her use of AAE features was variable by topic and by interviewer, but was nonetheless pervasive throughout her speech. However, a follow-up study with the grown-up Foxy reveals slightly different patterning.

In 2008, at the age of 35, Foxy is re-interviewed by the daughter of the African American interviewer who interviewed her as a teen (and who was, as a teen herself, co-present with her mother during the interviews). In the intervening years, Foxy has had children, pursued a career as a nurse, and is now the proprietor of her own home daycare business. For some of the AAE features studied (habitual be usage and third-person singular –s deletion), she shows a significant
reduction in usage rates, while for another, copula deletion, her rates are not greatly reduced from what they were in the past, particularly from what they were when she was a young teen.

Ultimately Rickford and Price ascribe the changes in Foxy’s speech to **age-grading**, a change in speech patterns which tracks to the speakers’ age: in age-grading, the same patterns can be seen in the talk of speakers of different generations as they move through the lifespan, and individual differences at different points in time are indicative of changing usage patterns at different ages, not of community language change, or different speech styles. This interpretation is supported by several pieces of evidence: one, that for Foxy (and “Tinky” another East Palo Alto informant interviewed and re-interviewed at around the same ages as Foxy) the change is most significant in the stigmatized grammatical features such as habitual *be* and third-person –s deletion, while a comparison of her vowels—which pattern according to observed AAE differences from white varieties according to Thomas (2007)—reveals no significant change. Thus the features involved are those which are most likely to be noticed by others and evaluated as deviations from a standard that might be expected from a professional woman. The interpretation of age-grading is also supported by evidence from other longitudinal studies of AAE speakers, which show similar patterns over the lifespan of increased usage of vernacular features as a speaker reaches her teenage years, followed by a drop in usage as he grows older, often traceable to their entrance into the mainstream linguistic marketplace. Thus a speaker like Foxy, who has moved into social spheres where mainstream white varieties have value in being considered a competent child-care professional, is more likely to draw upon those mainstream white linguistic resources in accordance with their value relative to what she wishes to accomplish.
Lastly, the age-grading interpretation is supported by Foxy’s own self-evaluations of the ways she has changed: she has grown up, and she overtly expresses her desire to model for her children a lifestyle different than the one she knew growing up.

What studies like this point to is the fact that features of AAE are used variably, and may be recruited at different points: at different times based on topics within one interview, variably over the lifespan, and variably based on what the speaker wants to accomplish in interaction, and this variation points to a difference in how we must understand AAE. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, in the early days of study of the dialect there was a great deal of scholarly and social value in treating AAE as homogenous—to formalize its linguistic properties, and also to advocate for the African American community by making arguments about its value and importance as a language variety.

These sorts of groupings are reflected in the various terms for African American English as a linguistic variety; it has been described as a social dialect (in contrast to a dialect associated with a distinct geographic region), or an ethnolect, a dialect associated with an ethnic group. Yet speakers of all ethnicities draw on a variety of linguistic features in everyday use, which may index any number of things like affiliation with an ethnic group, professionalisms, easygoingness, educatedness and other meanings which may form through the indexical processes outlined in section 2.2.3. These features make up what Gumperz (1971) terms the verbal repertoire, the arsenal of linguistic forms which any speaker might employ in the course of socially significant interaction.

It is for this reason that Benor (2010) introduces the concept of the ethnolinguistic repertoire. Like the verbal repertoire, the ethnolinguistic repertoire treats linguistic features as not a static set of expected realizations but rather as a group of resources which may be drawn on
variably throughout interaction. Thus a person like Foxy who is style shifting throughout an interview is not variably speaking and not speaking AAE, but variably drawing upon different stylistic resources which are associated with an ethnically-marked group. This re-analysis allows us to account for stylistic shifts, as well as the transfer from one repertoire to another, such as the appropriation of features of AAE by white speakers who wish to affiliate with hip-hop culture (Cutler 1999), and to understand style shifting phenomena as being systematic extensions of the ethnic marking of the features. The concept places an analytic focus on the individual while simultaneously emphasizing the ethnic group and the linguistic forms which have been seen to mark membership within it, providing a lens into the ways in which a speaker might variably recruit features associated with ethnic and other social groups and the traits believed to characterize them, in order to create and display identities, traits, and stances in ongoing interaction.

2.4 Style-shifting as an Indicator of Identities of Race and Place

The present study aims to use this understanding of the importance of drawing upon features of AAE in style shifting as a means of identity making to look more closely at the ways in which style shifting allows speakers to talk about their membership in and relationships to the particular physical community of Southeast Washington, D.C., the racial community of African Americans, and within that, the community of African Americans of a particular class.

Perhaps the most basic conceptual framework for community comes from understandings of community as being delimited by physical space: a neighborhood, a city, a school. Those who reside, do business, or otherwise inhabit that physical space become members of the community which that physical space defines. This kind of physically delimited locale is what Scollon and
Scollon (2003) refer to as **space**, which they define as referring to the “objective, physical dimensions and characteristics of a portion of the Earth or a built locale” (216), in contrast with **place**, a person’s lived experience and/or sense of presence within that space (214). Tapping into the language practices of those who inhabit a physical space can shed light on the ways in which speakers experience their sense of presence in that space. Speakers use aspects of their speech to index their membership in a group (Eckert 2008, Silverstein 2003); which allow them to align themselves with particular geographic communities (Labov 1966), ethnic identities (Rickford & McNair-Knox 1994, Schilling-Estes 2004), and place identities (Becker 2009; Johnstone & Kiesling 2008 and others). By understanding the ways in which these indexical links are drawn on and perpetuated through talk, it is possible to better understand the ways in which speakers orient to particular **ideologies** of place, the conscious and unconscious ideas, goals, and expectations which govern speaker’s understandings of space and community, and the ways in which their own identities are tied to or influenced by those ideologies of place.

Many studies of language and place have looked rather extensively at groups of speakers, and the ways in which they collectively use linguistic variables to index ideologies of place and community membership. I have already discussed several which inform the present work; however, it is useful to revisit at least one as we think about ways in which language features can be used in constructing a place-based identity. Labov's (1966) study of the Lower East Side of Manhattan uncovered linguistic features which indicated both class and ethnoracial affiliation, but also an identity closely tied to place. Of particular salience here is post-vocalic /r/ deletion, a feature historically associated with New York speech. Through elicitation in rapid and anonymous surveys and in different interview tasks designed to elicit different styles, as well as in the results of judgment tasks of speakers producing r-less and r-full pronunciations, Labov
found /r/ deletion to correspond with lower socioeconomic classes and with more casual speaking styles. Thus the indexical field (Eckert 2008) for post-vocalic /r/ deletion at the time of Labov's study might encompass casualness and membership in the working class as well as indexing residency in a particular locale.

These indexical links may shift, however, as a community changes over time. In her revisit to the Lower East Side, Becker (2009) explores the meaning of post-vocalic /r/ deletion forty years after Labov's initial study. In the intervening years, the lower east has become a heavily gentrified and trendy area, home to Greenwich Village and other highly desirable communities in Manhattan. Becker posits that in the face of so much migration to the area and loss of its original residents, /r/ deletion has become a marker of an "authentic lower east side" identity that allows longtime resident speakers to make a linguistic differentiation between themselves and the gentrifying newcomers to the neighborhood.

Thus it is often the case that discourses of place evoke discourses of self, for as one negotiates one’s membership in a particular place-based community, one also identifies with or distances oneself from the character type which may be associated with that community.

In Modan's (2007) exploration of a District of Columbia community, Mount Pleasant, and its residents, she finds that to embody the identity of a Mount Pleasant resident is also to take on an identity of urban, multiethnic cosmopolitanism. Modan argues that talk in and about Mt. Pleasant exhibits fractal recursivity (Irvine & Gal 2000), the concept that the same oppositions which distinguish different groups on larger scales can be found within those same groups, making ever smaller distinctions. In the case of Modan’s work, it is the talk about Mt. Pleasant the community which is a smaller reflection of larger ideologies about the distinctions between urban vs. suburban, white vs. nonwhite, and others. For instance, the suburbs might be conceived
of as private space, whereas the city is conceived as more public. But then within the city neighborhood of Mt. Pleasant, people talk of a public main strip that is opposed to the side streets which are associated with domestic, private activities. The side street can then be divided into the public sidewalk and the private houses, and the houses into their public front stoops versus the inside or the more private back porches (101-102). Thus ideologies which create large-scale delineations continue to be present in the creation of ever smaller distinctions. These ideologies form what Gee (2014) calls the “big D” Discourse of place: individuals’ “ways of being” in the world, the association between ways of thinking, acting, believing, and of course ways of using language, that signify a person’s membership in a social network or a socially significant group. Big-D Discourses of place are, therefore, inextricably linked with discourses of other identities, and therefore are interesting sites to explore the ways in which ideologies of race, class, urban/suburban, and the like become codified in a physical space.

The tie between language practice and these kinds of Discourses of place is common in a number of variation studies. For example Johnstone and Kiesling (2008) explore the social meaning of a particular variable, /aw/ monophthongization as it is applied to the indexing of the identity of “Pittsburgher.” They find that centralized, monophthongized /aw/ is seen as a marker of a Pittsburgher identity, but primarily by those who do not use the variant, while speakers who use the variant do not find it to be a marker of a Pittsburgh identity. This is explained by the context of the variant’s use: for those who use the variant, the vast majority of people in the social networks in which they are enmeshed also use it, so it is not contrasted with the diphthongal variant. For speakers who more readily notice (and consequently don’t use) the variant, however, it has acquired second-order indexical links with working class and incorrectness. Thus the indexical links of the variant are multiple, and not the same for the hearer
and the talker: one may be using a feature that is perceived as being “the way everybody talks” and another may hear “incorrect” and “working class” and, importantly, “localness.”

The indexical links between language and place identity can thus be variably interpreted. In addition, an existing link between a place and a linguistic feature or variety can be used to further differentiate intra-group styles from one another. Gordon (2000) for instance, examines speakers in Calumet, IL (a suburb of Chicago) for elements of the Northern Cities Shift (NCS), comparing measures of NCS features with those of several phonological variables that have been demonstrated by other research to correlate with ethnic identity. He examines 32 female speakers, of white (European descended), African-American, and Mexican descent (he includes both second and third-generation Hispanics in this latter grouping). Looking at three features of the NCS ([æ] shifting, where bag becomes something more like [bɛg], [a] shifting, where father becomes something more like [fæðr̩], and lax-mid vowel shifting, where buses becomes more like [basɨz]), Gordon finds where [æ] shifting does occur with Mexicans and African-Americans, it occurs primarily when it is phonologically conditioned by following nasals, and otherwise rarely occurs, whereas for the white speakers in the study, [æ] shifting is much more common and occurs in a wider variety of phonological environments. Gordon concludes that the NCS, a very place-based phenomenon, is also contributing to furthering phonological distinctiveness between Mexican American, African American, and white speech. Thus a place-associated feature such as the NCS can, through its use or rejection, end up indexing race identity instead.

Studies of the speech of entire communities such as these provide a great deal of information about what kinds of variants are available to be drawn upon by individual speakers in the construction of identities. Yet studies of many speakers within a community which explore macro-level connections between language practice and identities of place and race may
overlook subtleties in the complex negotiation of situating oneself as a particular kind of member of a particular community through one's language practice. Therefore, while the study of variation across groups of speakers helps us understand how ideologies and identities are negotiated at the level of the wider geographic and/or ethnic community, closer examinations of variation within the speech of individual speakers sheds light on exactly how these variables operate in connecting individuals to identities which encompass both race and place.

The multiple meanings which can be expressed through style shifting make intraspeaker variation a rich resource for understanding the kinds of links that speakers may make between themselves as members of particular physical and social communities. In the present study, speakers’ variable recruitment of features of the African American English ethnolinguistic repertoire serves as a locus for exploring the ways in which they index themselves as members of the geographic community of Anacostia, D.C., but within that, negotiate the complex identities of being individuals of a particular ethnicity and class in a neighborhood undergoing rapid change in terms of both of these social factors.
3.1 The usefulness of the sociolinguistic interview

As discussed in the previous chapter, there are a number of aspects of an individual’s speech we might wish to test. For instance, which features vary? Which variants do the speakers use? Are the variables phonological? Morphosyntactic? Do they vary based on co-interlocutor, topic, or just by who the speaker themselves happen to be? And is the important aspect of identity racial, gendered, location based, class based, or something else? Given this, it at first might seem almost impossible to look at each of these things in a manner which is both principled manner, yet also gets at the way in which speakers might use these features in everyday interaction. In an ideal world, perhaps sociolinguists could place microphones on every person we wished to study, so that we could have 24-hour data on every interaction in which they participated in a given day, as well as how their speech is shaped, and how they in turn shape, the speech of their other interlocutors. While some studies have closely approximated this method (Tannen 2007a), for most studies, including this one, such methods are overly tedious, expensive, and likely would result in copious amounts of data that are above and beyond the scope necessary for analysis and go unused anyway. So how do we get relatively naturalistic\textsuperscript{15} data, without compromising our ability to study shifts in speech relating to shifts in speech situation, including stance, topic and audience in a controlled fashion?

\textsuperscript{15} I use the term "naturalistic" in order to evoke the goals of the pioneers of the field when they first honed the sociolinguistic interview, with the full understanding that the question of exactly what is "naturalistic" speech, is not one which can be adequately answered. Further, I note here, and will argue in this study, that we understand speakers to be styling their speech in all interactions (Schilling 2013), and that even if we could record every speaker, every day, what we would ultimately get would not be more and less "natural" speech, but examples of the various ways in which speakers style their speech, in ongoing interaction.
The sociolinguistic interview is the fieldwork tool pioneered by Labov in his earliest studies in Martha's Vineyard (1963) and honed in his work in New York City (1966, 1972b). Its aim is to sidestep the difficulties posed by what Labov terms the "observer's paradox," that is, if we assume that speakers change the nature of their speech when they know their speech is the object of judgment, how is it possible to observe people speaking in the way they speak when they are not being observed?

The sociolinguistic interview is an instrument for gathering large amounts of speech data from a single speaker or a small group of speakers, in a manner which allows the speakers to produce their most naturalistic speech. One hallmark of the sociolinguistic interview is the encouragement of types of discourse not commonly acceptable in a formal interview; for instance, speakers are often encouraged to go on tangents or to otherwise discuss things about which they will talk passionately so that the speaker will focus on the topic at hand and not on how they are speaking. Indeed, some canonical sociolinguistic interview questions, such as Labov's "danger of death" question, are designed precisely to elicit this kind of emotionally-charged speech in hopes of causing the speaker to focus intently on the content of his or her message rather than its delivery.

Another bonus of the sociolinguistic interview is the combination of replicability and flexibility it offers. The interview is typically composed of several "modules," sets of questions which, while leaving each individual speaker free to unselfconsciously expound at length, also provide a means of controlling the content of any given interview and make the results relatively comparable across speakers. In the present study, matching modules were used to provide some measure of control in the results from interviews conducted by two different interviewers across
18 subjects, providing comparable data with regard to topics irrespective of interviewer and speaker.

A broadly applicable, easily replicable methodology such as this is obviously useful in the pursuit of large-scale sociolinguistic studies such as those early studies conducted by Labov, Fasold, Wolfram and others. As discussed in the previous chapter, first-wave studies focused on the nature of differences between large groups, in pursuit of exploring things such as dialect boundaries, the establishment of linguistic descriptions of “nonstandard” dialects, and evidence of language change over time. For these purposes, it made sense that what was needed was an exploration of the ways people talk when speech itself was not what the speakers were attending to. This unselfconscious speech was seen as the locus of the most important data—which indeed, it was for these studies, because it was that unselfconscious, vernacular speech, which was the very object of study.

Since the early days of sociolinguistics, however, the focus of research has broadened. Many linguists (cf. Bell 1984, Eckert 2012, Schilling 2013) would argue that, rather than operating along a single continuum of vernacular to nonvernacular and/or expectations of standardness/nonstandardness which often go along with that, speakers are constantly engaged in the process of styling, using the range of linguistic resources available to them as speakers to display themselves as being part of particular social groups, as being a particular type of person, as holding a particular viewpoint (and being qualified to hold it), as being close to or distant from the person to whom they are speak and more.

Analyzing such usages takes us beyond studies of speakers as defined by externally observable demographic factors (e.g. race, gender, location, or socioeconomic class), and avoids the problem of overly ascribing homogeneity to the speech practices of those groups in order to
compare the practices of the group to the practices of other groups. This shift from large-scale to more locally-situated analysis of the ways speakers are constantly engaged in their own meaning-making through styling their speech is indicative of the move from the first and second waves toward the third wave of variationist study (Eckert 2012). And despite its development for use in such large scale studies, the sociolinguistic interview is equally adept at unearthing these kinds of locally-situated meaning-making. Its replicability via the use of matching modules, and its long history of data mean that it is effective in unearthing the ways in which speakers might shift their styles in response to all the ways in which their speech situation might vary.

In the present study, the sociolinguistic interview was used to study two aspects of the speech of a set of eighteen speakers, and to provide data which is comparable across speakers, across groups of speakers, and within varying topics within the speech of individual speakers. Using this interview data, I examine both quantitatively and qualitatively one phonological variable of African American English, final consonant devoicing, and several AAE morphosyntactic variables, as they are used in the speech of longtime residents of Anacostia, a neighborhood in the Southeast quadrant of Washington, D.C. In the next sections, I discuss the community, the informants, and the variables under study.

3.2 Speakers and Data

The data in this study is part of a larger set of data collected to study speakers and speech patterns in and around Washington, D.C., the Language and Communication in the DC Metropolitan Area (LCDC) project. At the time of this writing, the data includes sociolinguistic interviews with nearly 200 participants, ranging in ages from eighteen to their nineties, who reside in parts of the city and its neighboring suburbs. While the data includes a few speakers
who moved to the metro area in adulthood, the majority of LCDC speakers are lifetime residents of the District.

One severely underrepresented area of the city in the corpus has been the neighborhood of Southeast. This area of the city has also been understudied in previous linguistic studies of Washington D.C. 16 (cf. Fasold 1972 and Wolfram 1974a). At the outset of this study, only one interview of the LCDC corpus was from a resident of the Southeast quadrant.

3.2.1 The Interviewees
Participants in this study were chosen for their representation of the current population of the Anacostia neighborhood of Southeast quadrant, Washington, D.C. One participant, Terra, was interviewed in 2008 as part of the LCDC project; the remainder were interviewed by me and another interviewer, Sinae Lee, during the summer and fall of 2013. Of the 18 participants, 12 are female and 6 are male. As mentioned above, 11 of the speakers were born in, or spent the bulk of their childhoods in Southeast D.C., the remainder are people with strong stake in the community, such as program administrators at a local school and workers at the Anacostia community museum. A full list of speaker pseudonyms, their demographics, their interviewer, and their social networks appears in Appendix I.

Speakers in this study range in age from the twenties to mid-eighties, spanning four generations of residents. Although the gentrification processes taking place in Southeast D.C. are bringing more white residents into the area, the focus of this study is on how African Americans position themselves relative to other African Americans, and so no white speakers are included in the study (and no white speakers from Southeast D.C. exist in the LCDC corpus at present).

16 It should be noted, however, that the demographics of the area were different at the time of the Fasold and Wolfram studies; the Southeast quadrant was a heavily white area at that time and would not have been as conducive to the studies of AAE.”
Three primary locations served as entrée to the community for me and my colleague. The first was the Anacostia Community Museum. The museum belongs to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, and as such, is part of the larger cultural and historical archival projects of the Smithsonian. It is the only museum, however, to exist for the purposes of serving a single neighborhood. By virtue of the racial makeup of Anacostia itself and the museum’s close vicinity to the Frederick Douglass house, situated less than a mile away, the museum has served as a de facto African American culture museum within the Smithsonian museum group, providing a place for African American art and exhibits of interest to African American history to be displayed. Two informants from the study were recruited because of their employment at the museum, Tana and Leona.

The second recruitment site was an elementary school in the neighborhood, which I refer to as “The School.” These interviews were conducted by my colleague, who volunteered there as a homework aide. Nine interviewees were recruited because of their connection to The School: Grey, a teacher’s aide; Jami, a security guard; Justin, the theater teacher; Oliver and Lucy, classroom teachers; Susanne, an administrator; and Chess, an after-school volunteer.

The third recruitment site is a church in the neighborhood, which I refer to as “The Church.” The Church was the first fully African American church of that denomination in Washington, D.C. Many of its members had been members of the church for generations, dating back to its founding in the early 1920s. Four interviewees were recruited through their

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17 In 2015, the Smithsonian will open the National Museum of African American History and Culture on the National Mall, the same location as most of the other notable Smithsonian Institution Museums. What effect this will have on the collections and function of the Anacostia Community Museum remains to be seen.

18 As in most sociolinguistic studies, I follow the convention of pseudonymizing my informants. Thus because the museum itself is identified by name (and would be otherwise identifiable from its description were I to pseudonym it), I omit Tana and Leona’s exact positions at the museum so as to preserve their anonymity.
connection to the Church: Chris, an information systems analyst; Gus, a retired truck driver; Rose, a professor of counseling; and Delores, a retired service industry worker.

Three remaining informants came from other forms of recruitment: Terra, an 18-year-old student who was the only Southeast informant who was part of the LCDC corpus prior to the start of this data collection; and Amy and Vee, relatives of Tana, recruited through the museum. Amy, a homemaker who supplements her social security income with a part-time position through a senior work program is Tana’s godmother, and Vee is Amy’s daughter. Terra was interviewed by another colleague, and Amy and Vee I interviewed myself. As these speakers were not recruited through a single dominant social network, their dominant social network(s) throughout their lives informed the decision about their PC-alignment. In the case of Vee, that was a military network, where she was the wife of an enlisted officer. For Amy, the dominant social network throughout her life has been her family and neighbors in Barry Farm, a low-income housing community in Anacostia, where she worked as a nursery school aide. And in the case of Terra, this was her high school community.

The diversity of sites means that as a part of this study, we include speakers who have different relationships to the community: some have professional positions, some service industry positions; some are schooled in the community or school their children/grandchildren there, some do not. Speakers in different networks allow for comparison between networks of speakers, and also, as will be discussed in section 3.3, an examination of the ways in which network identity contributes to identities related to social class.

3.2.2 The Interviewers

Two interviewers, I and Sinae Lee, conducted all but one of the interviews in this study. Lee is a Korean national and fluent L2 English speaker who emigrated from Korea to the United
States for graduate school. I, on the other hand, am an African American/White biracial born and raised in the Midwest United States. Each interviewer interviewed approximately half of the interviewees, and no interviewee was interviewed by both researchers.

Audience effects in the sociolinguistic interview are a well-documented phenomenon. (Bell 1984, 1999, 2013, Hay, Jannedy & Mendoza-Denton 1999, Rickford & McNair-Knox 1994). However, for the sake of not subdividing the sample too finely, interviews conducted by Lee and interviews I conducted myself have been collapsed for analysis. Knowing, however, that interviewer effects are often measurable, particularly when the interviewers are of two different races, one matching and one not matching the race of the interviewee, interviewer was included as a factor in all statistical models of the data.

### 3.3 Class-based identity

This study attempts to answer some of the questions about middle- and upper-class African American speech. But one of the first problems anyone purporting to examine class encounters is the question of exactly what to use as the criteria to determine a speaker is of a particular class to begin with. Throughout the history of sociolinguistics, this question has been answered in a myriad of ways; I rely here principally on the discussion contained in Ash (2002).

Labov (1966) followed in the footsteps of a large scale sociological study, the Mobilization for Youth program, a publicly funded agency which, having conducted a study of the same area the year before, offered Labov access to extensive demographic data from their collection. (Labov 1966: 102-5) The SES measures which Labov used included three factors—

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19 In my own work (Grieser 2010) I have found that features of AAE will vary based on the race of the interviewer, even holding all other aspects of the interview constant. This corroborates the findings of Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994), who found differences in both Foxy Boston’s willingness to talk on topics as well as her use of AAE features.
employment, education, and income—each with four possible levels. By using a combination of these levels, the MFY calculated an index score for each individual which placed them into varying levels of social class.

Similar composites of SES factors have been used by many which followed in this vein (Shuy, Wolfram and Riley 1968; Fasold 1972, Wolfram 1974a and others) to place speakers into groups, and occasionally some investigators such as Horvath (1985) and Lenning (1978, cited in Ash 2002) have used occupation alone as a stand-in for the whole of SES factors including the few studies which examine class-based differences in speech in the African American community in a meaningful way. (See chapter 1 and 2 for more on this.)

Labov’s more recent (2001) ongoing work on language change in Philadelphia studies which includes six levels each for education, occupation, and the value of the residence in which the speakers live, again, combining these features to arrive at a composite index of social class. One interesting addition, however, is the selection of neighborhoods to reflect a diversity of community types (urban vs. suburban, Irish immigrant vs. Italian immigrant, low vs. high priced houses). These provide a more nuanced and locally-determined measure of class, one which relies more on the ways in which the community defines itself.

However, studies such as Milroy and Milroy (1993) and Dubois and Horvath (1998) have complicated the idea that class can be measured by SES alone. In both these studies, social network was found to have a greater effect on what a speaker was likely to do, compared to even composite measures of SES. Milroy and Milroy, for example, looked at whether speakers moved in open versus closed networks. In a closed network the bulk of a speaker’s first-level network ties (the people whom they know personally) consist within a delimited sphere—they might work in the same place as their network ties, for instance, or they and the bulk of their personal
ties all go to the same church, or both or more. In an open network, by contrast, a speaker’s first-level network ties are often spread out, so that one might go to the same church, one might be an alumnus of the same university, one might share a workplace, and so on. Milroy and Milroy find that speakers in closed networks tend to be more likely to maintain linguistic features common to their group, whereas mobile middle-class speakers in open networks with many weak ties (people with whom they do not have a close relationship reinforced by co-presence in several networks) tend to be important agents of linguistic change.

Dubois and Horvath similarly find that social network is important in considering the maintenance or loss of a feature particular to a community (dh- and th- stopping in Cajun English). Their work shows that closed and open networks must be included in a complete explanation of the ways in which this variable patterns: women with closed networks are much more likely to use the Cajun community [t] and [d] variant, whereas for men, the effect of network is much smaller.

While SES continues to be a strong and valuable predictor to help classify speakers into class, it is also by nature externally defined. Social network theory probes a little deeper into the ways in which communities of speakers divide themselves, allowing for a more emic analysis of the ways in which a given linguistic variable might be functioning within those divided groups. This seems immediately attractive, as speakers can then be classified into groups based on their social networks and the ways in which they define themselves.

However, a fully speaker-determined classification likely is not wholly useful, either. Several studies (Dugan 2012, Shenker-Osorio 2013) show that even in times of economic strife such as the recession of 2008, a majority of Americans consider themselves middle class, even if they might be classified as either upper or lower by SES measures. Over the decades, “working-
“upper-class” and “lower-class” have negative connotations of laziness and lack of self-ambition which most Americans tend to shy away from. Similarly, speakers are unlikely to classify themselves as upper class, as this often connotes disdain or superiority.

This self-identification problem is further complicated for the present study by the nature of the economy during the time these interviews were conducted. Since the recession of 2008, a number of speakers of middle- and higher SES have experienced job loss or layoffs; this was especially common in the Washington D.C. area for those whose work was on contract—although people who worked directly for the government generally could count on job safety, people whose work was dependent on contracts often found that the government cut their contracts to save money and found themselves out of work. Many of these employees took the time (and the unemployment benefits) to pursue degree certificates and the like. But how does one categorize a participant who may have made $70,000 last year, but is making $20,000 this year? Are they no longer an upper-class speaker, since SES measures would indicate that their earnings place them out of that category?

It seems that the most useful measures of class, then, are multifaceted, relying as much on the externally-measurable factors of income, occupation, education, and possibly housing, as they do on the speaker’s own social network and the ways in which the speaker classifies him or herself. For these reasons, this study takes a more flexible approach to categorizing speakers according to class. In an attempt to acknowledge these three confounding issues—that social network, rather than SES alone, provides the better explanation for speaker behavior; that current income alone does not capture where a person has been or where they may be going, and that Americans who are neither in extreme poverty nor in possession of extraordinary wealth are not
likely to apply a label other than "middle" to themselves—this study considers class as a function of alignment.

Alignment is a term borrowed from sociology and is reflective of whether or not two interactants view themselves as accepting a particular definition of a situation. For instance, two interactants who see themselves as both pursuing the same goal could be said to be aligned. In this study, this acceptance of the definition of the situation is that of a speaker affiliating with the professional class; through their occupation, yes, but also through their social network and the way they describe themselves. Beginning with a speaker’s occupation and education, and continuing to their network, and then to the ways in which they describe themselves, the speakers in this study are thus classified as professional-class-aligned (PC-aligned or PCA) and professional-class-nonaligned (PC-nonaligned or PCN). For instance, a speaker who is college-educated, working in a non-service industry job (such as education or administration) with a social network consisting mostly of other professional-class people would be classified as professional-class aligned. Similarly, a speaker with a military background, no college education, but who holds a high-ranking government job and whose network and self-identification is as professional would similarly be classified as PC-aligned. In this way, alignment is determined by all facets of class identity: defined by the researcher, by the speaker’s community, and by the speaker him or herself.

Of the 18 speakers in the study, 11 speakers, 7 women and 4 men are classified as PC-aligned, and 7 speakers, 4 women and 3 men are PC-nonaligned.
This chapter explores the function of a particular phonological feature, final stop devoicing, and its apparent emergence as a feature that is particularly common to Professional-Class-aligned African American speakers. On the surface, the use by professional class speakers of a feature typically thought to be associated with vernacular African American styles might seem to be an contradiction, as most studies of middle- and upper-class African Americans find that features of African American Vernacular English are generally not used widely by PC-aligned African Americans (Rahman 2008, Taylor 1971). In this chapter I examine the linguistic and social patterning of this variable, and argue that its patterning in the present data makes sense because of the particular social meanings associated with features similar to final stop devoicing.

4.1 Studies of Stop Devoicing and Similar Phenomena

In studying final consonant devoicing it is useful to look at studies of some similar phonological phenomena in several varieties of English. One such feature is coronal stop deletion (CSD), the glottaling or complete deletion of [t] or [d] in word-final position. CSD is a well-documented feature of many varieties of English, including Mainstream US English, (Guy 1975, Guy & Boberg 1997), British English (Tagliamonte & Temple 2005), New Zealand English (Guy, Hay & Walker 2008), and Appalachian English (Hazen 2011). It is one of the most studied phonological variables in English, and is widely believed to occur to some degree in every variety (Tagliamonte 2011). Coronal stop deletion has also been a long-studied feature of AAE, documented in populations in Detroit (Wolfram 1969) New York (Labov 1968) and Washington, D.C. (Fasold 1972) in some of the earliest studies in the subdiscipline.
These and other studies have found a number of phonological and morphological factors which condition CSD. As with many phonological variables, CSD is conditioned by its preceding and following phonological environment, with both environments predicting deletion or retention of the stop based somewhat on the sonority of the segment in question.

The degree to which the preceding phonological segment conditions CSD varies by the variety of English; Labov (1989) finds it to be a relative weak predictor of CSD in speakers of AAE, while Santa Ana (1996) finds preceding environment to condition CSD more strongly than following segment and as strong as morphological class in Chicano English. Overall, studies have shown that less sonorant segments favor deletion and more sonorous segments disfavor it.

For most varieties of English, however, it is the following rather than preceding segment which has the strongest effect on the retention or deletion of the coronal stop (Tagliamonte 2011). As with preceding phonological environment, the conditioning is related to the sonority of the segment; that is, a following obstruent will favor deletion, while a following sonorant will disfavor it, roughly in relation to the sonority of the segment. Nasals, for instance, pattern more closely with obstruents in predicting deletion, while vowels predict retention.

African American English varieties, however, pattern somewhat differently with respect to the effects of following segment. For speakers of most varieties of English, a following consonant favors CSD, as in [wɛs.said] for ‘west side’), African American English, differs from other varieties in that CSD is also favored when the stop is followed by a vocalic segment, so that [col.ɛɡ] is permissible for cold egg. Pauses pattern with the more sonorous segments, conditioning some of the least deletion in most studies. (Tagliamonte 2011)
In addition to the phonological context, morphological status of the word has also been seen to condition CSD. For instance, Guy (1975) and Guy and Boyd (1990) document that CSD is more likely to occur if the word is a monomorpheme or a bare root (*toad*), and that it is less likely to occur if the final coronal stop is part of the weak (*toured*) or semiweak past tense (*told*). This is likely in part because of the surface similarity of the form of the past tense; toured realized with a deleted stop as *[tur]* is identical to the present tense tour.

CSD studies provide a useful starting point for exploring final consonant devoicing in part because in many instances, the same sound is involved: the voiced coronal stop *[d]* is the most common voiced final stop in English (Mines, Hanson & Shoup 1978), and accounts for over 97% of final consonant tokens in the 18-speaker sample analyzed here. Thus many of the same features which affect the deletion or retention of a final coronal stop might also predict the likelihood of final consonant devoicing as well. In fact, the processes themselves seem to be related: in the case of CSD, the deletion is a lenition process and so retention of the stop maintains the existing, unweakened phone. Final consonant devoicing pushes this continuum further, not only retaining the final voiced coronal stop but also strengthening it by virtue of making it a less sonorous segment.

Like CSD, final consonant devoicing is a well-documented feature of AAE. It is noted in several early studies (Fasold 1972, Wolfram 1969), in inventories of AAE features such as the one constructed by Rickford (1999) or Thomas (2007), and in more recent studies such as Farrington (2011) and Koops and Niedzielski (2009). Historically, and with the exception of these last two studies cited, explorations of final consonant devoicing have occurred in a manner which treats the variable in question as categorical, for example, *[d]* versus *[t]*. Historically, this has been in part due to lack of availability of instrumentation—it has only been in the last two
decades that more sophisticated methods of acoustic analysis such as PRAAT (Boersma & Weenink 2010) have become easily accessible to any linguist with a computer, allowing a greater number of linguists to easily measure and evaluate features along continua. This practice applies very naturally to vowels, where formant frequency measures provide a ready site for performing analysis along continua. For consonants, however, no similarly uniform and ready continuous measure exists—while one might measure voicing within a stop, not all stops are voiced, or while one might measure length of release bursts, not all consonants could be expected to have one. The readiness and comparability of formant measures has meant that most studies treating phonological variables as continuous have been vowel studies.

More recent work in sociolinguistics such as Thomas (2011) and Docherty and Foulkes (2005), has called for analysis of consonantal variables along continua in the same manner as vowels are often studied. Particularly with consonants, we encounter the problem of what Pierrehumbert (2001) terms the perceptual cloud, that is, we hear a discrete variable even though acoustically speaking, sound is produced along a continuum. Most analyses of stop consonants, therefore, treat the variable as categorical—realized, unrealized, and sometimes, glottalized.20

Craig and Washington (2005), in a study of African American schoolchildren in metropolitan Detroit, Michigan, find that children devoice final consonants in spontaneous speech tasks, but not in reading. They suggest that this provides evidence that this feature is one of some perceptual salience, and available to be used in style shifting. However, other evidence suggests that the feature is fixed over time, a question Farrington (2011) addresses to answer in

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his examination of longitudinal data from the Frank Porter Graham corpus (cf. Van Hofwegen & Wolfram 2010).

The FPC corpus is the result of a seventeen-year study in which connected speech data was obtained from over 60\textsuperscript{21} African American children, studied from late infancy to late teens. Data gathering for the corpus took place throughout the children’s toddlerhoods, childhoods, and adolescence, and contained both informal situations such as playing with a caregiver or talking with a peer, and more formal interviewer-led question-and-answer style interviews. Matching data points of interviews done with each subject at grades 1, 4, 6, 8, and 10 allows researchers to compare features across the subjects’ data and across real-time. In his study of devoicing, both longitudinally within a given speaker’s speech over time, and across several speakers’ speech at a given point in time, Farrington finds that neither group-based nor age-based patterning accounts for the majority of variation in his data. Although measures were taken at multiple points throughout the same speakers' childhoods and adolescence, there is little statistically significant difference within each speaker’s use of the feature across their age span—the speakers who use it more as children use it more as adolescents and vice versa, independent of context in which the speech was produced and independent of the speaker’s mobility between different peer groups. This runs counter to what we might expect if the feature is associated with vernacular performance. For instance, if we think back to another comparison study discussed in Chapter 2, Foxy Boston (Rickford & McNair-Knox 1994, Rickford & Price 2013) shows some of her highest use of several of the morphosyntactic AAE variables under study in her teen years, particularly in certain situations, such as the interviews conducted with the African American

\textsuperscript{21} 88 children entered the study in 1990 at an average age of 8.1 months, and all aged 12 months or under. Of the 88, 70 remained in the study after the first year, and 67 remained for the full 17 years of the project. (Van Hofwegen & Wolfram 2010)
researcher’s young daughter present. For the speakers in Farrington’s study, such an age-based change does not seem to exist (although there is some evidence of audience effect, see below).

What variation does occur Farrington attributes to phonological environment, where similarly to CSD, a following vowel predicts the more salient realization of a devoiced stop (as it predicts retention of the stop in CSD) and a following consonant predicts glottalizing or retention of voicing. He also attributes some intra-speaker variation to accommodation and audience design (Bell 1984, 1999), particularly with younger speakers who are likely to accommodate to a parent or caregiver who does (or doesn’t) devoice. Farrington reaches conclusions similar to those of other studies of AAE final consonant devoicing, such as Roberts (2006), Eddington & Taylor (2009) and Nguyen (2006), though counter to those of Craig and Washington (2005). He argues that as final consonant devoicing is not a feature that speakers lose over time as they become aware of dialect differences, and is also not a feature which varies based on context (such as reading context versus conversation context), this lack of variability gives evidence that consonant devoicing is a feature that speakers are not particularly aware of, and that this lack of awareness suggests it is likely not very socially stigmatized, particularly compared to other features of AAE. Thus on the one hand, the variable has been seen to vary stylistically (Craig and Washington 2005), and on the other, to be relatively stable within a speaker’s overall speech (Farrington 2011). What this suggests is that it is a feature which speakers are on some level aware, recruiting it variably in style-shifting, and yet it is not a feature which declines in use over the early lifespan, behaving differently from other stigmatized (and overtly commented upon) features of African American English.

That this variable does not seem to be socially stigmatized, and yet is actively used in style-shifting is important to the present study. A lack of social stigmatization may allow a
feature to be used by those who might otherwise not use a feature of a stigmatized dialect such as AAE. In addition, as Craig and Washington (2005) conclude, the present data suggest that final consonant devoicing shows stylistic variation, indicating that it is not without social meaning. In the following sections, I provide a quantitative analysis of final consonant devoicing, operationalized as a function of mean voice offset time or VOtt and argue that this feature does important work in allowing the professional-class-aligned speakers in this study to index their class identity in a way that also is distinctly African American.

4.2 Procedure

4.2.1 Coding procedure and measurement of VOtt
For the purposes of this study, final consonant devoicing is operationalized as a function of the length of time voicing continues from the previous segment into the stop closure, similar to that used to measure voice onset time, or VOT. VOT is an acoustic measure of when voicing pulses begin within a given word-initial segment. Studies have shown that VOT significantly affects the perception of a segment as voiced or unvoiced; and that, rather than perception of voicing being continuous, with segments with longer VOT being progressively more and more likely to be considered voiced, in fact there is a "cliff" in that perception at approximately 20ms: segments in which the voicing pulses begin within 20-30ms of the closure (in English) are almost uniformly considered voiced, regardless of VOT length, and segments in which the voicing pulses begin 40ms or later are almost uniformly considered to be voiceless (Cooper et al. 2005, Liberman, Delattre & Cooper 1958). A representation of these findings from Clark, Yallop, and Fletcher (1995) is reproduced in Figure Error! Reference source not found.6 elow; notice the sharp change in perception at 40 milliseconds.
This study takes the methodology of measuring voice onset time and uses it to analyze the final, rather than the initial, segment of a word. Where the word-final stop can be predicted to be underlying voiced (by the voicing of the preceding segment, if it is a final past-tense morpheme, or by the word itself), the segment is measured for the duration for which the voicing pulses continue into the stop. I will refer to this as voice offset time or VOffT. The measure of VOffT provides a continuous measurement, making a distinction from earlier studies such as Farrington (2011) and Nyguen (2006) who have examined the variable as consisting of discrete categories.
If voicing is produced on a continuum, as discussed in the previous paragraphs, but perceived categorically, what is the benefit of measuring it any other way? Erker (2012) points out that correlations between linguistic features and social factors can be found at all levels of phonetic and phonological structure, not merely at the levels of phonemic distinction. Studying only the distinctions where listeners discern different phonemes may obscure patterning which occurs at these other levels. Similarly, Strand (1999) in a study where listeners are asked to distinguish between /s/ and /ʃ/ among a series of artificially produced tokens where the frication noise was increased along a continuum, find that while speakers do make a categorical distinction between /s/ and /ʃ/, they do not do so uniformly: gender of the speaker has a significant effect on the amount of frication noise which must exist in the signal before the listener will consider the token in the /ʃ/ category, with male voices perceived to be producing /ʃ/ at a significantly lower amount of frication than women’s voices. These results point to some problems with a simple categorization: one could imagine that were one conducting a sociolinguistic study of how speakers use /s/ versus /ʃ/, the coder might make the distinction between /s/ and /ʃ/ differently for different speakers. Further, the social pattern itself is not evident unless one considers the frication noise along a continuum to begin with: it is the continuous measure which reveals the different cutoffs based on gender.

A continuous measure, therefore, allows us to explore patterns which might otherwise be less observable, and to describe those patterns to a greater degree of specificity.

4.2.1.1 Identification of Segments

To aid in the identification of the word-final voiced segments under study, each interview was transcribed and then the transcriptions and audio were input into the Forced Alignment and Vowel Extraction (FAVE) suite (Rosenfelder et al. 2011). FAVE was developed at the
University of Pennsylvania as part of the research project "Automatic Alignment and Analysis of Linguistic Change," (NSF grant 921643 to W. Labov) to study in more detail both new and old data from the Philadelphia Neighborhood Corpus. It includes both FAVE-align, which auto-segments transcribed data, and FAVE-extract, which extracts vowel formant measurements from segments classified as vowels. As the present study only examines consonant and morphosyntactic data, only the FAVE-align module was used.

The auto-segmented text grid was analyzed in PRAAT (Boersma & Weenink 2010) and used to aid in the initial identification of the segmental boundaries of all word-final voiced stops [b, g, d] for analysis. The researcher then hand checked and corrected segment boundaries. Examining the spectogram and the auto-segmented text grid revealed that the auto-segmenter Tokens identified as incorrect, either segments which were not stops or segments where the segment boundaries did not align with the stop in the spectogram, were re-segmented by hand.

Analysis of VOffT was conducted using spectrographic analysis in PRAAT (Boersma & Weenink 2010). Each word-final voiced segment was measured for length of time in which voicing pulses continued into the segment to determine its VOffT. This was done using both the “show pulses” option in PRAAT, which visibly marks with blue bars in the waveform the voicing pulses which PRAAT automatically measures in the signal, but also supplemented with visual inspection of the voicing bar in the spectogram, which shows in the spectrograph the striations produced by glottal pulses during a voiced segment. These two spectographic representations of voicing are indicated in Figure 7 below (reproduced from the Praat beginners manual). Further evidence for voicing in the spectogram was gleaned from the presence or absence of an automatic measurement of pitch, represented in the figure by the blue lines across segments in the spectrograph.
Where the voicing was unclear from the spectogram alone, I also examined the tokens aurally. Likewise, where PRAAT’s synthetic voicing analysis failed to indicate the presence of voicing, but pulses were evident in the spectrogram and the stop was audibly voiced, the part of the segment in which pulses could be identified was coded as voiced. In this way each of the included tokens was coded for VOffT measurement by hand; although automatic identification of segment boundaries and voicing pulses sped the coding, ultimately, each token was checked by the researcher before its coding was recorded.

A number of tokens were excluded from analysis from each interview, following a few main guidelines. Segments were not analyzed if:

1. They were produced in non-modal phonation (creak or whisper)
2. They were part of a geminate spanning word boundaries (e.g. 'thousand-dollar')
3. Their carrier word had already occurred five times in the interview. Because this study treats words as a random variable, however, and is concerned with how people speak differently based on their topic of speech, homonyms (heard vs. herd) and compounds (outside vs. side) were treated as unique words in counting toward the total.

This coding and these criteria for exclusion ultimately resulted in a total of 3,152 tokens across 18 interviews: 3034 tokens of underlying final [d], 67 tokens of underlying final [g], and 51 tokens of underlying final [b].

Finally, the duration of voicing pulses were compared to the full duration of the stop. The measurement of the voicing pulses duration was made in a text grid tier adjacent to the tier in which FAVE segmented the stream as a separate segmentation; the beginning of the stop closure, and the end of identifiable voicing pulses, following the identification procedure discussed above. Both the stop duration and the voicing durations were measured via script, and the final measure of VOffT was recorded as percentage of the stop duration. A higher number for VOffT corresponds to a greater percentage of the stop being realized as voiced, and a lower measure of VOffT indicates the more devoiced realizations. Statistical analysis looks at a dependent variable of length of VOffT, with an eye toward which factors (independent variables) have a negative effect on that measure; that is, which ones result in shorter VOffT measure and thus, more devoicing.

4.2.2 Statistical Method

This study considers a total of ten factors affecting VOffT. Six are linguistic factors: identity of the stop, morphological status of the word, preceding phonological segment, following phonological segment, stress, and the word (treated as a random effect). Four factors
are social factors: speaker gender, speaker age, professional class alignment, and the speakers themselves (treated as a random effect).

4.2.2.1 Linguistic Factors

Stop Identity

As discussed in section 4.1, word-final voiced stops in English are not in any way evenly distributed. In fact, only a handful of common words end in a voiced stop that is anything other than coronal. This pattern is very evident in the data in this study; of the 3152 word-final voiced stops in this data set over 3000 (97%) are coronal stops. This in part due to English morphology as the simple past tense morpheme |D| is realized as [d] when it follows a [+voice] segment and as [ɪd] when following a [+coronal] segment. This morphophonemic aspect of English makes the coronal voiced stop significantly more prevalent than any other voiced final stop in any given set of speech. For that reason a number of studies of final stop devoicing have excluded the effects of non-coronal voiced stops from their data. The benefits of variable rules, however, rest on their ability to account for all of the data in the model, even with distributions that are uneven due to patterning within the language being spoken (cf. Tagliamonte 2006, Johnson 2009). Thus for the sake of completeness of the analysis at hand, all stops were analyzed using the same exclusion criteria explained in section 4.2.1, which allows for the underlying identity of the stop to be considered as one of the possible factors affecting the model.

Three levels are analyzed for the stop identity factor, /b/, /d/, and /g/.

Morphological Status

As discussed in section 4.1, coronal stop deletion is in part predicted by the morphological status of the word, with monomorphemes (mist, pact) being the strongest
predictors of coronal stop deletion, followed by past tense semiweak verbs (*told, kept*), and with weak past tense (*missed, packed*) showing the lowest levels of deletion.

In order to examine whether final consonant devoicing patterns similarly to CSD, three levels were coded for morphological status: monomorpheme (M), semiweak (S), and weak past tense (W).

**Phonological Context**

Both preceding and following phonological context were considered as separate factors in the analysis. Each token was coded for the preceding and following segment, 22 and then using the entire coding, which consisted of 25 levels for the preceding context factor [k t u m n g o e b ɹ a l e a o æ i r v ɔ o ɪ z ʃ dʒ] and 32 levels for following context factor [i v m n g ə z r j ʃ w b ɹ h ɹ c a e a ɹ s d ʃ æ p f k t o f ə].

Figure 8 shows the average VOoffT based on each preceding segment, and Figure 9 shows the average VOoffT for preceding segments. Because in CSD studies, sonority has been shown to predict deletion, the segments are arranged by roughly descending sonority, with vowels on the left, and stops on the right. A linear trend line is fit to each graph.

---

22 The segments were coded using the output of the FAVE align suite, which uses the Advanced Research Projects Agency’s ARPAbet. ARPAbet is a system which represents phones with one- or two-letter alphabetic codes rather than the international phonetic alphabet. For instance, the diphthong [ai] is represented as AY, and the sound [dʒ] is represented as JH. This coding makes phonetic transcription machine readable and writable, and thus is the output provided by the FAVE suite. These ARPAbet symbols appear in the data graph below, and a full list of ARPAbet symbols and their corresponding international phonetic alphabet symbols are given in Appendix 1.
Figure 8 Preceding Context
The trend lines show a decrease in VOffT (that is, more devoicing) as the sonority of the preceding and following segments decrease, however, within each category of segments (vowels, liquids, fricatives, stops) there is considerable variation. For this reason, the analysis follows the tradition of CSD studies in collapsing the 28 levels for preceding context and 38 levels for following context into the levels vowel (V), consonant (B), and pause (#).\textsuperscript{23}

*Stress*

Although morphological status gives some indication as to the variable’s patterning with regard to syllable structure, whether or not the variable is conditioned by stress is examined in

\textsuperscript{23} For following context only.
order to explore the possible phonological explanations for the ways this variable patterns. If we hypothesize that FCD is similar to the retention of coronal stops, then we would expect that as a fortition process, it would occur more often in stressed syllables than in unstressed.

This factor contains two levels; one, that the final voiced stop occurs in a stressed syllable (e.g. beside [be. said]) or it occurs in an unstressed syllable (e.g. decided [do.ˈsaid.id]).

*Proper noun*

The model accounts for whether or not the feature occurs in a word which is a proper noun. If it is the case that devoicing is analogous, but opposite, to the lenition process of coronal stop deletion, the expectation is that it would be less likely to occur in proper nouns, which are infrequent and specific to the topic at hand. These topic-specific proper nouns might also give some information about the use of devoicing within a particular topic. This factor was coded with two levels: (Y)es, the word is a proper noun, or (N)o the word is not a proper noun.

*Topic*

The final linguistic constraint considered is at the level of discourse, and that is of topic. The method by which topic was analyzed and coded is outlined in detail Chapter 5. Briefly, intonation units were coded for the topic under discussion as introduced by the interviewer or as speaker-initiated topics. These were then collapsed into similar broader categories, ultimately resulting in five which were considered in the regression analysis (more finely-grained distinctions were preserved for the analysis of AAE morphosyntactic features in chapter 5): race (RC), language (LG), Southeast and, the District (DC), gentrification and neighborhood change (CH), work and education (WK), and other/personal topics (PH).
4.2.2.2 Social Factors

This study considers four social factors in addition to the five linguistic factors above: gender, age, professional class alignment, and individual speaker as a random effect.

**Gender**

Of the eighteen participants in this study, twelve are women and six are men. Gender is analyzed as a two-level factor, male (M) and female (F).

**Age**

Speakers were coded individually for age. An analysis of VOffT measure related to age produces the chart below, with PC-aligned speakers marked with a diamond and PC-nonaligned speakers marked with a square.

![Figure 10 PC-alignment and Age](image-url)
The chart gives us some indication of two related issues: one, that there is slightly less devoicing among older speakers, represented by their longer VOfrT measures; and two, that younger speakers seem to be slightly more likely to be PC-aligned. This suggests some degree of collinearity in the data. Because there are not sharp divides in the age data, age was treated as a continuous factor, and age * PC-alignment was treated as a partial interaction (evaluated both as separate factors and together).

*Interviewer*

Interviewer was considered as a factor with two levels, African American (for interviews conducted by myself) and Not African American. As the one interview, Terra, collected as part of the broader LCDC project prior to the remainder of data collection for this project was collected by a non African American student, it was grouped with those interviews conducted by my colleague, Sinae Lee in the Not African American category.

*Professional class alignment*

At the core of this study is the question of the different ways of speaking available to the African American speakers in this gentrifying neighborhood, and the ways in which these ways of speaking intersect with various parts of a multifaceted identity. What does it mean to speak as a professional class speaker who is also a Black speaker? What does it mean to speak as a service industry speaker, and also as a Black speaker? To this end, we have to pay very careful attention to the ways class identity intersects with racial identity, and the ways this intersectional identity is indexed linguistically.

Subjects were broken into PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned according to the criteria described in chapter 3. To briefly recap, in order to best capture the fluidity of class identity in a way that strict socioeconomic measures like income and education cannot, this study uses
demographic information as well as personal history speakers volunteered during their interviews to place speakers into two categories: the professional-class-aligned; those whose work, home life, and educational experience put them in positions where they mostly interact with and see themselves as peers to people in non-service industry, professional careers, and the professional class nonaligned—those whose lives place them in positions where they mostly interact with and see themselves as peers to people in service industry careers.

11 of the 18 participants are classified as PC-aligned, and 7 are classified as PC-nonaligned. This factor is coded as PC-aligned (Y) or PC-nonaligned (N).

Speaker

To control for the effect of individual speakers, each speaker was considered as a random effect in the model.

4.3 Hypotheses

The statistical analysis tests two primary hypotheses, stemming from the above discussion.

1. If it is the case that final consonant devoicing (FCD) is the result of a process similar to, but opposite from coronal stop deletion (CSD), we would expect that those factors which predict CSD would disfavor FCD and vice versa. Specifically, with regard to morphemic status, we would expect that monomorphemes, which predict deletion, would similarly predict the absence of FCD, whereas weak and semiweak verbs, which disfavor deletion would predict FCD. Similarly, we would expect that following consonants, which predict CSD, would disfavor FCD, whereas following vowels and following pauses, which disfavor CSD, would favor FCD.
Following the results of Labov (1989), preceding phonological segment is not predicted to have a significant effect in a dataset comprised of AAE speakers.

2. Following the results of Farrington (2011), speaker individuation, rather than social factors is expected to have the largest effect on the model. The greatest variation for FCD is predicted to be intraspeaker variation rather than interspeaker or intergroup variation.

Given hypothesis 2, it is then the mission of this study to investigate whether FCD is available to the speakers in this dataset as a stylistic resource; that is, whether or not speakers’ individual use of this variable varies predictably in an observable way.

4.4 Results

A mixed effects regression model serves as the foundation for the results reported here and discussed below. It includes the five linguistic factors and three social factors discussed in section 4.2 treated as fixed effects, and with the addition of word as a random effect in the linguistic factors, and speaker as a random effect in the social factors. Three interaction groups are included in the regression model; age * professional class alignment, gender * professional class alignment, and gender * age. The results of a mixed-effects step up/stepdown regression considering all ten factors are displayed below, split into Table 2 (social factors) and Table 3 (linguistic factors). Each factor is then discussed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 Social Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewer (ns)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (ns)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

103
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>coef</th>
<th>tokens</th>
<th>mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>0.115</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>-0.115</td>
<td>2190</td>
<td>0.644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PC-alignment (ns)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (ns)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>coef</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Speaker (random effect)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>tokens</th>
<th>mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>intercept</td>
<td>3152</td>
<td>0.628</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Interaction: Gender and PC-Alignment (ns)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>coef</th>
<th>tokens</th>
<th>mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F:N</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>0.746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M:Y</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>0.547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F:Y</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>1569</td>
<td>0.604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M:N</td>
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<td>576</td>
<td>0.619</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Interaction: Age and Gender (ns)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>coef</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F:+1</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M:+1</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interaction: PC-alignment and age (ns)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>coef</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y:+1</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N:+1</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant at p < 0.05
ns = not significant

---

**Table 3 Linguistic Factors**

**Identity of the stop**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>coef</th>
<th>tokens</th>
<th>mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/d/</td>
<td>0.117</td>
<td>3034</td>
<td>0.635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/g/</td>
<td>-0.012</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0.492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/b/</td>
<td>-0.105</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0.389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Preceding context (ns)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>coef</th>
<th>tokens</th>
<th>mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Coef</td>
<td>Tokens</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consonant</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>1399</td>
<td>0.627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vowel</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
<td>1753</td>
<td>0.628</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Following context***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Coef</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vowel</td>
<td>0.102</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>0.697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consonant</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>1739</td>
<td>0.643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pause</td>
<td>-0.148</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>0.457</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stress (ns)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Coef</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>unstressed</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>0.635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stressed</td>
<td>-0.024</td>
<td>2486</td>
<td>0.626</td>
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</table>

**morphological status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Coef</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>semiweak</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monomorpheme</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>2068</td>
<td>0.656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weak</td>
<td>-0.082</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>0.557</td>
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**Topic (ns)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Coef</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker initiated</td>
<td>0.293</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0.705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood change</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>0.624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The district</td>
<td>-0.025</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>0.679</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal History</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>0.627</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work and Education</td>
<td>-0.042</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>0.628</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>-0.047</td>
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<td>0.607</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>-0.054</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>0.579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>-0.064</td>
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<td>0.564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-0.117</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0.598</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proper noun (ns)</th>
<th>Coef</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>3042</td>
<td>0.628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>110</td>
<td>0.631</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Word (random)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intercept</th>
<th>Coef</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.086</td>
<td>3152</td>
<td>0.628</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant at p < 0.05
** significant at p < 0.01
*** significant at p <0.001
ns = not significant
4.4.1 Linguistic Factors

Each linguistic factor is explained below; first the three statistically significant factors, and then those which do not have a statistically significant effect on the model.

Identity of the stop. As discussed in section 4.2, this study does not follow the convention of excluding non-coronal voiced stops. Stop identity turns out to have a significant effect (p < 0.01) on final consonant devoicing (FCD). The positive direction of the coefficient shows that [d] stops have a higher likelihood of a longer VOffT (more voiced), and [b] stops have a higher likelihood of a shorter VOffT (less voiced).

Morphological status. Morphological status has a significant effect on FCD (p < 0.01). Semiweak verbs and contractions predict more devoicing, and monomorphemes and weak verbs predict more voicing.

Following context. The following segment also has a significant effect on FCD (p < 0.001). A following vowel predicts the least devoicing, with a following consonant slightly favoring devoicing, and a following pause predicting the most devoicing (shortest VOffT measures).

Stress. Stressed syllables are slightly more likely to exhibit devoicing than are unstressed syllables, with a coefficient of -0.024. The effect is not statistically significant.

Preceding context. The coefficient of the preceding context indicates that a preceding vowel slightly conditions devoicing. The effect, however, is not statistically significant.

Proper noun. Proper nouns, with a coefficient of -0.012, slightly predict shorter VOffT measures. The effect is not statistically significant.
4.4.1.1 Topic
One discourse factor, topic, is considered in the model. This is not significant in the full model.

4.4.2 Social Factors
The only social factor which emerges as significant in the full mixed effects model is the random effect of individual speaker. I discuss this and its implications for the overall interpretation of this variable in the discussion. Reported here are the results of the statistically insignificant factors.

Professional Class alignment. PC-Alignment has the largest effect of the social factors, and nearly as large an effect (+/- 0.141) as does the identity of the stop (although PC-Alignment is not significant in the model). PC-Alignment has a negative effect on mean VOffT, in other words, PC-aligned speakers are more likely to devoice.

Gender. Gender also has a relatively large effect (+/- 0.115). The direction indicates that women in the sample are more likely to exhibit less-voiced variables than are the men.

Age. Age, considered as a continuous factor, has a very small positive effect on VOffT, older speakers have longer VOffT means/are less likely to devoice than younger speakers. This small effect is as would be expected by the gradual slope of the line in Figure 10.

4.5 Discussion
4.5.1 Coronal stop deletion and Final Consonant devoicing
The first hypothesis suggests that if we predict that coronal stop deletion (CSD) and final consonant devoicing (FCD) are similar, albeit opposite, processes, then we would expect the following: that monomorphemes, which favor CSD, would similarly favor a weaker final segment and thus disfavor devoicing, and weak and semiweak verbs which disfavor CSD, would
favor a stronger final segment and thus favor FCD. Similarly, we would predict that following vowels and pauses, which disfavor CSD, would favor FCD, and following consonants, which favor CSD, will disfavor FCD.

The data mostly bears this out, with a few exceptions. Table 4 summarizes the predictions made by studies of CSD, and Tables 5 and 6 show the results from the stepwise regression reported in section 4.4, broken into their own tables apart from the rest of the data.

### Table 4 CSD Predictions for FCD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSD</th>
<th>FCD prediction</th>
<th>FCD actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>monomorpheme</td>
<td>favors</td>
<td>less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weak verb</td>
<td>disfavors</td>
<td>more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semiweak verb</td>
<td>disfavors</td>
<td>more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>following vowel</td>
<td>disfavors</td>
<td>more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>following pause</td>
<td>disfavors</td>
<td>more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>following consonant</td>
<td>disfavors</td>
<td>less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5 Morphemic Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>morphological status (p &lt; 0.01)</th>
<th>coefficient</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>mean VOffT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>semiweak</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monomorpheme</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>2068</td>
<td>0.656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weak</td>
<td>-0.082</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>0.557</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6 Following Phonological Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Following context (p &lt; 0.001)</th>
<th>coef</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>mean VOffT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vowel</td>
<td>0.102</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>0.697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consonant</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>1739</td>
<td>0.643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pause</td>
<td>0.148</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>0.457</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recall that the coefficient for a continuous variable in RBrul gives the direction and size of the effect, much as does a factor weight in VARBRUL or Goldvarb. Looking at the directionality in this way, we can see that semiweak verbs have the largest effect in predicting

---

24 RBrul transforms coefficients to have values between -1 and 1 so that they produce results which are comparable with factor weights generated by VARBRUL and Goldvarb. This allows direct comparison between continuous-variable studies with older studies of the same variable, which, due to the limitations of the statistical software used at the time, could not treat the variable as continuous.
more voicing, whereas monomorphemes also predict voicing but to a lesser degree. Weak verbs are the only level which significantly predict devoicing, and have the shortest mean VOffT by almost 10%, with a mean of 55.7% of the stop closure realized as voiced versus a mean of 65.6% for monomorphemes. Similarly, pauses are the only level of the following context factor which significantly predict devoicing, and with their average VOffT being almost 20% less than following consonants. Two predictors, therefore, behave differently than we would expect if the same factors which explain CSD explain FCD. They are the class of semiweak verbs, and following vowels.

4.5.1.1 Semiweak verbs

The semiweak verbs present an interesting case for this data. Studies of CSD have shown that semiweak verbs are the second-highest predictor of final consonant devoicing, behind monomorphemes and ahead of weak verbs. We would, therefore, expect them to be the second-weakest predictor of consonant devoicing. However, they turn out to have the largest positive effect on VOffT, with the longest mean VOffT of the three statuses.

Guy and Boyd (1990) argue that semiweak verbs pattern as they do with regard to CSD because of the speaker’s understanding of the words’ grammar: that despite their surface form appearing more similar to a monomorpheme, their analysis is still [root] + [past tense]. It is the past tense which then gets marked phonologically via the disfavoring of CSD; semiweak verbs behave more like their weak verb counterparts, where the deletion of the coronal stop would yield a surface form identical to the present tense form of the word. For instance, worked after undergoing CSD would be realized as [wɛ̃kt] instead of [wɛ̃kt], identical to the present tense work. Given that speakers are unlikely to be somehow re-analyzing the semiweak verbs as
monomorphemes in the context of FCD but not in CSD, an alternate explanation for the difference is necessary.

One possible explanation and limitation lies in the data in this study itself: the data contains only 85 semiweak verbs, making up only 2.7% of the total tokens. It is possible that were a greater sample size coded, semiweak verbs would pattern more similarly to what would be predicted by CSD.

4.5.1.2 Following segment

As shown in Table 4, following segment patterning in CSD makes several predictions for its patterning with regard to FCD. Following vowels and pauses, which disfavor CSD and thus favor retention of the stop, would be expected to favor devoicing. Following consonants, which favor CSD, would be expected to disfavor FCD.

For following consonants and following pauses, the prediction holds; following consonants disfavor FCD and following vowels pauses favor it. Following vowels, however, seem to disfavor devoicing as they disfavor CSD.

Ultimately, the patterning of FCD in this data in relation to established patterns in CSD suggests that there is some similarity, but the null hypothesis that these two phenomena do not pattern the same cannot be rejected.

4.5.2 Speaker Individuation

The second hypothesis of this chapter, following on the findings of Farrington (2011) and others, is that speaker-specific patterning will account for the majority of the variation in the data. In any runs of the data including speaker as a random effect, speaker does emerge as the only significant social factor (p < 0.05). This pattern matches Farrington's findings (see 4.1), that the majority of variation in final consonant devoicing occurs across speakers, and is otherwise
unattributable to social factors. One important aspect of this study to note is that it contains only 18 speakers, with total token counts ranging from 49 to 344 (approximately 1-10% of the total data). As such, any individual’s variation is likely to have a large pull on the data, simply by virtue of the mathematical relationship. I discuss this limitation more in the conclusion.

However, a look at the results of the speaker random effect data in this sample reveals some interesting patterns. The results are reported below in table 7.

Table 7 Speaker Intercepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Intercept</th>
<th># of tokens</th>
<th>Mean VOffT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leona</td>
<td>0.202</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>0.843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delores</td>
<td>0.126</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>0.768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terra</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>0.756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jami</td>
<td>0.085</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>0.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0.709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chess</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>0.723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>0.685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>0.658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susanne</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0.608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey</td>
<td>-0.022</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>0.621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vee</td>
<td>-0.054</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>0.572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gus</td>
<td>-0.073</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiesha</td>
<td>-0.078</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>0.554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>-0.097</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>0.549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>-0.114</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>0.527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>0.467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tana</td>
<td>-0.169</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>0.466</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In table 7, the speakers are ordered by the effect size of their intercepts, allowing a comparison of which speakers have the larger effects, and in which direction, on the prediction of mean VOffT. The first thing to note is that the effect size is quite concentrated: the random intercept as measured by RBrul range from 1 to -1, much like the coefficient in a fixed-effect regression. In this sample, two-thirds of the subjects fall within -0.01 and +0.01, indicating that overall, the degree to which their individual linguistic practice deviates from what otherwise would be predicted by the model is relatively small.
Another important pattern emerges in the data when we examine not only the size of the effect, but its direction. For ease of reading, in table 7, PC-aligned speakers are shaded. Looking at the shaded participants, it is immediately evident that the gray clusters toward the bottom of the table. In fact, if the data is divided into thirds, the top third of the table (containing those who have the strongest deviation predicting a longer VOffT) contains only two PC-aligned speakers, Leona and Chris, while the bottom third of the table (containing those who have the strongest deviation predicting a shorter VOffT) contains only one PC-nonaligned speaker, Gus.

Thus while random effects show us that it is the speakers’ own variation which contributes the most to the explanation of final consonant devoicing, it is evident that something is driving a pattern which also generally separates the PC-aligned speakers from the PC-nonaligned. If we do consider only the fixed effects in the model, quite a different picture emerges.

### 4.5.3 Fixed effects

The results of a fixed-effects model of the social factors are displayed in below. All social factors were considered in the model: Interviewer, speaker gender, speaker age (continuous), and PC-alignment. From the fixed effects model, we see significant patterning that is not significant in the model which includes the random intercept of speaker.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8 Fixed Effects of Social Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PC-alignment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Age (continuous) *****

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>continuous</th>
<th>coef</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender: Age *****

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>factor:continuous</th>
<th>coef</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F:+1</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M:+1</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PC-alignment: Age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>factor:continuous</th>
<th>coef</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y:+1</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N:+1</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>deviance</th>
<th>AIC</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>intercept</th>
<th>grand</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>R2.fixed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>581.731</td>
<td>3634.79</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.628</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*significant at p<0.05
**significant at p<0.01
***significant at p<0.001

**Interviewer** The effect of interviewer is significant (p < 0.01). The African American interviewer results in interviews in which the interviewees have shorter VOffTs, that is, exhibit more stop devoicing.

**Gender** The effect of speaker gender is significant (p < 0.001). Females in the data exhibit shorter VOffTs than do the males.

**PC-Alignment** PC-Alignment in the fixed-effects model emerges as significant (p < 0.001). PC-aligned speakers have shorter VOffTs than do PC-nonaligned speakers.

**Age.** Age, treated as a continuous variable, is significant at p < 0.001. Younger speakers exhibit shorter VOffTs than do older speakers.

Three interactions were considered in the model: PC-alignment and age, gender and age, and PC-alignment and gender. Two of these interactions were significant.

**PC-Alignment and Age.** PC-Alignment and Age is significant at p < 0.01, and the direction of the coefficient shows that older, PC-nonaligned speakers exhibit shorter VOffTs.
Gender and Age. Gender and Age is significant at $p < 0.001$, and indicates that older men devoice more (exhibit shorter VOffTs).

These results are somewhat contradictory. That shorter VOffT measures are predicted by the speaker being PC-aligned, younger, as well as female, point to an explanation consistent with devoicing as a prestige variant. That older male speakers and older PC-nonaligned speakers also exhibit shorter VOffTs point to the feature behaving more like a nonstandard variant. Similarly, that shorter VOffTs occur in the interviews with the African American interviewer also point to the feature exhibiting audience-based style shifting, in a similar pattern as observed by Rickford and McNair-Knox: a feature associated with African American English is used more frequently by an African American being interviewed by another African American.

Thus the feature seems to be operating on two planes at once: on the one hand, as a feature of a nonstandard variety associated with African American group identity. And on the other, as a feature collocated with the professional class and prestige. To further probe this, I turn to the feature’s patterning in topic-based style shifting among the different speakers.

4.5.4 Topic-based patterning

To examine the topic-based patterning of VOffT, each token of VOffT was coded for topic. The process is described in greater detail in section 5.3.2, but to briefly summarize it here, a given token was coded based on the topic in which it occurred; first at a very fine-grained level and then like topics were grouped together in much the same way preceding and following phonological environments are treated. So a speaker might be coded as talking about their experiences with their dog, then their experiences with pet stores, then about the veterinarian, and this would then be collapsed into “pets.” “Pets” might then, based on the full data, be collapsed into something like “Personal” to contrast with topics that are not about things directly
related to the speaker. This process resulted in 6 topics considered in the statistical model: “DC,” or talk about the District of Columbia and Southeast; “CH,” or talk about neighborhood change, “LG,” talk about language; “PH” or personal history, talk about the speaker and his or her history; “RC,” talk about race; and “WK” or work, which encompasses both work topics and education.

Dot plots for both the PC-aligned speakers and the PC-nonaligned speakers are displayed below in Figures 11 and 12. Each line represents a speaker, and each marker that speakers’ average VOffT (measured on the X-axis) for that particular topic.
Figure 11 Mean VOffT, PC-Aligned
Figure 12 Mean VOffT, PC Nonaligned
One obvious difference between these two groups that is immediately apparent looking at these charts are the degree of difference in the range of mean VOffTs for PC-Aligned and PC-nonaligned. The PC-nonaligned means cluster mostly between 0.5 and 0.8, with only three means falling outside that range (Grey’s mean for language topics, and Jami’s means for race and personal history topics). The VOffT measures for the PC-aligned speakers, however, have a much wider range, indicating that their use of the feature across topics varies more.

The two sets of speakers do exhibit some similar patterning. For both sets of speakers, the topic of race occasions a greater degree of devoicing than for other topics. This is consistent with previous findings about race talk and features of African American English; Anderson (2008), Rahman (2008), and Myers (2001) all identify talk about race and explicit evaluations of race and racism to be a site of increased use of AAE features. If devoicing is salient for the speakers as an ethnoracially marked feature, then the fact that it shows up more in talk about race is consistent with these previous findings.

For PC-nonaligned speakers, work topics occasion slightly shorter VOffT measures than for other topics, with only one PC-nonaligned speaker, Delores, having her highest mean VOffT for work topics.

For PC-aligned speakers, apart from race, there are fewer patterns, aside from the difference discussed above with regard to the range of VOffTs. Whereas for PC-nonaligned speakers, only one speaker’s mean VOffT for any topic is below 0.4, for the PC-aligned speakers, several speakers have topic means which are shorter. Those topics are race (as discussed above), work, and language.

A typical topic-based pattern for a feature associated with an ethnoracially marked style would be for that style to occur in topics which are related to race, as is found in several of the

But what to make of the topics of language and work? These are not topics directly associated with race, but which can evoke race; for instance, talk about language often occasions some discussion of talk about ethnoracially marked language or talk of regional differences which may correspond to racial differences as well.

It is the speakers with the shortest VOffT means, such as Tana, Oliver, and Jackie, who have their shortest means for race and language. This suggests that these topics occasion some sort of stylistic performance that is over and above what they otherwise produce. To unearth what might occasion such performance, we can look at to what the subject specifically refer when they take up these topics.

4.5.5  **Metalinguistic awareness on the part of the speakers**

This important line of evidence about how VOffT is intertwined with talk about language comes from the speakers’ **metalinguistic awareness**; an individual's ability to identify and reflect on language itself. In order to understand a speaker's awareness of this sort of practice, we turn to their talk about such practice, their **metalinguistic commentary**. Metalinguistic commentary is the language that is produced in the context of linguistic representations and evaluations (Jaworski, Coupland & Galasinski 2004), and directs us to the ways in which speakers understand the role of their own speech in ongoing discourse activity.

Elicitation of metalinguistic commentary has a long history in sociolinguistics. It has been a part of perceptual dialectology studies, in which speakers make judgments about where
people speak most “correctly”\textsuperscript{25} and draw maps or circle areas on maps which correspond, in their understanding to “less correct” dialects (Hartley 2002, Long & Preston 2002). Long & Preston (2002) point out that such demonstrations of how dialects are interpreted by hearers is an integral part of both the speakers’ and the hearers’ culture; variation cannot be easily untangled from its cultural meaning.

Speakers are often very highly aware of features which distinguish groups of other speakers, particularly in the case of dialects associated with racial and ethnic groups. For instance, using matched guises to investigate housing discrimination, Purnell, Baugh and Isardi (1999) discovered that not only will listeners make judgments about the race of a speaker based only on auditory input, but that they will pick up on phonetic cues to make these judgments even when given only a single word as input. Giles (1970) finds that listeners will not only identify an accent in such an exercise but are also confident making judgments about the character of the speaker based on their perceptions of the social meaning of his or her accent and its correctness.”

Although linguists agree that no dialect is empirically better than another, naïve speakers generally do perceive that there is a correct variety of their language, even if they themselves do not speak it (Niedzielski & Preston 2003) and despite their being somewhat inept at using phonetic features to separate one dialect from another (Clopper and Pisoni 2004). Such Speakers also tend to have a bias toward their own speech; they are more likely to judge their speech as different from that of their broader region (Giles 1970) and to ignore evidence that runs counter to what they perceive as the salient phonological features of their own dialect (Niedzielski 1999).

\textsuperscript{25} This term of course simplifies a number of related issues at multiple levels of language. However, in the case of these studies, the simplification is deliberate—they aim to get at the whole host of speaker preconceptions at once by using a catch-all term like “correct.”
Despite the problems that speakers have in distinguishing dialects from one another, determining which features speakers pay attention to when evaluating the correctness of their own accents and those of others tells us a great deal about which variants are assigned prestige and which have little, if any, effect on a listener’s perception of a speaker. Eliciting talk, or otherwise focusing on talk, in which speakers evaluate the correctness of a particular feature or dialect, or their evaluations of in which situations one ought to use a particular register or dialect, enables us to explore the explicit knowledge which speakers have about their own and others’ speech styles.

Rahman (2008) notes that the middle class African American speakers in her study provide a great deal of metalinguistic commentary about their use of AAE. In talking about their own use of the dialect, speakers not only acknowledge the power of standard English in signifying alignment with the establishment, but also are explicit in their acknowledgment of the covert prestige (Trudgill 1974, 1975) of using AAE, referring specifically to using it at home, church, and in other social settings with other African Americans because of its power to decrease social distance.

As Rahman discusses, to be a middle class African American is to be conscious of a great deal of linguistic diplomacy, as middle class African Americans often perceive the need to use language in ways which other (often white) people will associate with education and upward mobility, and yet also to balance that speech by drawing upon features of AAE which create solidarity with other African Americans and allow them to display an African American identity.

The speakers in this study exhibit similar awareness of the role of AAE and the perceived need to use features from a variety of linguistic repertoires as they navigate among different groups. To discuss this, I turn to the interviews in this sample.
One module used across the interviews in this dataset was to ask people to comment about language. This question was framed not as a question about ethnoracially marked dialects or even the ways in which the speakers themselves use language, but often focused on regional associations with language, “Tell me about what you think about language. Where do people speak differently?” This question was deliberately ambiguous, inviting speakers to choose social contexts or to comment on regional differences. Then, speakers were asked to specifically comment on places where people speak differently, and often asked to reflect specifically on whether they felt they spoke differently in the presence of the interviewer (like Labov’s attention-to-speech tasks, this module was used at the end of the interview to avoid speakers’ potentially reflecting on this throughout the interview).

An excerpt from Tana, a PC-aligned interviewee in her mid-40s is quoted below. She responded to the first question by focusing on her experiences going to junior high school in the wealthier, more racially-mixed neighborhood of Capitol Hill.

**Excerpt 4.1  Tana on Code switching**

1) right right the the you know this is not proper English that is proper English
2) don't say ain't
3) you know so um
4) I think that there there is a difference
5) but I don't know exactly what the what makes the difference
6) I know that my parents did not allow us to speak a lot of slang
7) ...
8) we my brother and I would sh have to shift gears
9) when it was time to go outdoors and play with our friends
10) so the conversations were very different
11) the words we used were very different
12) um
13) we couldn't use slang in the house but we could use it outside with our friends
14) but we had to m- it was we were switching
15) you know we were switching
16) and and the language that we used at school with our friends at school was different
Tana makes several important moves in this stretch of talk, all of which underscore the awareness of the need to shift her language use even as young as elementary school and the explicit instruction on how to do so that she received from relatives. Such dialect shifting is sometimes referred to as code switching (though of course code-switching is typically used to refer to switching between two different languages, with all the complications in delineating between ‘language’ and ‘dialect’ that this entails). As discussed in Rahman (2008) and Taylor (1971), code switching, and an awareness of the need to do so is more common among PC-aligned African American speakers.

Although Tana claims she and her brother "didn't think about [the need to switch]" (31) this only comes at the end of a 30-line stretch of talk in which she outlines in detail the ways in
which they were expected to switch: the importance of "proper English" (1), specific admonishments of "don't say 'ain't" (2), and underscoring that "the language we used at school...was different than the language we used at home" (16-17). A particular emphasis is placed on the existence of specific social situations in which she shifted, for instance, line 13, “we couldn't use slang in the house but we could use it outside with our friends” and the experience of explicit instructions regarding the need to shift, particularly at the outset of her discussion, when she recruits her parents' voices in constructed dialogue (Tannen 2007b) as being informed "this is not proper English that is proper English" (1) "don't say ain't" (2). The use of constructed dialogue allows her to put the admonitions directly into her parents' mouths, invoking them as authors of the speech (Goffman) and in doing so, emphasizing that these particular injunctions were taught directly.

In fact, Tina’s awareness of the necessity of shifting her linguistic repertoire is quite detailed and sophisticated. In lines 23-27, she specifically refers to the differences in speaking among her various peer groups. Her parents, seeking a better education for their children than was available in Anacostia at the time, sent Tana and her brother to school in the more affluent and racially diverse Capitol Hill neighborhood. Thus their school peers were not the African American children with whom they played in Anacostia, a fact Tana emphasizes in the interview section just preceding the one quoted above. She is careful to note that she and her brother changed their ways of speaking not only around adults, as per the directives she quotes from her parents, but also between these two groups of peers:

23) we might say ain't
24) with our friends at home
25) we wouldn't say that with friends at school
26) we would say something different
27) we would say aren't are not
Perhaps most interesting is that she invokes "ain't" to illustrate this difference, the same form that is the first she draws upon to discuss different repertoires to begin with. This is likely in part because "ain't" is one of the most stigmatized features of the dialects which use it (primarily AAE and Southern American English). As a lexical item, ain't more accessible to speakers to prescribe against than, say, a phonological feature like [r] vocalization (Taylor 1971), and so its perceptual salience is high. As a result, it is often one of the most explicitly taught injunctions; where PC-aligned teachers and parents who otherwise prescribe "proper English" may employ a number of African American English features themselves (Rahman 2008, Spears 1998, Taylor 1971) lexical items such as "ain't" provide a lightning rod of sorts by which to focus specific critique of a child's linguistic repertoire.

Despite her insistence that it was something she didn't think about (32), Tina’s metalinguistic commentary reveals a high level of awareness of the need for style-shifting as she navigated the various aspects of her life, even as an elementary school child. She points to both the need to shift as well as the explicitly-instructed nature of her metalinguistic knowledge, demonstrating her knowledge of the need for a great deal of the "linguistic diplomacy" (Rahman 2008) that so often characterizes PC-aligned African American speakers.

Comparing this to a PC-nonaligned speaker on the same topic, we see some very salient differences. In fact, the very task of comparing PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned speakers' metalinguistic commentary turned out to be a difficult—while PC-aligned speakers were likely to provide a lengthy commentary as does Tana, touching on the things they were taught and their experiences tailoring their speech to particular audiences and situations, the PC-nonaligned speakers categorically did not make these kinds of explicit observations.
Instead, their talk about talk tended to focus on perceived regional differences such as comparisons between D.C. and the Carolinas as evidence that D.C. residents do not have a southern accent, or on whether or not they felt listened to and understood. Such themes are exhibited in this excerpt from the interview with Grey, a male 40-year-old PC-nonaligned speaker. His answer to the interviewer’s direct inquiry about audience-directed shift, “Do you think you spoke differently in this interview?” is reproduced below:

Excerpt 4.2  Grey: Did I Speak Differently

1) I don't know you asked me the same question whether we was.. you know s-
2) sitting right here up Georgetown law school
3) and in at Barry Farm project
4) we can have the same conversation
5) so it wouldn't have made the difference
6) yeah, you got to k- yeah you got to keep it real
7) yeah if- you got to let- yeah, if you don't know
8) the biggest mystery is for.. uh
9) to figure out
10) you know
11) the... ins and out of person- person mind
12) and the only way you can have some clarity is if I tell you my mind
13) because if you try to figure it out on your own, you would never be right
14) but if I tell you
15) and I talk to you what's in my heart
16) what's in my mind
17) that's the only way you will ever know me
18) because it's if you try to assume about
19) you know where I live in, how much money I get, how I dress or...
20) anything else
21) you'll be wrong ninety nine percent of the time
22) but if you hear it out my mouth you can just take it and... then you'll know

When asked by the interviewer about speaking in different situations, Grey does not appeal to the issues of explicit instruction on ways of speaking and the necessity of code switching which characterize Tana’s discussion. Instead, according to Grey, one would "have the same conversation" at the elite Georgetown University Law School as one would in Barry
Farms, a low-income subsidized housing community in Anacostia. That Grey would not style shift if speaking to people in these two drastically different environments is, of course, unlikely, but that he perceives that there would not be a need to sets his commentary in stark contrast to Tana’s.

Grey focuses on the content of speech rather than its manner—he talks about how one needs to listen to a person to know "the ins and outs of person—person mind" (11) and "what's in [their] heart" (15). For Grey, talking is about understanding and being understood and in thinking about speaking, he does not orient to the issues of correctness and audience as does Tana.

This difference in the perception of the importance of the form of the language itself in portraying a particular identity, versus simply using content of talk to reveal to another “the ins and outs of [a] person mind” (Grey, line 11), is reflected in the topic-based VOffT measures for these two speakers, as shown in Figure13.
Looking at these two measures of VOffT reveals that for these speakers the Language topic occasions very different measures. For Grey, his VOffT measures for language are at 100%; meaning that for this topic, all tokens (27), are realized with voicing throughout the entire closure. Tana, meanwhile, has a mean of 32%, meaning that her tokens on average are more than 65% devoiced. For Tana, then, this hyper-awareness of her linguistic style, and the need to
switch that style, occurs alongside a corresponding shift in VOffT, whereas for Grey, his explicit rejection of the notion that style shifting even occurs (cf. lines 2 and 3 “Georgetown Law School” vs. Barry Farm”) corresponds with his own lack of shifting on this variable. For Tana and other PC-aligned speakers, the use of VOffT seems to be doing some stylistic work. If we look at some phenomena which share ideological interpretations with devoicing, there is a strong suggestion as to what that work might be.

4.5.6 *Hyperarticulations as “Correctness”*

In numerous studies of AAE, it has been shown that many, if not most, AAE features pattern such that upper and middle class speakers are less likely to use them. Many of the earliest studies in sociolinguistics have correlated non-standard speech styles with the speech of the PC-nonaligned (who are in those studies often referred to as working class or lower class as discussed in chapter 1). Many inventories of features of African American Vernacular English have counted final consonant devoicing among the dialect’s features (Bailey & Thomas 1998, Fasold 1972, Rickford 1999, Thomas 2007, Wolfram 1969). At first glance, then this would seem to be a strange pattern—that a feature typically associated with a dialect considered to be vernacular and nonstandard would pattern very strongly with speakers who would otherwise be predicted not to use it. In order to unpack this seeming paradox, it is necessary to think about the possible social meanings of this variable, above and beyond vernacularism, class, and stigmatization. A simplistic continuum of vernacular/not vernacular, working class/upper class, or stigmatized/not stigmatized seems unlikely to be able to account for the way the speakers in this study use this feature.

Many studies of AAE have noticed that at times, speakers have a propensity toward *hyperarticulation*—that is, over-articulating a particular sound in order to emphasize its
presence, especially when they are aware that the sound’s absence is socially significant. Fasold (1972) notes in his data on coronal stop deletion that particularly when given a more artificial speaking task such as a reading passage or word list which draws focus to the variable under consideration, a number of speakers would emphasize the stop even above its standard realization in casual speech, for instance, not only avoiding producing [wɛs.said] but audibly releasing the final [t] to produce something such as [wɛstʰ.said].

These sorts of hyperarticulations may not, however, be only the result of attention to speech Bucholtz (1999a), for instance, finds hyperarticulation of word-medial [t] (for example, the [t] in the word beetle) to be used by a group of white girls in displaying the identity of "nerd." Benor (2004) finds the same feature demonstrating a "learned" identity among orthodox Jewish boys studying the Torah. In their study of artificially created guises of U.S. politicians (both black and white), Podesva, Jamsu, Callier, and Heitman (To Appear) find this feature is rated by listeners as an increase in "articulateness" of the politician who supposedly produced it.

In a study somewhat similar to the present study, Nylund (2010) argues that looking at the ways in which speakers use a particular feature in style shifting can explain the use of two standard variants, including the word-final coronal stop feature that Fasold examined. In examining white and African American speakers in Washington, D.C., she finds that speakers demonstrate noticeable patterning with regard to the retention of the coronal stop, particularly where the speaker is asked to take a stance which asks them to demonstrate their own knowledge. This stop retention contrasts with a more frequent, lenited pronunciation in which the stop is deleted, making it “stand out” in the same way that a [t] with a noticeable release contrasts with the flap or unreleased [t] that might more commonly occur in that position. Nylund concludes that this retention of [-t/-d] is used in part to indicate "factualness," that is, to
emphasize the speaker's authority to comment on the topic at hand and the correctness of the answer which they offer.

From these studies, it would seem that the same feature, hyperarticulation, has this constellation of meanings: "nerd" or "Torah student" or "articulate politician." But how is it this possible that this same feature produces multiple meanings, and are these meanings in some way related?

For this, we can return to the notion of indexicality and the indexical field, as introduced in section 2.2.3. As described by Eckert, the construct of the indexical field emphasizes that the meanings of variables are not fixed. Instead, each meaning exists concurrently in a field of potential meanings, any of which might be recruited by a speaker to different stylistic ends, and which are potentially open to a different interpretation—recall that one speaker’s “approachable” fronted [ŋ] is another hearer’s signal of laziness and uneducatedness. It is important to note that these indexical meanings are generally divorced from a direct relationship from the acoustical properties of the variable, that is to say, it is not necessarily that a [t] with a longer release universally indicates more “Torah studentness,” but rather that there is a perception that the [t] is released, and that the release constitutes some sort of departure from the expected realization, or the realization associated with another group or meaning. It is this match, or lack thereof, between expectation and realization which then cues the listener to interpret the sound as “hyperarticulated.”

The temptation here, however, is to assume that a released [t], or in the case of Nylund, a retained coronal stop, are in and of themselves are meaningful, as they constitute the fullest phonetic realization of the sound in question. One might assume that such precise pronunciation therefore automatically means “preciseness.” But that link is made in the minds of speakers and
hearers, not by virtue of the segment itself. Irvine (2001) discusses this kind of distinction as **iconcization**, the linking of a particular linguistic form, in this case, hyperarticulation, with a particular social meaning, such as preciseness. She argues that styles, as we think of them in language use, are part of a system of distinctiveness, by which particular patterns become set apart from other patterns—that released [t] is set apart from unreleased [t]; a retained stop is set apart from a deleted stop; a devoiced segment set apart from its underlying voiced counterpart. The characteristics of any given style, therefore, cannot be described without comparison to the characteristics of another style, and the demonstration of how those styles are distinct.

These relationships between styles are “ideologically mediated” (2001; 22); that is, they operate within a semiotic system which is informed by the speakers and hearers who take part in it. Thus as Eckert (2012) argues, any given linguistic feature operates within a system that is not unambiguous or open to multiple interpretations. It is the speakers and hearers who decide the meaning of a particular variant. Thus while linguists might wish to argue a direct link between a released [t] and precision because the phone is “fully pronounced,” in truth, the connection between released [t] and precision is an arbitrary one (Schilling 2013).

This arbitrary link, however, means that devoicing, which could be seen as “fully realized” or “precise” by virtue of its contrast with the expected underlying voiced segment, can by association be equally able to recruit these meanings of “preciseness” as the other variants discussed above. A lower VOffT creates a contrast between an expected, voiced, form, and the actual realization. Not only that, but as argued in section 4.5.1, VOffT shares some of its linguistic patterning with coronal stop retention. Like coronal stop retention and [t] release, therefore, lower VOffTs can access this iconization of “full pronunciation,” and its associated meanings of “preciseness,” “nerdiness,” and “factualness” despite it being a feature which
actually constitutes a different realization of its underlying segment rather than a fuller realization.

It is important to note that all these studies cited examine features which are below the level of awareness; that is, the speakers themselves do not show evidence of being explicitly attending to any sort of need to release [t] or retain a coronal stop. Yet the hyperarticulated variants appear in the creation of these various “nerd,” “factual,” and “learned” identities. Similarly, while the PC-aligned speakers in this study do not explicitly talk about a need to devoice final consonants, that they do so in topics where correctness is salient, such as work and language (and while demonstrating acute awareness of the salience of correctness with regard to that topic) strongly suggests that they, too, are orienting toward that association of hyperarticulation with a hypercorrect style.

These meanings of “education,” “learnedness,” “articulateness” and “factualness” make up some of the potential meanings available in the indexical field for hyperarticulation, constituting the higher order indexical meanings which Bell, Silverstein, and Eckert talk about—the linkage of the style to characteristics of a group rather than to membership in the group itself. If hyper-articulation means something like “precise” or “correct,” then high school girls can recruit that meaning in order to index "nerd," Torah students can recruit that meaning in order to index success at their studies, and PC-aligned DC speakers can recruit this meaning to signal that they are a part of the educated professional class.

What results is a unique opportunity for speakers to use a feature which allows them to index salient identities at two different indexical levels. Final consonant devoicing is a longtime documented feature of AAE, thus one first order meaning arising from this connection is the group-associational meaning of "African American." From this, one would expect that it would
pattern along with other phonological and morphosyntactic features of African American English (more on the latter is discussed in Chapter 5). With this meaning, one would expect that like many other features of AAE, it would be absent from the talk of speakers wishing to index standardness, and by way of this, professional class. But final consonant devoicing, by departing from the expected pronunciation, shares the iconized connection between “pronounced” and “precise” that drives the patterning with other hyper-articulated features. Because of this, it gains a competing second-order meaning of “correct” or “precise,” which helps explain its presence in the speech of PC-aligned speakers who otherwise have low rates of features of AAE. With their low VOffTs, particularly for topics in which correctness is highly salient, PC-aligned speakers can demonstrate that they are precise, correct, and learned. In using this feature, therefore, PC-aligned speakers are able to perform on the one hand their race through the first-order indexical link, and their education and correctness through the second. It is this duality which allows final consonant devoicing to function in this unpredicted way, where it is the presence of this "nonstandard" feature, rather than its absence, that allows speakers to index the complex identity that is "Black professional class."

4.6 Conclusions

This chapter has explored one feature of professional class African American speech in Washington, D.C. Final consonant devoicing, as measured by mean voice offset time, is a robust feature among the speakers identified in this study as professional class-aligned.

The variable patterns in ways consistent with other findings on the variable in that the best statistical explanation for the data under study here is speaker individuation; that is, each
speaker’s variation is what contributes the most to the statistical model explaining the overall variation in the group.

Yet when we look closely at the patterning within those individuals’ speech, we see patterns that are consistent with other findings with regard to stigmatized features of African American English. For instance, lower VOffTs are associated for both PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned speakers with talk about race, a pattern which substantiates findings on other topic-based variation involving stigmatized AAE features. The fixed effects statistical model suggests that being an older male speaker has a significant effect predicting shorter VOffTs, which is the pattern more common for variants associated with less privileged styles. Similarly, the smaller effect of interviewer matches other audience-based shift findings such as that of Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994) in that the African American interviewer has a small effect on speakers’ increased devoicing. All this evidence points toward an interpretation of shorter VOffTs as behaving like a prototypical feature of a dialect considered nonstandard.

At the same time, however, the shorter VOffTs also pattern in a way that suggest that it is a variant which conveys standardness and correctness. We see in the fixed effects model that PC-aligned speakers have significantly shorter VOffTs, and in looking at topic, that many speakers use shorter VOffTs for topics in which sounding professional or correct are of higher importance. We also see from a representative metalinguistic commentary that these shorter VOffTs in the topic of language co-occur with the speakers’ hyperawareness of her own style shifting and of the situations which create the need to do so.

When we consider the speakers’ individual intercepts in the model, most PC-aligned speakers’ individual variation still lines up with an explanation of PC-alignment predicting shorter variation—those who are PC-aligned have a pull on the model toward shorter VOffTs
even over and above what their PC-alignment would predict. That devoicing can recruit the same meaning of “precise” and “correct” as do other hyperarticulations in English provides an explanation for this phenomenon. These PC-aligned speakers may not be using shorter VOffTs to perform a group-associational identity of PC-alignment, but rather, are using them to access the second-order indexical meanings of hyperarticulation of correctness and precision. Of course, stylistic variation is done at the level of the individual, and it follows that not every PC-aligned speaker does “correctness” in this way. This helps explain why the group of PC-aligned speakers do not emerge as significant in the statistical model. That many PC-aligned speakers do seem to use shorter VOffTs to perform “correctness,” and by association, “professionalness,” means, however, that we see patterns evident in how each individual speaker’s performance affects the model and within each speaker’s talk at the level of topic.

As mentioned in the results of the statistical analysis, one significant limitation of these findings is the size of the sample. With only eighteen speakers, it is a forgone conclusion that each speaker’s variation within their own speech will have a large effect on the statistical model simply because each speaker’s speech accounts for anywhere up to ten percent of the total tokens. Thus it may be the case that were a larger sample collected, a group-associational pattern might emerge. Previous studies, however, suggest that the interpretation that individual speaker’s variation provides the best explanation for final consonant devoicing is the correct one. What this study adds to that conversation, then, is delving one level deeper into that individual variation: that for a number of speakers, final consonant devoicing allows them to index the group-associational identity of “Blackness” and the professional-class characteristic of “preciseness” and “correctness” all at once.
From Taylor (1971) forward, there have been a number of studies which have documented that middle class African Americans tend not to use features which are highly marked, which is to say, they are noticed by listeners in a way that clearly brings them above the level of awareness. Some of these marked features include things such as double negation, copula deletion, be and past-tense leveling, and stressed BIN, and are often more noticeable features than features such as existential *it* or third-person -s absence (Alim & Smitherman 2012, Rickford 1999). It would be expected then, that features which are more marked would be more likely to be absent in the speech of professional class-aligned speakers, for coupled with the markedness of the features is the likelihood that speakers will have received specific injunctions against their use, as discussed in the section on metalinguistic commentary in chapter 4.

But while it might not be common for PC-aligned speakers to use highly marked features, it is rarer still that their speech is utterly devoid of them. Rahman (2008) points out that for many middle-class African American speakers, features of AAE allow them to mark in-group statuses: their use conveys closeness and familiarity, and with same-race peers, reinforces a shared African American identity. Similarly, Anderson (2008) finds that features of AAE play an important role in people's discussion of issues surrounding race: using ethnoracially marked features lets speakers stake a claim of legitimacy and authority to make the racial comments they choose to make. In Podesva's (2008) work, this same force seems to be at play with regards specifically to the issue of a speaker's stancetaking specifically about gentrification.

This chapter explores several morphosyntactic features of AAE in order to uncover the role that these features play in the speech of PC-aligned speakers. I analyze them both
quantitatively and qualitatively, comparing the rates of usage of different features both across groups and within groups, and then looking at several excerpts that show the ways in which speakers use or don't use these features to take up particular stances about the issues at hand. I place a particular emphasis on talk about change in the neighborhood, and uncover the ways in which talk about change begets a need for careful identity negotiation on the part of PC-aligned speakers, and examine the role of AAE in helping the speakers to strike that delicate balance.

5.1 **Awareness, markedness, and AAE**

In chapter 2, I discuss the indexical cycle, as conceived by Bell (2013) to bring together paradigms of linguistic meaning-making advanced by Labov (1971) and Silverstein (2003). In short, there exists a multi-phase process by which language comes to be associated with particular social meanings. In phase zero, a group becomes distinct from another group and is perceived by both groups as being so distinct. In phase one, that group differentiates their linguistic practice from other groups. In phase two, that linguistic practice is evaluated by members of the group and outsiders, and outsiders adopt (or avoid) that linguistic practice in order to signal membership in the group. This phase may be iterative; once a feature has acquired meaning, it may go on to acquire other meanings associated with the first. In phase three, that linguistic practice becomes overtly commented upon, becoming a linguistic stereotype (Labov) or a shibboleth (Bell). Thus features may move along a continuum of **markedness**, the degree to which a given form contrasts with another form, in this case, the features of AAE vs. those of mainstream varieties of English.

Thus it is the case that linguistic features can lie at various places along the continuum, and at least Bell argues that the vast majority move to phase two, that of evaluation and meaning
association, but do not progress to phase three. In addition, a given features can be variously situated along the continuum for different speakers and hearers. This was shown in Johnstone and Kiesling’s (2008) analysis of /aw/ monophthongization in Pittsburgh: the speakers who used it did not have awareness of it as being anything other than the way that they and their peers talked, whereas for those who did not use it, it had risen to the level of being evaluated as an incorrect and stigmatized feature of Pittsburgh speech.

A speaker’s awareness of meaning attached to a particular linguistic variant can affect her conscious choices regarding its use. In speakers’ metalinguistic commentary discussed in chapter 4, there are several comments about specific shibboleths of which they are aware, for instance, Tana’s “Don’t say ain’t.” As discussed in chapter 4, the professional class aligned speakers are much more likely than non-professionally aligned speakers to have received specific injunctions about particular words and phrases and to be more conscious of their use of these. This is very different from phonological features of AAE, upon which speakers are much less likely to comment: in fact, the only such comment in the entire dataset is from the participant Lucy, just after she’s been asked to read a word list, when she comments, “This reminds me of my diction classes at Howard [University].”

Similarly, we notice that grammatical features are more likely to vary in style shifting in AAE. One of the foci of the second study of Foxy Boston (Rickford & Price 2013), discussed at length in Chapter 2, is the difference between Foxy’s production of grammatical features such as habitual be and third-person singular –s absence versus her vowel space. While her use of habitual be and –s absence show significant change over time and audience (first increasing as she becomes a teenager, and then drastically decreasing by the time she is a businesswoman in her thirties), her vowel system remains almost completely unchanged, and still has many features
which have been shown in other studies to be vowel features associated with African American English such as the PIN/PEN merger. (Bailey & Thomas 1998, Thomas 2007)

For these reasons, this part of the study focuses on features of which speakers are much more likely to be consciously aware, and which have mostly risen to the third phase of the indexical cycle and are commented on as linguistic phenomena unto themselves: the morphosyntactic features of AAE.

5.2 Stance, positioning, and alignment in uncovering identity in interaction

One principal concern of this study overall is the ways in which AAE is or is not used in negotiating the speakers’ identities. In order to understand this relationship between features and identity, it can be useful to both look at what the features are and how they pattern more generally, but then to also look more locally at the ways they are used in interaction. For instance, in Schilling-Estes (2004) discussed in Chapter 2, it is not merely counting which variants are used by the two interactants, or even tallying them by topic which shows how those variants are being used, but rather looking closely at the ways the two young men are expressing agreement and disagreement, closeness and distance.

This part of the study takes a similarly two-pronged approach to examining how shifts in AAE feature use can be tied to identities of race and place. I rely here on three principal concepts in discussing the ways in which speakers use AAE in creating these identities, stance, positioning, and alignment.

Johnstone (2009) defines stance as “the methods, linguistic and other, by which interactants signal relationships with the propositions they utter, and the people they interact with” (31). This definition puts stance at the forefront of how people relate: not only to the other
people with whom they happen to be co-interactants, but also with the things about which they talk. Kiesling (same volume) argues that stancetaking, therefore, is always a speaker’s primary concern in conversation, and that it is through stancetaking that other connections are made between linguistic practice and identities and social categories.

In chapter 2, I discussed DuBois’ (2007) concept of the stance triangle, which is reproduced in Figure 14. In this model of stancetaking, stance is created as two individuals (who may or may not be co-present individuals) evaluate a stance object, the thing toward which stances are taken. This might be another person, a situation, an idea, or even membership in a group, for instance, an identity taken or not taken could be a stance object, as could a linguistic variety like African American English. Subject 1 evaluates the stance object: is it

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26 Figure drawn by Noelle Galos Zambrano, noellegaloszambrano.wordpress.com
positive? negative? impactful? unimportant? and in so doing, self-positions herself vis-à-vis that object. By **positioning**, I mean how a person is aligned or disaligned with a particular subject. Thus someone who evaluates a stance object as positive and impactful would align with that stance object, whereas someone who evaluates that stance object as negative distances herself from it. As subject 1 evaluates the object, subject 2 also evaluates the stance object, and in so doing, positions *herself* relative to the object, and, by extension, positions herself with respect to Subject 1. Thus for DuBois, all acts of evaluation are simultaneously acts of positioning.

A speaker’s self-positioning automatically has effects for the positioning of others around him. For instance, a speaker who positions himself as an expert through his **epistemic stancetaking**, the degree of certainty he expresses with regard to his propositions, inherently positions his listeners as novices in turn (Jaffe 2009). Personal stance, therefore, is always achieved through comparison and contrast with other persons and categories.

Though of course positioning is happening along every side of the triangle, I will use **alignment** to refer to the positioning of speakers relative to each other, as accomplished via their positioning themselves and the other speaker with regard to the stance object.

The “triangle” part of the stance triangle is particularly theoretically useful in that it indicates how each connection affects the others: one can imagine the triangle flexing geometrically as an evaluation draws a speaker closer to the stance object, and what effect that would have on the other two sides: if both speakers evaluate the stance object so as to reduce distance with it, their own leg of the triangle becomes shorter as well, indicating their increased interpersonal alignment.

Principally, linguists consider stances to be divided into two general groups: **affective stances**, the expression of a mood, attitude, feeling or disposition toward a stance object, and
epistemic stance, the knowledge or belief vis-à-vis some focus of concern (Ochs 1996).

Affective stance is very richly indexed in almost all languages, both with respect to the type of affect as well as its intensity, and this index occurs through a variety of grammatical structures that can serve to indicate affective stance, such as diminutives, argumentatives, quantifiers, the verb voice, sentential adverbs, and intonation. (Ochs 1996) For instance, one can imagine a speaker sharing, “I love that book!” where the affect of positive feeling toward the book is expressed through the word love but its intensity is marked by the choice of love versus like or perhaps an adverbially-modified kinda like that book, as well as the sentence’s intonation (expressed here in writing through the use of the exclamation point).

Epistemic stance similarly can be expressed through a variety of linguistic forms: for instance, the choice of adverbs, adjectives, modals, hedges, emphatics, verbs of certainty or doubt, or possibility modals (Kärkkäinen 2003). For instance, a speaker might say, “I know that book is good” expressing both affective stance through the argumentative good but also the epistemic stance of certainty with the verb of certainty, I know. In this way, speakers often express both types of stance at once.

Understanding which stances speakers take up in interaction, and how those stances position the speakers relative to other speakers and relative to the stance object can provide valuable insight into how and why speakers use particular dialect features at particular points in interaction. Thus the approach of this analysis is two-fold: one, to document which AAE dialect features vary, and two, to explore the ways in which those features’ use might reflect both epistemic and affective stancetaking about class, race, and place identities. I consider not only the AAE features themselves as they are used, but also how they collocate with the other types of linguistic evidence, as described above, which indicates the taking up of stances.
5.3 Methodology

To complement the close phonetic feature analysis that forms the companion portion of this study, the style analysis centers on the morphosyntactic features of AAE. In addition to focusing on a separate part of the grammar, morphosyntactic features also serve as a counterpoint to the study of final consonant devoicing because as mentioned in section 5.1, in general, these features are more highly marked than phonological features. Thus examining morphosyntactic features gives insight into how features which have risen to a high level of awareness, to the point that they are commented on as linguistic features themselves and/or have become shibboleths or stereotypes, might be used in ways which are different to or similar from less marked phonological features.

Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 outline the methodology for the analysis of morphosyntactic variation and style shifting.

5.3.1 Coding methodology: AAE features

The coding mechanism and coding decisions for the dataset under consideration are based on the overlapping feature inventories of African American English as identified in a number of studies of AAE (Craig & Washington 2004, Labov 1968, 1972b, Rickford 1999, Rickford & Rickford 2000, Wolfram & Thomas 2002). Particular attention was paid to those morphosyntactic features used in recent studies calculating dialect density measure (Craig & Washington 2004, Van Hofwegen 2010, Van Hofwegen & Wolfram 2010).

Dialect density measure (DDM), as developed by Craig & Washington (2005) and described by Van Hofwegen and Wolfram (2010), is a method for examining the vernacularity of speech by measuring the features of a given dialect which occur over a stretch of talk. It is a token-based approach, counting dialect features per a decided-upon set of words. Importantly, it
does not treat every feature of a dialect equally; DDM weights speech features, understanding that the markedness (Labov 1968) of different features may be different: for instance, a feature such as completive done (I done ate my lunch) is more marked than a feature such as final consonant devoicing, the topic of the first analysis chapter. Thus the calculation of a DDM is not only dependent on how often features are used, but also how much those features are “worth” and considers the ways in which the constellation of features would likely contribute to a naïve listener’s judgment of the speaker’s vernacularity.

A full DDM analysis thus gives a quite carefully controlled quantification of the use of a dialect by a given speaker, accounting for a number of aspects of dialect use which token counts and frequency tabulations do not always adequately explain: though we can perform statistical tests to determine that the speaker frequently uses feature A, and that the feature is conditioned by X and Y linguistic and extralinguistic factors, it may be the case that a single use of feature B, which is recognized by the speaker and/or hearers as being significantly more marked than feature A, actually has more to tell us about their linguistic practice and its social meanings.

For the purposes of this study, I used weighted DDM measures as a guide in deciding on which features of AAE to focus the analysis, and in making predictions about which features were likely to vary in between groups, between speakers, and within the speech of single speakers. In calculating the density of features, I rely on a modification of the method used by Craig and Washington (2005), in counting features per unit. In this case, AAE features were tagged per their instance per intonation unit, a term introduced by Chafe (1994) to refer to the words produced in a single prosodic (rhythm + pitch) contour. For instance, a sentence with a single clause might be one intonation unit: I threw the ball, but a sentence such as First my teacher gave us a warning, then we went outside, and even though my friends told me not to, I
threw the ball has four: First my teacher gave us a warning | then we went outside and so on. For
the purposes of this study, the number of AAE features were divided by the total number of
intonation units within each topic to arrive at a percentage calculation of density.

Although a variety of features were considered, individual coding was limited to the nine
which occurred most frequently in the data, with other features being put into a tenth category of
"other." The features analyzed are listed below with examples.

1. Zero copula (He Ø nice.)
2. Negative concord (Don't nobody want that.)
3. Determiner alterations/determiner drop, both bare nouns (Suit look good [(Spears 2007)])
   and substitution of a for an
4. Past-tense leveling (Yesterday she say I look good)
5. Completive done (I done ate my lunch)
6. Remote time (stressed) been (I BIN had my supplies)
7. 3rd singular verb regularization (He talk to her every day)
8. Habitual be (We be having to write a lot in this class)
9. Existential it (It was a lot of tourists downtown)

Nine features were studied originally, relegating any remaining AAE features into a
category of other. However, this category wound up containing the greatest number of tokens for
both PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned speaker and obscured the patterns created by the 9 most
frequent features. For this reason, "other" was recoded to specify four additional features which
were the most frequently occurring in the “other:** category

10. ain't
11. They substitution for their or they're (Those girls don't have they homework.)
12. got for have/has (She got four kids.)
13. Q-inversion: subject/auxiliary inversion in embedded questions (He asked him did he go.)

Remaining features which occurred fewer than 2 times per speaker (and the majority occurred 0
times per speaker) were retained as “other.”
Where a particular feature was ambiguous either phonologically or syntactically, it was not coded, for instance, if it was unclear in the interview if the speaker used a contracted copula or deleted the copula, that token was not counted.

One of the difficulties of coding morphosyntactic variables is coding for sites of potential realizations. For instance, while coding for existential it might seem to be straightforward—simply count the locations where someone could say there is and see if it is realized as there is or it is instead – the possibilities for existentials includes options aside from it and there, for example "you've got" in "You've got your red balls in this bin, and you've got your yellow balls in that bin." (And of course, this example also includes got/have alternation as well). While some features such as copula deletion are highly patterned, or at least certainly can be definitely said to be barred in certain constructions (Labov 1969, Wolfram 1974a), other features are, like existentials, considerably more variable, and explaining whether or not a site is a potential site for that variant to occur is not straightforward.

For these reasons, potential realizations were not coded. Instead, as with the DDM, realizations were coded as realization per unit, in this case, the realizations per intonation unit, and quantitative results are presented not to provide a strictly variationist analysis, but rather to provide quantitative evidence about how AAE is used in creating the stances identified through qualitative methods.

5.3.2 Coding methodology: topic

As discussed above, each interview in the data was coded for topic at the level of the intonation unit. Smaller topics were recoded into broader topic categories so as to most efficiently capture what was occurring for each speaker over a given stretch of talk, and to allow for cross-speaker comparison. Thus, while one speaker might talk about the Baptist church,
another the Catholic Church, and another his experiences visiting a mosque as part of a youth organization, these would all be categorized as "religion" to allow for comparison. This yielded the following topics:

**ED Education:** talk about the speakers’ own education, or education in general, such as discussion of the D.C. school system, or for the speakers from the School social network, the school where they work. (See section 3.2.1 regarding the School social network.)

**LN Language:** talk about language, dialects, D.C. slang, correct language.

**SE Southeast:** talk about Southeast Washington, D.C. exclusive of talk of its gentrification processes (which is categorized as Change)

**RL Religion:** talk about religion, church, religious experiences. For speakers from the Church social network (see section 3.2.1) this includes talk about the church they attend.

**WK Work:** talk about speakers’ own work history, ideologies about work, gender in the workplace

**DC D.C.:** talk about the metro D.C. area nonexclusive to Southeast D.C.

**CH Change:** talk about the ways Southeast and Metro D.C. have and are changing.

**PH Personal History:** talk about speakers’ personal history, including talk about childhood activities, family

**RC Race:** talk about race and discrimination

**SI Speaker-initiated:** see below

While most of the topics are explainable in relatively short space, speaker initiated topics require a brief background. Topics coded as “speaker-initiated” are groups of topics which are highly speaker-specific: where no parallel talk could be found in another speaker's speech, and particularly where the topic was not elicited by the interviewer. Because many of the topics of interest to this study are topics which emerged to be of natural interest to the participants, not every topic a speaker brought up on his or her own was categorized as speaker-initiated—often, it was often the case that a speaker volunteered information about race, education, Washington D.C. or the like in answering the interviewer's question about a different topic. Where the speaker-initiated topic became much narrower, however, to the point that it was not comparable to topics brought up by other speakers, the topic was characterized as SI.
Methodologically, it makes sense to collapse these to isolate speaker effects; if only one speaker talks on a particular topic in such a way that it cannot be compared with any other speaker’s talk, then the only other recourse would be to remove that portion of the speaker's data so that it does not skew the overall figures. The SI topics contain two styles identified by Labov, the tangent style, an extended body of speech which deviates plainly from the last topic introduced by the interviewer, representing the strong interest of the speaker; and soapbox style, which is characterized as an extended expression of generalized opinions enunciated as if for a general audience rather than to the interviewer (Labov 2001a: 91-2).

The SI topic very often contains highly animated narratives such as Labov's (Labov 1972a) "danger of death" narratives, or segments in soapbox style which likewise occasion strong reactions on the part of the speaker. For instance, being long-term metro D.C. residents, all participants in the study were in the region during the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, including one, Vee, who was working in the Pentagon when the building was struck. Several interviewees, therefore, volunteered their story of that day, which could not be neatly categorized with other topics, and which were not matched across speakers—though all speakers were present in the District metro area during the terrorist attacks, their stories were not elicited, and not every interviewee volunteered them.

The intonation units were then coded for which, if any, of the AAE features were present in the intonation unit so that usage rates of these features could be compared broadly across

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27 Labov separates these two styles in his attention-to-speech model of style shifting: soapbox is a high-attention style, one which is predicted to occasion fewer vernacular features as he defines them. More recent work, however, including a number of chapters in the Eckert and Rickford (2001) volume in which the above-cited Labov style definitions appear, problematize attention-to-speech as a singular predictor of style shifts. As the present study examines topic as a predictor of linguistic style, I have chosen for the reasons discussed above to consider as one group these speaker-initiated topics which contain these two highly animated styles.
topics, between PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned speakers, between speakers within either group, and within the speech of individual speakers according to topic.

5.4 Hypotheses

Studies of middle- and upper-class African American English have shown that speakers of the middle- and upper classes are less likely to use AAE features across the board. However, based on studies such as Anderson (2008) and Myers (2001), as well as studies such as the Foxy Boston study (Rickford and McNair-Knox 1994; Rickford and Price 2013) it is expected that for all speakers in the study, topics which are more closely related to race and to being a member of the race will occasion more use of AAE than those which are not related to race, and that topics about which the speaker is particularly passionate will also occasion greater use of the features. Because of the racially based nature of gentrification, and that most speakers in the neighborhood consider gentrification to be a topic in which they have considerable stake as members of the community, it is expected that speech related to gentrification in particular will occasion use of AAE features.

The results of the coding are described below.

5.5 Quantitative Results

5.5.1 PC-aligned

Overall usage rates of AAE morphosyntactic features in the data hover at less than 15% for all speakers, where the percentage level refers to percent of intonation units out of total that contain one or more of the AAE features considered. Consistent with other findings on middle-class African American English (Rahman 2008, Weldon 2004, 2011) the PC-aligned speakers in this study use significantly fewer AAE features overall than do the PC-nonaligned speakers (with
the highest rates per topic being 4.71% and 14.06%, respectively). Table 10 shows a breakdown of usage levels per topic, ordered by rate of feature use. Figure 15 illustrates the aggregate usage rates per topic, with each feature represented by matching color bands, making it possible to see both the total density of morphosyntactic features as a percentage of total intonation units in that topic, but also which of those features make up that overall usage rate and their relative strength. As all usage falls below 15% for both groups, the y-axis of all bar graphs is truncated at 15% to make clearer the relative rate of each feature's use.

### Table 10 PC-Aligned Speakers’ Rate of Usage by Topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Intonation units with no features</th>
<th>Intonation Units with AAE features</th>
<th>Total Intonation Units</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ED Education</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>0.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LN Language</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Southeast</td>
<td>1113</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1131</td>
<td>1.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL Religion</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>1.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WK Work</td>
<td>1290</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1316</td>
<td>1.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC DC</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>3.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH Change</td>
<td>1481</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1540</td>
<td>3.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PH Personal History</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>4.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC Race</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>4.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI Speaker-initiated</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>4.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>278</strong></td>
<td><strong>8936</strong></td>
<td><strong>8936</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.11%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 15 PC-Aligned AAE Feature usage rates by Topic and Feature
For professional speakers, the three topics which occasion the highest usage rates of AAE features are speaker-initiated topics (see section 5.3.1 for an explanation of these topics), in which 4.74% of intonation units contain at least one AAE feature, race (4.71%), and personal history (4.69%). Two other topics occasioned usage rates higher than 3%: change (3.83%) and DC (3.48%). Apart from these five topics, there is a distinct cut in AAE usage, with all remaining topics occasioning usage rates below 2%.

In addition to which topics occasion greater usage of the features studied, a second consideration is which features of AAE are used by each group. Table 11 shows the counts of each AAE feature coded, and the percent of the total tokens that particular feature makes up. Copula deletion is by far the most commonly used feature, accounting for 26% of the total AAE features used (N=73). Following it is past-tense leveling (10% of total feature use, N=27), got (10% N = 28), determiner alteration/bare nouns (8%, N=23) and existential it (8%, N=22). Together, these five features account for over 60% of the total AAE tokens in the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent of all AAE features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero copula</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>26.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>got</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past tense leveling</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>determiner drop</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential it</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Regularization</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative concord</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they substitution</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitual be</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ain’t</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote-time \textit{BIN}</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completive \textit{done}</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qinversion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.2 \textit{PC non-aligned}

As mentioned in the previous section, the usage rates of AAE features in the PC-nonaligned group is higher than in the PC-aligned group, with the topic occasioning the highest
usage rate having a usage rate nearly three times the highest-rate topic in the PC-aligned group. This is consistent with decades of sociolinguistic work which have shown marked vernacular features to correlate strongly with SES, with lower SES speakers exhibiting more usage of the marked features than higher SES speakers. Although this study does not use only measures of SES to divide speaker subgroups, it nevertheless makes sense that speakers who are not aligned with a higher-SES group would use more of the AAE features.

Table 12 shows a breakdown of AAE feature usage by topic, ordered by rate of feature use. Figure 16 represents this same information in stacked bars, as in Figure 15. As in section 5.2.1, the graph's y-axis has been truncated at 55% to allow the relative occasion of the individual features to be seen within the bars. Comparing this to the chart for the PC-aligned speakers, several trends are evident. One is the difference between the usage rates of the two groups: for the PC-nonaligned speakers, all but two topics occasion higher usage rates than the topic with the highest usage rate (4.74%) for the PC-aligned speakers.

### Table 12 PC-Nonaligned Speakers’ Rate of Usage by Topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Intonation units with no features</th>
<th>Intonation Units with AAE features</th>
<th>Total Intonation Units</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RL Religion</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>3.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED Education</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>4.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WK Work</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>5.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PH Personal History</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Southeast</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>858</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI Self- Initiated</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>11.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC DC</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>12.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH Change</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>12.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LG Language</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC Race</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>14.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>4243</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 16 PC-Aligned AAE Feature usage rates by Topic and Feature
The topics which occasion the highest usage rates, however, mirror those which occasion the highest rates in the PC-aligned group. These include race (14.06%), language (13.64%), neighborhood change (12.25%), talk about D.C. (12.12%), and speaker-initiated topics (11.02%). Both groups of speakers share four of the five topics which most occasion use of AAE features: race, change, talk about D.C., and speaker-initiated topics.

The PC-nonaligned speakers exhibit some similarity to the PC-aligned with regard to which AAE features are most commonly found in their data. Table 13 shows the counts of each AAE feature coded, and the percent of the total that particular feature makes up. As with the PC-aligned speakers, copula deletion is the most frequently used feature, although it accounts for a considerably smaller percentage of the total (15.23% versus 26.26%). Past tense leveling and existential it also turn up in the top five features for PC-nonaligned speakers, with 9.64% of the total tokens and 9.14% of the total tokens, respectively.

Where the PC-nonaligned speakers differ significantly from the PC-aligned speakers is in their use of habitual be. This feature is used more than three times as often in the PC-nonaligned speakers’ speech, accounting for 13.71%. This suggests that there may be a difference in awareness of habitual be as a stigmatized feature; with the PC-aligned users greater sensitivity to this particular feature resulting in their much lower rate of use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent of all AAE features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero copula</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitual be</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>13.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past tense leveling</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>9.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd regularization</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>9.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential it</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative concord</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.6 Qualitative Results

It is evident from the quantitative analysis that substantial differences in AAE feature use do emerge both between PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned speakers and from topic to topic when the data is grouped by topic. In order to examine this more closely, however, it is necessary to delve more deeply into the talk within each topic. What do speakers talk about which occasions or does not occasion the use of AAE features? And within that talk, how does AAE allow them to take up stances and otherwise express themselves, if it indeed does?

The next several sections take up the outlying topics with regard to usage rates: speaker-initiated topics and race topics, on the high end, and work and education on the low end. Finally, the discussion turns specifically to how PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned speakers talk about the ways in which their neighborhood is changing.

5.6.1 Speaker-initiated topics

As discussed above, for both sets of speakers, the grouping of speaker-initiated (SI) topics emerged as one of the top five topics for AAE feature use among both groups. Briefly, to recap, speaker-initiated topics are groups of topics which are highly speaker-specific: where no parallel talk could be found in another speaker's speech, and particularly where the topic was not elicited by the interviewer.

Again, for both groups of speakers, speaker-initiated topics were among the topics which most occasioned use of AAE features. This kind of patterning could be predicted by models of style shifting such as Labov's attention-to-speech model (Labov 1972a), which posit that highly-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ain't</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>determiner drop</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>got</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compleitive done</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote time BIN</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qinversion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
charged talk, such as the danger of death narrative, will focus the speaker's attention on the topic rather than the task of being interviewed, and thus will elicit the speaker's natural speech patterns. Though the attention-to-speech minimizes the effects of other factors which have since been documented to occasion a speakers' style shifting, for instance, audience and referee (Bell 1984, Rickford & McNair-Knox 1994) or the performance of interpersonal affiliation or distance (Schilling-Estes 2004), it nonetheless provides one plausible explanation for why speaker-initiated topics emerge as a strong predictor of AAE feature use.

An example of the effects of attention to speech on patterns of stylistic variation in speaker-initiated topics is extracted from the interview with Chess, a 58-year-old PC-nonaligned participant. During an answer to the interviewer’s talk about the District, Chess takes up a stance about the economics of the Bureau of Prisons, taking a stand against their running prisons for profit. This stretch contains a cluster of AAE features as Chess gives an animated soapbox-style speech to illustrate his points. The full speech covers 58 lines, of which 35 are quoted below.

**Excerpt 5.1 Chess and the Prison System**

1) and the school is becoming the pipeline to prison
2) you know because of that
3) and people know it and people see it
4) but they [0 COPULA] not impl impl implementing anything that can
5) you know so therefore I think they uh can be implicated in accessories to the fact
6) that might lead you to jail
7) and if it leads you to jail
8) you [0 COPULA] going to a jail that's for profit
9) and then once you go there you [0 COPULA] going [PHONOLOGICALLY AMBIGUOUS] become a slave
10) because uh when you go to jail you become an indentured servant
11) and being an indentured servant you [0 COPULA] just a slave so you
12) You [0 COPULA] in there making things
13) that if it was on the street
14) it might you might have to pay somebody thirty-five dollars an hour or fifty dollars a [DETERMINER] hour
15) but while you [0 COPULA] in there they paying you fifty cent [3rd PLURAL S] a [DETERMINER] hour
16) or twenty-five or thirty percent or the most they might pay you is a dollar and fifty a day
17) you know so that's exploitation
18) that's uh indentured servitude
19) and it's not only
20) they be [HABITUAL BE] talking about
21) outsourcing the jobs
22) they [0 COPULA] not outsourcing the jobs in reality
23) they [0 COPULA] insourcing them to to the penal institution
24) so they can have that time of uh indentured servitude, you know
25) to uh uh bolster or whatever the
26) uh economy they the the penal institutions budgets or uh uh uh uh
27) economic financial status is overwhelming
28) so much so that they got stock on the uh
29) Walm not Walmart they got stock
30) in the uh what's that
31) Wall Street
32) you know
33) like the bureau of prisons
34) they have stock
35) on that and uh

In this stretch, we see 14 features appearing within 35 lines. Eight are instances of zero-copula, the most common feature used across the data by PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned speakers alike. It is easily argued that this topic is of course replete with vernacular features, since as mentioned above, the speaker-initiated topics are those in which the speaker is most highly invested. It is also interesting, however, to look at exactly how Chess uses these features, particularly copula deletion, to mark his stance in opposition to the ways the modern prison system functions.

I turn first to Chess's discussion of how people end up in prison, below.

7) and if it leads you to jail
8) you [0 COPULA] going to a jail that's for profit
9) and then once you go there you [0 COPULA] going [PHONOLOGICALLY AMBIGUOUS] become a slave
10) because uh when you go to jail you become an indentured servant
11) and being an indentured servant you [0 COPULA] just a slave so you
12) You [0 COPULA] in there making things
In this stretch of five intonation units, the copula is deleted four times, at every possible instance of "you are." The "you" in this stretch does not exactly map to the second person addressee, in Chess's case, the interviewer, but is an apostrophized "you" designed to put the interviewer in the shoes of a person going to prison. In addition to the deleted copula, the parallel structure of the sentences combines to build Chess's case against what's going on in the prisons:

8) You Ø going to jail
9) You Ø going (to) become a slave
11) You Ø just a slave
12) You Ø in there making things

The repeated structure of “you Ø” for “you are” and the repeated copula deletion combine to highlight the "you": the invitation Chess makes to the interviewer to imagine herself in the shoes of a (presumably African American) person being taken to prison.

Chess uses an almost identical structure to create the contrast between the prisoner and those who run the prisons.

20) they be [HABITUAL BE] talking about
21) outsourcing the jobs
22) they [0 COPULA] not outsourcing the jobs in reality
23) they [0 COPULA] insourcing them to to the penal institution

As he does with "you," the structure of NOUN + 0 Copula serves to highlight the "they":

22) they [0 COPULA] not outsourcing the jobs in reality
23) they [0 COPULA] insourcing them to to the penal institution

"They" here is not just the penal institutions themselves but presumably, the entire social system which results in prisons being for-profit institutions. In using the same structure that he
uses to describe the hypothetical prisoner in the section above, Chess is able to draw a contrast between the prisoner and the system, using both the content and the syntactic structure of his speech to make clear the abuses he sees as inherent in the system.

This close reading of a speaker-initiated topic shows how an AAE feature functions to help the speaker take up the stance against the modern prison system, a topic he seemingly feels quite strongly about, since he raised it himself. He does this both through syntactic parallelism, and the variable presence/absence of the copula—its absence signals that the prior pronoun is to be taken universally; to represent the people who are (unfairly, according to Chess) taken to prison, and those whose greedy economics put them there.

Across the data considered in this study, such speaker-initiated topics promote the use of AAE features, likely both because they do reduce attention to speech, but also because the use of these features aids speakers in taking up the stances that were the reasons they initiated the topic to begin with.

5.6.2 Race
Race emerged as a high-usage-rate topic for both PC-aligned (second highest rate, 4.71% of intonation units) and PC-nonaligned speakers (highest rate, 14.06% of intonation units). This is consistent with findings such as those of Anderson (2008), who notes that race talk, that is, talk in which speakers are evaluating issues related to race, occasions high rates of use of AAE features.

What is very interesting about this data is that race talk emerges as being a high usage-rate topic among both PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned speakers. Particularly when we consider that for most of the topics, PC-aligned speakers' usage rates hover below 2% of total intonation units, a rate that is almost two and a half times as high points to features which are likely doing
significant work for the speakers. And indeed, when we look at the ways in which PC-aligned speakers use AAE in talking about race, we see how it allows them to take up very complicated stances with regard to the things they talk about.

As an example, I turn to Kiesha, a 43-year old school administrator who was raised in Southeast. In response to a question about race and segregation in D.C, she tells a story about her ten-year-old son, Dean, who was briefly detained by the police at the grocery store. She takes up as a stance object the discrimination her son will face as he grows up from strangers and the police, and by evaluating that discrimination as a negative force, maintains her alignment with her son as a concerned mother, positioning herself as standing in opposition to the forces of institutionalized racism. This oppositional stance enables Kiesha to align herself with Dean, enabling her to advise that he must respond to those forces through his behavior even though the discrimination is unfair.

In Kiesha’s story, she and her son went to the grocery store and each went their separate ways. After she finished shopping, Keisha reached the end of her patience with Dean’s desire to linger in the toy aisle, so she went out and moved the car to make him think he'd been forgotten. Meanwhile, he was strolling through the store wearing his school uniform pants and a white tank-top "wifebeater"²⁸ style undershirt, and when he was unable to produce evidence of having

²⁸ I use this term because it is the term Kiesha herself chooses to describe the garment, although she recognizes the problematic nature of the term in her own talk and makes a number of discourse moves to distance herself from the term.

1) he had on the white, we call them wife beaters, I don't know if you
2) you ever heard, did y- we call them, I don't know if you ever heard that saying
3) but you know the white t-shirt I'm talking about
4) they call them wife beaters
5) because they say guys that beat their wives
6) they usually wearing that type of shirt

By asking repeatedly if the interviewer has heard the term, Kiesha is able to create room to explain the term's origins, providing justification for its use: "they say guys that beat their wives/ they usually wearing that type
money and was unable to quickly find his mother, he was detained and frisked by the store police, despite having no merchandise.

Kiesha first relays the narrative about what happened at the store to the interviewer. Where her stancetaking gets interesting, however, is in the narrative’s coda. Labov (1972, “Transformation of Experience”) defines the coda as the part of a narrative which signals to the listener the end of the narrative. Labov identifies the coda as a location which may contain external or embedded evaluation, “the means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative...why it was told, and what the narrator is getting at.” (Labov 1972b: 366) In Kiesha’s coda, her evaluation comes through her quoting herself about what she told her son after the incident, which is quoted below.

**Excerpt 5.2  Kiesha and Dean**

1) what I'm trying to tell my son is  
2) unfortunately Dean  
3) you are Black  
4) Black boy  
5) that's gonna end up being a Black man  
6) and when you leave this house  
7) you're gonna-  
8) Every time you leave this house,  
9) you're gonna have to be mindful of how you look  
10) always because  
11) you Ø still gonna have those women  
12) if you Ø not looking a certain way, that's [be-level] gonna clutch their purse  
13) when you Ø walking by their car, they're gonna lock the door  
14) I said because that's-  
15) that's just society  
16) even though you have no intent to s-  
17) of doing nothing to nobody [neg concord]  
18) you have to be very mindful when you leave this house, how you look  
19) you have no intention of shoplifting  
20) but it's the way you look  
21) so wearing, if you Ø wearing braids and  
22) having a wife beater shirt on

of shirt." In providing the word's origins, Kiesha is able to mitigate her own use of the word, and distance herself from any reading in which her 10-year-old is a wifebeater by wearing the shirt.
23) you know
24) you Ø just gonna be profiled
25) so unfortunately, you know there's some people out there
26) they look at guys with tattoos, that don't bother me
27) they say if you see a guy with a whole bunch of tattoos, don't care what race they are
28) that they profile them that they up to no good so
29) so it's a matter, you know you- when you start looking for work
30) and you want a professional job
31) you can't
32) you gotta think about that with you head
33) got earrings in your ear, and tattoos
34) and they Ø looking at you
35) you may be a excellent worker
36) but pleasant person
37) god fearing person
38) but because of your appearance
39) how you carry yourself
40) you might not get the job
41) so that was a learning experience
42) and I'm glad- and I told him I said 'I'm glad that happen to you'
43) that that's- that's reality
44) it's unfortunate it happen [past level]
45) but I'm glad it happened to you

In this stretch of talk, Kiesha has to maintain two disparate stances, which allow her, as the mother of a ten-year-old African American boy, to both emphasize her solidarity with him as his mother, and yet to also underscore the negative stance they both take toward the police for profiling Dean. This speech activity fits rather neatly into the stance triangle as described by DuBois (2007), as discussed in section 5.2, in that both Kiesha and Dean as speakers orient relative to a stance object, the discrimination that Dean will undoubtedly face throughout his life.

Kiesha makes several moves which underscore her distance from the police, and her disappointment that this happened to her son, pointing out that she knows "you have no intent to s-/ of doing nothing to nobody"(17) and that she knows he will grow to be "a excellent worker/ but pleasant person/ god fearing person." (35-37) Importantly, she does not say this merely to
compliment Dean. Looking at it in context, it follows a long stretch of talk in which she describes how people will react to his appearance:

15) that's just society
16) even though you have no intent to s-
17) of doing nothing to nobody [neg concord]
18) you have to be very mindful when you leave this house, how you look
19) you have no intention of shoplifting
20) but it's the way you look
21) so wearing, if you Ø wearing braids and
22) having a wife beater shirt on
23) you know
24) you Ø just gonna be profiled

Kiesha’s epistemic stance here is one of certainty and authority. This is signaled in two distinct ways. One is the overwhelming presence of intonation units whose main verb is copular be, a feature noted by Johnstone (2009) to signal a speaker who is invoking “universal truths:” Kiesha does not express these things as being her beliefs about how the world is, or even her first-hand observations, which might have included sentences which began “I think,” or “I feel,” or even “you know that…” Instead what she states is just things that are: that is society (15), it is the way you look (20). Her epistemic modality is simply to state these things as unequivocal fact, underscored by her use of just in lines 15 and 24; “that’s just society” and “you Ø just gonna be profiled.”

By setting up the existence of discrimination as inalienable fact, Kiesha is then able to distance herself from it by telling Dean all the ways he is (and will continue to be) a good person. She can underscore that Dean is not somehow a bad person for having been profiled or being likely to be profiled in the future. These statements counter the implicit assumptions that are apparently being made by someone who "clutch[es] their purse" (12), "lock[s] the door" (13), or stops to frisk him in the grocery store: that someone who appears as Dean does is dangerous or
untrustworthy. By contrasting how people may react to him with the affirmation that she understands his intentions to be good, Kiesha is able to enact a very deft self-positioning, which consists of three interconnected stancetaking acts.

One, she is able to underscore her close alignment with her son. Emphasizing his good nature allows her to demonstrate her closeness and reassure him that he is not to blame for what has happened. Two, in underscoring Dean's good nature, she positions by contrast the people who think otherwise of Dean as wrong. This decreases the social distance between Kiesha and Dean, and increases their distance from their stance object, the act of profiling.

The third stance, however, is possibly the most interesting. By talking an “expert” epistemic stance, Kiesha turns racial profiling into a fact of life that neither she nor Dean can do anything about, other than to react to it. Because of this, once she distances herself from the act itself by positioning those who discriminate as not understanding that Dean is good, she is then free to criticize Dean's self-presentation. She has established that his nature is good and his intentions are pure, and that he is being unfairly judged. By affirming these things, she then is able to open a place where she can insist that she and Dean must react to this kind of profiling even though it is unfair. By situating the act of profiling as being something that neither she nor Dean feels is just, she is able to nevertheless emphasize to Dean that he must behave in response to it, without jeopardizing the solidarity created by underscoring Dean's purity of heart. Thus when she tells him "Every time you leave this house, / you're gonna have to be mindful of how you look" (17-18) and that "because of your appearance / how you carry yourself / you might not get the job,"(38-40) these comments are not an endorsement of how others behave toward Dean.

AAE features play a critical role in the construction of these stances. Unsurprisingly, as it is the most common feature for both PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned speakers alike, copula
deletion plays a large role in Kiesha's talk. For instance, in the beginning of her recounting of what she said Dean, Kiesha offers the following (instances of copula preservation/deletion are highlighted in boldface):

3) you are Black
4) Black boy
5) that's gonna end up being a Black man
6) and when you leave this house
7) you're gonna-
8) Every time you leave this house,
9) you're gonna have to be mindful of how you look
10) always because
11) you Ø still gonna have those women
12) if you Ø not looking a certain way, that's [be-level] gonna clutch their purse
13) when you Ø walking by their car, they're gonna lock the door

At the beginning of this stretch of speech, the copula is retained when the subject of the sentence is Dean. Kiesha tells him "You are Black, Black boy, that's gonna end up being a Black man" and "you're gonna have to be mindful of how you look." In each of these lines, the copula verb is retained: you are Black, that is going to end up a Black man, you are gonna have to be mindful.

In the following lines, however, exactly the opposite happens: instead of complete preservation of the copula verb, it is completely deleted. Instead of "you are Black," we get "you Ø still gonna have those women/ if you Ø not looking a certain way ... / when you Ø walking by their car." For each instance where the realization could be "you are," Kiesha produces an instance of deletion instead. Yet when these lines are compared to the clauses where the subject is the women who respond to Dean and other Black boys and men like him, the copula is preserved: "[those women] that's [be-level] gonna clutch their purse / they're gonna lock the door." Why the difference?
When the subject of the sentence is a second person addressee who is obviously Dean, the copula is retained. Similarly, when the subject of the sentence is the women who will profile Dean, the copula is retained. But if the final three lines of this extract are examined closely, it is evident that the "you" in this sentence is not exactly the same "you" as at the beginning of the extract. "You" in these sentences applies not only to Dean himself but to everyone who might be wrongfully profiled. Copula deletion in this instance serves to make these sentences syntactically distinct from those which refer to Dean specifically. This allows Kiesha to emphasize that the “you” in “you still gonna have these women” is not Dean, but the universal, immutable forces that Kiesha presents in lines 15-26. This separation allows Kiesha to admonish Dean to behave in a particular way while still ascribing fault not to Dean himself but to wider, unfair societal processes to which they both must respond. By using a feature of AAE to separate you from the actual co-present second person, Kiesha is able to remain squarely on the side of her Black boy, and yet, as his mother, prepare him for the ways that others will treat him in the future.

5.6.3 Work

The topics of work and education occasioned some of the lowest usages of AAE features for both groups. For the PC-aligned speakers, "work" topics occasioned AAE feature use at a rate of 1.98%, the third-lowest rate, with "Southeast" topics occasioning a 1.59% rate, and "education" topics occasioning a 0.79% rate. Similarly, for the PC-nonaligned speakers, "work" topics were also the third-lowest rate, occasioning a 5.02% rate, with "education" topics occasioning a 4.29% rate, and "religion" topics occasioning a 3.51% rate.

In a number of sociolinguistic studies of topic-based style shifting, work and education are topics which occasion low rates of nonstandard variant use. It makes sense, then that linguistic usages which accord with that prescriptive language ideology will occur in talk about
education. Similarly, work is often a location where speakers shift into a register containing fewer nonstandard features. For this reason, it is not surprising to find that speakers use fewer nonstandard features when talking about work, as it similarly evokes this "work self" who uses fewer nonstandard features.

Yet for both the PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned speakers, work and education do not occasion the complete omission of AAE features across the board. Thus it is not enough to point out that their rates are lower; they are not entirely nonexistent. A closer look at exactly what the speakers are doing with these features within the topic gives some insight into exactly what standard features versus AAE features accomplish in ongoing topic talk.

First, consider Grey, a 50-year old, PC-nonaligned speaker, an IT assistant at a neighborhood elementary school, and a latecomer to higher education (technical school) who spent most of his career as a driver for D.C. dignitaries. In response to a question about men and women and the kinds of careers they tend to pursue, Grey tries to break down the number of people he knows in his neighborhood who have skilled work. He then goes on a line later to directly talk about his own children, and the jobs they have.

**Excerpt 5.3  Grey and Skilled Work**
   1) no I wouldn't go fifty fifty
   2) yeah I have to go like seventy-five twenty-five
   3) at the people that
   4) have skilled trades being twenty five,
   5) and unskilled trade being seventy five

**Excerpt 5.4  Grey’s sons**
   1) they have jobs
   2) they Ø productive citizens so
   3) that's all I can, that's all I can ask for, they are-
   4) they're not drug addicts
   5) they're not thieves and killers so
6) that's all I can ask for

It bears mention that across the board, Grey's AAE feature use is on par with that of other PC-nonaligned speakers, and even slightly higher. He uses at least one AAE feature in 11.84% of the intonation units he produces, compared to the overall PC-nonaligned rate of 9.89%. Within the "work" topics, his feature use is 4.55% compared to 5.02%. Thus excerpt 3 above, with a single instance of copula deletion is quite indicative of what we might expect from the PC-nonaligned speakers.

There are two other locations in the excerpt where the copula could be deleted, lines 10 and 11: "they're not drug addicts," and "they're not thieves and killers." Contrast this to line 8, where Grey does delete: "they Ø productive citizens." All three phrases describe Grey's sons, as he discusses how they have come into their own as adults. Comparing the three phrases reveals an interesting pattern when we consider the evaluative stance Grey is taking toward his sons in these lines. He uses the three lines together to positively evaluate his sons' success, by marking one thing that they are, and contrasting this with two things that they are not.

they Ø productive citizens so
they're not drug addicts
they're not thieves and killers so

In this segment, Grey uses the copula deletion to contrast what his sons are with what they are not. When he says what they are, he deletes the copula: "they productive citizens." He contrasts this both with the content and form of the other two statements he makes: "they're not drug addicts/ they're not thieves." Retaining the copula verb in the second two statements creates distance between what the boys are and what they are not, allowing him to take up an evaluative stance praising them for who they've become.
Given Grey's overall usage rates of AAE features, it is not so surprising that we find him using zero copula in talk within what is otherwise a low-usage-rate topic. However, despite overall low rates of use, AAE features are not entirely absent from the PC-aligned speakers' speech, either. Jackie is a school administrator in her forties, who, like Grey, answers a question about how people in her neighborhood work. In the excerpt quoted below, she is discussing the lack of work ethic she sees among some young people in the Anacostia neighborhood, who receive government assistance instead of working.

**Excerpt 5.5  Jackie: Who Should Get Government Assistance**

7) I have to get up every day and go to work
8) so you should have to get up every day and go to work
9) and not depend on
10) the government, to take care of you
11) I could see it for the elderly
12) the elderly elderly
13) that has put in their time
14) you know they work
15) they've done all they could do
16) I could see them getting support from the government but when you Ø young
17) you Ø in your twenties
18) and you don't wanna work
19) something's wrong with you
20) something is really wrong
21) and- and I just don't mean to be
22) hard or anything but, something is really wrong
23) so.. I really don't know
24) you know when I was coming up
25) this used to be a um...
26) heavy drug area
27) that avenue, so
28) when you Ø in that mode and you just wanna...
29) sit there and get easy money
30) you Ø not gonna make it out here
31) cause it's either gonna be death or penitentiary
Jackie states that receiving aid is fine for "the elderly / the elderly elderly / that has put in their time" (5-7) but then goes on to discuss the people for whom she doesn't find it appropriate—the parents of many students at the school where she works.

As with Kiesha in the previous section, the use of the deleted copula serves to delineate the "you:" again, this is not a "you" that is the co-present second person (who in this case is the researcher, whereas for Kiesha it was her son Dean, in the storyworld), but rather "you" stands in for "them": the young, able-bodied people who Jackie sees as being able to work and choosing not to. With each instance of "you [are]", where "you" is this imaginary addressee of the assistance-getter (lines 11-13, and again in lines 22-24), the copula is deleted, which allows Jackie to make it clear she speaks in second person about an addressee who is not present. As Kiesha’s use of generic “you” allows her to distance herself from the stance object, discrimination, so here Jackie’s use of generic “you” allows her to distance herself and take up a stance criticizing those who rely on government assistance for what she evaluates as laziness, by comparing them to the "elderly elderly" who she sees as deserving their money. And as it does for Kiesha, the deletion of the copula helps Jackie linguistically draw a line between the “you” who is co-present and this generic “you” from whom she distances herself through her talk.

The quantitative results from the work and education topics are consistent with other findings on topic-based style shifting, particularly among speakers of African American English. Where the object of discussion is in a discourse context which occasions use of more Standard American English (SAE), fewer AAE features occur in the speech of the person discussing that topic as a result. But close analysis of the speech of both a PC-nonaligned (Grey) and PC-aligned (Jackie) speaker reveals that just as in topics which occasion higher usage rates of AAE, the

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29 A second piece of evidence which makes it clear that Jackie is concerned with the ability to work is her reduplication of the word "elderly" in describing who should be able to receive assistance: not just "the elderly" which presumably might encompass young retirees not much older than herself, but "the elderly elderly."
AAE features which are used in topics that occasion lower rates perform important functions with regard to the speakers' stancetaking and positioning, allowing them to comment on aspects of work and to take up stances regarding those they view as successful or unsuccessful without alienating the audience at hand.

Importantly, both PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned speakers in this sample are clearly work aligned, in that they praise people for being gainfully employed (in the case of Grey) or criticize those who "just wanna/ sit there and get easy money" (Jackie). Both speakers, and indeed, most of the speakers in the study, express discontent with their neighborhood being known for high levels of unemployment and government assistance. This valuing of work across all speakers creates an interesting position for all the speakers with respect to the changing state of the neighborhood: as Anacostia becomes a location that is less known for unemployment and drugs, but instead becomes the home of the gentrifying middle-class population, how do speakers situate themselves in such a way that they can both continue to embrace the value of work, yet also take up stances in favor of or in opposition to the ways in which the neighborhood is changing?

I take up this question in the next section.

5.6.4 Neighborhood change

The "change" topic is the topic of most concern to the present study, and served as one of the primary reasons for the choice of this particular field site to begin with. As explained in chapters 1 and 2, Washington D.C. has been undergoing gentrification processes for the last thirty years, as newer, wealthier (and often, whiter) residents have taken the place of D.C.'s longstanding working class African American community. Those processes have, however, until recently, been concentrated in the center of the city as opposed to the outskirts, and the entire
Southeast quadrant, including the neighborhood of Anacostia, has been relatively immune to these pressures, if anything, growing even increasingly poorer, crime-ridden and Black as the rest of the city became richer, safer, and whiter.

Recently, however, as discussed in chapter 1, a number of features of Anacostia have changed: its subway station opened in the early 1990s, a Circulator\textsuperscript{30} bus route was created to service the area, and a number of new businesses and government buildings have opened, including the headquarters of the Department of Homeland Security. As of this writing, one of the new DC streetcars is planned to run from the Anacostia subway station through Martin Luther King Avenue, the main retail and entertainment hub of the neighborhood. All these additions have resulted in a change in neighborhood demographics, with new residents moving to the neighborhood to take advantage of the low housing prices and new amenities. (Wax 2011)

These changes are also very noticeable to residents, making neighborhood change a highly salient topic for them.

Each interview conducted for this study specifically questioned the informants about change in the neighborhood. In addition to that, the topic of how the neighborhood is changing was often spontaneously brought up by the speakers as they discussed other topics, such as race, Southeast D.C. versus the rest of D.C., or the speaker’s personal migration patterns, if they currently lived outside of Southeast. Such topics often prompted talk about how and why the neighborhood of Anacostia is changing, and occasioned discussion of how the speakers feel about those changes.

\textsuperscript{30} The circulator buses were instituted in Washington D.C. in 2005 (DCCirculator.com). They operate as a joint venture of the Washington Metro Area Transit Authority (WMATA) but are for-profit and are less expensive than the WMATA buses. Although they are used by DC commuters, the routes the Circulator buses run are catered to the needs of tourists and are organized around tourist attractions such as the baseball stadium, the train station, and the boutique shopping neighborhood of Georgetown. As a result, the Circulator buses are often seen as a sign of gentrification processes, a means to get people who otherwise don't have any intention of staying in an area to and from that area's tourist sites.
For both PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned speakers, the topic "change" occasioned the third-highest usage rates among the topics surveyed for this study. The PC-aligned speakers had a rate of 3.83% (compared to the highest-rate topic at 4.71%), and the PC-nonaligned speakers had a rate of 12.25% (compared to the highest-rate topic at 14.06%). These rates make sense considered in conjunction with the results of race talk, as for many, issues of gentrification are closely aligned with issues of race. The Washington Post noted in 2013 (Morello & Melnik 2013) that for the first time in half a century, Blacks make up just barely over 50% of the District's population (301,000 out of 602,000), as a result of exodus to P.G. County. Thus for most, the experience of gentrification is one which is racially loaded, and is situated alongside other narratives of place: the ways in which people make sense of the physical space in which they belong.

But what does talk about change actually entail, and what role do features of African American English play in helping speakers approach this topic? A detailed look at the different ways in which speakers talk about change in their neighborhood yields a great deal of insight into the ways in which talk about change operates.

Despite the higher density numbers for AAE use within the Change topic, in exploring individual speakers’ talk, very few long stretches containing AAE features appear. However, when speakers do use AAE to talk about change, its use is often highly salient, especially for PC-nonaligned speakers. For both groups of speakers, the increase in use of AAE features is quantifiable in the aggregate, if not entirely evident at the discourse level. I suggest that particularly for the PC-Aligned speakers, this pattern is reflective of a very carefully constructed dual identity on the part of the PC-aligned speakers that allows them to implicitly criticize the problems in the neighborhood (e.g. ever-increasing crime, loss of a close neighborhood feel)
without fully aligning with the processes of gentrification. This pattern becomes evident when we examine not only the bare numbers for their AAE feature use but also the ways in which they position themselves discursively relative to the stance object of the change their neighborhood is undergoing.

I turn now to the speech of five informants whose sections on Change are particularly illustrative of these patterns and consider them each in turn: Gus (male, PC-nonaligned), Delores (female, PC-nonaligned), Justin (male, PC-aligned), Tana (female, PC-aligned), and Susanne (female, PC-aligned). I consider both their use and non-use of AAE features, but also the ways in which they use other linguistic features to take up stances about the neighborhood and the changes it is undergoing. To contextualize their use or non-use of AAE features, I first consider the overall stancetaking each speaker undertakes, and then show how their use of AAE contributes, if it does, to their discourse about neighborhood change.

5.6.4.1 PC Nonaligned: Gus

Gus is a PC-nonaligned speaker in his eighties, who was born in Washington, D.C. and grew up in Anacostia. Like many Anacostia residents in their 70s and 80s, he was born in the now predominately white neighborhood of Georgetown, and then as the city’s demography shifted, moved to Anacostia as a small child. In response to a question about what Anacostia was like as he was growing up, he offers the quote in Excerpt 5.6:

Excerpt 5.6  Gus: A subtle community
1) and we had eh eh it was just a nice little
2) it was a subtle community
3) it was real subtle
4) Anacostia was a small community
5) it was really small
Gus emphasizes the close-knit nature of the neighborhood, he talks about it as being physically small. In another part of his talk about Southeast he describes it as a "close community, but also a closed community," in that people were neighborly, but also that it experience relatively little migration of residents in and out. He describes the community as "subtle" (lines 2 and 3), underscoring the peacefulness he ascribes to the neighborhood in other segments of his interview, and which he positions in another segment as being one of the neighborhood's chief attractions:

**Excerpt 5.7  Gus: If You Go to Ward 9**

6) I mean seriously  
7) you you you you see more  
8) and you see more whites in the neighborhood now  
9) because it offers something here  
10) you're offered you're offered peace and quiet  
11) schools  
12) neighborhoods  
13) you know it's it's it's nice  
14) and then if you leave here  
15) if you leave here  
16) and go out there to  
17) and I say this out to Ward 9  
18) which is PG County  
19) you know it's going be hard getting back in here

In line 5 of this second excerpt (which occurs a little less than two minutes after the first), Gus refers back to the qualities which make Anacostia an excellent place to live. "You're offered peace and quiet" (5) turns the peace and subtleness which have characterized the neighborhood into the neighborhood's most valuable asset—one which Gus frames the newcomers as essentially coming to steal.

He talks about the peace and quiet as being something that "you're offered." This use of the second person invites his listener, in this case, the interviewer, to put herself in the shoes of
someone considering living in the neighborhood. Interestingly, this referent shifts: in lines 2 and 3, the "you" is the existing, long-term resident of Anacostia who "see[s] more whites in the neighborhood now," but by the time Gus reaches line 5, the "you" has leaned toward referring to the newcomer who is being offered peace and quiet if "you" move to Anacostia. Then in line 9, "you" has shifted to the Anacostia resident who might choose to leave: "you" will be shut out if you leave Anacostia for Prince George's County. This shifting referent allows him to slowly move from why Anacostia is a prize place to live, into why people want to live there, and also to take up a stance that the people who are moving in are pushing others out. Interestingly, he initially frames the process of gentrification as being a choice on the part of the people who choose to leave, that they have made the decision to move out to PG County (13) and "it's going to be hard [for them] getting back in here" (14).

Yet as he goes on, he points to the idea that people are being shut out of Anacostia and that there is agency and culpability on the part of those who are working to bring new efficiencies such as the streetcar line to the neighborhood.

Excerpt 5.8   Gus and change

20) it will become bad for us
21) us meaning Black folks it's going
22) if I move out of Anacostia tomorrow
23) and want to come back
24) a house is going to cost me three times as much
25) but that's the new history of uh uh uh of Southeast
26) that's the new thing of Southeast that's going on
27) and it it there is no admittance to it.
28) Nobody wants to admit that
29) well yeah it's going on
30) no it
31) you know they'll tell you “no
32) no it's not

31Gus refers to PG County as “Ward 9,” in other words, the (nonexistent) 9th segment of District of Columbia. It is a term in common parlance among D.C. residents because of the large number of former D.C. residents who live there. (Wiggins, Morello & Keating 2011)
(33) that's not happening"
(34) that's a lie.
(35) You can see it.
(36) You can
(37) You can go out there and look at the subway.
(38) You can go out there and look at the bus.
(39) you know come on they're doing
(40) they're making vast improvements over here
(41) they ain't [AIN'T] make [ZERO TENSE] improvements for us
(42) they're not.
(43) They're making improvements to get to change the demographics
(44) all this history is going to be gone.

In this third section of speech Gus moves from simply comparing the neighborhood and praising its past to directly criticizing the processes going on in the neighborhood. He uses constructed dialogue (Tannen 2007b), in which he voices an imaginary response from those (presumably city planners, politicians, and others behind the change in the neighborhood) who disagree with what the residents of the neighborhood "can see" (16). Constructing the dialogue of those who insist change is not happening allows him to then take up an epistemic stance which positions himself as an expert observer in line 15: “That’s a lie.” Notice that this is utterly without hedging, or any epistemic markers of uncertainty such as “I think that’s a lie.” He is able to further this epistemic stance by appealing to the listener’s sense of what can be observed, and indeed, inviting them to go do so:

18) You can go out there and look at the subway.
19) You can go out there and look at the bus.32

32 In a section shortly before this, Gus, Chris, and the interviewer (me) are talking about the Circulator bus, as I commented that there was not one in Anacostia and was promptly corrected. It is likely that by “the bus” Gus is not referring to the city busses which travel through Anacostia but specifically meaning this tourist-oriented bus which as mentioned in a previous footnote, is seen by many as a sign of gentrification.
Appealing to this kind of observable data strengthens Gus’s stance as the authority on the change that is happening in his neighborhood. Then, interestingly, he uses a highly salient feature of AAE to underscore his point:

41) they *ain't make* improvements for us

This exclamation uses the only two features of AAE used in this entire 25-line stretch of talk, and they occur next to each other: *ain’t* and zero-tense marking on *make* for making. The latter is perhaps even more interesting as the line immediately preceding it retains the tense marking:

40) they're *making* vast improvements over here

As happens with other speakers in this dataset, for instance, with Chess, in his discussion of the prison system, Gus’s syntactic parallel here serves to emphasize the contrast: an ambiguous “they” are making improvements, but not for the people who live there. Both the structure and the use of *ain’t make* serve to heighten the distinction between the two sentences. Combined with Gus’s epistemic stancetaking earlier, positioning him as the expert, his final exclamation allows him to draw a rather damning conclusion about what is happening around him.

5.6.4.2 PC-Nonaligned: Delores

Delores, like Gus, is a retired PC-nonaligned resident. Although she completed a bachelor's degree, she did so after her retirement in her early sixties, spending most of her working life in jobs which did not require such a credential. Like Gus, she is a lifelong resident of Anacostia, and she attends the same church.
When Delores discusses the way in which the neighborhood is changing, like Gus, she frames it in terms of racial change, observing the newcomers to her part of the neighborhood:

**Excerpt 5.9 Delores’s New Neighbors**

1) As you come up on the left hand side
2) it's [EXISTENTIAL IT] some houses there um that have is--
3) and is [LEVELING] being remodeled
4) and they Ø occupied by white people
5) you know that's a good thing
6) all us Ø supposed to live together
7) but this I've never known a white person to live on Morris Road
8) never.
9) So when I walked down the street
10) I introduced myself
11) and spoke with them and everything.
12) Seem to be nice people.
13) They said they Ø enjoying the neighborhood
14) I tell them good

Interestingly, what Delores describes as being her method of talking with her neighbors is exactly the aspect of the neighborhood which others claim is lost: consider Gus’s discussion of the neighborhood as being “small” and “subtle.” This also contrasts to the ways in which the PC-aligned speakers talk about what has been lost in the neighborhood, which I will discuss in the next sections. But for Delores, this aspect is not a part of the neighborhood which is lost, but rather one which she portrays herself as actively cultivating. Even while she expresses her surprise at "never known a white person to live on Morris Road" she maintains that "all us supposed to live together," explicitly taking a positive stance toward at least the racial integration. 33

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33 Delores takes up this same positive stance in other parts of the interview also, by contrasting her experiences growing up in the neighborhood during the Jim Crow era, where at that time, although Anacostia had a large number of white residents, street by street, the neighborhood was very segregated, such that, as she describes, "Black people had to cross the white part to go home [from work] and white people had to cross the Black part."
In this stretch of talk, she uses 5 AAE features, three instances of copula deletion, and one each of be-leveling and existential it. However, in this stretch, she only once explicitly takes up a stance regarding the neighborhood change:

5) you know that's a good thing
6) all us Ø supposed to live together

As discussed in section 5.6.2, Johnstone (2009) points out that one function of a sentence with the main verb as a copular be is to state a “universal truth,” and in so doing, give the speaker a stance of moral authority. Delores does not equivocate or offer explanation for this statement, “all us Ø supposed to live together” is presented as shared and understood fact, allowing her to highlight that she feels

At the same time, however, like Gus, she takes an explicit stance about some of the infrastructure manifestations of the neighborhood’s changes. Talking about the same streetcar that Gus says "ain't for us" (Excerpt 3, Line 22), she has the following to offer:

Excerpt 5.10  Delores on Improvements
1) now what I think is a terrible money-wasting idea is these trolley cars
2) They done [COMPLETEIVE] had the tracks down for five years
3) I haven't seen no [NEG CONCORD] trolley car run yet
4) that was um
5) Adrian that mayor
6) Fenty
7) That was his baby
8) And why would you have a trolley car when you have buses and a subway
9) you know
10) you see there at H Street is loaded with the tracks
11) Trolley car hadn't be-
12) and they was [ZERO TENSE] trying to build that four or five years
13) They have the trolley the tracks down there by the metro but
14) um by um Anacostia metro station
15) but the way the tro- the tracks are set up
16) It would be to carry people to um

34 Adrian Fenty, Mayor of Washington, D.C. from 2007-2011.
17) Homeland Security

Like Gus, Delores takes a very explicit stance against the "improvements" being made to the neighborhood. I choose to put this in scare quotes because it is evident from Delores's talk that she does not consider the advent of the streetcar to be an improvement being made to the neighborhood, but rather explicitly states that it is a "money-wasting idea." (1) She goes on to levy several other charges, pointing out that the streetcars are superfluous in the presence of "busses and a subway" (10). And like Gus, although she does not explicitly state that the changes are not being made for the current residents, she points out that "the way ... the tracks are set up, it would be to carry people to um Homeland Security." Thus although she does not outright say the new streetcar is not for the current residents, she points out that it will lead people to the new offices where, presumably non-residents or new, gentrifying residents will work.

As with Gus, Delores recruits features of AAE to make her point. Of the three features which appear in this extract, two occur back to back when she makes the move to talking about what she sees as wasteful:

7) now what I think is a terrible money-wasting idea is these trolley cars
8) They done [COMPLETEIVE] had the tracks down for five years
9) I haven't seen no [NEG CONCORD] trolley car run yet

This excerpt occurs as Delores is slightly changing the topic from the changes she views as positive in the neighborhood, such as her new white neighbors integrating the street, to the things she views as negative. She views this as negative for two important reasons: one, it wastes money (1), but it also will not serve herself and other existing residents of the neighborhood (15-17). This is reminiscent of Gus’s exclamation, “They ain’t make improvements for us!” (Excerpt
Delores likewise pulls out the stops on her AAE feature usage when she makes her own point about who the changes will serve.

This use is reminiscent of Podesva’s (2008) study of a long-term resident of a neighborhood in Northwest D.C. which was rapidly gentrifying at the time of her interview. I discussed this study in Chapter 2, however, it is useful to revisit it here. Within the context of a study of coronal stop deletion among a dozen D.C. residents, half white and half African American, Podesva looks carefully at the way a single African American subject, “Carrie,” uses the feature variably throughout her interview. He finds that Carrie deletes significantly more when she is talking about the ways in which her neighborhood is changing; effectively, she signals her opposition to gentrification linguistically, through her use of an ethnoracially-marked linguistic feature. Via its use, she is able to invoke an African American identity, and since unlike in Southeast, the gentrification pattern in Northwest does have a significant racial component, by invoking that identity, she is affirming her status as an original resident who belongs.

It is interesting to note, then, that for Delores and Gus, these clusters of features similarly arise out of discussions of belonging: both speakers use them most when they are discussing that which is changing and to which they see no benefit to themselves and their neighbors. These things are framed through their descriptions both explicitly (Gus) and implicitly (Delores, highlighting where the tracks will go) as “not for us.” As longtime residents, Delores and Gus have a stake in opposing those changes, and affirming their status as residents who should be served by new amenities. As they are older, PC-nonaligned speakers, it is not surprising to see a number of AAE morphosyntactic features in the speech of speakers like Gus and Delores. These clusters, however, and the stances they accompany, show that the use of these features is
strategic—even for speakers who would nevertheless be expected to use AAE more than the PC-aligned speakers in this study—and that AAE plays an important role in allowing speakers to mark stances and reinforce their own identities as long-term, African American residents of the neighborhood.

5.6.4.3 PC-Aligned: Justin

I turn now to a closer analysis of the talk of two of the PC-aligned speakers. Recall that for the PC-aligned speakers, just as with the PC-nonaligned speakers, the topic of change occasions the third-highest rate of usage of AAE (3.83% of intonation units containing at least one feature compared to the highest-rate topic, race, at 4.71%). Because this is spread across dozens of intonation units and is proportionately lower than it is for the PC-nonaligned speakers, there are not as many stretches of speech for the PC-aligned speakers where more than one or two features occur. In this section, I look at some of the ways in which the PC-aligned speakers talk about the change going on in their neighborhood, which provides micro-level explanations for the macro-level patterning.

Justin is a 61-year-old teacher from the School network, who works in Southeast D.C. and grew up there. In his interview, he talks a great deal about how the neighborhood has changed over the decades, offering a number of themes which recur in the talk of the other interviewees.

When asked by the interviewer directly "how has the neighborhood [Anacostia] changed over the decades," Justin provides the following:

**Excerpt 5.11 Justin on the old neighborhood**

1) you don't see children outside playing anymore
2) you don't see that
3) you see um
4) uh you have to have um organized activities if that's- places that you go to
5) and you, you, you hardly see that, that kind of thing so
6) and you know Halloween
7) because you knew your neighbors
8) and you, you could go around, you know the block
9) and knock on doors um
10) the expectation that um
11) every uh
12) uh adults were responsible for every child within their view
13) the idea that you were safe as a child
14) because if someone was bothering you
15) all you had to do is go and stand by an adult
16) and you, you had that sense of safety, the sense of, of knowing people
17) and even if you did not know that adult, that sense that
18) you knew that that adult be- by virtue of the fact there was an adult was cared
   about you and your safety
19) there was a sense of, of understanding what your boundaries were
20) so that's one of the, the biggest things um
21) speaking to people
22) always saying hi
23) you know the expectation when you walk down the street
24) you pass another human being
25) you're gonna say hello, you're gonna say good morning
26) you're gonna say something
27) so um
28) um that, that, that sense of, of neighborhood um i- has been missing um

In this, he creates a picture of what Anacostia initially was by contrasting it to what it is now. Although later in the interview he offers examples of the ways that the neighborhood has improved, citing "modernization" and "things are being built ... it's become a very beautiful city" it is interesting to note that he begins by articulating what Anacostia is no longer: a neighborhood where children are outside playing, where adults are responsible for every child.

He uses this ideal image of a place where children played outside and adults looked after them, which he calls a "sense of safety" (line 16), and constructs a negative stance toward what the neighborhood is becoming. In three places he describes these things as what one no longer sees in the neighborhood: line 1, "You don't see children out playing" and its repetition in line 2. He repeats this again in line 5, "you hardly see that." The contrast between what the "you" could
do in the past and what the "you" in the present doesn't observe positions Justin in opposition to what "you" can currently see.

In fact, this use of "you" allows him to discuss the neighborhood in quite an interesting way. Eight out of the twenty-six intonation units specifically begin with "you" and indeed, "you" is the subject of nearly every clause in this excerpt, with a few exceptions: "the expectation" (ln. 10), "the idea" (ln 13), the existential there in line 17, and "that" in lines 18 and 26. Aside from these sentences, every sentence's subject is "you."

However, there are multiple "you"s at work in this segment. One is the "you" that is a somewhat generic "one," but which invites the interviewer to put herself in the shoes of a person currently evaluating the neighborhood; this is the "you don't see children playing anymore." (1) Another "you" has the referent of Justin in the time when the neighborhood met the ideal against which he contrasts its current state: "you were safe as a child" could easily be "I was safe as a child." The second-person nature of both these referents invites the listener (in this case, the interviewer) to place herself in the shoes of Justin-who-was and Justin-who-is; implicitly asking her to consider the way the neighborhood has changed as though it is part of her own experience (and to be certain, she can walk out from the interview and experience the neighborhood as Justin describes).

In Justin's discussion of change, he contrasts the neighborhood as it once was both through his parallel syntactic structure of “you [verb]” coupled with the changing referents of "you." He begins with the things that “you don’t see” in lines 1-5:

1) you don't see children outside playing anymore
2) you don't see that
3) you see um
4) uh you have to have um organized activities if that's- places that you go to
5) and you, you, you hardly see that, that kind of thing so
Through the sentences’ repetitive structure, Justin is able to quickly build a case for what’s missing: children playing and organized activities. The structure has the effect of highlighting the “don’t/hardly” (lines 1, 2, and 5 contrasted with line 3) and thus quickly establishing that there is a negative change going on in the neighborhood. Justin uses the same pattern when he shifts to the “you” whose referent is “me/my peers as a child:”

8) and you, **you could go** around, you know the block
9) and knock on doors um
10) the expectation that um
11) every uh
12) uh adults were responsible for every child within their view
13) the idea that **you were safe** as a child
14) because if someone was bothering you
15) all you had to do is go and stand by an adult
16) and you, **you had that sense of safety**, the sense of, of knowing people
17) and even if **you did not know** that adult, that sense that
18) **you knew that that adult** be- by virtue of the fact there was an adult was cared about you and your safety

Interestingly, this pattern directly contradicts the first, in that each of these statements contains no negation. The present-tense “you” in the first section is reiterated three times as “you don’t/hardly see,” but the past-tense “you” in the second part has no negation: “you could go,” (8), “you were safe” (13), “you had that sense of safety” (16), “you knew that adult” (18). In fact, the only place where “you” is the safe child of the past and the sentence has any sort of negation is in line 17, “Even if you did not know that adult,” a negation inside an embedded clause whose main purpose in negation is to set up the contrast in line 18: “you knew that adult.” Thus both the past vs. present “you,” and the presence or absence of negation work to set up a contrast between the neighborhood that was and the neighborhood that is.

In so doing, Justin is able to take up the stance that the overall change in the neighborhood has not been positive without explicitly saying so—he does not, for instance, refer
to the neighborhood's crime rate or jobless rate as some other interviewees do (see the discussion of Jackie in section 5.6.3). The contrast is created entirely through syntactic structure in the reiterations of what "you don't see," and in the shifting referent of "you." This allows Justin to critique the neighborhood in which he's lived his whole life without explicitly criticizing any specific aspect that it has lost, remaining positive with the things he says about his neighborhood even as he is able to take up a negative stance toward how it has changed.

5.6.4.4 PC-Aligned: Tana

Like Justin, Tana draws similar contrasts when talking about the neighborhood as she knew it growing up and how she knows it now as a professional adult resident there. Tana is a 44-year-old woman from the Museum network. She is a former government contractor, now non-profit worker who grew up in Anacostia, and after a brief time living out of the neighborhood, has returned to live there as an adult.

When asked about how the neighborhood has changed, like Justin, Tana offers a description emphasizing the safety and friendliness of the neighborhood:

**Excerpt 5.12  Tana on change**

1) we never felt unsafe there  
2) didn't feel unsafe.  
3) There were playgrounds there.  
4) The swimming pool was there.  
5) There was a basketball court.  
6) A baseball diamond  
7) a smaller pool that we called the bathtub  
8) So but um that community started to really change  
9) I think in the late seventies  
10) you know as people began to move out  
11) some people began to move out  
12) the the seams seem to be fraying  
13) or something  
14) you know where you didn't know as many people there as you knew before  
15) or people didn't speak to you as much as they did before
In this excerpt, Tana is referring specifically to not only Anacostia, but a particular part of the neighborhood, Barry Farms, a public housing project which now in the 2010s, is home to a great many drug crimes and is largely responsible for Anacostia’s negative reputation throughout the city and even throughout the world for being crime-ridden. This is the "there" to which she refers in lines 1-4; although Tana herself did not live in Barry Farms, her godmother Amy lived and raised her children there, and Tana spent a great deal of time playing with her godsisters in the community recreation centers that were part of the housing project.

Like Justin, Tana draws an immediate contrast with what was and what is, through the use of words like "didn't feel unsafe." Although she does not specifically claim that currently she does feel unsafe (or she would if she were to visit Barry Farms), as it does with Justin, the use of “didn’t” contrasts with an unstated difference. That in the past she did not feel unsafe automatically creates an implicature that at the moment she, or others do feel unsafe. This contrast allows her to evaluate negatively the change that has happened in her neighborhood, and present it as a change away from an ideal, without specifically stating so.

Similarly, as does Justin, Tana talks about the change in terms of a dwindling of interpersonal relationships. Justin, for instance, talks about,

21) speaking to people
22) always saying hi
23) you know the expectation when you walk down the street
24) you pass another human being
25) you're gonna say hello

35 In the course of my research about the neighborhood more broadly, I came across a blog post on the Washington Post website (Wilson 2013) concerning warnings from other governments about U.S. cities. In the French Foreign ministry’s instructions about Washington D.C. is the phrase: Le quartier Anacostia n’est pas recommandable de jour comme de nuit: “Don’t go to Anacostia, day or night.”
36 also an informant in this dataset
Tana echoes these sentiments in lines 14 and 15: "you know, where you didn't know as many people there as you knew before/ or people didn't speak to you as much as they did before." Thus for Tana and Justin, one of the key things that is missing is the "sense of neighborhood" as Justin puts it, and the interaction that neighbors have with each other. This is not a universal sentiment, as will be seen in the excerpts from Delores, below.

The last interesting part of Tana's change talk has to do with the word change itself. When the interviewer brings up the word gentrification, Tana has this to say in answer:

**Excerpt 5.13  Tana and gentrification**

1) so I don't even use the you notice I didn't use the g word
2) I didn't use it
3) I don't use it
4) I don't use it
5) because when when you use that word
6) it feels negative
7) yep it's a you know you say the word gentrification
8) and it translates into these people are being pushed out
9) by these other people
10) whoever the others are
11) they're pushing them out
12) and it's unfair
13) and it's racist
14) and it's this
15) and it's that
16) and it's
17) um class warfare it's all of these different things
18) I didn't use it
19) It's change

Tana unpacks gentrification, a word which in another part of the interview, she jokingly calls "a whole paragraph in a word." However, here she outlines each of the loads that she sees gentrification to carry: that it "translates into these people are being pushed out" and "it's unfair" and "it's racist." She repeats five times that she “didn't/doesn't use it” and instead adds, "It's change."
The explicit rejection of the word *gentrification* on Tana's part is a reflection of the same careful neutrality she maintains in her previous excerpt, where by contrasting the old and new, she can take up a negative stance toward the new without explicitly being negative about the current state of neighborhood.

5.6.4.5 PC-Aligned: Susanne

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, one difficulty with the PC-aligned speakers is that while their overall rate of usage of AAE features is significantly higher in the Change topic, the rate of use is still low enough that few speakers use clusters of features in the way we see with the PC-nonaligned speakers like Delores and Gus. There is one clear example in the data, which I examine here.

Susanne is a 53-year-old school administrator from tand neighbors who knew one another. he School social network. She was born and raised in Southeast, and like many of the PC-aligned, has moved to nearby PG county, though she still works at the School, which is situated in the heart of the neighborhood. As a result, her stake in the neighborhood and its growth is high.

Like Tana and Justin, Susanne’s discussion of change focuses on the differences between what the neighborhood was and what it is now. She focuses on a number of the same issues: adults looking out for children, safety, and neighbors who knew one another. When the interviewer asks her if she feels the neighborhood is changing for the better or for the worse, she replies quickly:

**Excerpt 5.14 Susanne: For the Better**

1) for the better
2) um because
3) I remember when they re- renamed the street down the street
4) um
5) I remember um
6) A lot of the different
7) library like if we really wanted to go to a library
8) we had to go downtown to the library
9) because it [EXISTENTIAL IT] really wasn't
10) a big library to do research over here
11) and now we have more libraries over here
12) that we can actually the kids can utilize

The immediate response from Susanne is that the neighborhood has changed for the better, and she points at once to a feature of the neighborhood that represents that change: the Anacostia Branch Library, which is one of the nicest in Washington, D.C. Thus Susanne’s explicit evaluation of the change in the neighborhood is that the ways in which it is changing are for the benefit of and in recognition of the people there. In line 3, she refers to “when they renamed the street down the street,” a reference to the former Nichols avenue, which was renamed Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue in 1971.

As Susanne goes on talking, however, she begins to shift away from this explicit evaluation of the change as good, and as she shifts her evaluation, she shifts her speech as well. For 57 intonation units, there is only one AAE morphosyntactic feature, the existential it in line 9, above. But like Justin and Tana, Susanne begins to describe the way the neighborhood was more close-knit when she was growing up:

**Excerpt 5.15 Susanne: No Block Parties**

1) we used to do uh um
2) like block parties
3) but they don't do that anymore a lot
4) but they do do a lot of cookouts and family gatherings like birthday parties
5) and stuff like that
6) yes
7) I know
8) I enjoyed the block parties
9) because y- all the neighbors
10) you just block off the street and all the neighbors would come out
11) and we would have a good time
12) and you got a chance to actually
13) um mingle with your neighbors
...
24) it's really a disadvantage for the children.
25) you know because
26) you know you knew
27) that Miss Miss Anne on the street
28) or whoever was looking
29) while Mommy might have been at work
30) you know you couldn't
31) it [EXISTENTIAL IT] was no getting away
32) or doing things that was not [ZERO TENSE] right
33) because you had somebody always looking
34) and correcting it
35) you know you're not supposed to do that
36) so yeah
37) that I'm sh-- the only thing I can see is that
38) it's [EXISTENTIAL IT] a lot of grandparents raising the kids now
39) and the parents are getting younger
40) you know having kids younger
41) and so they don't have that experience

In this section, Susanne is changing her initial evaluation of the ways the neighborhood has changed. Despite her initial explicit evaluation of “for the better” (1) in excerpt 5.14, as she discusses further the ways in which the neighborhood has changed, she begins to talk about the lack of community and safety for children, much as did Tana and Justin. What is particularly intriguing about Susanne’s discussion of the same problem is the cluster of AAE features we see in this section: between lines 24 and 41, when she is discussing exactly what is a “disadvantage for the children” (24), she uses existential it twice in lines 31 and 37, and a zero tense marker once. These three features make up a rate across these lines of over 18%, and represent the same kind of cluster we see in the speech of Delores and Gus. Unlike Delores and Gus, however, Susanne does not make an explicit negative evaluation of what is happening in the neighborhood. Instead, her evaluation of the neighborhood change as negative is much more
subtle and accomplished in the same way as is for Justin and Tana: through the contrast between what was and what is. For instance, she talks about what used to be:

1) we used to do uh um
2) like block parties

and provides an explanation as to why this was a good thing:

10) you just block off the street and all the neighbors would come out
11) and we would have a good time
12) and you got a chance to actually
13) um mingle with your neighbors

For Susanne, the benefit is not merely in having the parties, as she points out that the residents of Anacostia still do have private parties (4-5). But the benefit of the block parties were their ability to foster a sense of community, an opportunity to meet one’s neighbors. This led to a sense of safety for the children in the community. She then goes on to describe the effect on the neighborhood children:

30) you know you couldn't
31) it [EXISTENTIAL IT] was no getting away
32) or doing things that was not [ZERO TENSE] right

Like Tana and Justin, Susanne sets up this contrast through negation and through tense: she uses sentences like “you couldn’t” (30) and “it was no getting away or doing things that was not right” (31-32) to indicate the bad things that children couldn’t do by virtue of being watched, thus positively evaluating the past. Then, her use of AAE combines with her positive evaluation to juxtapose the past with the present. As with the other PC-aligned speakers, this coupling of positive evaluation with past tense and negation creates an implicature: contrasting with now, without explicitly stating that now is not as good.
One possible explanation for this very careful negotiation of implicit versus explicit stancetaking on the part of Justin, Tana, and Susanne has to do with the position of PC-aligned residents of Anacostia throughout the last several decades. Although the neighborhood is changing, and greater numbers of middle class African American residents (and a few white, as Delores points out) are beginning to move into the area, the perception remains among residents of other parts of D.C. and among those who have left Southeast D.C. for the suburbs that Anacostia is still a dangerous, undesirable place to live. As PC-aligned residents who, by this thinking, ought to have moved to more affluent and safer neighborhoods such as those in Northwest, the PC-aligned residents must subtly justify their choice to remain. By focusing on what the neighborhood used to be like and using tense and negation to create the contrast between then and now, both Justin and Tana are able to indicate that they do feel the neighborhood has changed for the worse, and yet are able to avoid explicitly aligning themselves with others who criticize it as an undesirable place to live.

For Susanne, the picture is a bit more complicated, as she is one of the PC-aligned who have moved to the suburbs; she now lives in adjacent Prince George’s county. Yet she does some of the same things that Justin and Tana do with her talk; implicitly criticizing the present by praising the past. Praising the past gives additional benefit for Susanne; the contrast with the present, and its implication that the present state of the neighborhood is not what it was when she grew up also serves her by way of explaining why it is that she’s moved away. Thus not only does her use of African American English in describing the past provide an additional layer of linguistic contrast with how she describes the present, it ties her, as an African American woman, to the predominately African American neighborhood which existed when she was small.
Though its use, she is able to subtly claim her authenticity in the neighborhood, giving her the authority to make the implicit criticism of its current state as she does.

It is this function that gives the most likely explanation for why "change" is a high-rate topic for PC-aligned speakers. Although unsurprisingly there are not long stretches of talk in PC-aligned speakers' interviews in which we see many features in a row, nor the kinds of close, back-to-back clustering that we see in the above examples from Delores and Gus, the topic nevertheless occasions higher rates of feature use. It is evident in the excerpts from Tana and Justin that for PC-aligned speakers, taking up stances against what is going on in their neighborhood is a delicate act: on the one hand, they are long-term residents who have every bit as much a right to criticize the uptick in crime and the loss of "sense of neighborhood" that has changed Anacostia, as well as to oppose the processes of gentrification that are the result of the depressed real estate market. But even while they are long-term African American residents of the neighborhood, they are also the same professional class people who are slowly pushing others out.

In much the same way that contrasting what the neighborhood was without mentioning what the neighborhood is allows them to criticize without being overt, features of AAE allow PC-aligned speakers also to continue to align themselves with the rich African American identity of the neighborhood. By using AAE in talking about race and change, PC-aligned speakers can assert a distinctly African American identity, preserving their authority to make race-based claims about race relations and about the demographic changes taking place in their neighborhood. Even though the overall usage rates for PC-aligned speakers are but a fraction of the rates of the PC-nonaligned, when and where they choose to use it is important: it helps them strike the very careful balance of maintaining the professional class identity shared with those
who are moving in, while maintaining alignment with those long-term residents of the neighborhood alongside whom they have always lived.

5.7 Conclusion

For PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned speakers alike, AAE plays an important part in the ways in which they address different topics. This use is evident on the macro level, when their usage rates across topics are compared, and on the micro level, when we look at what these features do specifically in interaction.

For many of the speakers, using AAE features, particularly copula deletion, allows them to set up contrasts: for Chess, setting up differences between those who fuel the prison-industrial complex and those whom that complex affects; for Grey, to separate out the non-workers to emphasize his sons’ successful work. For Jackie, copula deletion allows her to separate a “you” from an actual co-present interlocutor; allowing her to criticize those whom she sees as lazy and undeserving of government assistance. For Kiesha, copula deletion allows her to make a discourse-level distinction between the act of racial profiling and the necessity of responding to its reality—allowing her to instruct her son to dress and behave a certain way without endorsing the actions of those who judge him. And for PC-nonaligned and aligned speakers, AAE allows speakers to index their membership as longtime residents of the neighborhood, fortifying their authority to comment on its change.

The differences between the PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned speakers at the discourse level reveal several interesting notes, however. For PC-nonaligned speakers, AAE comes up in separating things to be critiqued quite overtly, particularly in the case of Gus and Delores’ criticisms of the gentrification processes and Chess’s critique of the prison-industrial complex.
For PC-aligned speakers, however, such as Kiesha and Susanne, the use of AAE is coupled with very subtle negotiations of identity: if you negatively evaluate your child’s self-presentation, are you aligning with those who judge your child’s worth based on that appearance? If you overtly criticize the state of change in the neighborhood, then are you undermining your own authority to speak as a person who is invested in its future?

In the talk of Justin, Tana, and Susanne, we see how carefully they construct their critique of the neighborhood: it is not through outright statements that the neighborhood has too much crime or that the neighbors are too fragmented, but though the contrast with the Anacostia they knew as children, and the implicature, achieved through syntactic features like tense and negation, that those days are gone. In Susanne’s speech, we see the addition of a short cluster of AAE features, further contrasting the present with the past.

Anacostia, and Southeast, D.C. more generally is known for its crime and poverty, and yet is on the brink of gentrification processes. The role of the African American professional class in the midst of that is one fraught with contradictions: if to be from Anacostia is to be working class, then how does one maintain one’s professional class identity while keeping solidarity with one’s working class neighbors? And if the new aspects of the neighborhood are to serve the professional-class newcomers (as Delores and Gus suggest), how does one reconcile a perceived need for those amenities with the fact that they are aimed squarely at only the segment of society that you happen to occupy?

Even with the income level rising, Southeast D.C. is still in the process of becoming more and more African American. Thus to have a Southeast identity is to have an African American identity. While we see very careful negotiations on the part of PC-aligned speakers when it comes to taking stances about issues of race, and place, the quantitative patterning of AAE
across topics suggests that AAE helps PC-aligned speaker navigate that complexity. Its use emphasizes their African American identities, and by virtue of that, aligns them with their neighbors, no matter what class.
6.1 Research Questions

This dissertation set out to address three interrelated research questions:

1. Are features of African American English used by these professional class African American speakers in the negotiation and projection of their professional class identity? If so, which kinds of features are implicated: phonological features, morphosyntactic features, or both, and how are these features used?

2. Specifically, does the use of African American English facilitate the negotiation of identities related to gentrification processes, and if so, how? What does that use tell us about how these speakers use language to negotiate place and class related identities?

3. What does the study of AAE in the speech of these professional-class aligned speakers tell us about the possible social meaning of African American English more generally?

I address each in turn below.

6.1.1 Features

1. Are features of African American English used by these professional class African American speakers in the negotiation and projection of their professional class identity? If so, which kinds of features are implicated: phonological features, morphosyntactic features, or both, and how are these features used?

The evidence presented in chapter 4 suggests that final consonant devoicing is a phonological feature whose use patterns by class status. Class status emerges as the most significant social factor when speakers are not considered as a random effect. Additionally, class status interacts with other features such as gender in such a way that the effect of class status
supersedes other patterns; while, for instance, there is a gender pattern whereby men devoice final consonants more than do women, PC-aligned women devoice even more than PC-nonaligned men (and PC-aligned men even more still).

The feature patterns in ways which are at the same time predictable and unexpected. That male speakers are more likely to devoice suggests that this feature patterns like many other nonstandard features (and like a great number of features of African American English). At the same time, however, its class patterning is exactly the opposite of what would be predicted if it were being perceived as simply a nonstandard English feature—the PC-aligned speakers use it more, not less.

These findings suggest that for professional class speakers, final consonant devoicing is indexing something, if not directly indexing class. Its similarity to variants such as coronal stop retention and released [t] allow it to be iconized as a “precise” pronunciation, and as such, as a “correct” pronunciation. That speakers are attending to this meaning of “correctness” is further bolstered by two pieces of evidence from speakers’ topic based patterning: one, that PC-aligned speakers show a wider range for this variable, and two, that topics about situations in which an attention to standard speech might be more important tend to occasion shorter VOTs. That correctness, and the ability of that correct pronunciation to tap into a second-order index professional-class identity that as a marker of class, even while it maintains the social meanings of African American English suggested by its patterning vis-à-vis age and gender within the PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned groups. I argue that this is evidence that the feature operates in two indexical fields at once: one, indexing African American identity, and the other, indexing hyper-articulateness and correctness, which in turn, allows speakers to index an identity as a member of the professional class.
In chapter 5, the exploration speakers' use of morphosyntactic features of AAE across topics reveals that as would be predicted by prior studies of African American English, PC-nonaligned speakers use AAE with greater frequency across all intonation units in all topics than do PC-aligned speakers. Many of the same features are recruited by speakers in both groups in topic-based style shifting, and significant differences in which features were used were not evident.

Nevertheless, there are interesting patterns in the ways these features function within the topics under discussion. Both PC-aligned and PC-nonaligned speakers exhibit their highest rates of usage in the same set of topics (change, race) and their lowest in the same set of topics (education, work). These findings suggest that for both sets of speakers, AAE is on the one hand, a feature reserved for non-professional contexts, and on the other, a valuable tool for asserting African American identity in topics where such identity is highly salient. For both groups of speakers, AAE features, particularly copula deletion, are intimately involved in their ability to position themselves relative to the other speakers with whom they speak (for instance in the case of Kiesha and her son) and to take up and emphasize particular stances with respect to the topic at hand (as with the clustering of features occurring in Gus’, Delores’, and Susanne’s talk about change).

6.1.2 Gentrification

Specifically, does the use of African American English facilitate the negotiation of identities related to gentrification processes, and if so, how? What does that use tell us about how these speakers use language to negotiate place and class related identities?

In chapter 5, we see that for all speakers, the topic of change occasions greater use of the morphosyntactic features of AAE under study in this project. This is as true for the PC-aligned
speakers, who have a significantly lower rate of morphosyntactic feature use across the board as it is for the PC-nonaligned speakers. Further, morphosyntactic features of AAE collocate with other features in situations in which speakers are taking up stances which are critical of gentrification processes. These findings match those of Podesva (2008), who found that the phonological feature of CSD, associated with African American English, is used more frequently by a speaker in his study in style-shifting on topics directly related to gentrification.

Anderson (2008) finds that in “race talk,” that is, overarching discourse that links race to linguistic practice, speakers use features associated with African American Language styles in order to assert the validity of the claims which they make. In talk about gentrification, speakers’ recruitment of African American Language allow them to assert themselves as long-time residents of the neighborhood, who have a stake in its change and whose opinions regarding that change are to be valued and heard.

6.1.3 Social Meaning of AAE and Professional Class

3. What does the study of the use of aspects of AAE in the speech of these professional-class aligned speakers tell us about the possible social meanings of African American English more generally? Is it the case that African American English is as heterogenous as the community that speaks it, or are there overarching patterns that can inform our understanding about the English of African Americans and how it is used?

Both final consonant devoicing and morphosyntactic features in style shifting provide evidence that for PC-aligned speakers, the meanings of features cannot be easily reduced to a single indexical link. While studies such as Rahman's (2008) indicate that one possible use of African American English is in creating solidarity between groups of speakers, particularly in
private and often racially-segregated contexts such as home and church, features of AAE also show up in topics which are associated with racial identity and place.

Perhaps more interesting is the isolation of one feature, final consonant devoicing, which appears to be robust in the speech of PC-aligned African American speakers. Because it patterns similarly to other variables which are considered hyperarticulations, patterns by topic with higher usage rates occurring in topics where standard language and correctness are predicted by the topic, and co-occurs with speakers' demonstrated high levels of awareness of their own phonology and the necessity of speaking correctly and clearly, it is apparent that one meaning of final consonant devoicing is something along the lines of "correctness," allowing the speakers to recruit it to mean not only "African American" but also "professional class."

A PC-aligned African American identity is one which is inherently intersectional. A PC-aligned speaker will have need to assert an African American identity, of course, but that identity is complex. In the case of Anacostia, the forces of change in the city which have driven out of the District first affluent whites, and then affluent African Americans, have resulted in the neighborhood being a neighborhood of extreme poverty. Thus being an Anacostia resident implies social class—a middle-class African American lives in nearby P.G. County, not Anacostia.

Similarly, Anacostia has borne the brunt of the racial migrations within the District. Where once it was a highly integrated (albeit carefully Jim Crow separated) neighborhood, it now is over 94% African American. To be a resident of Anacostia implies race.

This then creates two planes on which an African American, professional class-aligned Anacostia resident needs to operate. On the one hand, she will align herself with her residency in Anacostia, and therefore, with the African American identity which the demographics of the city
imbue. Here, "African American" and "Anacostia" work hand-in-hand; affirming one identity affirms the other.

On the other hand, "Anacostia," by virtue of the patterns of flight which has taken place over the last fifty years, implies lower socio-economic status. Thus to maintain an identity which incorporates residency in Anacostia creates an implied lower socioeconomic status which for the PC-aligned speaker, is not the case. The resultant negotiation is one which calls on the PC-aligned speakers to walk a tightrope of identity: preserving their alignment with African Americans, preserving their alignment with the neighborhood they call home, and yet carefully separating themselves out as speakers of higher socio-economic status than would otherwise be predicted by Anacostia itself.

For professional class speakers, there is a precarious balance which must be struck between professional class identity, predicated on situations which privilege standardness and articulateness such as higher education and business interaction, and the need to simultaneously assert an identity of a local, African American speaker. This can be seen most readily in the PC-aligned speakers' talk about change in their neighborhood—for these speakers, discussing the neighborhood and how its demographics have shifted over the decades requires a balancing act of not explicitly criticizing the neighborhood as it is, but allowing a positive image of the neighborhood as it once was to create the contrast which makes the evaluation they cannot explicitly make.

In the case of both studies in this project, the evidence makes clear that AAE features make it possible for PC-aligned speakers to index the multiplicative identities which they must negotiate, providing a means for them to align with other members of their community even
while maintaining and encouraging the professional class identity which might otherwise separate them.

6.2 Limitations

This study, like any study, has its limitations. In this case, they are twofold: the nature of the sample, and the collection method of using two interviewers.

6.2.1 The sample

The sample for this study is indisputably a sample of convenience. Neither interviewer conducting interviews for this study is a resident of Anacostia, and as a result, interviewees were mostly recruited through more official, publicly accessible contexts: churches, schools, and the community museum. With the exception of one interview, Amy and Vee, who are family members of another interviewee, all the interviewees were contacted through these sorts of official channels.

This of course skews the population in the study toward the PC-aligned speakers, as they are the ones who are working at the museum or the school. A more even collection of data would have provided a balanced sample of PC-nonaligned speakers. Although many of the conclusions about PC-aligned speakers can be made based primarily on their intragroup data and intragroup variation, a larger sample of PC-nonaligned speakers would allow more robust conclusions to be drawn about the ways in which PC-nonaligned speakers differ or not from the PC-aligned speakers.

A second issue with the sample is its size. At eighteen speakers, it provides a relatively narrow lens into the linguistic practices of this group. Further, it is possible that with a larger
sample size, speaker-specific random effects might be mitigated, providing stronger evidence for which social factors best account for the observed patterns.

Lastly, the significant gender skew in the data, a result again of the convenience sample, means that our sample of PC-aligned speakers is predominately women. Although the very nature of multivariate regression is to account for such irregularities in the distribution of cells in the sample, this area, too, would benefit from a more even-handed data collection. With African American women continuing to be significantly more likely than African American men to pursue advanced education (Banks 2011, Robinson 2010), and with such advanced degrees being necessary for entry in many professional class occupations, particularly in the government jobs which have made Washington, D.C. such a mecca for African American residents, it seems relatively likely that any collection of data of professional-class African American speakers will need to employ careful sampling to balance genders. However, it is possible that a seemingly gender-skewed sample actually accurately reflects the gender imbalance in the African American professional class and that if a feature patterns more strongly with women, and women make up the majority of the African American professional class, then that feature is likely to acquire the n+1 indexical meaning of "professional" in addition to "woman." So it could be argued that such sampling accurately depicts the state of affairs within the population of PC-aligned speakers and should potentially be left alone.

6.2.2 The interviewers
With the exception of one interview, Terra, the interviews for this study were conducted during the same stretch of time by two interviewers, I and a colleague, Sinae Lee. Yet even the cursory, anecdotal analysis which results from transcribing and coding data reveals stark
differences in the ways the interviewees interacted with the two different researchers. One of the most salient differences which can be observed between the two sets of data is in racial terminology. With me, a biracial interviewer who, while mostly a speaker of standard English occasionally code-switches into a style which uses more AAE features, speakers often used a combination of "African American" and "Black" to describe their own race, and universally used "white" to describe white residents of their neighborhood and of D.C.

Several of Lee's interviewees, on the other hand, reached for terms such as "Caucasian" and "European American" when describing whites. While it is possible that these are their preferred terms, it is more likely that the artificial setting of an interview, and the effect of sitting with an interviewer who was very obviously non-Black and foreign produced a heightened sensitivity prompting them to use a term which carries a lower risk of being offensive.

Given this kind of evidence and the evidence provided by studies of audience-based style shifting, there is little doubt that at least some interviewer effect exists in this dataset. That effect was not measured, but would provide an excellent starting point for a re-evaluation of this dataset.

6.3 Contributions

This study makes several contributions to the existing literature on African American English. Here I outline these contributions, and their implications for further scholarship.
6.3.1 Focus on middle class AAE
Although more recent studies have focused more on middle-class and upper-class African American English, their number is still relatively few. This study adds to that number with a population in a region and a social situation which is highly understudied in the literature.

6.3.2 Washington, D.C.
This study also makes an important contribution in that it is a study focused on African American English in Washington, D.C. Since the foundational work by Fasold (1972) which formed part of the earliest sociolinguistic understanding of AAE, almost no sociolinguistic work has focused exclusively on African American English in Washington D.C. until the recent work of the Language and Communication in the DC Metropolitan Area project (LCDC project, Schiffrin and Schilling, 2006).

As mentioned in the introduction, Washington D.C. provides a unique site in which to study African American English, particularly the speech of the African American professional class. As it serves as the home of Howard University, and its metro region remains home to the largest concentration in the US of African-American residents with six-figure and higher family incomes, its concentration of professional class speakers makes it a vibrant location in which to study these speakers. Such areas are rare; in other parts of the country, though there may be concentrations of upper-class African Americans, rarely are they as numerous and, as a result of this number, rarely are they able to be so deliberately insular as they are in Prince George’s county.

The foundational work cited above deals with a Washington D.C. that was radically different than it stands today, and of the recent work on Washington, D.C. (Lou 2009, Modan 2007, Nylund 2010, Podesva 2008) none has placed a focus on the professional class African
American speakers who very deliberately make D.C. home. This study therefore fills a gap in both the ongoing research on Washington, D.C., and updates the work which came decades before it with a lens into how African American residents negotiate new identities in a city which has changed.

6.3.3 Class-mixing

A related contribution relates to the issues of gentrification processes and studying speakers who are part of a community which is rapidly changing. Although more studies have taken into account middle-class and even transcendent (to borrow a term from Robinson 2010) African American speakers, these studies have mostly looked at communities of African Americans who live in either segregated or integrated communities which are class stable. While such studies give us insight into what kinds of functions African American English plays as the speakers negotiate the linguistic marketplaces of home versus work versus school versus church, they do not always tell us about how African American speakers divide themselves into groups along class lines, or how they negotiate the intersectional identities of race, place, and class.

This work takes as its central object of study the changing community, and the ways in which professional class identities become negotiated within that community. A professional class African American speaker from SE is on the one hand, aligned with the professional class Washington, D.C. residents who are moving to the community. Yet on the other, they seek to preserve their alignment with the long-term African American residents of the neighborhood where they have their own roots.

Exploring the ways in which professional class-aligned speakers use features of AAE to negotiate these identities and maintain these disparate alignments provides greater insight into
the social meaning of African American English than studies of communities which are not undergoing such changes, revealing the ways in which AAE and its various features can function as a tool for speakers who must balance several competing identities at once.

6.3.4 Combination of qualitative and quantitative methods

This study is a mixed-methodology study. It uses the methodology of sociophonetics to unearth a new use of an old feature, final consonant devoicing, and mixed-effects linear regression modeling to explore the ways in which that feature patterns both traditionally and unexpectedly. However, the meaning of that variable cannot be fully understood without the qualitative evaluation of the metalinguistic commentary which backs it up. It is in studying this metalinguistic commentary that we can see that professional-class-aligned speakers are making very deliberate choices about their pronunciations, with these choices leading to the proliferation of devoiced final consonants.

Similarly, the quantitative analysis of morphosyntactic AAE features gives us insight into how speakers use them to indicate stance in ongoing interaction, leading to the interesting conclusion that for professional-class-aligned speakers, talk about gentrification is one of the most common sites for AAE feature use. But it is the close, qualitative analysis of the ways AAE allows speakers to take stances and position themselves vis-à-vis their neighborhood and the other African American residents in it that reveals the ways in which these features are recruited in order to shape and display racial identities and place identities, including ones of relative neutrality or even positivity toward the gentrification of the Anacostia neighborhood, a topic we would normally associate with negative attitudes on the part of longstanding neighborhood residents.
6.3.5 Varied meanings of the same variables

This study takes a feature-based approach, but does so in order to uncover the heterogeneity of the use of given linguistic variables. The findings on final consonant devoicing show that the social meaning of this variable come primarily not from its association with a particular group, but rather from a second-order indexical meaning of “correctness” or “educatedness;” advancing the notion that it is possible for a variable which has acquired such a second-order meaning to go on to have a first-order group associational meaning built on that. Further, it exists in competing indexical fields, where on the one hand, it could be seen to be indicative of a vernacular style, and thus patterns as would be expected for a variable that is associated with a nonstandard style, and yet at the same time is part of an indexical field in which its meaning is “hyperstandard,” and thus it patterns with a group who are predicted to use a more standard style. This underscores that a given variable has multiple meanings at the same point in time, and that it is in examining the variable’s use by speakers in ongoing interaction that we can best determine how these multiple meanings intersect in identity performance.

6.4 Future directions

Several logical next steps arise from the results of this study, both from the answers this study gives to its research questions, and from some of the shortcomings discussed in the limitations section above. Here I discuss each of these in turn.

6.4.1 Gender and PC-alignment

The first is the question brought up by the gender skew of the data. Recent studies of the African American PC-nonaligned reveal adult males to be very difficult to gather data from: in the PC-nonaligned group, many are being sent to prison (Rickford & McLaughlin 2014). As with the current study, studies of the African American populace conducted in other fields also reveal
a dearth of adult men in the professional class; African American women pursue advanced
degrees in higher numbers and achieve higher salaries over their lifetimes than do most African
American men. For that reason, it is reasonable to expect to continue to see a gender skew
toward women when studying PC-aligned African American speakers.

Because sociolinguistic explorations of gender and language have often revealed women
to be the more conservative speakers with regard to older variants, but also the leaders of
linguistic change with regard to innovative variants (Labov 2001b), these possible forces must be
taken into account when thinking about the speech of the African American professional class.
Does a preponderance of women mean that the speech of the professional class is more heavily
affected by the speech of women? The results of the final consonant devoicing study show the
women as preferring a more standard variant; yet they still use the nonstandard devoiced final
stop more than the PC-nonaligned men.

For this reason, it is important to look again at the intersection of gender and class;
studies of more variables, with differing degrees of markedness would aid in understanding the
ways in which professional class African American women and men speak differently, and the
ways in which women's speech may or may not have a significant effect on the speech of the
whole group.

6.4.2 Defining markedness
Talking of markedness makes a second important point. Studies such as Craig and
Washington (2004, 2005) provide some sense of markedness of features, based on criteria often
defined by the speakers themselves. Sometimes, markedness is defined by presence or absence in
the speech of PC-aligned speakers; the assumption being that if PC-aligned speakers are less
likely to use a feature, that feature is more marked. Such is the kind of data we get from the percentage-use data in Chapter 5; it suggests that certain features, which show up more in the highly metalinguistically-aware PC-aligned speakers' are necessarily less marked.

But studying markedness in the speech of PC-aligned speakers using a heuristic which defines markedness by the absence of a feature within the speech of PC-aligned speakers would beg the question. So how can we better explore which features are above the level of awareness for speakers and take into account the varying levels of linguistic awareness that different groups of speakers might have?

One answer to this would be to study repair. In almost every interview in this dataset, from both PC-aligned speakers and PC-nonaligned speakers, there are many instances when a speaker chooses to repair their sentence; often repairing it from an African American English construction to a standard English construction, but also at times repairing from standard English to African American English. Studying these instances to figure out which features get repaired, by whom, and when, would give us much greater insight into what kinds of features are most marked for professional-class speakers. Knowledge of which features are more marked than others would then give greater weight to the occurrence of marked features in a particular stretch of talk: the more marked the feature and the less likely the speaker is to use it otherwise, the more likely that feature is playing an important role in that speaker's styling and in their construction of self in interaction.

6.4.3 Separating PC-alignment from upward mobility

In an early presentation of this data, a colleague of mine made a comment to the effect of, "Hypercorrection is probably just as likely in an upwardly mobile New York Jew as it is in an
upwardly mobile D.C. Black person." He makes an important point. Historically, Washington, D.C. has been home to a thriving upper- and middle-class African American population. Yet not every speaker who is PC-aligned currently comes from a background of PC-aligned African Americans. The patterns within the city as well as shifting opportunities in the post-Jim Crow era have produced generations of PC-aligned African Americans in families and neighborhoods that previously may not have been PC-aligned. This study did not gather data on the PC-alignment status of the generation above the interviewee; in some cases it was volunteered and in other cases, it was not.

To what extent, then, is a feature like final consonant devoicing not a feature of the professional class, but a feature of the upwardly mobile (or at least, the upwardly-aspiring?) To gather this data, sample design and speaker selection would need to be more controlled, and information collected on the occupations and professional-class affiliations of the generation or two above the interviewee. Such data would provide important insight into the function of the features we see patterning with the professional-class; are they truly markers of class alignment, or are they markers of class aspiration? It would be equally interesting to specifically explore those who are upwardly mobile, for instance, first-generation college students. What role do features such as final consonant devoicing play in their speech? Such data would help understand if there is an "upwardly mobile" identity that is more universal than "African American PC-aligned," and also provide insight into the ways in which PC-alignment contains or maintains features which might begin as features which mark mobility.
6.4.4 Larger corpus

Finally, the main limitation of this study is its sample size. In order to most effectively draw broad conclusions, more speakers would need to be studied and that data would need to be added to the data that forms the base of the current study. A larger study would greatly reduce single-speaker effects and thus, ensure greater generalizability.

Similarly, the results of this study need to be compared with the results of similar studies in other locales, of which at present there are none. To what extent do these features emerge in the presence of gentrification, and are they more or less likely to occur in speakers who see themselves as part of a community that is not undergoing rapid change? If speakers are recruited from a city without such a strong history of upper- and middle-class African Americans, do PC-aligned speakers use AAE differently because their PC-aligned identity is not as entrenched in the African American community in that city?

That this study takes place in such a class-mixing locale, and in a place which has always been recognized for the class status which African American speakers can achieve makes this study unique; however, it also makes its results somewhat difficult to interpret. Comparison studies would provide insight into whether these phenomena truly are best explained by this unique situation, or if they might be ascribed to broader processes in the African American community writ large.

6.5 The Language of Professional Blackness

The identity of a professional class African American is an inherently intersectional one, where a speaker’s class identity, and the (often white and standard-English-speaking) linguistic marketplaces the speaker is in as a result, may compete with his or her desire to maintain the language which creates and establishes ties to the African American community of which he or she is a part. Though the field of linguistics is unpacking the ways in which African American
English, at all its linguistic levels, is used by professional class African Americans (see for example, the forthcoming volume by Weldon), much work remains to be done in this area.

The 1971 volume in which appears Orlando Taylor’s advancement of the notion of Black Standard English begins with a striking opening line in its foreword, written by Roger Shuy: “One of the truly disarming aspects of the development of any field of study is that as it comes closer and closer to telling the truth, the truth that it tries to tell becomes harder and harder to understand” (Shuy, Feigenbaum & Grognet 1971). This is certainly true of the present study, and of the evolving study of African American English more generally. The truth of African American English continues to become more and more complex, as the discipline moves away from the kinds of essentializing notions which ignore its regionality and its change over time, and that view the use of the variety as being strictly within the working class.

What this study suggests is that, in order to understand African American English in its role in maintaining identities which are both African American and professional/middle class, we must look not to the ways in which African American English is separate from other, usually white, varieties, but rather to the ways in which the use of African American English can contrast within the speech of the same group of speakers, or within the talk of a single speaker. What stances and identities does its use enable a speaker to index in ongoing interaction? It is in the internal contrasts within African American English – and Englishes – that the true complexity of the language(s) of professional class African Americans begins to show itself most fully, and we move one step closer to the truths about language, society, and identity that our field is trying to tell.
APPENDIX I: SPEAKERS

Below is a list of each speaker, their gender, their occupation, their level of education, their social network, and the determination of PC-Alignment. Superscript symbols indicate subjects interviewed together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Network</th>
<th>PC-Alignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leona</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>museum program director</td>
<td>bachelors</td>
<td>museum</td>
<td>PC Aligned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>elementary teacher</td>
<td>bachelors</td>
<td>school</td>
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<td>Kiesha</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>elementary administrator</td>
<td>bachelors</td>
<td>school</td>
<td>PC Aligned</td>
</tr>
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<td>Jackie</td>
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<td>bachelors</td>
<td>school</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susanne</td>
<td>f</td>
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<td>elementary administrator</td>
<td>bachelors</td>
<td>school</td>
<td>PC Aligned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>professor of counseling</td>
<td>doctoral</td>
<td>church</td>
<td>PC Aligned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tana</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>officer, nonprofit organization</td>
<td>pursuing bachelors</td>
<td>museum</td>
<td>PC Aligned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vee</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Pentagon</td>
<td>bachelors/military</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>PC Aligned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>m</td>
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<td>elementary teacher</td>
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<td>Oliver</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>elementary teacher</td>
<td>masters</td>
<td>school</td>
<td>PC Aligned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>IT system admin</td>
<td>masters</td>
<td>church</td>
<td>PC Aligned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terra</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td>other</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jami</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>security guard</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td>school</td>
<td>PC Non-Aligned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delores</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>retired, service industry</td>
<td>associates (post-retirement)</td>
<td>church</td>
<td>PC Non-Aligned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>homemaker, part-time administrative assistant at EPA via seniors work program</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td>other</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>IT technician</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td>school</td>
<td>PC Non-Aligned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gus</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>truck driver, US Treasury</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td>church</td>
<td>PC Non-Aligned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chess</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>unemployed/volunteer</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td>school</td>
<td>PC Non-Aligned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX II: Interview Protocol

Following sociolinguistic interview techniques, interviewees were given the opportunity to stray from topics brought up by the interviewer, and encouraged to expound upon topics that were particularly meaningful to them. Below are the modules which formed the basis of the majority of interviews conducted in this study, with the exception of Terra, whose data was collected by an interviewer several years prior to the other interviews used in this study.

Demographic information (all confidential)
- What is your name?
- What year were you born?
- Where were you born?
- In which part of the city did you grow up?
- In which part of the city do you live/work?
- Where are your parents from?

School
- Did you go to school in the neighborhood?
- Did you enjoy your school years?
- What was your favorite/least favorite subject?
- What is the most memorable incident you remember from your school years?
- Who was your favorite/least favorite teacher?
- What do you think about Savoy Elementary School’s Turnaround Arts Initiative (TAI)?

Work
- Are you working now?
  - What do/did you do?
  - What’s good/bad about the job?
- What was the first job you had?
  - How long did you do that work?
  - Did you like it?
- Does anyone else work in your family?
  - What do they do?

About DC neighborhoods
- Do you like the city? Why/why not?
- Has the city changed much? If so, in what way?
- What do you think about city’s ethnic makeup?
  - Do you think DC is predominantly black?
  - Do you think the city is residentially segregated?
  - Other than white people / black people, what other races do you see around here?
• What are some recent changes in the DC area?
  ○ Do you welcome the change? Why/why not?
• What do you think about gentrification?
  ○ (elicit talk about each section of the city, especially NE and SE)
• What was the craziest thing you saw/heard/experienced that happened in the neighborhood/city?
  ○ (elicit stories)
• Who are some of your neighbors?
• If you were the mayor of the city, what would you like to do?

Gender in the African American community
• Growing up, what were the popular hair/fashion styles among girls/boys?
• In the area, what types of jobs do women/men usually have?
• Who is more likely to continue education (e.g. college), men or women?
  ○ If men, why do you think so? If women, why do you think so?
• Who is more likely to stay in/leave the neighborhood, men or women? Why do you think so?
• What kinds of activities do men/women do in the neighborhood?
• In the neighborhood, what are some popular hangout spots for men/women? Or for both?
• What are some common interests among men/women recently?

Hobbies and foods
• What do you like to do when you are free?
• What is your favorite movie/TV shows?
• What is your favorite food?
• What are some of your favorite sports?

Anacostia Community Museum (Used in Museum and School networks)
• When and how did you first hear about the museum?
• When was the first time you visited the museum?
• Do you notice / feel the museum does a lot with the community?
• What do you like the most about the museum? (e.g. the building, the location, exhibitions, education program, etc.)
• What do you think about the Museum Academy Program?\(^{37}\)
• What kind of changes do you think the Museum Academy Program has made?

\(^{37}\) The Museum Academy Program is a program which connects the Anacostia museum to neighborhood schools, including The School in this study. The museum provides programming both at the school and onsite at the museum.
• Is there anything you would like to see the museum (and the Museum Academy Program) do?

Church (Used in Church network)

• How long have you attended the church?
  o How did you come to attend the church?
  o Do your family members attend the church?
• Tell me about the history of the church.
• Did you go to the church school?
  o What was the church school like?
  o How do you feel about there no longer being a church school?
• How has the church changed over the years?
  o Are different people attending the church now? What are they like?
• How important is the church to the community? What does the church do in the community?
• Do you think it is important that the church is the first African American church of its denomination in D.C.? Why?

Metalinguistic commentaries

• What do you think about how DC people talk?
• Are there any DC specific words/slangs you know?
• Do you think there are differences between DC vs. VA vs. MD in the DC area?
• Where do people speak differently than you?
• What do you think about African American English?
• What do you think about ‘standard’ English?
• In your opinion, do you have an accent?
• Do you think you talk differently in different situations?
• Did you talk differently in this interview?
APPENDIX III: Arpabet

ARPAbet, developed by the Advanced Research Programs Administration (ARPA), is a system of transcribing phonemes with two-letter codes, using only the standard ASCII character set. Its advantage over the international phonetic alphabet is that it is easily machine-readable and writeable. As such, it is used in transcriptions produced by the FAVE suite (Rosenfelder et al. 2011), and appears in graphs in this dissertation. A chart of the symbols and their equivalent English phonemes are below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARPABET phone</th>
<th>Example Word</th>
<th>ARPAbet transcription</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>odd</td>
<td>AA D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>AE T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AH</td>
<td>hut</td>
<td>HH AH T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO</td>
<td>ought</td>
<td>AO T</td>
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<tr>
<td>AW</td>
<td>cow</td>
<td>K AW</td>
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<tr>
<td>AY</td>
<td>hide</td>
<td>HH AY D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>be</td>
<td>B IY</td>
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<tr>
<td>CH</td>
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<tr>
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<td>dee</td>
<td>D IY</td>
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<td>thee</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ed</td>
<td>EH D</td>
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<tr>
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<td>G R IY N</td>
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<td>lee</td>
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<tr>
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