

“ONCE THEY START SPEAKING ENGLISH THEY ARE RUINED”:
THE WHITE RACIAL FRAME, EXPLOITATION DISCOURSE, AND
NEUTRALIZATIONS WHITE EMPLOYERS USE FOR
HIRING UNDOCUMENTED LATINO WORKERS

A Dissertation

by

JUAN SALINAS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Chair of Committee,	Joe Feagin
Co-Chair of Committee,	Edward Murguia
Committee Members,	Holly Foster
	Felipe Hinojosa
Head of Department,	Denis O’Hearn

August 2017

Major Subject: Sociology

Copyright 2017 Juan Salinas

ABSTRACT

This research explores the racial framing, exploitation discourse, and neutralizations used by white employers that manage white, black, and undocumented Latino workers. White employers are uniquely situated to provide insights into the operation of systemic racism, capitalism, and, more specifically, the racial oppression of undocumented Latino laborers. Drawing from 26 in-depth interviews, this work analyzes the views of white and minority employers across several businesses including restaurants and construction firms in Texas. The research finds that employers have in-depth racial framing concerning white, black, and Latino immigrant workers that reinforces a racial hierarchy found in labor-intensive work. Employers engage in pro-immigrant racial framing based on the perceived work ethic of undocumented Latino immigrants that justifies their exploitability. This racial framing justifies low wages, barriers to promotions, and a discouragement of reporting injuries. This research also finds employers use the techniques of neutralization to rationalize hiring undocumented immigrants and breaking immigration laws. Employers adopt pro-immigrant and anti-government regulation views that are predominately fueled by their interests in the continual capitalist exploitation of undocumented Latino laborers. A major point of interest convergence exists where the white employers' interest overlaps with the fight for legalization of Latino immigrants that may provide a catalyst for immigration reform. This study calls for further research into the views of white employers for understanding race and racism, labor rights, and the potential of immigration reform.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Manisha Salinas, and my sons.

This journey is just the beginning, there is so much left for us to accomplish together.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was possible through the major support and encouragement from my advisor and committee chair, Dr. Joe R. Feagin. My perspective on society has significantly been impacted through his guidance. He is an insightful mentor that encourages critical thinking about the world through his research and teaching on the significance of race and racism throughout society. I am highly fortunate to have had the opportunity to work and learn from him over the past few years. My research was also possible through the guidance of my committee co-chair Dr. Edward Murguia who has been a great mentor during my graduate studies in the area of Latino Sociology. He provided the tools necessary for succeeding in graduate school and pursuing my academic goals. I also would like to thank my other committee members, including Dr. Holly Foster who is a great researcher and teacher that provided critical feedback on my study, and Dr. Felipe Hinojosa, who was also supportive and committed to my academic success.

Graduate school was a life changing experience and it would not have been possible without all of my friends, colleagues, departmental faculty and staff, and the many students who I have connected with over the years. Thanks also goes to all those that made it possible for achieving my academic goals at Texas A&M University. This includes, but is not limited to, Dr. Pat Rubio Goldsmith, Dr. Nadia Flores, Dr. Jane Sell, Dr. Nancy Plankey-Videla and many other faculty members, colleagues, and friends. A major thank you to all of the department staff, including Christi Barrera, Brenda Bernal,

Bethany Edwards, Marissa Winking, and all others for their continual support over the years.

Finally, thanks to all of my family and friends for being there for me, even while my academic pursuits took years and led me from Tennessee, to Hawaii, and to Texas. I would like to thank my parents Juan Luis Salinas Guerra and Irma Elia Salinas Hinojosa, my sister Daisy Salinas, we have been there for each other across time and across so many places. Also, thanks to Shiva Gautam and Bharati Gautam for their support over the years. Finally, thanks to my wife Manisha Salinas who has been my loving partner through this journey across life, we made our dreams come true together!

CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES

Contributors

This work was supervised by a dissertation committee consisting of Dr. Joe R. Feagin, advisor and chair; Dr. Edward Murguia, co-chair, Dr. Holly Foster of the Department of Sociology, and Dr. Felipe Hinojosa of the Department of History.

Funding Sources

Graduate study was supported by the 2020 Vision Fellowship from the College of Liberal Arts. The funding for the study was provided by the 2020 Dissertation Enhancement Award from the College of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M University.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
LIST OF TABLES	xi
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
Why Do the Racial Views of White Employers Matter?	3
Taking a Power-Conflict View of White Employers of Undocumented Immigrants	6
Research Questions	9
Outline of Dissertation Chapters	11
CHAPTER II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	18
Introduction	18
The Race-Conflict Perspective.....	19
Systemic Racism	21
Marxism and Race Conflict Analysis of White Employers	23
The Gender Conflict Perspective of Elite White Employers	26
Systemic Racism, Classism, and Sexism of Elite Whites	29
The White Racial Frame	30
White Racial Framing and Elite White Male Employers.....	31
The Capitalist-Class Frame	35
Colorblind Racism.....	37
Racial Framing in the Frontstage and Backstage	39
The Techniques of Neutralization	40
CHAPTER III LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY	42

	Page
Early Employer Studies on Racial Issues.....	42
White Employers Using Racially Coded Language.....	45
White Employers Reproducing the Racial Hierarchy in the Workplace	47
White Employers’ Racial Framing and Exploitation Discourse of Latinos.....	50
Methodology	52
Interviews	52
Recruitment	54
Participants	56
Data Analysis	59
Positionality.....	62
The Elusive Employers: Doing Qualitative Research on Elites.....	65
 CHAPTER IV WHITE VIRTUE IN THE WORKPLACE	 68
Introduction	68
White Males Associated with Authority and Power	68
White Males Promoted to Management.....	71
White Networks Support White Men for Management	74
White Laborers Viewed as Entitled Workers.....	75
Conclusion.....	81
 CHAPTER V THE RACIAL FRAMING OF LATINOS FOR EXPLOITATION.....	 83
Introduction	83
Pro-Immigrant Racial Framing	83
White Employers Racially Framing Latinos as Hard-Working Beasts of Burden	87
White Employers Exploiting Latino Immigrants to Maximize Surplus Value	88
White Employers Controlling the Labor of Latino Immigrants.....	91
White Employers Using Illegal Practices to Limit Overtime Pay	93
White Employers Discouraging Latinos from Reporting Injuries	95
Barriers in Promotions: Latinos Shut Out of Management Positions	98
Minority Employers Counter-Framing the Exploitation of Latinos.....	101
Conclusion.....	103
 CHAPTER VI WHITES NEUTRALIZING VIOLATIONS OF IMMIGRATION LAW	 104
Introduction	104
White Employers: The Frontstage, Backstage, and Techniques of Neutralization	104

The Denial of Responsibility: White Employers Denying Hiring Undocumented Laborers	106
The Denial of Injury: Techniques Employers Use for Keeping Immigrant Laborers	110
Condemning the Condemners: Employers Hiring Undocumented Immigrants	113
White Employers Co-opting Pro-Immigrant Counter-Frames	116
White Employers Appeal to Higher Loyalties: The White Male Capitalist System	119
Conclusion	122
CHAPTER VII CONCLUSIONS	124
White Employers and the White Racial Frame	124
Future Discussions	126
REFERENCES	130
APPENDIX A INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	138

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1 Theoretical Framework for Analyzing the Discourse of Employers.....	7

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1 Summary Demographics of Participants.....	58

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It's uh... kind of a joke between contractors, where they will say: **'Man, you gotta get the ones that don't speak English, once they start speaking English they are ruined,'**...because, the one that speaks English is the one running the crew with them. And he is the one that is going to want the money and he is going to be the subcontractor and he is the leader, **but if you just want a day laborer and you don't want a subcontractor to send his guys, then you want the one that doesn't speak English. He is the one who will work for 100 dollars a day and that's cool.** Once he has worked here for a long time he will know English. And it's also in everyone's mind too that they all know English, and it's just the ones that want to speak English to you that will. Judgement call, case by case man.

Will, White Male Construction Employer

I first met Will during my research in a city in central Texas; he was one of the few white employers in the area that agreed to speak with me about his views on hiring immigrant workers. Will, who is a white male construction employer in the area, had a lot to say about the construction business and provided insights on how Latino immigrants are seen in the industry. After meeting with him at a local restaurant, he shared his thoughts on how employers hire Latino immigrants, including the idea of determining whether an immigrant is desirable for employment. As I got to know Will further, I realized he had very complex and highly conscious views of race and immigration status that influence his decisions on what workers to hire. When he shared the behind-the-scenes reality of the hiring process, he let me in on the secret employers are using to determine which immigrants to hire. Will shares that a common joke between employers is that the immigrants that don't speak English are better to hire

because speaking English means they are “ruined.” I was taken back by this blunt statement on how to choose an immigrant worker because of the major implications about this form of white framing that is occurring with employers. An immigrant who speaks English is seen by employers as an undesirable immigrant who will exert more work rights, leading to more power and control over their own labor position. This is a major contradiction of the view that Latino immigrants should be assimilating and learning English for achieving social mobility. From a white employer’s perspective, as an immigrant is learning more skills, he is actually seen as less desirable because he is also less controllable and exploitable. As Will states, an immigrant who knows English is “ruined” because he will “send his guys” that will organize and have a competing interest in controlling the surplus labor of a given employment.

Will was the second employer to finally agree to be interviewed, after having reached out to dozens of employers who were not interested in speaking about the issue of hiring undocumented Latino workers. I was starting to suspect that employers are strongly opposed to speaking about their true feelings about racial issues and the hiring of undocumented Latino workers. After speaking with 26 employer participants using in-depth interviews over a two year period, I have found that employers are highly conscious of race and immigration status in determining who they want to hire in order to maximize their exploitability in the labor market. In this case, Will shares this common joke in the industry where employers use English language skills as a proxy for how exploitable an immigrant will be to maximize the profits from the worker. Most

employers share similar sentiments, and have racial commentaries about white, black, and Latino workers that justify their positions on the racial hierarchy found in work.

The study of white male employers of undocumented immigrants is a study of race, immigration, and exploitative labor relations. Historically, there has been an enduring conflict between the capitalist class and the working class in a society highly structured through capitalism, racism, and sexism. The foundation of our society's economic system can be seen through the institutional legacies of slavery and colonialism where white employers began their involvement in massively exploiting and oppressing blacks, Latinos, and other racial minorities. Over hundreds of years the social structure has developed powerful ideological justifications of the capitalist system based on the ideas of white virtue and the continuous racial framing of people of color. This study of white employers is interested in unraveling their complex discourse on racial issues that shape the work lives of white, black, and Latino workers. The power held by elite white male employers is used to sustain the racial hierarchy found at work through the everyday beliefs held by owners, co-owners, and managers of businesses in construction, restaurant, and agriculture. This research uncovers the behind-the-scenes of white employer's that hire undocumented Latino immigrants and their justifications of the racial stratification system seen in labor-intensive work.

Why Do the Racial Views of White Employers Matter?

During my years working in the food industry as a waiter, I developed great relationships with Mexican immigrants working in the kitchens of several restaurants. These extraordinarily hard-working immigrants worked 6 days a week, 12 hours a day,

averaging over 70 hours a week. During the peak time of the restaurant rush hour, I will never forget how understaffed the kitchen was, as the immigrants were engaged in laborious and dangerous work. These immigrant workers received no overtime pay or health benefits, there were numerous cases where they barely made above minimum wage. To add to these conditions, I witnessed immigrants being hurt on the job and avoiding healthcare. In one example, the manager refused to provide healthcare services for a Mexican cook that had slipped into an oil fryer after cleaning oven ventilation. The manager was concerned that the undocumented status of the cook would be a problem when seeking healthcare and discouraged him from taking a trip to the emergency room.

The employer in this situation held power to undermine the labor rights of Mexican immigrant workers, to determine their pay, hours, benefits, and access to healthcare. Employers have racial views that significantly shape the way in which Latinos are treated in the workforce. Racial ideologies held by employers highly correspond with the development of a racialized work force, where Latino immigrants are placed into the most dangerous conditions with few labor rights (Saucedo 2006). All over this country, millions of Latino undocumented workers provide the backbreaking work concentrated across several precarious industries such as agriculture, construction, food service, and hospitality work. Major research on Latino immigrant day laborers and the harmful conditions has been studied by leading scholars. Reports of frequent misconduct by employers including paying below minimum wage, being abandoned at jobsites, providing no health benefits, and other numerous labor violations are commonplace (Valenzuela 2003). A 2016 study at Tyson poultry processing centers

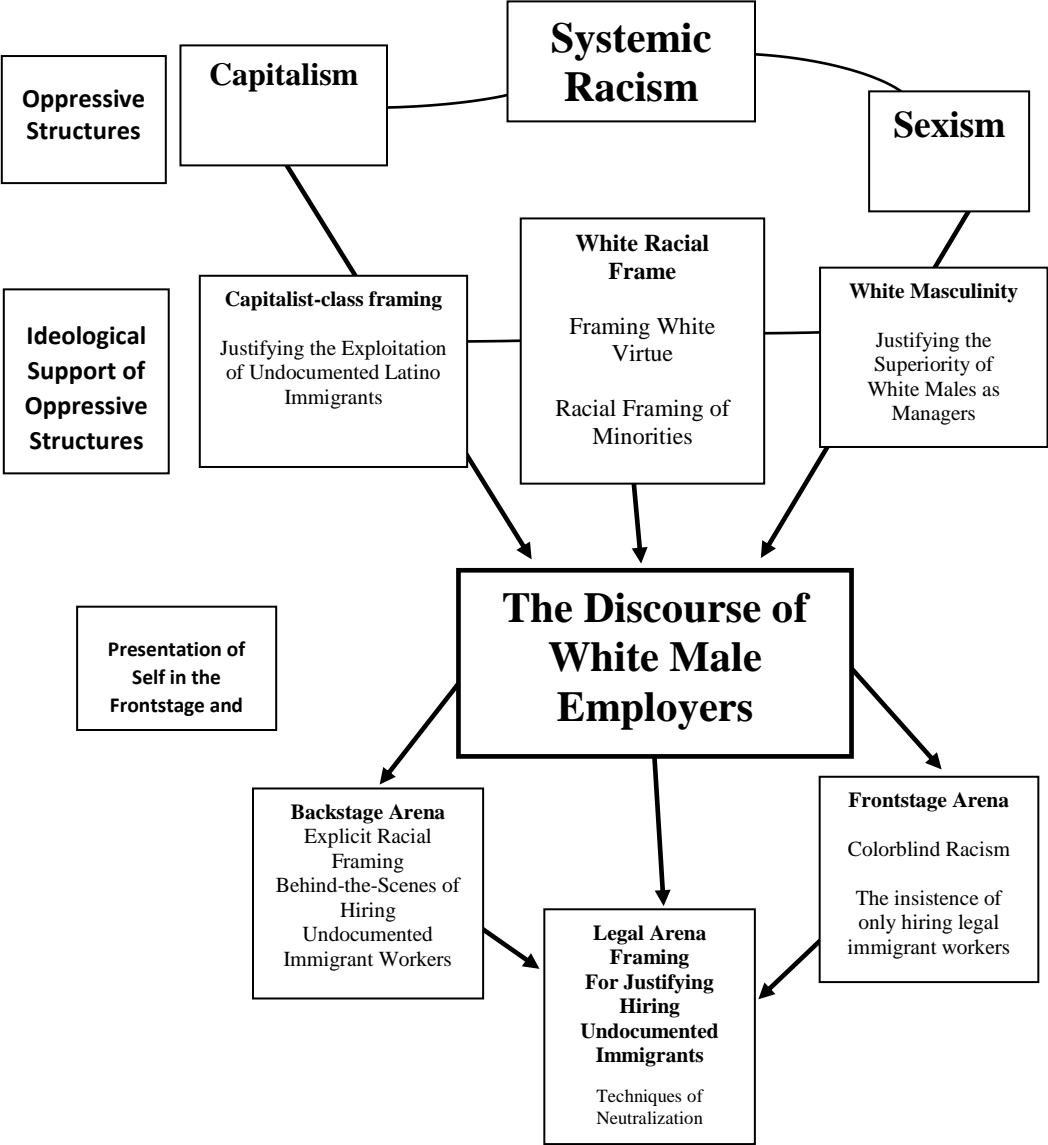
found that Latinos were are not given bathroom breaks and encouraged to wear diapers to keep them on the line (Oxfam 2016). The study of Latino working conditions needs further research and public attention to ultimately influence immigration and labor policy.

The hazardous conditions faced by Latino immigrant laborers are heavily influenced and largely under the control of elite white employers that are reaping profits from exploiting Latino immigrant workers. Elite white employers have a massive stake in a marginalized immigrant workforce that provides subservient workers living in the shadows. Little attention has been focused on how an employer feels about race and immigration, how these views impact the work environment, and what this means for working conditions for millions of racial minorities in the US. The racial views of employers matter, especially when considering that top employers are mostly elite white males that have a significant impact on the economic organization of work life for racial minorities. Even with the data showing the rampant work violations and the call for policy changes, not many scholars are focusing on understanding the views of white male employers that have a major say in the structure of work life. What is it about the study of work that causes employers to be overlooked or scrutinized regarding their views about race and immigrants? An employer's discourse on race, immigration, and work ethic are all highly connected to ideologies of the American Dream and 'gut feelings' they claim to use during interviews on who to hire. The views of employers need critical analysis beyond the mainstream view that employers are just experts on who is hireable for jobs in the US economy.

Taking a Power-Conflict View of White Employers of Undocumented Immigrants

This research draws from a power-conflict perspective for studying white employers to understand their racial thinking and treatment of white, black, and Latino workers. The power-conflict view has some of its roots in the Marxist analysis of conflict, power, and the societal domination of elite capitalists over the control of political, social, and economic resources. Several theoretical traditions based on the scholarly study of race, class, and gender provide a framework for the approach this study takes. First are the structural theories of systemic racism, classism, and sexism that will be applied based on their strengths of analyzing the oppressive conditions that exist in the labor market. These theories have much to offer in the study of power, privilege, and oppression that rewards massive advantages for elite white employers. I will explore how these major structural theories are interconnected and each provide major implications for studying white employers. Second are the theoretical traditions that focus on the study of the ideological, cognitive, conscious, unconscious, and emotional justifications of the oppressive systems of racism, capitalism, and sexism. This study draws from vital conceptual tools for analyzing oppressive discourse including the white racial frame (Feagin 2013), cultural hegemony (Gramsci 1971), colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2006), and frontstage and backstage theory (Goffman 1959). A visual representation of the theoretical framework is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Theoretical Framework for Analyzing the Discourse of Employers



As seen on Figure 1, there are number of structural, ideological, and interactionist theoretical concepts used for analyzing the discourse of white male employers. The structural forms of oppression include systemic racism, capitalism, and sexism.

Each oppressive structure has ideological components that shapes the thinking of racial, class, and gender issues for white male employers. These components include the white racial frame, cultural hegemony, and white masculinity, each describing ideological, oppressive thinking, and support systems for sustain three main structural forms of oppression. All of these cumulate to shape the discourse of white male employers.

Furthermore, Figure 1 shows how the discourse of white male employers is influenced by the presentation of self through frontstage and backstage settings, where white employers are carefully presenting their public and private understandings of race, class, gender, and immigration issues. The frontstage arena is where employers display their colorblind views of race and feelings towards immigrants, while the backstage arena is where they share their innermost, explicit feelings about racial issues and behind-the-scenes strategies for hiring undocumented immigrant workers.

There is also a separate legal arena where white employers frame the legality and justification of hiring undocumented Latino immigrants. This is shown through the way white employers present their techniques of neutralization, a framework used to excuse oneself from following societal laws based on a series of justifications. Alongside these justifications include the way white employers co-opt counter-frames supporting immigrant legal rights for the way they justify the actions of white employers of undocumented Latino immigrants.

This theoretical framework is essential for examining the discourse of white employers and their racial thinking towards hiring white, black, and Latino workers. The

research is especially interested on the views white employers have on undocumented Latino workers, their justifications for hiring the immigrants, and their overall view of immigration issues in US society. By better understanding the employer perspective, the nuances that sustain the racial hierarchy found in labor-intensive work will be made clearer.

Research Questions

The main research questions for the dissertation focus on understanding the discourse of white employers and how their racial framing is used in the workplace towards the placement of white, black, and Latino immigrant workers along a racial hierarchy. The study looks closely at the views white employers have about undocumented Latino workers, their justifications for exploiting their labor, strategies they use for circumventing immigration laws, and the white employer view of immigration policy in US society. The following are the research questions that guide this study:

- How do white employers construct whiteness and white virtue in the workplace?
- How do white employers racially frame undocumented Latino immigrant workers in ways that justifies their exploitation in the workplace?
- How do white employers frame their own violations of immigration laws and how does this influence their views on immigration?

The first question examines the racial framing white employers use to construct whiteness and white virtue that supports the racial hierarchy in the workplace. White employers not only have a positive image of whites and their own white virtue but also have in-depth racial framing of workers that influences their placement in particular

positions in the workforce. White employers tend to view white workers as better suited for supervising and management positions, but also as insufficient for labor-intensive work. This study will explore how white employers use their racial framing of whites and Latino workers to justify the racial hierarchy they sustain in the workforce.

The second question focuses on the racial framing that white employers have about undocumented Latino immigrants and how they use this racialized thinking to justify exploiting their labor. White employers strongly believe in the work ethic of undocumented immigrant workers that will do the most labor-intensive work for lower labor costs. Many white employers frame undocumented Latino workers as people who desire employment more than other racial groups and are willing to work harder, complain less, and accept lower wages. The justification of hiring undocumented Latino workers largely is contingent on the perceived exploitability of the workers.

The third question focuses on the way white employers frame their own violations of immigration laws along with the strategies they take to continue employing undocumented Latino immigrants. White employers see themselves as virtuous in their determination of what immigration laws should be broken in pursuit of their capitalist accumulation. Many white employers are cautious discussing the sensitive topic of employing undocumented immigrant workers, while some will openly share their justifications for why they decide to violate immigration laws. White employers have various behind-the-scenes strategies for keeping immigrants on payrolls and avoiding legal ramifications. They have also adopted pro-immigrant views as a reaction to

immigration issues based on sustaining the continual employment of undocumented Latinos in their businesses.

Outline of Dissertation Chapters

This dissertation focuses on the views white employers have of undocumented Latino workers. The research is based on two years of ethnography, participant observation, and in-depth interviewing with 26 employers in construction, restaurant, and agriculture. In the remaining chapters I will explore the theoretical race-conflict perspectives that provide a framework for analyzing the discourse of white male employers pertaining to race, class, and gender in the labor market.

In Chapter II, I discuss the interconnectedness of the major theories of the power-conflict tradition, especially in the ways they all play a role in providing an understanding of the power and dominance elite white male employers have on explaining the racial hierarchy found in labor-intensive work. I discuss the main structural theories of systemic racism, classism, and sexism and their implications for studying white male employers. I also lay out the conceptual tools for discourse analysis found in the white racial frame, cultural hegemony, colorblind racism, as well as frontstage and backstage theory. These all play a significant role in analyzing the discourse used by white employers for justifying oppressive labor practices used against white, black, and Latino immigrant workers.

In Chapter III, I lay out the literature on the racial thinking of employers. I start by providing a critique of early studies on employers for their avoidance of racial issues and assumptions that employers are experts for establishing hiring and labor practices

based on the theory of free market capitalism. I also outline recent scholarship that has begun to explore the racial thinking of employers concerning their views of black and Latino workers. The studies are explored for the implications on the role of employers and their significance in structuring the racial hierarchy seen in the labor market. Some recent studies are presented that have begun to look closer at white employers and their relationship with the undocumented Latino worker.

At the end of Chapter III I detail the methodological approach taken for the study based on qualitative research using in-depth interviews and participant observation. I describe the approaches taken to collect the data from the participants of the study and provide details about the twenty-six participant employers. The study focuses heavily on the views of twenty white employers and their perspective on race and immigration issues. Furthermore, this study also explores six employers who were racial minorities that provided insights into the world of employers with a minority background. In this section I also share my positionality as a Latino graduate student doing their dissertation on white employers and how this influenced the research. I focus on the challenges for doing qualitative research on the dominant group, where I refer to the participants as the *elusive white employers* for their hesitancy and reluctance to take part in the study of their racial thinking in the workplace. Some research has pointed out that there are few rewards for studying the dominant group, as it is not in the general interest of those who hold power in US society to study the actions of those at the very top. The maintenance of significant profits for elite whites in the US capitalism system may rest on the avoidance of targeting employers exploiting undocumented Latino workers through

public or scholarly attention. I will be focusing on answering the following questions in this study:

- How do white employers construct whiteness and white virtue in the workplace?
- How do white employers racially frame undocumented Latino immigrant workers in ways that justifies their exploitation in the workplace?
- How do white employers frame their violations of immigration laws and how does this influence their views on immigration?

In Chapter IV, I focus on how white male employers use racial framing to uphold white virtue concerning their own identities as well as white workers in their businesses. White employers view themselves as morally superior as expressed through their capitalist identity as job creators and small-business owners. Some racial minority employers adopt similar racial and class framing, although they are somewhat critical of their white employer counterparts in regards to the treatment of laborers. White employers uphold white virtue through their strong belief that they themselves have the ability to judge the work ethic of employees and make quick decisions as to where racial groups belong in the workplace. White workers are racially framed as virtuous as they are expected to have aspirations and gain social mobility. White men are highly sought out by white employers for management positions and most businesses had only white men in the highest positions. An interesting finding was that many white workers are looked down upon because of their aspirations for achieving social mobility out of low-wage work. White employers often refer to them as entitled, lazy, and complainers for the way white workers speak up about their labor rights. I argue that white employers face great difficulty controlling white labor as compared to other racial groups, as whites

will not stay in low-wage work for long periods of time. Many white employers themselves rapidly achieved their employer positions starting as low-wage workers in their businesses. The US capitalist, racist, and sexist system has awarded many white male workers opportunities and privileges that causes white employers frustration in the control over white male labor.

In Chapter V, I explore the racial framing white employers have towards Latino workers. My interviews were mostly in frontstage settings where white employers expressed colorblind racism through their discussion of Latino workers. Some racial minority employers provided counter-framing towards the practices of white employers, showing how the racial background of employers has an impact on their view of labor practices. Most white employers are operating out of colorblind version of the white racial frame and are insistent that race does not matter in the workplace while also visibly uncomfortable speaking about racial issues. Employers unanimously attribute Latino workers as the most productive and hardest working racial group. I argue white employers engage in pro-immigrant racial framing, where Latinos are seen as model workers to justify their exploitation in labor-intensive work. White employers emphasize that Latinos are incredible workers for the toughest jobs, but also that they do not make great management material, showing how a positive racial framing is in actuality a barrier to social mobility that Latinos encounter in labor-intensive work. I argue that Latinos are highly favored over white laborers for their subservience due to their undocumented status in society.

In Chapter VI, I focus on how white employers frame their violations of immigration laws and how this influences their overall views on immigration issues. Both white and racial minority employers attempt to distance themselves from any wrongdoing from hiring undocumented laborers. I explore how the unequal and racially paternalistic relationship white employers have with Latino immigrants has a major influence on their actions of breaking immigration laws. This relationship, based on the subjugation and exploitation of the Latino worker, is crucial for understanding the racial frames white employers use to justify their own violations of immigration laws. White employers become so reliant on Latino immigrant laborers that they adopt the frames necessary for disregarding immigration laws. I argue that employers use the techniques of neutralization, a framework used to excuse oneself from following societal laws based on a series of justifications. My findings show a variety of justifications that shift away the responsibility of breaking immigration laws from the white employer, showing their commitment to the white virtuousness center of the white racial frame. Many white employers also point to the ideals of a “free market” and the government getting in the way of who a business owner can or cannot hire. I argue that this disregard for the law is possible due to the power and privilege white male employers have, so they face few threats in being criminalized or targeted for breaking immigration laws. I also demonstrate that, fueled by their commitment for sustaining the exploitative relationship over the undocumented Latino laborer, many white employers have interestingly co-opted strong counter-framing in *support of immigrant rights*. These counter-frames are seen through liberal positions on immigration rights of belonging and views of America

being a land of immigrants. An interesting finding is that some white employers have been active in lobbying against e-verify laws in Texas, showing an unlikely commitment white employers have to providing legal avenues for Latino laborers. I argue that this allows for an interest convergence where an unlikely alliance may exist between white employers, who are eager to continue exploiting undocumented immigrant laborers, and Latino immigrant laborers, who seek opportunities to work without the threat of deportation. Far more work is needed for understanding how far white employers are willing to go to maintain an exploitative workforce of Latino immigrant laborers

For Chapter VII, I reiterate some of the main findings found through the analysis of white male employers that shows how the racial thinking of employers is significant for explaining the racial hierarchy of the workforce. Race and racism continues to shape the racial hierarchy in the workforce and it structures the opportunities that exist for white, black, and Latino workers. I also link the studies significance to policy implications regarding racial issues, labor rights, and immigration reform. There needs to be further scrutiny on employers and their racial views in the 21st century; employers across several industries need to be studied to understand barriers they support on the social mobility of racial minorities and immigrants. I argue that we need to dispel the notion that white business owners are post-racial and break down the myth that employers simply hire the most qualified when in reality they continue to use explicit and implicit racial framing concerning white, black, and Latino workers. I also situate this research as a way to better understand the white employer perspective, as they have developed a white identity based on survival in a competitive capitalistic society that is

increasingly putting barriers on hiring immigrants. White employers are also prepared to defend their ability to hire undocumented immigrants, such as the fight against e-verify or anti-immigrant laws, providing an unusual and uneasy source of political pressure against the general white public's nativism. Employers are highly reliant on the continual exploitation of immigrant labor and will place their class interest before the general white public's racial interest in suppressing the immigration population. Far more research is needed for understanding how elite white employers will maintain their continual exploitation of undocumented immigrants through their control of political, social, and economic system in America.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This study draws from a theoretical framework known as the conflict perspective that examines contemporary oppression along race, class, and gender. The conflict perspective allows this research to layout each critical dimension necessary for analyzing the racial and immigration views of white employers. At the helm of the race-conflict approach I use here is the theory of Systemic Racism and the conceptual analysis provided by the white racial frame (Feagin 2006). Systemic Racism is a theory of racial oppression that concentrates on the foundational aspect of racism throughout all societal institutions. Along with Systemic Racism is the conflict perspective on social class that has its origins in the Neo-Marxist critique of capitalism. This Neo-Marxist view is considered one of the origins of conflict-oriented theories that provided a much needed framework for analyzing the role of elite capitalists in society. A third aspect of the conflict perspective focuses on gender that is developed by the critical analysis of a patriarchal society that shapes the gendered views of white male employers. The theories of Systemic Racism, Classism, and Sexism will guide this project's analysis of the racial and immigration views of elite white male employers.

These conflict-oriented perspectives will be explored for the structural role they have on shaping the racial and immigration views of elite white employers. Elite white male employers are arguably the most privileged members of society along race, class, and gendered lines, and they have received little attention for their role in maintaining

and shaping their dominance of US social institutions. The discourse of white male employers provides a self-favoring ideological understanding of race, class, and gender that justifies the dominant position they hold in controlling the economic sector of the US. Laying out and critically analyzing the white employer discourse provides a unique opportunity to explain racial stratification in the workforce and the appalling labor conditions for millions of racial minorities and immigrations.

The Race-Conflict Perspective

The race-conflict perspective is a broad term to describe several academic traditions that emphasizes a critical view of race and racism. At various points in time, scholars have presented these race-critical views that have significantly influenced the understanding of racial issues in the US. Some of the earliest works include W.E.B. Du Bois who developed major research in the area of race, and has recently been acknowledged as the founder of modern sociology in America (Morris 2015). The treatment of Du Bois, including the racism he faced throughout his life by mainstream white sociology, is a testament to the strong denial of the race-conflict perspective. The race-conflict view has been mostly led by racial minorities against the status quo, including major Black and Chicano scholars that have all advanced the race-conflict tradition. The Black radical tradition includes the works of Fredrick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, Oliver Cox, Kwame Ture, Derrick Bell, Angela Davis, and many others. The Chicano radical tradition includes scholars such as Mario Barrera, Rodolfo Acuna, Jose Angel Gutierrez, Armando Navarro, Ramon A. Gutierrez, David Montejano, Richard Delgado, and many others that provide a Chicano-focused critical analysis of society.

Many of these pioneers in Black and Chicano race-conflict theory challenged the status quo and provided room to conceptualize racial minorities as an oppressed group that experiences a structural form of racism. Some of the racism models from this period include the Caste, Class, and Race perspective (Cox 1948), as well as the Internal Colonialism perspective (Ture and Hamilton 1967; Barrera 1979), for understanding racial oppression of both blacks and Chicanos in the US.

The race-conflict theoretical approaches, including the theory of Internal Colonialism, provide a radical alternative to mainstream models of approaching race relations, such as assimilation theory (Murguia 1975). The race-conflict view centralizes the impact of racism as a structural barrier and the exploitation of people of color by elite whites. The mainstream assimilation models largely focus on integration and overcoming barriers to social mobility (Gordon 1964; Jiménez 2010), leaving little room for conceptualizing racial oppression and the role of elite white capitalists. The popularity of Internal Colonialism has been largely toned down in the post-civil rights era, causing the perspective to be generally abandoned and underdeveloped for decades (Gutierrez 2004). Without a leading race-conflict model, mainstream race relation views of ethnicity and assimilation in work life have dominated the conceptual understanding of racial minorities. There exists a crucial need to revitalize critical models to make sense of contemporary racial oppression for racial minorities (Gutierrez 2004).

Systemic Racism

One major contemporary form of the race-conflict perspective can be seen in the theory of Systemic Racism (Feagin 2006), a conceptual framework to critically analyze racial oppression in US society. Heavily influenced by the critical-race traditions of black and Chicano scholars, Systemic Racism offers numerous ways to link historical racial oppression with the legacy of racism in modern times. This perspective is a much needed addition to the race-conflict tradition and allows critical analysis of race and racism issues. Joe Feagin (2006) explains Systemic Racism as comprising the following dimensions:

(1) The complex array of recurring exploitative, discriminatory, and other oppressive white practices targeting Americans of color; (2) The institutionalized economic and other social resource inequalities along racial lines (the racial hierarchy); (3) The dominant white racial frame that was generated to rationalize and insure white privilege and dominance over Americans of color. (Feagin 2013:ix-x)

Systemic Racism focuses on the myriad of ways whites are engaged in exploitation and discrimination towards people of color throughout all societal institutions. Feagin traces the foundational nature of Systemic Racism in US society, starting with European colonization where whites enriched themselves at the expense of people of color through genocide, slavery, and conquest. These inhumane practices of racism were justified for centuries for the unjust enrichment of elite whites (Feagin 2013). The racial inequality experienced through systemic racism results in the racial hierarchies seen throughout society such as racial oppression at work, education, criminal justice, health, and major societal institutions.

The strength of Systemic Racism is that it offers a race-conflict framework for critically analyzing contemporary racial issues for both Black, Latino, and other racial minorities. A significant amount of research on black Americans and their experiences of racism has been developed from this perspective (Feagin and Sikes 1995, Feagin 2013). In recent years, Systemic Racism has been applied for understanding Latinos facing race and racism issues by various scholars (Cobas, Duany, and Feagin 2009; Feagin and Cobas 2014; Chavez 2012; Chavez, Lavariega, and Michelson 2015). Another important dimension of Systemic Racism is its emphasis on centralizing elite whites and their multifaceted use of racism for the exploitation of people of color. A growing literature on whiteness studies shares this approach, where researchers focus on the development of white racial identities to critically analyze racism (Peggy McIntosh 1988, Yancy 2012).

For the purposes of this research project, Systemic Racism offers a framework for analyzing the views and treatment of blacks and undocumented Latino immigrants by white employers in the workforce. This includes the way in which white employers create racial meanings about the roles of racial minorities in the work environment. The white employers focused on in this study are crucial for understanding the development of a racial hierarchy consisting of undocumented Latino immigrants placed at the most labor-intensive working positions and generally having white managers at top positions. The existence of this racial hierarchy is largely attributed to systemic racism and the justifications of this social arrangement will be the crucial focus of this study for understanding the white racial framing of white employers.

Marxism and Race Conflict Analysis of White Employers

This dissertation also draws from the Marxist analysis of capitalism for understanding the motivations and justification white employers have for maintaining the racial hierarchy in labor-intensive work. The Marxist perspective's strength lies in its analysis of class and labor inequality, which significantly shapes the relationship white employers have with racial minorities and Latino immigrants in the workforce. Marxism emphasizes the role of elite capitalists in society with socio-political power over societal institutions that massively benefit from maintaining an exploitative and oppressive system over subordinate groups. This section will explore the connections scholars have made between Marxism and racial conflict theory that provide conceptual understandings of how social structures shape the discourse used by white employers concerning their workforce.

Marxist and race-conflict scholars have interpreted Marx's work by recognizing racial exploitation as a necessary occurrence in sustaining capitalism. Marx provides a critical analysis of European colonialism and its ties to the capitalist system.

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signaled the rosy dawn of capitalist productive. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moment of primitive accumulation...these methods depend in part on brute force, e.g. the colonial system. (Marx 1853;823)

Marx shows how the capitalist system spread globally through primitive accumulation, where Europeans would forcefully take lands and resources from subordinate racial groups and control their labor through violence, enslavement, and colonialism. This

reading of Marx highlights the significance of racial conflict to the operation of capitalist labor exploitation. These conditions were the historical context of the labor relationship between white male employers and racial minority laborers.

Scholars have applied aspects of Marxism and racial-conflict theory to study racial exploitation and oppression faced by blacks and Latinos by white employers (Du Bois 1934; Cox 1944; Ture and Hamilton 1967; Galeano 1971; Acuna 1972; Barrera 1979). Early scholarship is seen in Du Bois' (1934) *Black Reconstruction*, where the post-slavery period is analyzed through Marxist and racial-conflict conceptual lens. This work highlights the strategies of exploitation used by the elite white planter class to sustain oppressive conditions for the newly freed black workers. A significant exploitation strategy, first coined by Du Bois, was the *psychological wages of whiteness*, which is how elite whites maintained a racial alliance with working class white laborers who were rewarded with preferential treatment at the expense of black laborers (Du Bois 1934). This strategy is necessary to show how white employers use racial inequality to maintain the control of labor to maximize the exploitation of racial minorities. Elite white employers are highly invested in maintaining economic, social, and political dominance over racial minority workers. Contemporary white employers have similar justifications to maintain their dominance in the racial hierarchy in the workplace that continues to exist in our society.

The tradition of using race-conflict theory and Marxist scholarship continued with other scholars, such as Oliver Cox's work in *Caste, Class, and Race* (1948) that argues race and racism are tied to the conditions of capitalism in society. Cox argues that

Race prejudice in the United States is the socio-attitudinal matrix supporting a calculated and determined effort of a white ruling class to keep some people or peoples of color and their resources exploitable...Thus, race prejudice may be thought of as having its genesis in the propagandistic and legal contrivances of the white ruling class for securing mass support of its interest (Cox 1944:475).

Centralizing the role of the elite white ruling class, Cox argues that there has always existed a crucial link between racism and capitalist exploitation. As elite whites are heavily invested in an economic system based on racial exploitation, they will maintain this system to continue their survival as the white ruling class. The analysis adds depth to understanding the foundational history of the ideology of white supremacy based on the capitalistic exploitation of racial minorities. This has major implications for the contemporary study of white employers that continues to depend on racialized exploitation over racial minorities in present society. The contributions of Du Bois and Cox demonstrate how the economic system is largely controlled by elite whites and is reliant on the exploitation of racial minorities.

Further insightful research was developed by Chicano scholars involved in race-conflict and Marxist scholarship for studying the exploitation of Chicanos (Acuna 1972; Murguia 1975; Barrera 1979). This social science research advocated an internal colonialism perspective for understanding the race and class exploitation of Chicano laborers by elite whites in the southwest. From this Chicano race-conflict perspective, whites are seen as occupiers and colonizers of Chicanos within a conquered territory for their labor exploitation. This was a major departure from mainstream analysis on Mexicans and immigrants, carving an academic space for interpreting Chicanos and racial minorities as experiencing a form of racial exploitation by elite whites. Recent

scholarship has revitalized the internal colonialism theory and as seen through the literatures of post-colonialism and white settler colonialism that focus on the white ruling class and the oppressive historical conditions they had against racial minorities (Gutierrez 2006; Glenn 2014).

The work of these earlier scholars provides an academic space for inquiring about the views white employers may have of black and Latino laborers. According to the historical research, white employers have to a large extent actively engaged in exploiting minority laborers through various justifications. Whites saw themselves as civilizing black slaves and later freed black men by offering them work. Whites also saw opportunities to oppress and exploit Chicano laborers in the southwest, showing a long history of rationalizations of their superiority. There is a significant scholarly precedent for exploring the theoretical linkages between racism and capitalistic exploitation in our society. This tradition has major implications for studying the role of white employers of racial minorities and immigrants. Contemporary race-conflict theorists have continued to explore the many dimensions of white racism and the justifications needed for maintaining the racial hierarchy in society (Feagin 2006; Bonilla-Silva 2006).

The Gender-Conflict Perspective of Elite White Employers

Along with the connection between racial-conflict and capitalism, there also exists a long tradition of gender-conflict oriented research that speaks to both the class and race conflict perspectives. This focus on gender began with the study of women's social issues and major forms of sexism and sex discrimination that women face in society. Feminist scholars have demonstrated the historical and contemporary prevalence

of sexism against women across all social institutions (Lerner 1987, Butler 1990). Many strains of feminism have identified with the analysis put forth through Marxist and race-conflict approaches. Two major developments in gender studies, including intersectionality and white masculinity, are vital to consider for the study of racial, class, and gender issues found in the discourse of white employers. First, the leading contemporary theory on gender oppression is the theory of intersectionality that examines the ways in which race, class, and gender intersect to produce simultaneous forms of oppression. Kimberly Crenshaw (1991) and Patricia Hill Collins (2000) have conceptualized intersectionality as a way of understanding the voice of people in the margins that deal with intersectional oppression in their everyday lives. Crenshaw's use of intersectionality focuses on court cases dealing with the work experiences of black women, where they face racial, gender, and class discrimination. Crenshaw's analysis of the court rulings show that little attention is paid to the sexism and racism faced by black women due to the lack of conceptualizing the intersectional experience. This focus on the voices of the oppressed has major implications when studying the work experiences of racial minorities and immigrants across race, class, and gendered lines. Collins (2000) conceptualizes intersectionality through her work in *Black Feminist Thought* with the matrix of domination, analyzing the interlocking forms of oppression that occur for the marginalized and oppressed.

Although intersectionality and the matrix of domination have made significant impact on the study of oppression, its focus has largely been on studying the social issues faced by groups at the lowest level of the system of social stratification. There is a

growing need to also examine the intersectional experiences of those at the helm of the social stratification, such as the intersectional analysis of elite white men and their experiences with power, privilege, and ideological justification of oppression. One growing field is white masculinity studies, which focuses on the gendered experiences of this very powerful group that has a major impact on sustaining the present system of social stratification (Slatton 2014, Majzler 2016, Feagin and Ducey 2017). Elite white men are also experiencing an intersection of privilege that is based on their race, class, and gender status positions. The often toxic white masculinity perpetuates and justifies racist and sexist thinking that is used against racial minorities in the workplace. For white male employers, many have adopted white masculinity into their way of thinking to maintain their power over the composition of management positions in the work force and groups to hire at the bottom. White masculinity is heavily invested in reproducing the white male leadership that is overrepresented in management found in the work place. Research has found that white men continue to operate an “old-boys network” that offers powerful social networks for gaining access to social resources (McDonald 2011; Royster 2003). Additionally, the ideological justification of “pulling yourself up by your bootstraps” is evident in white male identities, tied to their masculinity and manifest itself through the disparaging views white male managers have of women, immigrants, and racial minorities (Hossfeld 1991; Saucedo 2006; Maldonado 2006).

Scholars have addressed the three main forms of oppression previously discussed, including systemic racism, systemic sexism, and capitalism in a forthcoming academic study (Feagin and Ducey 2017). In their new book, Feagin and Ducey argue

and show empirically that the systemic racism, systemic sexism, systemic classism (capitalism) are all highly connected with coreproducing parts forming a triple helix of *one integrated oppression system*, the elite-white-male dominance system. This research is crucial for showing that all systems of oppression are interconnected through the same elite-white-male dominance system. For hundreds of years society has been controlled by the one percent consisting of elite white men. Their research argues that 93 percent of CEOs of Fortune 500 corporations are all elite white men, meaning most businesses must cater to the needs and interests of this elite group. Major implications exist for white employers of undocumented Latino immigrants that must cater to elite white men who control our society's oppressive system. White employers must adopt the white racial frame to continue employing undocumented immigrant to uphold the elite white dominance system.

Systemic Racism, Classism, and Sexism of Elite Whites

Elite white male employers have sustained the major systems of oppression through racial framing and cultural hegemony that has been adopted by millions of Americans over the past few centuries. The economic dominance and survival of privileged elite whites is based around the continual societal support of systemic racism, classism, and sexism. Elite whites are highly involved in the obfuscation, complication, and opaque systems of oppression that benefit their interests and maintain their dominance of the political, economic, and social institutions in America. The everyday American has a myriad of views that in some ways are explicit support of an oppressive system, while in many ways are the implicit acceptance of the status quo. In this study, I

will focus on how white employers are imbedded in this system of ideological justification that shapes their views on race, class, gender, and immigration. Key to their justification are the values and norms elite white males use for establishing their white virtue, white masculinity, and the dominance over people of color. This section will explore the conceptual tools used to study the ideological, cognitive, and unconscious support the systems of oppression have received (Feagin 2013, Gramsci 1971, Bonilla-Silva 2006, Goffman 1959). I will explore the White Racial Frame, Cultural Hegemony, Colorblind Racism, as well as Frontstage and Backstage Racism as they pertain to the study of white employers of blacks and undocumented immigrants.

The White Racial Frame

A conceptual tool for analyzing the complexity of white views and racial ideology is known as the white racial frame (Feagin 2013). While Systemic Racism presents the structural context of white supremacy and has provided a contemporary framework for the race-conflict perspective, the white racial frame focuses on the persistence of white virtue and the everyday thinking about racial matters that shapes social outcomes for racial minorities. Joe Feagin (2013) presents the various elements of the white racial frame as an array of complex ideologies and interpretations whites have developed about racial minorities over the past few centuries. The white racial frame is defined as

A broad and persisting set of racial stereotypes, prejudices, ideologies, interlinked interpretations and narratives, and visual images. It also includes racialized emotions, racialized reactions to language accents and imbed inclinations to discriminate (Feagin 2013:xi)

The white racial frame goes far beyond attitudes and views, as it encompasses cognitive processes at a conscious and unconscious level carried by millions of Americans.

Drawing from interdisciplinary research on ideological thinking and how this influences behavior, the white racial frame provides an explanation for the historical and continuous justifications for racial oppression. This involves drawing upon the deeply imbedded racial views that surface with narratives, analogies, and emotional racializations whites engage in when discussing racial issues. The culmination of all these components of racial framing results in the inclinations to discriminate towards people of color. The power of the white racial frame is its historical and contemporary prevalence in society that shapes the racial thinking of millions of Americans.

White Racial Framing and Elite White Male Employers

A great way of demonstrating the significance of the white racial frame is the way white historical figures, such as the founding fathers, are upheld as noble and moral leaders that symbolize white virtue for Americans (Feagin 2013). However, these same white historical figures thought of so highly by millions of Americans, participated in genocide, slavery, and conquest against racial minorities. A closer look at the racial commentaries and actions of these figures illustrates the foundational nature of systemic racism and the significance this has for modern racial problems in US society. In the case of white employers, many early US founders that fought for independence were also wealthy slave owners and can be thought of as early elite white employers. The white racial framing that justified ownership of slaves was prevalent in these early thinkers, with notable examples included George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and

Benjamin Franklin. These founding fathers were instrumental in the developing the systemic racism, sexism, and capitalist system in their founding of the United States. George Washington, the revered general and first President, was also a prolific slave owner who had hundreds of slaves that were severely mistreated. Washington can be seen as an early white employer, a businessman seeking profit through racial oppression in the slavery system. The white racial frame justifies Washington's position as a slave owner through a multitude of ways, including that it was a common practice, that it civilized blacks, and that it was a divine right white men held for overseeing blacks. Records even show that Washington, as a white employer aiming to maintain his livelihood in owning slaves, sought legal loopholes to extend his ownership of slaves in areas that had begun to abolish slavery. When living in Pennsylvania, a law was formed that stated all slaves were to be freed after six months of residency in the state.

Washington developed a canny strategy that would protect his property and allow him to avoid public scrutiny. Every six months, the president's slaves would travel back to Mount Vernon or would journey with Mrs. Washington outside the boundaries of the state. In essence, the Washington reset the clock. The president was secretive when writing to his personal secretary Tobias Lear in 1791: 'I request that these Sentiments and this advise may be known to none but yourself & Mrs. Washington.' (Dunbar 2015)

It was well documented that Washington disregarded Pennsylvania laws against slavery to maintain his power and control over his oppressed and dehumanized black slaves. Washington went through a considerable effort to maintain his dominance over his slaves and even did not release all of his slaves in his will after his death. The early elite white employers were operating out of an explicit form of the white racial frame that

openly saw whites as superior for the justification of racial oppression for the inferior blacks.

The white racial framing seen through the early practices of white slave owners has fascinating parallels to contemporary white employers of racial minorities. While no form of racial oppression can compare to the practice of chattel slavery in America, white employers continue to have a particular canny ability to maintain their power over their racialized labor force by whatever means available to them in the current socio-political climate. White employers continue to engage in racial thinking and justification that results in the placement of racial minorities in laborious intensive work and whites into managerial tracks. And similar to George Washington's legal loopholes to keep his enslaved workers, white employers seek legal loopholes to continue employing undocumented immigrant workers. Through the white racial frame, white employers justify their actions as upholding law and order while consciously and unconsciously employing undocumented workers for the purposes of exploitation, profit, and racial domination.

Along with the centuries-long justification for the enslavement of blacks, elite white historical figures also developed similar justifications for the racial oppression of Latinos. As the US justified these views during their conquest of the southwest, where hundreds of thousands of Mexicans became subordinated into American imperialism. Acuna (1972) provides much of this historical background in *Occupied America* that draws from the Chicano radical tradition. The white racial frame is at work in the racialized thinking of Mexicans as a dehumanized mongrel race. One striking example

exists from Senator John C. Calhoun in 1848, who provided much racial commentary on the US imperialist policy towards Mexican people and territory.

Can we incorporate a people so dissimilar from us in every respect – so little qualified for free and popular government – without certain destruction to our political institutions... We do not want the people of Mexico, either as citizens or subjects. All we want is a portion of territory, which they nominally hold, generally uninhabited, or, where inhabited at all, sparsely so, and with a population, which would soon recede, or identify itself with ours... We have never dreamt of incorporating into our Union any but the Caucasian race – the free white race. (Feagin and Cobas 2015:18)

The historical views of Calhoun shows the early anti-Latino framing towards Mexicans, as a dehumanized and a racially impure people. This early racial framing set a standard for viewing Mexicans as a ‘mongrel race’, great for exploitation, but in no way full members of US society (Lopez 1997). From this early racial thinking in the 1800s, scholars argue that Mexicans underwent a form of internal colonialism, where racial minorities are colonized within the same country as the oppressor group (Barrera 1979). Whites developed an exploitative system based on class and racial status that created several Chicano economic sectors. Barrera argues that Chicano laborers and domestic workers consisted of the lowest status and were significantly underpaid compared to their white counterparts. While some Chicanos who were craftsmen held higher status, they were a small minority of all Chicanos and were still paid less than skilled white workers. Striking parallels exist with this historical internal colonial relationship and modern white employers with undocumented immigrants. White employers continue to subordinate Latino workers in a similar fashion, with segregated workforces in laborious and underpaid positions (Saucedo 2006). The justification for this system links to the white racial framing of society, where whites justify the existence of Latino

subordination as a natural process of work life. The white racial framing is justified in more implicit terms through the racial colorblind era, where issues of race are downplayed as having any significance, contrary to major research claiming race continues to matter in a myriad of ways in modern society.

The Capitalist-Class Frame

For the purposes of this research, Systemic Racism and neo-Marxist class analysis are both necessary for the analysis of the racial views of white employers of undocumented immigrants. White employers have complex racial views that convey a mix of both class and racial interests dependent upon the exploitation of Latino immigrants. To make sense of white employer views, it is important to note that capitalism, due to its economic structure dominated by the interests of elite white male capitalists, is sustained in society not just from direct political-economic forces but also from cultural ideological components to maintain its dominance. Antonio Gramsci conceptualized this process as cultural hegemony, which he defines as the following:

The spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is historically caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (Gramsci 1971:12)

For Gramsci, cultural hegemony explains the process in which people adopt the cultural views, beliefs, values, and ideas that support the dominant group's interest. Hegemony is derived from the Greek word *hegemonia* which means leadership and supremacy and is equivalent to *hegemon* which means leader. Gramsci offers a developed cultural component to neo-Marxist tradition that explains how capitalism continues as a

persistent system, despite the process of exploitation. Counterhegemonic ideology can be seen in labor movements and anti-capitalism protests that have at times taken place in society and run counter to elite interests.

Cultural Hegemony involves all three dominant frames of racism, sexism, and the capitalist-class frame for supporting the interests of elite whites in power (Feagin and Ducey 2017). The capitalist-class frame is the ideological component of capitalism and in some respects is similar to the way the white racial frame is the ideological component of systemic racism. White employers are heavily influenced by these structures of capitalism and systemic racism that manifest themselves in their discourse on class, race, and labor issues. As part of the millions of Americans who are socialized into the white racial frame, white employers also adopt the frames components including stereotypes, prejudices, ideologies, interpretations and narratives, visual images. They also have racialized emotions, issues with language accents, and all of this has major consequences for how they see workers and their decisions on hiring, pay, promotions, and other labor issues. Employers have a say in what racial groups to place in specific positions and administer the exploitation over laborers. They are actively engaged in developing a racialized hierarchy where blacks and Latinos are concentrated in the most labor intensive work.

The capitalist-class frame is widespread and often seen in ideological arguments such as the American Dream where the US is explained to be an exceptional country, where anyone can rise up by their bootstraps with a hard work ethic. The capitalist system is highly supported by the idea that any American can join the capitalist class by

working hard to be successful. The capitalist-class frame can be seen in white employer's ideological ideas concerning hiring, work ethic, minimum wage, promotions, and labor issues that are all heavily influential in maintaining their class interests. Employers in the public discourse are sometimes referred to as job creators and their views for the success of their businesses are accepted uncritically, allotting them great power over the composition of their labor force that results in social stratification and the development of a racial hierarchy. This study aims to critically analyze their capitalist-class framing and influence it has on the current system of social stratification.

Colorblind Racism

A major theoretical advancement in race and racism studies is the interrogation of the white racial framing that claims that the US is in a post-racial society. Many whites continue to see race and racism issues as unfortunate past events that the US has largely done away with. This insistence that race is not a factor in any aspect of society has led to the development of colorblind racism, a powerful ideological thinking found throughout contemporary US society. Colorblind racism is an ideology that is a key part of the white virtue center of the dominant white racial frame that explains racial inequality in society is derived from outcomes that have nothing to do with race (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Feagin 2013; Lopez 2015). The views of whites in regard to minimizing racism today can be broken down into four sub-frames of colorblind racism, which include abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism. While each provides a unique understanding of the ways whites use race in our society, the sub-frame of cultural racism offers insights on the study of white employers

that discuss black and Latino workers. Cultural racism focuses on cultural explanations in lieu of race-based explanations for addressing issues faced by racial minorities. White employers frequently speak about the culture of blacks and Latinos through detailed accounts of their work ethic, value system, and attitudes. By focusing on cultural attributes as the reasoning there exists differences between workers, white employers mask the racial stratification system that exists in labor-intensive work.

Research on the racial views white employers in the contemporary period must be analyzed through the context of colorblind racism era. White employers are subject to discrimination laws, meaning that in addition to social regulation of appropriate public racial commentary, employers face the possibility of actual legal ramifications for discrimination in the workplace. Even with the legal protections in place, racial discrimination continues to be rampant in the workplace. For instance, data from the 2015 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shows 89,385 charges of workplace discrimination was filed, over 30,000 being racial discrimination (EEOC 2015). Often the legal system does not always favor those who claim to have faced racial discrimination in the workplace. For example, a recent judicial decision found that employers are legally permitted to discriminate by hairstyles since they are not innate physical traits protected by anti-discriminatory laws (Cauterucci 2016). In the case, a black women was told she must remove her dreadlocks to be hired by an Alabama insurance company because they potentially could be unsanitary. After 6 years of litigation, the courts ruled that since hairstyles are not physically innate characteristics that are unchangeable, as opposed to skin color, the company is not found viable of

discrimination. The case is an example that although legal precedents exist for protection against discrimination, employers can still legally get away with workplace discrimination in the colorblind racist environment. White employers, while not directly speaking about their racial views of black and Latino workers, can nevertheless adopt a colorblind racism approach for speaking about racial minorities and be relatively safe from social or legal repercussions. White employers are not held responsible for unconscious and colorblind racist practices in the workplace.

Racial Framing in the Frontstage and Backstage

White employers, in the supposedly colorblind racist era, heavily regulate their racial views as a way of displaying their public and private self. Goffman's (1959) crucial work in the area of symbolic interactionism provides the conceptual terms of *frontstage* and *backstage* in this presentation of self that people are engaged in. The frontstage includes the everyday work life of employers and managers that causes certain formalities to exist when interacting with the racially diverse public. For a white employer, the frontstage is a multifaceted arena for enabling a public identity of white virtue, including the face of the business as a cordial owner and manager, as well as a white role model for firmly overseeing employees. This frontstage arena is a socially regulated environment where racial commentary is limited in ways that maintain the premise of the public persona. Social researchers have argued that beliefs about race must be probed beyond surface level analysis that capture only frontstage presentations of racial views (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Picca and Feagin 2007). The white employer in a frontstage setting is not ideal for uncovering reserved racial commentary, but

nevertheless there are methodological strategies for inquiring this information. This involves discussions of racial issues in frontstage settings that allow aspects of racial framing to appear for white employers.

The backstage arena includes the behind the scenes commentary and behavior regarding racial issues. This setting is typically all white, less formal, and more relaxed for white employers and may result in higher likelihood of racial commentary, racial humor, and overall problematic views of class, race, and gender that may influence discriminate work environments (Picca and Feagin 2007). The issue of access is exceptional for collecting data in the backstage, limiting major research in this area. The very few researchers that have accessed fully backstage settings tend to have established social networks through close family members or friends that allow entry into the backstage personas of white employers. Employers, although the public face of their companies, are very private people for discussing racial and social issues dealing with the operation of their companies. For research purposes, this study focuses on innovative techniques for collecting data of employers in semi-private frontstage settings. The glimpse into racial thinking and commentary will provide some level of access into opinions on racial and immigration issues, with an understanding that social barriers exist for uncovering extensive commentaries on backstage racial thinking.

The Techniques of Neutralization

This study also draws from a social theory from criminology known as the techniques of neutralization for interpreting the rationalizations and justifications white employers use for breaking immigration laws (Sykes and Matza 1957). First introduced

by Sykes and Matza in their study of delinquent youth, these neutralizations were conceptualized as a way deviant acts are framed as acceptable in the minds of those committing deviant or criminal acts. There are six aspects of the techniques of neutralization that include the following: denying responsibility, denying injury, denying the victim, condemning the condemners, and appealing to higher loyalties. Each of these neutralizations can be used to downplay the occurrence of a deviant action in attempt to garner support and sympathy from the general society.

While the techniques of neutralization have been applied to delinquent youths, some research has applied this framework for studying the justifications for engaging in white-collar crimes (Kieffer and Sloan 2009). White elites in power provide neutralizations that are useful for understanding their justifications and rationalization for breaking laws. White employers of undocumented immigrants must formulate these neutralizations for hiring their labor force, as current immigration laws place significant restrictions on the legal hiring of workers. Some research has shown that white employers of undocumented immigrants are engaged in a low-risk white-collar crime, where the immigration laws in place are largely symbolic and not expected to be enforced (Calavita 1990). The techniques of neutralization are highly useful in organizing the behind-the-scenes rationalizations employers engage in when hiring undocumented immigrant workers. This study will apply this neutralization theory in the analysis of the views of white employers to shed light on their justifications for hiring undocumented immigrant workers.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Early Employer Studies on Racial Issues

Early studies of employers were based on the functionalist understanding of free market capitalism, where employers were understood as experts on hiring the most productive worker for their firms with little incentive to discriminate based on race (Friedman 1962). Scholars, including sociologists and economists, began to question these assumptions through empirical studies of inequality based on wage gaps and unemployment rates of the black community in the US (Phelps 1972; Arrow 1973; Thurow 1975). These researchers found that employers were involved in discriminating based on race and provided two concepts for understanding the incentives of employers. The first concept was seen as *pure discrimination*, where an employer would purposely pay more for white employees to avoid working with racial minorities. Pure discrimination was seen as isolated, similar to the way openly racist views are seen as less likely in modern times. The second form was known as the concept of *statistical discrimination*, a perspective that argues employers will make a risk/benefit analysis purely based on the beliefs that specific workers are likelier to be less productive than other workers based on race. Scholars viewed employers as simply calculating the perceived performance of a racial minority group's average behavior and extended this stereotype into the hiring process to remove the risk of hiring an unproductive worker. In some ways, these researchers were providing a framework to explain the existence of

racial stereotyping within the context of free market capitalism. While significant in early employer studies, the framework of statistical discrimination has limited value for understanding the process of racialization that white employers engage in to maintain the existing racial stratification. Firmly situating statistical discrimination as employers utilizing rational choice for a cost/benefit analysis, the researchers managed to maintain the premise of free market forces to explain discrimination as an unfortunate occurrence to maximize profit potential.

Scholars followed up with large-scale, multi-city studies in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Atlanta on employers and their racial views using in-depth qualitative interviews and discovered an alarmingly high degree of racializations openly discussed by white employers across several industries (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991; Waldinger 1992; Moss and Tilly 1996; Shih 2002). White employers were found to have an enormous amount of racial commentary regarding whites, blacks, Asian, and Latinos. For instance, researchers found that white employers rely heavily on racialized and gendered narratives to that describe the employability of various racial groups (Hossfeld 1991; Moss and Tilly 1996; Shih 2002). At times the scholars were astonished by the openly racist views white employers held about racial minorities that relied on racial stereotypes and racial joking to describe the work ethic, productivity, and desirability of workers. At the recruitment stage, white employers would actively seek out applicants from white suburbs and avoid inner-city black neighborhoods. They would also use informal networks to recruit to get around hiring black workers. During the job interview stage, the researchers found that white employers would subjectively test applicants to

measure their attitudes and work ethic. Employers would rely on subjective instincts based on brief interviews, the manner of speech workers used, as well as perceived attitudes and work ethic. Employers also admitted black workers did not meet their needs as well as white workers did, and they pointed to educational issues or bad neighborhoods as the main social factors. Scholars found that white employers believed blacks were “unskilled, uneducated, illiterate, dishonest, lacking initiative, unmotivated, involved with drugs and gangs, did not understand work, had no personal charm, were unstable, lacked work ethic, and had no family life or role models (Krichenman and Neckerman 1991:154). A white employer participant explained that “Probably what I’m trying to say is we’re not social minded. We’re not worried about solving the problems of sociology. We can’t afford to (Krichenman and Neckerman 1991:154)”. Employers are deeply motivated by the capitalist system and use racial framing to determine the most exploitable worker, with little regard for the social consequences of reinforcing the racial hierarchy in the workforce.

An area of contention between major studies on employers is the interpretation of employer’s own views on workers and to what extent they should be accepted at face value. Some scholars emphasize the social institutions outside of the labor market create skill disparities between racial groups that employers use to justify their own discrimination (Moss and Tilly 1996, Waldinger 2002). Another view focuses more on the role employers have on perpetuating existing racial inequalities by using racially framed analysis to maintain the racial hierarchy found in the workplace (Feagin 2006, Maldonado 2006, Zamudio and Lichter 2008, Harrison and Lloyd 2013). This more

critical view emphasizes that scholars should be careful not to reify the coded and colorblind analysis of employers, as they are imbedded in a society whose foundation is built upon systemic racism and are greatly invested in maintaining a capitalist system for the survival of their business.

White Employers Using Racially Coded Language

A major theme in the literature on white employers focuses on the racially-coded language used to describe racial minorities in the workplace. Scholars have found that employers are uncomfortable discussing their racial thinking and often use coded language to indirectly speak about racial issues in the workforce (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991; Moss and Tilly 1996; Ward 2003; Maldonado 2006; Zamudio and Lichter 2008). When pressed on explaining the differences between racial groups that make up the racial hierarchy in the workforce, employers tend to rely on “soft-skills”, which include work ethic, motivation, and attitudes as a significant deciding factor on whether racial groups are hired and where they are placed at work. Scholars have referred to soft-skills as subjective interpretations that employers often use for describing their views of racial groups in the workforce (Ward 2003; Zamudio and Lichter 2008). The emphasis on soft-skills for hiring is argued as being a carefully produced code word for the justification of hiring discrimination towards racial minorities (Zamudio and Lichter 2008).

Although some white employers present openly racialized views of black and Latino workers, researchers found that employers would often present the argument that workers needed certain “skills” and that blacks lacked the necessary background to

obtain them (Ward 2003; Maldonado 2006; Zamudio and Lichter 2008). This explanation appears compatible with the view of human capital theory that workers are more hireable when they are argued to be more productive and some researchers have tended to accept the employer's coded language explanations at face value. Scholars have questioned the underlying meanings of soft skills that employers use, referring to them as coded tractability, meaning that the racially coded language is masking the desire to control workers. On the surface, black employees are said to have worse work ethic and motivation as compared to Latino immigrant workers, but when pressed employers at times share in-depth racializations of black and Latino workers. Latinos are explained to be quiet and having a great work ethic, codes that are claims of their inferiority and exploitability as hard-laborers (Maldonado 2006). The work ethic, motivation, and attitudes are argued to be carefully coded language to sustain a system of racial exploitation in the workforce. Employers make broad racial generalizations about black and Latino workers with the coded language of soft skills to justify the racial hierarchy and scholars reify the employer's perspective by accepting their views of the workforce as truth (Zamudio and Lichter 2008).

These conscious or unconscious social processes from employers are clearly explained by Feagin's (2013) white racial frame concept. White employers draw from the white racial frame to legitimize their superior racial virtue and present socially acceptable reasons for racial hiring based on subjective traits. Furthermore, by taking the white employer view at face value, the researcher and audience adopts their racially framed presentation of racial minorities and attributes these negative traits to them,

legitimizing the prevalence of widely practiced hiring discrimination (Zumudio and Lichter 2008). White employers hold powerful positions in the economy that give them large leeway for subjective interpretation of which groups make subservient, productive workers and act accordingly based on their business needs. Scholars have the opportunity to interpret the negative traits attributed to racial minorities as less individually inherent traits but rather, as Zamudio and Lichter argue, “an expression of differences in social and political vulnerabilities (2008:576).” In other words, the disparate treatment by the systemic racism experienced by black and Latino workers may provide a basis for explaining these supposedly negative traits racial minorities develop when judged by white employers.

White Employers Reproducing the Racial Hierarchy in the Workplace

White employers wield immense power for sustaining the racial hierarchy in the workforce. Scholars have explored the myriad of ways employers reproduce the existing racial stratification in the workforce, one of which is based on the control employers have with network hiring (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991; Royster 2003; Saucedo 2005). Employers have been argued to actively recruit through white neighborhoods and white networks for more valued positions in the businesses (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991; Royster 2003; DiTomaso 2013). These same approaches of network hiring are used for hiring Latino employers for filling the most labor-intensive work in firms (Saucedo 2005). White employers have a canny ability of maintaining dominance and using available hiring tactics to funnel the appropriate racial group to their corresponding position along the racial hierarchy found in the workplace.

Scholars have begun to question the meritocratic argument that having high human capital will secure employment by exploring how employers are instead using social networks for maintaining the racial hierarchy in the workplace (Royster 2003). Research has found a disproportionate amount of white men obtain the most lucrative positions in blue-collar work, based on white parents, family, friends, and acquaintances who make up white social networks that offer access to valuable employment. These same white social networks are tapped for promotions within companies and the network based hiring process provides an understanding of how white men tend to become managers and employers in most companies. Researchers have found that blacks report that newly hired white employees are frequently given more pay raises and promotions (Moss and Tilly 2001). Similar research shows how black networks do not have the same access to high-end wage work and causes a major barrier for accessing employment. Blacks, having little chance of breaking into white social networks, have little to no connections to white employers to gain an edge in being hired or promoted in work. Instead, white employers are more likely to be distant and rely on figuring out if the black applicant is an exception to the rule of white perceived racial stereotypes. This process is largely determined during short job interviews where white employers rely on “gut feelings” that can likely go wrong for the black applicant (Krichenman and Neckerman 1991). It is important to note that black and Latino social networks exist and provide a form of communal resilience and counter-framing to systemic racism (Feagin 2013). Black networks are supportive and provide necessary resources for dealing with

social issues of discrimination and poverty, even as they are limited in having access to employment opportunities.

When examining social networks and racism in the job market, there appears to be a gap in the literature on how Latinos immigrants are impacted in this process. The social network literature on Latino immigrants has been argued to be a critical part of the migration process and access to jobs in the US (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2003, Flores 2013). This view focuses on the communal aspect of migration and the connectedness migrants have with information about employment and community resources. Scholars argue that migrant social networks are crucial for the migration experience and must be taken into account for understanding immigration issues. There is an additional view on immigrant social networks that centralizes the role of white employers in taking advantage of immigrant labor. Scholars have pointed out how white employers have developed the *brown collar workplace*, a social process that explains the concentration of Latino immigrant workers in segregated low-skilled sectors of the labor market largely because of their subservience (Saucedo 2006). This critical view of immigrant social networks focuses on how white employers create jobs for the employment of Latino immigrants based on the control of their labor. White employers treat newly arrived and long-term immigrants along the same lines as they accumulate a large pool of brown collar workers to maintain low-wage employees with little opportunity for mobility. This large reserve of Latino laborers for exploitation creates conditions that allows employers to take advantage of them, whether the Latino laborers are documented or undocumented. White employers are sharply aware of the abundance

of Latino laborers and actively recruit by using referrals through the Latino social networks in place. The Latino social networks serve as a conduit of racial stratification that white employers exploit to maximize the control of the means of production and turn higher profits for their businesses.

White Employers' Racial Framing and the Exploitation Discourse of Latinos

A body of work exists on the significance of racial framing directed at Latinos in everyday life that has major implications for the study of white employers (Romero 2008; Chavez 2011; Feagin and Cobas 2013). Scholars have recently begun to interrogate how white employers view hiring undocumented Latino immigrants, the ways in which employers favor them for their hard work and exploitability, and why employers have developed a high reliance on these workplace inequalities towards immigrants (Shih 2002, Holms 2005; Maldonado 2006; Zamudio and Lichter 2008; Harrison and Lloyd 2013). This emerging theme focuses on the racial and exploitative framing white employers have of undocumented Latino immigrants in the workforce. White employers heavily rely on Latino immigrants in some of the most laborious work conditions in the US, including agriculture, construction, food service, and hotel services. White employers segregate Latinos into dead-end positions that are known for their low wages, long hours, and severe barriers for social mobility. There is a layering of contractors and middleman, often by middle class whites or Mexican Americans that remove the liability of these conditions to elite whites who profit tremendously from this exploitation.

Scholars have applied a race-critical analysis of white agricultural employers of undocumented Latino farm workers (Holms 2005; Maldonado 2006; Harrison and Lloyd 2013). White employers use racial ideologies and everyday practices of racialization to justify Latino laborers as cheap and disposable bodies. Research has found that employers are highly convinced that the racial background of Latino immigrant employees shapes their work ethic, attitude, and productivity on the job (Maldonado 2006). Employers are also convinced that the background experiences of Latino laborers as newly arrived immigrants are the catalyst for their hard work ethic. Scholars have found that white employers look down on Latino immigrants who “Americanize”, as immigrants that gain more experience in the US and tend to not remain the ideal worker (Maldonado 2006; Harrison and Lloyd 2013). When pressed on why they believe this, employers speak about immigrants as becoming lazy and losing their work ethic or picking up bad attitudes. Scholars have demonstrated that white employers have a reliance on the controllability and malleability of immigrant workers that focuses on how to maintain their subservient attitudes and hard work ethic to maximize their exploitability (Shih 2002; Maldonado 2006; Harrison and Lloyd 2013).

Scholars have also focused on the narratives white employers have about their own challenges and survivals they have in their business in the context of relying on Latino immigrant laborers (Harrison and Lloyd 2013). The employer’s own social mobility is strongly correlated with the immobility of the Latino immigrant workers they employ (Harrison and Lloyd 2013). White agriculture employers, seeking to maintain their livelihoods, are immensely reliant on Latino immigrant laborers for the most

difficult work at their business. Latino immigrant laborers are also significant time savers for white employers, as having reliable workers means more personal time for white employers to spend with family or other activities outside the scope of work. The employer's sense of well-being is enhanced by knowing hard-working reliable Latino workers are essentially running their business. It is crucial to explore the white employer identity for uncovering their motivations and rationalizations that maintain the racial hierarchy in labor intensive work.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore the racial framing of white employers use towards undocumented Latino immigrants. By interviewing employers at their place of work, this research aimed to uncover both the frontstage and backstage practices and justifications that white employers use for their hiring and treatment of undocumented Latino immigrants. I will now discuss the interview process, recruitment strategy, participants, data analysis, and the positionality as the researcher of this study.

Interviews

The primary source of data collection for this study was through twenty-six qualitative interviews with white and nonwhite employers in central Texas. Twenty were white employers, while six were racial minority employers. A semi-structured interview guide was developed to guide employer interviews while also allowing for open-ended discussions on race and immigration during the interview process. Interviews allow researchers to gain a deep understanding on the construction of various aspects of knowledge through every day lived experiences, which is then analyzed and interpreted

in the context of the broader social structure (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). The participants were explained the purpose of the study that focuses on how employers manage their business and their views of race and immigration issues. The first section of the interview questionnaire was designed for establishing rapport with employers by asking them about their own history and challenges they face as managers in their industry. The next section focused on describing the demographics of their business as well as questions regarding their immigrant workers. To expand on the discussions, several vignettes were used describing scenarios or quotes regarding immigration related issues in the workplace. Participants would respond in various ways to the vignettes and I would probe their views on race, immigration, and the workplace.

There was a high level of resistance to agreeing to be involved in this study. Many employers would not return phone calls and were reluctant to discuss issues in person, over the phone, or through online means. Only in-person interviews were acceptable for data collection purposes due to the sensitive nature of the topic, as being in-person developed an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity with employers of predominant industries. The majority of interviews took place at the employer's job site, during their break or work hours. There were six interviews that were conducted at a different location, at a café or other local setting. All interviews were audio recorded with the exception of three participants who did not agree to be recorded. Field notes immediately after the interviews were crucial for collecting data for those that asked not to be recorded. The interviews lasted Interviews lasted from forty minutes to one and a half hours, and at a convenient time based on participants' schedules.

Furthermore it is important to note that there were six racial minority employers and they provided a somewhat different perspective of race and immigration in the workplace. The racial minority employers had similar capitalist frames for understanding labor relations, yet they were often more critical towards the treatment of Latino laborers. Although they were a smaller sample, I argue racial minority employers have experiences with racial discrimination that allow them to see and highlight the existence of harmful labor practices experienced by Latinos. The racial minority employers often provided insights on the practices of white employers behind closed doors, such as their backstage views on hiring undocumented immigrant workers and techniques for engaging in labor violations.

Recruitment

This research came across significant issues in gaining access to participants for several reasons. The participants aimed for in this study are white employers who hold significant power as owners and managers of businesses. These employers are not readily able to speak frankly about the employment of undocumented immigrants as they have an interest in maintaining a legitimate business. To maintain their distance, many employers instead use secretaries or hostesses to explain that they are too busy to speak. I was turned away dozens of times in-person and over the phone about inquiries to participate in this study.

Another approach that I conducted was an online survey designed for employers or managers to complete that would be an anonymous way to participate in the study. After several weeks of posting the survey at numerous online employment websites such

as Craigslist and Backpage, very few replies occurred that collected virtually no in-depth data. The specific participants this study was targeting were not active online users who are drawn to filling out anonymous surveys on their business practices.

Ultimately, I reached out through snowball methodology using contacts in the community that had personal relationships with restaurant owners who hire undocumented immigrant workers. Out of the seventy business that I contacted which held at least one employer, only twenty six responded. The bulk of the willing participants became restaurant owners and managers due to their increased likelihood of response during slow business hours. I would approach the employers dressed in professional attire, and I would shake their hands while maintaining eye contact and explaining my status as a student doing research on employment.

My semi-structured, open-ended interview survey used a narrative approach where I asked about their beginnings in their industry and how they came to be owners or managers in their businesses. This approach was warmly responded to as many restaurant owners have considerable social skills developed from experience with clients and are in many ways the face of their business. These early questions created a comfortable space between myself and the participant, before I moved on to asking about the demographic of the workers at their business and later their racial and undocumented immigration views concerning their workers.

There were several reasons which indicated employers' motivations to participate in the study and their elusiveness for recruitment and participation, despite having a significant incentive of a \$30 gift card. First, employers want to appear they have a

legitimate business. Admitting to hiring or employing of undocumented immigrants could have serious repercussions and may negatively impact the employer's perception of themselves, their business, or their practices. Though I consistently emphasized confidentiality in the interviews, they still appeared to fear the penalties associated with being discovered as a business which hiring undocumented immigrants. Second, employers also face time constraints and separate industries provide different challenges for approaching employers for interviews about their employment of undocumented immigrants. Employers are simply very busy, and many did not have time to sit down for an interview, particularly in fast-paced setting such as restaurants. Other industries, such as locally based construction companies, did not have an address to approach them, or an office or physical setting which they could be easily accessible. Third, employers are too specific of a population to capture in online forums/settings where they could speak openly about their racial and immigration views. Many did not have the time, resources, or interest in sitting at a computer answering survey questions. Almost all employers had to be interviewed upon immediate contact, as they would easily dismiss recruitment efforts over the phone with disinterest or distractedness from the hectic restaurant environment.

Participants

The participants of this study included 26 employers of businesses located in a mid-sized city in central Texas. Over the course of one year and six months, the participants agreed to discuss their views. All participants were employers in a business and were either owners, co-owners, senior managers, assistant managers, or supervisors

in their particular industry that had the power to hire, promote, and oversee the labor conditions of laborers. There was a high priority to protect the identity of the participants, so pseudonyms were used to organize the data collected. The demographic information for the included participants can be found in Table 1. The majority were males, with five being female. Twenty participants were white, five were Latino, and one was south Asian. Almost all of the participants worked in various types of restaurants, and five were owners or employers in the construction industry, one participant was a local farmer. All participants resided in central Texas during the study. The interviews with the employer participants lasted around one hour, with some employers lasting one hour and half. Some of the participant's interviews were much shorter than 30 minutes, as they were uncomfortable answering certain questions and would ask to pass on to other questions. Also a few of the participants asked not to be recorded, where I would rely upon interview notes taken after speaking with the participants.

All participants are defined as “employers” due to their power and authority to hire and promote laborers. There were five types of employers in this study, including owners, co-owners, senior managers, assistant managers, and supervisors. The owners and co-owners were older and more established employers, most were not readily available for interviews as they are not often running the day to day operations of the business. These owners and co-owners had much more in-depth knowledge on the origin of their business and had much more experience to draw from, very few were interviewed in this study. The senior managers make up the bulk of the study and are

often the ones truly running the business and have significant power in the everyday operation of their firm. All owners, co-owners, and senior managers were white men, while the assistant managers and supervisors consisted of white men, women, and racial minorities. The assistant managers and supervisors are often younger and were receiving training for higher management positions. There were a number of assistant managers and supervisors that were interviewed in this study, as they are the most approachable employers to speak with due to their availability during slower hours of the businesses. The employer participants can be understood as being a part of a hierarchical structure, where the easiest to approach are assistant managers and supervisors, followed by senior managers, and the most difficult to approach are owners and co-owners. Additional high ranking positions such as regional managers and nationwide CEOs that wield significant power in the labor force were beyond the scope of this study.

Table 1.
Summary Demographics of Participants

Name (Pseudonym)	Sex	Race	Industry
Will	Male	White	Construction
Adam	Male	White	Construction
Pablo	Male	Latino	Construction
Enrique	Male	Latino	Construction
Niki	Female	Asian	Construction
John	Male	White	Restaurant
Billy	Male	White	Restaurant
Kevin	Male	White	Restaurant
Tom	Male	White	Restaurant

Table 1.
Continued

Name (Pseudonym)	Sex	Race	Industry
Gary	Male	White	Restaurant
Jennifer	Female	White	Restaurant
Jamie	Male	Latino	Restaurant
Jerry	Male	White	Restaurant
Frank	Male	White	Restaurant
Margaret	Female	White	Restaurant
Mike	Male	White	Restaurant
Javier	Male	Latino	Restaurant
Sofia	Female	Latina	Restaurant
Sam	Male	White	Restaurant
Paul	Male	White	Restaurant
Nick	Male	White	Restaurant
Caleb	Male	White	Restaurant
Sarah	Female	White	Restaurant
Jackson	Male	White	Restaurant
Adrian	Male	White	Restaurant
Fred	Male	White	Agriculture

Data Analysis

The data was collected over the period of one year and six months that gathered twenty-six interviews with twenty-three being audio recorded. The interviews, which were around one hour, were transcribed using computer software. The data which

included field notes, memos, and interviews were analyzed using a qualitative research software program, ATLAS.ti. Any personal identifying information was removed or modified in transcripts and they were organized by their assigned pseudonym. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and categorically coded through initial open coding, followed by line by line coding. The codes were organized along axial codes and later became the supporting data for the thematic codes used in the analysis (Charmaz 2006). Through constant comparison, and categorization of larger representative codes, and analytic reflection, several major themes emerged which captured the perspectives of the employers across the interviews. As the main source for data interpretation for this study, the themes generated are described and reported through supporting evidence of participant quotations and researcher observations. During this process, analytic memos were documented to emphasize complex phenomena, critical reflection and knowledge construction (Salandia 2009).

A significant guiding principle throughout this study was the critical analysis of the data through the conceptual lens of the white racial frame (Feagin 2013). The participants described a variety of racial thinking, narratives, interpretations, and emotional responses to the race and immigration issues within the workplace. The white racial frame offers an analytical framework for understanding white virtue and Latino racial framing, all of which were applied in the analysis of the data. Also significant for the data analysis was Goffman's presentation of self for understanding the context in which employers shared their racial framing. There was a consideration of the frontstage and backstage arenas that shaped the context of their racial framing. Another framework

used in this study is based on Sykes and Matza's (1957) techniques of neutralization for interpreting the rationalizations white employers used to justify breaking immigration laws. All of these conceptual guides were crucial for interpreting, categorizing, and analyzing the myriad of racial views white employers shared during the interviews.

An important consideration for the data analysis in this study are the differences in racial framing between whites and racial minorities in the study, showing that the racial background of the employer has significant influence on their views. White employers tended to operate more closely out of the white racial frame for upholding white virtue, although they did take some liberal standpoints on immigration based on their capitalist positions. The few Latino employers in the study also adopted similar capitalist standpoints, but they did appear much more sympathetic to Latino exploitation and offered a critiques of Latinos being taken advantage of by white employers. The minority employers also provide an inside look at the practices of their white employer counterparts that is used in the analysis. Furthermore, the gender background of the employers appeared to have some influence on their views. The white male employers had strong feelings about work ethic and subtle preferences for white men in management positions. The few women in the study did address the experiences of women in higher management positions that caused issues of acceptance by what are mostly male dominated industries. Further research is necessary for exploring how the race and gender background play significant roles in the views of employers of undocumented Latino immigrants.

Positionality

My experiences as a Mexican American race scholar have shaped my interests in this topic of the racial views of white employers of Latino immigrants. I began my research agenda by focusing on the experiences of Mexican immigrants, including restaurant workers and day laborers. Studying their experiences in society was a passion of mine, as I come from an immigrant family and have had connections to both Mexico and the United States. Early in my graduate studies at Texas A&M, I became involved in interviewing day laborers on street corners to understand their work experiences. One morning as I was interviewing day laborers, I was approached by a white employer in a pickup truck and asked if I was looking for employment. This interaction was significant, as I had been learning from Mexican day laborers that employers at times treated them poorly, such as low wages, not paying them the agreed amount, or leaving them behind at job sites. I began to wonder about the racial views of white employers and their justifications for hiring day laborers. What sorts of racial framing are used by white employers in their everyday interaction with Latino laborers? Where do they stand on the general issue of undocumented immigration? White employers are important to consider in the analysis of Latino immigration.

Being a Mexican American male resulted in several consequences on the impact of this study of the racial views of white employers of undocumented Latino immigrants. Research has shown that the race of the interviewer has a significant impact on the responses and discussions of participants in studies. For instance, whites have been shown to answer questions on race in ways that are seen as socially acceptable (Bonilla-

Silva 2006). My own racial background, especially my name, signifies to white employers that they are speaking with a Latino. White professionals are thus automatically placed in frontstage setting to present their best selves as they speak with a Latino interviewer as well as being the face of their business. At times during interviews, white employers would ask about my own background and experiences, which I believe stemmed from their interests in understanding my goals and purpose of discussing these issues of race and immigration. Some white employers would insist that I would find that they are often on the same side as immigrants, downplaying any potential issues as they took into account they were speaking with a Latino interviewer asking rarely brought up questions.

My epistemological viewpoint in this research is important for discussing my overall approach to this study. I take a subjective, constructivist approach that assumes the data and my analytical interpretation are socially constructed (Charmaz 2006). I also take into consideration a reflexive view of science that focuses on the intersubjectivity of both the interviewer and the participant (Burawoy 1998). Whether I am studying the lived experiences of undocumented Latino laborers, or the racial views of the white employer, I am taking their subjective realities into account in the construction of their interview data (Jamal 2006). The interviews with employers are meant to collect information about how they see the social world, while incorporating my own interpretation and biases I bring into the research process (Madison 2005). My aim is to reject objectivity and any claims of neutrality as is seen in the positivist tradition that is known for taking an ahistorical approach for studying social reality. Much of academic

thinking has claimed to be objective but continues to be highly shaped by Eurocentric viewpoints and often dismisses the subjective approaches taken by race scholars (Ladner 1973). I embrace the view of race-critical scholars conducting anti-racist research and offer frameworks for defining an approach on doing research on race (Jamal 2006; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008).

Social scientists who consider the social world as a hard objective reality will probably focus on analyzing relationships and regularities; they will search for universal laws that can explain and govern the reality being observed. Social scientists who stress the subjective experience of individuals as being paramount have a totally different approach. Their main concern is to develop an understanding of how an individual creates, modifies, and interprets the world (Jamal 2006:227)

I acknowledge that a multitude of social structural conditions shape the historical and contemporary realities that are subjectively experienced. I also agree with the realist approach in the social sciences that argues that “theory aims to provide an understanding of the processes which produce the contingent outcomes of experiences (Manicas 2006)”. In other words, the social structural conditions and in turn their social processes must be well understood in terms of their influence on the analysis of subjective understandings.

The theoretical approach for this study is thus rooted in an anti-racist sociological critique that sees social reality as heavily influenced by the structural conditions of systemic racism, systemic sexism, and capitalism. The research provides the subjective experiences of white male employers and this socially constructed data is based upon the social processes embedded in the conditions of racism, sexism, and capitalist exploitation. The racial hierarchy found in labor-intensive work is an observable social

fact, while the interpretation for why this stratification system exists is the subjective analysis of social reality that can be interpreted in a multitude of ways. Based upon my laid out epistemological approach, I will bring my experiences, interpretations, biases, and subjective reality in the creation, data collection, analysis, and conclusions of this study. This project is interested in the inner-workings of systemic racism as a reality that is observed, reinforced, and defended through white employers of undocumented Latino immigrants.

The Elusive Employers: Doing Qualitative Research on Elites

There has been a relatively recent methodological tradition that has focused on doing qualitative research on privileged and powerful groups in society. These kinds of studies focus on elite groups, examining their cultural traditions as well as their ideological justifications of their social status and position (Hertz and Imber 1995; Feagin and O'Brien 2004). From a Marxist perspective, elite white capitalists hold immense power in the shaping and operation of the major social, economic, and political institutions that largely perpetuate social inequality in its many forms. The study of elite groups thus must be central concern of academic study, their cultural traditions and their ideological understandings of society that largely justify their social status and position. There are a number of concerns this translates for methodological approaches on the elites.

Few social researchers study elites because elites are by their very nature difficult to penetrate. Elites establish barriers that set them apart from the rest of society... social scientists have traditionally identified with the disenfranchised, believing that to understand them and expose their plight will also eventually empower them. This explains perhaps why research on elites is so rarely undertaken. After all, whose purpose does it serve to “empower” the rich and powerful? One

strategy in the study of elites is to expose the reach of power in hope to clarifying it for those who are subject to it. (Hertz and Imber 1995:viii)

First, as Hertz and Imber point out, much of sociological analysis on the issues of inequality have tended to focus on marginalized groups, such as the study of the working class, racial minorities, and women. Major early and contemporary studies have made methodological advancements with the purpose of empowering the voiceless with qualitative research. There does not appear to be any significant work for studying white elites up close, as there have been little public or academic interests in the social, political, and cultural traditions elites use to maintain power. One exception can be seen in *White Men on Race* (2003) where Feagin and O'Brien have college students interview friends of their elite white parents on their racial views, showing an innovative methodological approach in studying elite white men. Secondly, Hertz and Imber raise the question of who gains from researching and empowering the rich and the powerful, especially when their voices are not seeking to be heard on the issues of inequality.

White employers are not interested in solving inequality or social issues, they are much more interested in solving any challenges to their desire to accumulate capital. There is a real necessity for critical methodological frameworks for interpreting the views of elites in power and the strategies available for the researcher to gain the critical access essential for gaining their trust. For the purposes of this dissertation, I draw upon these methodological concerns of studying those in power in the labor market. The employer participants are not part of the highest reaches of elite groups in society, yet they hold privileges and power through the control of their businesses. They were often employing dozens of workers and were actively engaged in maintaining the racial hierarchy in the

workplace. They were also highly elusive, creating major difficulties in collecting the sample due to their avoidance of discussing these major concerns of the research.

CHAPTER IV

WHITE VIRTUE IN THE WORKPLACE

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the way white employers use the white racial frame in the development of white virtue in the workplace. White virtue is a central component of the white racial frame that includes a variety of racialized interpretations for seeing and valuing the superiority of white intelligence and expected success in the workplace. White virtue is upheld as a justification for superiority that reinforces and justifies the racial hierarchy that allows white workers to have access to higher status positions in the workforce. Several of the themes I will explore include how white males are associated with authority and power, how whites are promoted into management, and how white networks support whites in the workforce. These themes are closely associated with narratives of white workers experiencing rapid promotions to more beneficial positions over racial minorities. A surprising finding was that many white employers are also conflicted about entry level white laborers, as they are at times depicted as aspirational and as well as entitled for demanding the control of their own labor. White employers expect white laborers to move on to better opportunities, finding them not as controllable as racial minorities or undocumented immigrants. Thus, white virtue is constructed through the comparison of whites to racial minorities and immigrants.

White Males Associated with Authority and Power

Participants discussed the perceived authority that is associated with white men at work such as how white men are expected to be in charge, and that Latinos will do

their jobs when white men are overseeing them. This racial framing shapes white virtue as a form of established authority that benefits that status of white men at work and reinforces their position along the racial hierarchy. Will, a white construction employer, describes the necessity of white men to hold this top position.

Will: They wouldn't give a Hispanic my job. They're not going to tell somebody that doesn't maybe speak English to go check with all these contractors because, like I said, you have to be there, because if I leave, even the oldest of the old and the most experienced [Latinos] will sit down and take a break. If no one is watching them, there has to be somebody there. And I think the reason that [Latinos] listen to me is because I'm a white guy and for the most part the white guys are the developers, the guys running the show, and that just kind of, if a white guy walks up to you, if all your bosses have always been a white guy I feel that there is a sense of authority already established

From the perspective of an employer, Latinos will not work as hard if there is not a white male overseeing them on the job. Employers also believe it is expected that white men become overseers for ensuring Latino laborers are kept in check. Several other employers shared that white men are most qualified to oversee labor-intensive businesses, usually through their insistence that whites speak English and are more suited for management roles. The symbolic representation of white men in authority has a long historical precedent, where whites are seen as superior and intelligent overseers as opposed to Latino laborers that are seen as bodies for manual labor. This white racial framing is ongoing and helps explain the high position of white men along the racial hierarchy.

Another employer who connects white virtue to authority is Niki, a South Asian woman who works as a manager at a construction firm. Niki is in charge of hiring and monitoring construction sites in central Texas and has an inside look at perspectives of

white male employers. She spoke often of how different she felt being the only non-white and female manager in the company. In her experience she finds that white men earn respect from laborers from their status as overseers and authority figures

Niki: Well, it's very simple. I think the reason that is, is because [whites] relate more to themselves, to their own kind. You know personally, I just I feel that a lot of time, these [white men] that I work with, are very lazy. Like on a whole another level of laziness, and the thing is when they talk down to people, you know, even when they talk down to certain Hispanics, the Hispanics have to obey because they are in fear of their jobs... **I had to actually, the crazy thing is and I hate to say this, I had to become like the white men, I had to become like them in order get the respect of certain, of these Hispanics.** Yes like I can't go around talking to them like "hey" you know, "how's everything going, what do you guys need?" I need to be like "y'all need to hurry up" (laugh)

Niki provides a perceptive analysis of what white virtue means in the workplace and how it relates to the marginalization of Latino laborers. Although she is a South Asian woman, she discusses how she must adopt the traits and behavior of white men to fulfill her role as a construction manager of Latino laborers. Niki explains that white male managers in construction are not compassionate or friendly towards Latino laborers, instead they are aggressive and insistent on Latinos working faster to finish projects. She also emphasizes that she must "become like the white men" to get respect and control over Latino laborers. The Latino workers are marginalized by the possibility of losing their jobs and have come to adhere to the demands of white male managers to maintain their laborer status. While the majority of managers are white men, managers from other racial backgrounds must also adopt the established white virtue associated with authority and power at the top of the racial hierarchy.

White Males Promoted to Management

As white virtue is racially framed to be associated with authority, the resulting influence on the labor market is that white men experience opportunities and privileges for advancement in their industries. Many white employers discuss their experiences starting at lower status positions, which involved working alongside Latino laborers at first, but then being offered higher status positions in management. Some white male employers, such as Billy, spoke about being quickly promoted to higher paying positions over racial minorities that they felt were more deserved.

Billy: I know the [construction company I worked for], they would pay them a lot less than what I was getting paid. Because I worked there about three weeks and I went from just pushing the rake to being on the paver. And there were people there that worked with [white male manager] for years.

Interviewer: what do you think was the cause of that quick promotion there?

Billy: Cause we had a common trait, we both spoke clear English. We could sit down and have a conversation with one another. I know that's what it was.

Billy explains his experience from performing manual labor and being promoted to operating machinery, a coveted higher status position in construction. When pressed on explaining his promotion, Billy emphasizes that it was the ability to connect and speak English with the manager that created this opportunity. Although he does not openly state his racial background had a role in his promotion, it is very apparent white male managers prefer to connect with other white men and offer them opportunities over racial minorities. The explanation of a common language, culture, and the ability of having a conversation is a racially framed way of avoiding the discussion of white racial privileges white men have in the industry. A reoccurring trend amongst the employers is

the instance that culture and language best explain the development of the racial hierarchy in the workplace.

Niki: Yeah right, umm, every time [whites] would come there, they wanted to learn to operate the machinery, all the machines, and this is like what I was telling you about, with the black individuals, they were not given the opportunity to operate certain machinery, even though they showed that they could come to work on time every day, do their work correctly, and have a desire to learn. [Blacks] were not given those opportunities. But [quietly] the white men were.

Niki shows how white men are favored for higher status positions over black workers. The higher status roles associated with operating machinery are reserved for white men based on their perceived white virtue including a superior intelligence required for these positions. Black men are seen as inferior and are designated to lower status positions. Niki shared that white managers would disapprove of even hiring black laborers and would refuse to promote them into any positions, even though they had longer tenure. White employers have developed rigid social hierarchy that reinforces stratification in the workforce and leaves pathways for white men to be successful.

Another example is seen from Frank, a young white restaurant manager that speaks about starting out working alongside Latinos in the kitchen and being promoted into the manager position.

Frank: yeah I started as cashier and moved my way up, every few months I ended up getting another raise, another raise, and then transferred over here. And then I worked in the kitchen for a year, side by side with those [Latinos]. Still doing the key work but also working on the line. And after a year of that, that's when they offered me to be front of the house manager position and I took that.

Frank explains the process white men experience as they are promoted from within and gain management positions. Frank speaks about working alongside Latinos his investment in working in the kitchen has paid off as he is rewarded with a higher status

along the racial hierarchy. White men experience what they believe is a virtuous journey that starts as an entry level position, such as dishwashers, line cooks, or general labor. Whites begin working alongside Latinos, many of whom have devoted years of their lives as low status workers. Latinos are then assigned by white managers to train the entry-level white workers, who after a short while are rapidly promoted into management positions. White men become the overseers of those that trained them and they can now claim their journey was built on hard work and experience. Many whites experience this accelerated track towards management that is closely related to the framing of whites as authority figures that are rewarded by upper management.

I also followed up with Frank to ask him his thoughts on why the management has been predominantly white at the business.

Frank:...I mean..uh...I'm not sure why it works out that way... I mean the management process hiring, I imagine that the upper management, maybe, their all, everyone that I've met has been older white guys, mid to later 40s/50s...yeah the market partners, honestly every single one I've met has been 50 year old white men, I've only met one that was female, and the rest has been white guys, older white guys and they are the ones that are in charge of hiring managers unto it, so that might have something to do with it.

When pressed on explaining why so much of the management has been white, Frank paused and was unsure at first, showing he had not really thought about the mechanisms behind the status quo of whites as managers. He then explains how all upper management, including regional managers and partners, have all been white men in their 50s and this may be influencing the decisions of continuing to hire white men as managers. This insight shows the established white management has a major influence on white males being chosen for higher positions in the company. Many of the

participants alluded to the power held by elite white managers that have a significance in the makeup of the hierarchy found in the restaurant business.

White Networks Support White Men for Management

Employers shared the ways in which white networks were crucial for obtaining management positions in their companies. Historically, these white networks have given major advantages to white men for obtaining the most desirable positions in blue collar employment, involving construction, restaurant, and trade work. Many of the employer participants spoke about networks that introduced them into their respective businesses. Will, a construction contractor, first gained valuable work as an electrician through connections with his grandfather and uncle.

Will: Annd soooo, I started my own business umm, I'm a contractor around town, but I've been doing labor since I was 14 years old, doing electrical, I've done every stage of building, even metal buildings like this, help wire them-

Interviewer: how did you get into that work?

Will: my uncle was an electrician, my grandpa is an electrician, and then so, I help my uncle, for a couple years

Will describes his start in the construction business and refers to his family's history of electrician work over generations that has given him an advantage in trade work. These crucial connections are based on the historical white dominance of construction trade work that continues to benefit white men in the present era. White men can find success in managing labor-intensive businesses based on these prior advantages, even without having completed higher education. Often, white men will attribute their success to their hard work ethic, not making connections to these prior advantages that maintain whites at the top of the racial hierarchy in labor intensive work.

Once white men establish businesses, they use white networks to fulfill their top management team, keeping a status quo of when men at the top. Niki provides an inside look at this operation.

Niki: Definitely, definitely. We are looking at majority of the superintendents or project managers are all, (quietly) are all white male. Umm, the youngest I think that I have come across is the guy that works with me, he is 35. And um, probably the oldest, haha, is probably about 68. Yes, the superintendent is best friends with the owner of the company. And their all like in their late 60s, they have gone to high school, done everything together, so a majority of them, the guys who are like in superintendent positions who oversee the job sites are in their 60s cause they are best friends....very male dominated, and then when I have meetings it's like nothing but [quietly] older white men, and I'm the only female and the only person of color in there.

Niki explains that upper management in her construction company is male dominated and they all have long-term relationship networks where they have controlled the company. These networks are crucial for keeping a closed-knit group of white men in control of the business. Established over many years, white networks are firmly in place and play a significant role in promoting white men into management. Niki provides these critical insights on the backstage inner-workings of white dominated companies. She explains that she is the only woman and person of color at the management level and describes being uncomfortable in the white male setting. She provides significant insights based on her perspective on the operations of the racial hierarchy at the management level.

White Laborers Viewed as Entitled Workers

Although white virtue in the workforce is associated with authority and reinforced through favoritism in promotions and white networking, whiteness is heavily influenced by the class conflict between white employers and white laborers.

Surprisingly, many white employers racially frame white laborers as entitled and lazy when comparing them to Latino laborers. This complexity in racial thinking can best be understood by conceptualizing two tracks for white laborers in the workforce. The first track involves whites as authoritative figures for management, as explained in the findings that show a high preference for the promotion of white men. The second track involves whites as temporary laborers that are expected to gain social mobility through other pursuits, such as college or different industries. White male employers are highly devoted to containing and controlling labor costs and use racial framing to distinguish which groups are more malleable for subservience. Frequently white workers were not seen as a subservient group, they were often dismissed as entitled workers that were lazy for not doing what is asked of them. White workers were seen as constantly questioning their own working conditions, asking for benefits or higher pay, while white employers were consistently cautious about reliability of the white worker.

From a white employer's perspective, whites in labor-intensive positions are not usually seen as a good fit because they are not subservient hard-working laborers. Billy, a white male restaurant manager, explains this sentiment as he speaks about white workers in his restaurant.

Billy: I actually don't like working with white people, they are very lazy. [laughs] They really are. The fast pace back there, does not work [for the white workers]. You have to constantly go, there's no like [in a whiney voice], "oh well he didn't do this" that's what will happen, it would be like "well, the morning prep, they didn't make this, so I'm not gonna make it at night". But with other people, such as Guatemalans, like Jose back there, he's our main prep guy. He comes in and does whatever is needed, and will not complain one time, about anything. If you ask him something, if it's logical and makes sense, he'll be like "Yes, sir" and he'll do it. He'll do it right away. No questions asked.

Billy explains that whites are lazy and cannot keep up with the fast paced demands of the kitchen work. White employees are seen as people who will cut corners and not devote themselves to the needs of the workplace, and they are frequently compared to the hard work Latinos provide for the restaurant industry. Thus, whites are seen as not suitable for labor-intensive work, which is due to this strain between white managers and white laborers whose labor can't be as easily controlled as Latino labor. The framing of whites as entitled is a way white managers can use their capitalist-class frame to negatively portray white laborers that complain and call into question their working conditions. At the bottom of the racial hierarchy of labor-intensive work exist the most controllable forms of employment. The labor needed to be performed requires subservience with high labor demands, low pay, and an expectation of stagnant positions with little mobility. White male employers have developed an understanding that white men will not settle for labor-intensive work and actively see them as a threat to the employer's authority and labor costs.

Many of the employers describe white restaurant workers as millennials, usually younger college students that do not have good work ethic and are not devoted to the industry. White employers speak about their experience in management as "babysitting" young whites who have not developed good work ethic and commitment to labor-intensive work. Many white employers interviewed were older whites who tended to look down at white youth and their work ethic.

Margaret: All I can think of right now is that I definitely notice all the white college students, they are very lazy. I can't put it any other way. Like lazy about it, they aren't there to get their money, they could care less, their parents pay for rent, car bill, everything, so they don't usually have to have the job. They just

need extra cash, they are in and out. You tell them one thing, they go and wipe over it and their done. You know, walk away, they don't really care, they don't care about the job. Most of us we are there all the time, [restaurant] is a second home, we know all the regulars, you know, we are there all the time, meeting new people, new customers. We know all the back of the house, like we are all friends with each other.-But then the college students, they feel like they're just, in a whole another world.

Interviewer: they're not part of the family like your saying? Your second home?

Margaret: right, right, exactly, mainly in the back of the house which is mainly Latinos. Those are my guys, those are our guys. You know, they are better workers, they care.

Margaret, a white manager, speaks about her experiences working with white college students, a group she frames as disconnected and lazy as compared to the experiences she has had with Latinos. White college students, with goals outside of restaurant management, are seen as unreliable and temporary workers. The restaurant environment for white managers is considered a second home and a major commitment is expected to the healthy and profitable operation of the business, a commitment that is found lacking in white youth. Many employers believe white youth have aspirations outside of the restaurant industry, which may explain why whites are accused of acting entitled and hand-held by their white parents who provide them with financial support. Frank, a white male manager, explains his views of Latino and white workers.

Frank; umm, I honestly tend to think that a lot of the time the Hispanics and Latino workers tend to work harder and the white people that I've worked with here especially are mostly college kids and pretty much are handed things their whole lives so they don't really care as much about the job. They don't need the job, they don't care about the job they don't work as hard. So they are kind of just there to collect a paycheck.

Frank, a white restaurant manager, compares the hard-working Latino with the unreliable white worker who is not as invested into performing labor-intensive work for the restaurant operation. Many employers racially frame Latinos and whites along these

lines, a comparison that fuels their racial thinking about each group and where they belong along the racial hierarchy. Employers see many whites as privileged youth that are handed things across their lifetime and have developed a sense of not caring about the needs of the restaurant. They are not seen as suitable for fast-paced kitchen work and are given work in the front of the house as waiters or busboys in a far more relaxed setting.

As a follow up to these views of white workers, I also asked employers on their thoughts of the social conditions that may shape a more ideal white worker. Employers explained that white youth who are financially independent tend to work harder than their financially dependent counterparts. Margaret shares the following based on her observations of white workers.

Margaret: and I've noticed that the few that have to work and have to pay their bills. They do work harder, they are usually the better ones, even out in the front. You know, doesn't matter what race, you know like, black, if they have to come in there for their job, to get money, they are usually better. I like that, the rest of them, nahhh, they will be gone in a few months. Whatever.

Margaret, as many other employers, expressed this concern that white workers only work hard based on the context of their situation and whether they are in need of the income. This view of white workers shows how conscious employers are of the conditions needed for the desperation of workers that result in tighter control over their labor. This framing is also highly colorblind, with many employers emphasizing that this is not connected to racial issues, but rather that individual work ethic is a trait that all workers must learn as employees. A separate white restaurant employer, Mike, brings up

similar sentiments when discussing the process by which white workers can at times adopt good work ethic based on their reliance on restaurant earnings.

Mike: A *lot* of people complain about American youth being very lazy or wanting to not have to work hard to get any money. I have one [white] girl here...she did her job, but like bottom line, bare minimum, that's it. And then her parents cut her off completely. And now she's pretty much like our top tier employee. She'll do everything you need to be done, she takes care of all of her guests, and I asked her one day, I said, what happened? Why, what's going on? And she said, well I mean my parents don't give me money anymore. I have to actually make it myself. They paid for college, rent, cars, going out, any money that she wanted was being given to her. That's a lot of things that I see with a lot of people. I didn't grow up that way. I had no money given to me or anything, so I always, I've always worked very hard to get everything.

Mike, a white male restaurant manager, presents a narrative of white workers who must go through a process that conditions them into favorable workers. Whites have goals and aspirations beyond their industries, but when they are financially desperate on the restaurant income they will conform into being great laborers. Employers are very conscious of the conditions needed to control the labor of workers and are more likely to prefer and seek out laborers who are more desperate for employment. This preference also is shown in the hiring process for finding the most exploitable white worker.

Mike: one of my favorite questions is, so I know you're looking for a job, why are you look for a job? You looking to pay your bills, you looking for a little bit of extra income? I'm not gonna not hire somebody because of that, but it lets me know how many hours they're gonna want to work, when they're gonna want to work, and how hard they're probably gonna work, because of that constraint. I want to see what they're looking for out of the job

Mike shows he is highly conscious of his preference for marginalized workers that are willing to work harder to keep their jobs. In other words, he is highly favorable towards hiring white workers whose background is based on a more desperation and need for employment that will result in higher productivity for his labor costs. This cost analysis

is crucial for how white employers determine which white workers to be sought out for class exploitation. White college student workers are also seen as entitled by their financial support from white parents that remove the necessity of working for survival. Many white college student waiters in restaurants aim to do things at their own pace and have more demands to accommodate control over their own labor.

Although white workers have their place along the racial hierarchy based on their management or temporary work tracks, many employers simply construct whiteness as not a reliable form of labor.

Will: I've been doing this, like I said my whole life, you can't find good help. Good help is hard to find is a true statement, you just can't do it. And most of the time, they're not white if I you do find them.

Will, a white construction manager, explains that ultimately, white workers are not usually who you will rely on for good help. Whiteness in the workforce is thus constructed as a way to shape the labor force into the needs to capitalist production and labor exploitation. Whites are not the laborers a construction firm is looking for to maintain reliability and profitability. Whites instead are transient workers, often younger and aspiring towards management positions, furthering their education, or entry into separate industries.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored how white virtue is upheld and maintained by white employers in the workplace. White superiority is justified and reinforced through the associations whites are thought to have with authority and power, the preference for whites in management, and the established white networks that provide privileges for

white men. While white men are devoted to promoting white workers, they are also influenced by a capitalist-class frame that seeks to control the labor of all white workers. Many white workers are seen as aspirational and entitled about controlling their labor rights, causing major conflict with white employers who prefer subservient workers. To remedy these opposing racial and class based frames, white employers have established two employment tracks for white workers, a management track for white men based upon their ideals of white virtue, while also a temporary laborer track for white workers that are expected to seek higher status employment outside of the industry. My findings show white employers use this class based frame to see white workers as demanding too much labor rights and threatening the authority of the established white employers. White workers either seek out promotions into management or they will leave the industry to pursue educational opportunities and acquire higher status employment. White employers instead focus on establishing a much more reliable and subservient labor force that fits their racial and class based frames: the undocumented Latino immigrants that whites have come to heavily rely upon for fulfilling the lowest rungs of the racial hierarchy in labor-intensive work.

CHAPTER V

THE RACIAL FRAMING OF LATINOS FOR EXPLOITATION

Introduction

This chapter explores the racial framing white employers use in their views of undocumented Latino workers. The relationship between white employers and Latino immigrants is significantly shaped by social structures involving capitalism and systemic racism. White employers are heavily invested in maintaining a system of racial exploitation to maintain high profits in labor-intensive industries. For justifying this system of oppression, white employers use racial framing of Latino immigrant workers that naturalize their exploitation. Although white employers were elated about their Latino laborers, the positive racial narratives were carefully constructed racial framing that justify their exploitation. I refer to this process as *pro-immigrant racial framing*, a positive view of immigrant laborers based on traits and qualities that lead to their hyper-exploitation by white employers. The racial framing by white employers also includes narratives of Latino laborers, analogies of Latinos as beasts of burden, a calculation of racial surplus value, and an overall justification for controlling the labor of Latinos through illegal practices concerning overtime pay and work injuries.

Pro-Immigrant Racial Framing

White employers are ecstatic about their hard-working Latino laborers. They joke about their hard work, use metaphors to describe them as machines and beasts, and are frequently praising them as naturally great workers. These racial narratives and commentaries, while appearing positive on the surface are in actuality a self-serving

purpose, as employers are capitalists seeking to obtain high profits in their industries. White Employers are highly engaged in *pro-immigrant racial framing*, where Latinos are held up as ideal model workers for justifying their placement along the racial hierarchy of labor-intensive work. Every praise directed at Latinos carries with it an implicit understanding that Latinos are highly exploitable, that is, Latinos excel at qualities and traits that lead to their hyper-exploitation. For instance, there are several examples in which employers focused on exploitable traits that lead them to believe Latino immigrants make better employees. A restaurant manager shares his views of what makes Latino immigrants better workers.

Interviewer: Have you ever noticed any differences in the quality of work between a white, black, or Latino worker?

Kevin: of course I have, and just to be clear we did mention this was all confidential yes?

Interviewer: I'm not taking names, locations, or anything, so nothing is being taken down like that

Kevin: ok, umm, yeah I mean, of course, definitely, the, any variety of Hispanic worker typically puts out one, a better product, they work harder, they work faster, they tend to be more punctual, they complain less, umm and a lot of it I think is again a matter of...they know, they know how bad things can be [in home country]. Because most of them are not native born, umm, workers, they just aren't.

Kevin, a white male restaurant manager, was asked about his views of Latino workers and was very cautious before answering, wanting to be ensured of the anonymity of the discussion, before explaining his observations of Latino employees. This cautiousness is based on his racial commentary that he may believe is a socially unacceptable way of speaking about race in the workplace. Once assured of the anonymity, he lists an assortment of advantages that exist from employing Latino laborers. Kevin lists the major advantages from employing a Latino immigrant worker, including working

harder, faster, and complaining less as compared to white workers. Latinos are seen as ideal workers with significant qualities and traits that set them apart from white workers in these labor-intensive positions. Furthermore, white employers are aware somewhat that Latino workers are seeking out better opportunities from their home country, a background that compels them to be hard-working and subservient. They are highly praised for a number of qualities that are rooted in their marginalization, which are exacerbated in the pursuit of profits by white male employers.

Another employer, Tom, provides commentary on working with Latinos and what makes them the best laborers for kitchen work.

Tom: Yeah. Yeah, and I don't think it's the *race* necessarily, I think it's where they've come from. So I mean it ultimately can come down to race, but I think it's more how they were raised, not, you know, cause, obviously I think as far as a *whole*, my Hispanic workers, my Guatemalan workers, are harder working. And um...and better at manual kind of stuff. So better at the food prep, and better at the recipes. And as far as efficient and fast, stuff like that goes. And I think that's because, you know, they're more trade oriented in their country than we are here nowadays I think. And um, it's also kinda why you see construction crews ninety percent Hispanic out there, because that's what they do, they do labor.

Tom also insists Latinos work harder, are more efficient, and can make higher quality of food. Latinos are seen as overall better at manual labor. Interestingly, Tom insists at first that race does not play a factor in the background of why immigrants work harder, but eventually he does attribute their hard work ethic to their upbringing that "ultimately can come down to race". Latinos are racially framed as trade oriented and this background helps explain why they are seen predominately in certain labor-intensive positions, as Tom puts it matter-of-factly, "because that's what they do, they do labor". These are rigid forms of racial framing, seeing that Latinos do labor and thus are destined to be the

best workers for these forms of employment. There is little open acknowledgement in the minds of white employers that Latinos being marginalized and subservient are the qualities that make them desirable to be employed. Employers mask this underlying exploitation through the pro-immigrant racial framing they share about their workers.

Gary also offers similar understandings of his Latino immigrant workers.

Gary: I mean, and-and I've joked about it before, I said, 'man, if I put eight white people in the kitchen, they couldn't do the job of two of these guys.' Seriously.

Interviewer: That's how it is?

Gary: And I know that's kind of what you're writing about. It is what it is. I mean, you put a white boy in the kitchen, he's not going to get the job done as...that sounds so racist to say, but it's so true. It sounds racist but it's so true.

Interviewer: what are the mechanisms for that to be the way it is?

Gary: It is because of work ethic. Work ethic and culture. Culture. The Latino culture, they have better work ethic. Which is funny, because white people are so racist and they're like, "Oh, you know, they're [immigrants are] lazy." No. They work ten times harder than you. And I would rather pay somebody well to do the job of two people than to pay two people minimum wage. It's accountability. It's knowing that the job is going to get done. It's knowing that it's going to get done right.

Gary, a white male manager, shares his pro-immigrant racial framing, seeing Latinos as far harder workers than whites. He states that this sounds racist against whites, but he insists that it is true. Employers are often asserting that the hard work of Latinos is explained away as work ethic, culture, and this self-serving praise is used to dismiss general racist framing of Latinos as lazy. Although Gary is dismissing racism against Latinos, he is also using racial framing of Latinos in his justification of them as employable and that they will do the work of two people. This example captures how the white employer's capitalist interest is used to replace one sort of anti-immigrant racial framing, that Latinos are lazy, with another form of pro-immigrant racial framing, that

Latinos are hardworking, influenced by the perspective and interests of the white capitalist class. The employers must justify the usage and continual employment of undocumented Latino immigrants as their ideal laborers, even while staying away from discussing their marginalization and in turn subservience that is tied to having an undocumented status in society.

White Employers Racially Framing Latinos as Hard-Working Beasts of Burden

When exploring the racial thinking employers have about Latinos, there was a unanimous insistence that Latinos are the hardest workers at each business. Employers were very conscious of the labor productivity and shared racial commentaries along with narratives concerning the intensive labor and long hours Latinos provided them. Gary, a white male restaurant manager, shares his experiences working with Latinos and provides racial joking along with metaphors to describe Latino laborers.

Gary: There's never a sick day, they don't call in. **They're machines. And we make jokes about it. We make jokes about them being machines.** "Oh yeah, you wanna make me a machine? Oh yeah, yeah, yeah"... "You just push a button and we go!" **And it's true, you know? They are machines. They're beasts.** And I think it's a pride thing, man. I mean, they're proud of the work they do

Gary shares racial joking about the work ethic of Latinos, comparing them to machines and beasts of burden. His essentializing of Latinos as natural born laborers are powerful racial metaphors that are locked into particular way of thinking. When Latinos are seen as machines and beasts, they are dehumanized and easier to see as mechanized assets for profiting businesses. Thus, it becomes easier to justify their position along the racial hierarchy, their stagnant mobility, and their lack of benefits even after years of working in the kitchens of restaurants.

Employers would regularly share that it was in the nature of Latinos to preform hard work and manual labor. Jennifer, a white woman who is a restaurant manager, describes Latinos in this manner.

Jennifer: Umm... I kind of feel like, especially with ours, they're used to doing labor for money... **But they just work hard, I think that's just their nature - it's just to work hard.** That's what they've grown up knowing, and they've probably been working for a while, especially the ones I know. Like our kitchen guys, they've worked their whole lives, really. And um, because they're from Guatemala they know what it's like to be there and they don't want to go back there. **And so they try really hard to keep the job and keep us happy. It's what they know. It's their nature.**

This employer, when asked why the Latinos are such hard workers, describes how their conditioning and upbringing across their lives have naturalized them for doing labor-intensive kitchen work. She would paternalistically refer to Latino workers as “ours” or “my guys” that are doing all they can to keep the managers happy and the business needs met. Although they work alongside them, there is a lack of a constructive relationship between the white management and the Latino laborer. The relationship is constrained by the capitalist demands of profitability and racialized conditions of exploitative labor. White employers are elated about the intensive-labor of Latinos and racially frame them as able-bodied workers for their own purposes.

White Employers Exploiting Latino Immigrants to Maximize Surplus Value

Along with the racial framing of Latinos as machines and the self-serving praise many employers share about Latinos, white employers are also making calculated decisions for determining the most exploitable worker to hire. They are highly convinced that undocumented Latino immigrants will work harder for lower pay than white workers and use this to their advantage in developing the racial hierarchy of the

workforce. In Marxist terms, white employers are highly conscious of the surplus value they bring for increasing the profits for their businesses. This involves making calculations of the value a Latino immigrant worker provides that is in excess of his paid labor, a value that will bring greater profit to the white employer.

In the study I find that certain employers in relaxed settings, opened up a bit more than others offering a glimpse of their backstage feelings about race, immigration, and managing decisions concerning Latino workers. For instance, I spoke with Gary at his restaurant over beers and appetizers, a much more relaxed setting that I believe contributes to speaking more freely about racial issues and his strong belief that Latinos make more profitable workers. Gary continually brought up the concept of hiring Latinos as “two to one”.

Gary: Oh yeah. No, you’re going to get double the work out of a Guatemalan than a white guy. That sounds so general, and pardon me for being generalizing—

Interviewer: No, it’s fine. It’s, I mean this is how the way things are. It’s the way people talk.

Gary: It’s true. So if I can pay, if I can pay one guy \$12 an hour to do the work of two, it’s cheaper than paying two guys \$8 an hour. And so I think what you find in a lot of kitchens in town is, you’ve got Guatemalan guys who may not speak a lick of English, but work ten times harder. It’s a little bit, you know, it’s more per hour, but it’s less than paying two people

Gary, in this relaxed setting at his restaurant, shares his backstage managerial hiring decisions, including his insistence on his informal policy of “two to one”. Guatemalans are argued as offering double the productivity than a white male, an employer’s conscious calculation of the surplus value these workers will offer. White employers use their pro-immigrant racial framing to justify the exploitation of Latino immigrant workers that add immense surplus value to their companies. Gary is willing to pay

Latino immigrant workers a higher wage to keep them because he strongly believes hiring whites will result in worse productivity and in the end higher costs. Latino immigrant workers are seen as going above and beyond in their labor, keeping white employers content and valuing their subservient labor.

Some white employers were not as forthcoming with describing their racial beliefs about Latinos, being careful as to not to directly share that Latinos provide more value for less pay. Many instead would strongly imply Latinos offer more value by describing how white workers result in higher costs and unproductive work. Kevin explains this in his discussion of having to pay two white workers for work that could have been done by one person, presumably an immigrant worker.

Kevin: I had a guy who was a white prep cook for a year and half or two, he is not here because he couldn't get the job done. The food quality was awesome, the food safety was awesome, but he didn't work cleanly, and not super fast. They just took way more time, I had to hire another person...you add them together I was paying, two and a half – three times, probably two and half times what I could have, I could have gotten two-three people out of what I had paid those two. To do the job of one person

As described in the previous chapter, white employers share racial narratives about white laborers as inefficient workers unable to keep up with the demands of labor-intensive work. Kevin shares that an additional white worker had to be hired to do some of the cleanliness and prep work that a line cook is normally responsible for doing. Again, white employers are highly conscious of labor costs and use racial framing of whites and Latinos to determine where to place them along the racial hierarchy to maximize profitability. Kevin calculates he lost income by hiring these two white workers for work that could have been handled by one Latino immigrant. He also speaks about a current

worker he plans to replace as soon as he can with Latinos to increase the productivity of the kitchen. White employers know that subservient and marginalized Latino workers will provide higher productivity at lower costs. Their success in their business becomes reliant on the exploitation of the marginalized and racialized Latinos they employ.

White Employers Controlling the Labor of Latino Immigrants

An emerging theme in the research was the way in which employers spoke about controlling the labor of Latinos through close surveillance of their overtime pay.

Controlling the labor of Latinos refers to limiting their access to overtime pay, discouraging reporting injuries, and any labor-cost saving strategies. From the perspective of white employers, it is fundamental to control the labor of Latinos to favor their own interests in order to maximize exploitation. Many white employers speak highly of Latino immigrants on the one hand, yet share strategies they employ to control their labor rights on the other hand. The strategies involved no access to paid time off, healthcare coverage, or overtime pay.

Kevin The paid time off is not a policy unfortunately that we, we exact, and I think, I'd like to find a restaurant that does. I think you would be hard pressed to find a restaurant that allows paid time off, and it's one of those dirty little secrets, that's maybe not my favorite thing about the industry I am in. There is not a mechanism in place, not a budget in place to allow that sort of thing.

Employers speak about making ends meet in their business and how there is no mechanism to provide labor benefits for their immigrant employees. Although they speak about the lack of benefits that exist for Latinos laborers, they acknowledge their businesses would fall apart if it were not for the immigrant workers, referring to them as the “pillars of the community”. Maintaining a system of low labor costs is essential to

maximize exploitation of undocumented Latino workers. White employers feel constrained by the budgets in place for offering labor benefits, even when many of their Latino employees have spent many years in the same positions in the kitchen.

One major way white employers control the labor of immigrants is through the surveillance and policing of their overtime pay. Employers unanimously spoke about how immigrants ask to work overtime but are frequently denied as a company policy. In fact, many employers are actively policing any access to overtime pay by limiting the hours they work. White employers are very aware that their immigrant workers have two jobs, often working morning shift at one restaurant along with an evening shift at another. The overall labor of immigrants is being controlled so that they do not reach overtime at any job but end up working 70 to 80 hours a week for two different restaurants. Employers go to great lengths to minimize overtime pay, a restaurant manager shared the following about controlling the labor of immigrant workers.

Jennifer: They wanna stay as long as they can, which has sometimes been an issue because we have labor costs too. But they're pretty good at their job. There's a few that, that are here a little bit more. Some of them don't like whenever I tell them, "Ok you need to go, I don't need all five of you here at 2:30 in the afternoon on a Monday" like, I just don't need that. I have to tell them, "Ok go, go." They say like "mucho prep, mucho prep" and I'm like "Ok you've been cutting those fries for like two hours, so we have enough fries, thank you" [small laugh]. Yeah, so, but it's like, they listen. Or they like to hide in the bathroom.

Interviewer: Oh, really?

Jennifer: Yeah so I'm constantly like, once it's time to cut I'm like, alright, who's in the bathroom?

Interviewer: They're trying to squeeze in a few more hours? Do they hit the overtime?

Jennifer: Uh, yeah, we're like, like right now we have a pay period, our pay period ends today. So we're trying to keep that from happening. But um, *but we also have the cameras*. So Greg [other manager], like if they go in over time, and he's like, "Why was so-and-so here until 3 o'clock?" Then I can go back and

look and see if they're in the bathroom for half an hour, 'cause they do that too. Or if they're in the back watching a soccer game on their phones [small laugh]. So you have to keep an eye on them. But they're, like they're very good workers, they just sometimes like to try to get away with little things. I think sometimes it's just that they're trying to be funny. We have a very nice relationship with them.

Jennifer, a white female manager, shows the persistence employers have with controlling the labor of immigrants, making sure the least amount of immigrant workers are on the shift without jeopardizing the operation of the business. Latinos are constantly being surveilled to control their access to overtime hours. Jennifer claims immigrant workers "hide in the bathroom" and explains a cat and mouse scenario, where employers are constantly checking the hours put in by immigrant worker as a humorous game being played. She also shares that managers use cameras for the surveillance of the kitchen workers, which involves the omnipresent white manager handily exerting power and control over the Latino laborer, maximizing their exploitation and regulating them well below 40 hours a week. These stories are told in a humorous manner, softening the problematic labor practices Latinos face from white employers in their everyday work lives.

White Employers Using Illegal Practices to Limit Overtime Pay

While employers are routinely controlling Latino labor in their interests by limiting overtime, others are doing so through illegal practices. One employer spoke about payroll techniques being taught to him by a separate manager to ensure Latino immigrants are not being paid overtime. Jamie, a Latino manager, explained the following about advice he received from a white manager that works at a separate restaurant location within the same company.

Jamie: yeah, he may see it from a different standpoint too, cause he's like I got all these tricks, even with overtime, I put double the employees, and its just the same person, that way you don't pay extra, but they still get their money. He was just all like 'im not going to tell you to go too in depth about it, but that is some stuff that you can get away with. As long as you don't get caught you'll be ok.'

Interviewer: does this double employee stuff happened with the back of the house workers?

Jamie: umm, yeah more so then because they work more house, people in the front of the house they probably work at the most like 35 hours, so you don't really get a chance to do overtime, but we always need help in the kitchen and I mean that's what makes the restaurant run, you know what I mean? I mean its service based cause that's what you see but at the same time its uh, if you don't have food or product, I mean no one is going to come through.

Jamie, a Latino manager at a restaurant, shares that white managers in his company have described tricks and techniques for controlling the labor costs of Latino immigrant workers. As a company policy exists that limits overtime for employees, white employers have developed approaches to offer immigrants more work hours with no overtime pay. Jamie shares that immigrants are placed in the payroll system under two different names, so they are treated as two employees. This allows immigrants to work past 40 hours, but not receive overtime pay that employers are reluctant to pay out to save on labor costs. Marginalized workers such as undocumented immigrants are taken advantage of by these actions, which are highly illegal according to US labor laws, yet it has become a common practice experienced by immigrants. Jamie explains that these tricks are routine by many employers, who often justify the practice as a way to help immigrants receive more work hours to achieve higher pay, although much lower than they legally should receiving based on overtime laws.

Many non-white employers tended to adopt a similar class-based framing as found amongst white employers, including emphasizing the individuality and work ethic

of laborers for business success, downplaying the significance of race in workplace mobility. At times non-white employers appear to go along with the status quo of exploiting Latino laborers, yet there were also many times in which minority employers were more critical of practices against Latino laborers. Jamie, a Latino employer, for instance speaks about these white employers who take advantage of minorities by not paying them overtime, yet he does not engage in these same practices. Racial minority employers are thus embedded in a capitalistic system that requires them to adopt class-based framing of their workforce, but also because of their racial background they sympathize more so with Latino laborers that face exploitative practices from employers. The non-white employers provide major insights into the overall views of employers of undocumented immigrants.

White Employers Discouraging Latinos from Reporting Injuries

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), employers are responsible for providing a workplace free of injuries and must meet labor standards and regulations. White employers mostly speak highly of meeting OSHA standards, yet they acknowledge that Latino laborers are reluctant to report injuries at work. Employers speak of serious injuries or even deaths that have resulted in construction work, as well as injuries in restaurants from cuts or falls mostly in the kitchen where Latinos are concentrated in. White employers take part in creating conditions that discourage immigrants from reporting injuries, even though immigrants have been found much more likely to be injured on the job. The lack of reporting injuries

has become tied to the pro-immigrant racial framing that white employers utilize in their views of Latino laborers.

A Latino worker that does not report injuries saves immense costs on the profit of white employers, meaning not reporting injuries is a form of exploitation of Latino labor. Pablo, a Latino construction manager shared an inside look at the illegal practices white employers at his company have towards any immigrants that report injuries. Latino immigrants that bring up medical attention are awarded worker's compensation, but are fired from their job a short time later. Pablo explained this was an unofficial policy set by the white upper management at his construction firm and had witnessed many Latino immigrants losing their jobs because of reporting injuries. White employers, through unofficial policy and attitudes against workers compensation, create the work conditions that cause Latinos not to report injuries. Latino laborers are risking their lives performing dangerous labor-intensive work because they fear losing their jobs, all of which can be considered racially exploitative conditions white employers have imposed on to them.

The lack of reporting injuries has become tied to the pro-immigrant racial framing that white employers use towards Latino laborers. White employers rely on racial framing to describe how injuries are dealt with at work. Will, a white construction manager, shares the following racial narrative on injuries on the jobs between white and Latino workers.

Interviewer: another question about injuries on the jobs – any examples on injuries on the job and how groups handle it?

Will: white people get hurt

Interviewer: white people get hurt, you see them getting hurt more often?

Will: White people get hurt (Sarcastic Voice) “Oh my back hurts” that’s the story, that’s the excuse, that’s the reason to get out of work. **That’s all that is, a Mexican guy won’t tell you he is hurt, he will put duct tape on it and keep working because he needs a job...** This [white] guy came out one day, just one, and said my back hurts I need to go to the doctor the next day. And the boss said, you’re fired, and then he called a meeting with me and the project manager and said look, I need you guys to get some more labor, and if they’re going to get hurt don’t hire them. And then he said, don’t hire white people.

Based on Will’s perspective as a white construction manager, many white laborers that complain are using an excuse to get out of work, showing even further disdain from hiring white laborers. Latino laborers will expected to use “duct tape” on their wounds and keep working to maintain their employment and not cause issues by bringing attention to any injuries at work. Will explains that those that complain will be fired from their jobs from higher management. Since white laborers are more prone to speaking up and demanding labor rights, they are often excluded for consideration from being hired in the first place. Will is instructed by higher management to not hire any white people, implying that Latinos are preferred not because they are less likely to be injured, but rather less likely to report being injured. Thus, pro-immigrant racial framing also includes positive racial narratives of Latinos not reporting injuries that ultimately results in lower labor costs for white employers.

Some employers spoke about appalling injuries in both construction and restaurant work resulting in serious bodily harm or even death. I followed up by asking what may be the social mechanisms explaining why Latinos are less likely to report, resulting in many employers sharing that their conditions of their work status may make them less able to seek attention to their injuries.

Niki: there was this other guy, I believe he got bit by some kind of spider or something.

Interviewer: Oh on the job? Oh.

Niki: Yes, and he formed this giant bump on his back, and he did not go, he didn't talk about it, he didn't, you know, and the superintendent didn't force him to go there. They just kind of acted like everything was kind of ok, and he just endured all this pain. But, I don't even know how to say this cause it's one of those things that you can't prove as to what happened, but he actually passed away. That's serious. But again, you know, when things happen, medically, like on the worksite, the first thing is not to rush to the hospital...based off of what I've seen I feel like the most, the main people to get injured is probably the immigrants. Because they're lack of understanding of doing something and then the implications of what it is they're doing.

Niki shares some of the backstage experiences with workers who have been injured, she explains that a Latino laborer was injured on the job from a spider bite. The white superintendent did not press for medical attention and they all acted as if everything was ok. Niki was very alarmed at the situation, because later she heard the worker ultimately passed away. Employers are actively engaged in practices that result in higher risks for Latino laborers to maintain lower costs. Solving medical issues in the construction industry is not the highest priority and immigrants are far more likely to be injured and not given proper medical attention.

Barriers in Promotions: Latinos Shut Out of Management Positions

As a way of exploring the rigidness of the racial hierarchy in the workplace, employers also discussed their views on promotions for Latinos in the workplace. After revealing that most employers were heavily invested in pro-immigrant racial framing, I was interested in seeing if this translated for promotions for Latinos into higher status positions within the businesses. White managers insisted that opportunities do exist for better positions within the kitchen for Latinos. Employers provided rationalizations for

why their Latino laborers were not able to gain mobility into higher status positions in the workforce. Some employers insisted that Latino immigrants lacked people and language skills making them unsuited for being managers; others simply said Latinos are not interested in taking managerial positions. One white manager even insisted that instead of promotions, Latino laborers are paid with respect and appreciation for their hard work, involving a pat on the back or encouragement for going above and beyond in their duties, often in front of other workers nearby. The white manager strongly believed this creates a sense pride that is paid by nice words and encouragement, instead of higher pay or work benefits, in lieu of any official promotion in the business.

One trend that emerged from many employers was a horizontal promotion, where Latinos are promoted into a supervising kitchen position for training new kitchen employees, with an implicit understanding that they would not achieve higher mobility within the business. Jamie, a Latino restaurant manager, explains that Latino laborers experience a promotion within the kitchen.

Jamie: They're being promoted within the kitchen. And uh..., correct yeah, they can't move up so far as like um... management because they would be forced to you know, deal with customers, and then then uh paperwork and they still have to do background checks and things like that, which they might not pass.

Jamie explains that Latinos are moving up from dishwashers, to prep workers, to line cooks, all of which serve as the backbone of the restaurant industry. He mentions a series of barriers for Latino immigrants in management positions, including dealing with customers, further paperwork, and in-depth background checks they may not pass. These rationalizations for not promoting Latino immigrants can be seen in the ways white and Latino employers speak about their laborers. Employers use a capitalist-class frame for

justifying the lack of work mobility for Latino laborers. For instance, Jerry, a white employer, describes similar explanations for why Latino immigrants are not considered for higher management.

Jerry: yeah they get promoted. Yeah. Um, we got, so basically they're all on the same level no matter what position they work. There's a couple positions that are higher, you know, as far as hierarchy they do get paid a little bit more for certain positions because we need a better employee and a faster person on that position. So once you get into that point, we do give them a little bit more money. Um, you know, but I mean that's funny you said that. I actually got two that I offered today. And if they wanted to do it there's the background check and everything they have to go through to be approved to do it. But basically what is it is whenever a company opens another store they'll be like, hey we need Diego on this store on these days in this location. And if he wants to go he can, and he gets paid more, it's like a fully paid trip

In this example, Jerry explains that wages do increase a bit for immigrant workers, and at times they are offered these horizontal promotions for training purposes. Many Latino immigrants who have worked for over 10 years, usually far before the white manager ever gained his position, are offered very little for their long-term support of these businesses. Some employers also began to acknowledge that Latino workers may not have proper legal status to work and that managerial promotions may result in thorough background checks by company policy. Billy, a white manager, shares his views on this process.

Interviewer: In your experience, do immigrants get promoted? Or do they generally stay the same level.

Billy: That's a problem we have, we can't promote them without the proper documentation. We have one cook, his name is, Javier, he's fantastic. We actually allow him to serve and wait tables. Cause that way when he wants more money he can do that. But he wants to be the kitchen manager, and we're...me and Jake are trying to figure out a way to kind of beat the system a little bit, because we just switched to what's called e-verify.

Billy explains that white employers are willing to employ Latino immigrants and offer them various roles in the business that are concentrated towards the bottom of the racial hierarchy. The employers are aware that Latinos are interested in being promoted and becoming managers themselves, yet there continues to be barriers placed on employing immigrant workers. There is also an indication that white employers are willing to cut corners and overlook background checks when it comes to hiring Latino laborers for the more labor-intensive work at their businesses, but a different standard is held for managerial positions. Whites hold power to decide when background checks are applicable or not. This discretion is an informal strategy used by white employers to maintain the racial hierarchy in the workforce and mask their complicity in this oppressive system.

Minority Employers Counter-Framing the Exploitation of Latinos

Although only six participants in this study were non-white employers, several of them had critiques against the system of labor exploitation that white men oversee over undocumented Latino laborers. I categorized these as examples of counter-frames that are often used by people of color in their critique of the white racial framing seen in society. Counter-frames provide a critical analysis and rebuttal to the established status quo in society that favors white virtue seen in the perspective and practices of white men. Niki, a south Asian women that is a construction manager, explains the following in her critical analysis of the treatment of Latinos by whites.

Niki: I feel that to a certain extent, it is kind of like slavery to me. I feel like it is, I guess, quote unquote the master has to come there and whip, right, get a good whip just to get everyone working. Even back in the slavery days, the slaves wanted a kind of acceptance and gratification from their master. So you work

harder just to be like, ‘look how good im doing’, you know, and I feel like it’s the same kind of mentality, its just now you can pay them you know, pennies just to get the job done. As opposed to back then [slavery] you didn’t pay them anything, you were just like, you know, keep working (laugh)... And they work hard to impress

Niki provides an insightful comparison of white employers as white slave owners, pointing to similar exploitative conditions seen in the relationship between whites and Latinos. She refers to whites as “masters” that bring fear to Latinos to pressure them to work hard in order to continue their employment. Latino laborers, hoping to maintain their employment, seek to satisfy the labor demands of white employers, going as far as accepting the working conditions that they are provided. This is a rare perspective from an employer that stems from her experiences as a women of color that is critical of the labor conditions. I would consider it the most aggressive counter-frame against the Latino labor exploitation provided from a manager in this study.

Another construction manager of color, Pablo, described two ways in which he challenged white employers from their efforts of exploiting Latino laborers. The first way was by disagreeing that white men should be the only ones considered for operating machinery, a position he had begun seeking more Latinos to be promoted into. A second way was by recommending that Latino laborers seek legal advice before reporting injuries because of a practice by white employers to fire any Latinos who brought up any injuries on the job. After these efforts, Pablo described how white employers were challenged to change their unofficial policies for exploiting Latino laborers through access to promotions and worker’s compensation for injuries. This counter-framing against white employers was possible from the access Pablo had as a Latino manager

that could place pressure on whites for creating more just and favorable labor conditions for Latinos.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the ways in which white employers use pro-immigrant racial framing for justifying the exploitation of Latinos in the workforce. The findings throughout show the myriad of ways white managers use racial narratives and commentary to maintain the racial hierarchy in labor-intensive work. This extensive racial framing was seen in the way white employers engaged in analogies of Latinos as beasts of burden, justifications for exploitation, problematic labor practices, the discouraging of reporting injuries, and barriers to promotions for Latinos. The pro-immigrant racial framing is rooted in the idea that Latinos are marginalized and subservient, ripe for exploitation in labor-intensive conditions. White employers have free reign to treat Latinos as dehumanized natural workers and have total control of their labor conditions. Their preference for Latinos on the toughest jobs is a major priority to keep up massive profits, regardless of any laws that exist to limit hiring Latinos. In addition, I presented some key counter-framing that exists from racial minority employers that show some pushback against the rampant exploitation against Latinos. When I asked white employers what would happen if for some reason Latinos could no longer work for them, many insisted their businesses would shut down and that the economy would be devastated. In the following chapter I will describe how white employers are determined to defend this exploitative system by doing what they can to rationalize hiring undocumented Latino workers.

CHAPTER VI
WHITES NEUTRALIZING VIOLATIONS OF IMMIGRATION LAW

Introduction

White employers routinely obfuscate their roles in breaking immigration laws with little risk because of a system of privileges and rewards they receive from their position as white capitalists that reap massive profits from exploiting the labor of Latino immigrants. In the frontstage settings, white employers are highly cordial and proper, speaking about the natural process of capitalism, of laborers seeking employment, and the needs their capitalist enterprises have for employing them. In the backstage setting, white employers share tips and techniques used to employ undocumented immigrants and how to circumvent immigration laws while still meeting the standards of a legitimate business. This process is an everyday part of managing workers in labor-intensive industries. The capitalists have major issues with current immigration laws that stand in their way from employing who they believe are the hardest working and most exploitable laborers that are available. In order for mitigating their actions, white employers engage in the techniques a neutralization, a framework for justifying deviant behavior that breaks laws in society. In this chapter I will explore the frontstage and backstage settings as well as explore how white employer rationalize breaking immigration laws through the techniques of neutralization.

White Employers: The Frontstage, Backstage, and Techniques of Neutralization

White employers in this study were asked to describe their views of immigration, including hiring workers and dealing with immigration laws. White employers hold

powerful positions in the labor market and their views are an inside look at the perspectives of business owners and managers. This chapter will organize the social components that make up the perspective of white employers concerning hiring undocumented immigrants. First, white employers can be understood as social actors undergoing a presentation of self, where they are involved in impression management for frontstage and backstage settings (Goffman 1956). White employers are careful when sharing their views in the frontstage settings, often being the face of their business establishment. At the same time, some elements of the backstage can be seen in their discussions during the in-depth interviews, as they open up about their perspectives on immigration. These are explained in the following descriptions of frontstage and backstage settings.

1. **Frontstage Settings** – Categorized as the face of the business, only discussing legitimate business practices, highly formal discussions and interactions
2. **Backstage Settings** – Categorized as a behind-the-scenes explanation, often held outside the establishment in more relaxed conditions

Secondly, white employers can be seen as utilizing the techniques of neutralization, a framework using “motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes favorable to the violation of the law (Sykes and Matza 1957:664)”. White employers frame their violations of immigration laws in positive ways that absolve them of responsibility while maintaining their power and status as capitalists. The techniques of neutralization are broken down into five forms of rationalizations and I briefly explain the ways in which they relate to the case of white employers of undocumented immigrants.

1. **Denial of responsibility** – Employers will often deny their role in hiring undocumented immigrants, absolving themselves of responsibility
2. **Denial of injury** – Employers see undocumented immigrants as eager and able-bodied workers, rather than highly marginalized and exploited laborers
3. **Denial of the victim** – Employers often do not see Latino laborers as facing problematic labor conditions
4. **Condemnation of the condemners** – Employers critique immigration enforcement and anti-immigrant sentiment, blaming them for not seeing the conditions in place that require the hiring of undocumented immigrants
5. **Appeal to Higher loyalties** – Employers uphold capitalist practices that benefit elite white men and the pursuit of profits are seen as more important than following immigration laws

Each of these rationalizations offers an inside look at the perspectives white employers take along frontstage and backstage settings when discussing employing undocumented Latino laborers. At times these techniques of neutralization overlap, yet patterns emerge that show the consistency of white employers justifying their actions of hiring undocumented immigrants. In this chapter I will explore aspects of the frontstage, backstage, and techniques of neutralization for understanding the legal framing discourse used by white employers of undocumented immigrants.

The Denial of Responsibility: White Employers Denying Hiring Undocumented Laborers

The frontstage setting for a white employer is based on a very positive presentation of self that is designed to be the public face of their legitimate business practices and views. Employers in the frontstage are usually speaking in the establishments they are responsible for and are very careful in their responses to questions concerning undocumented Latino immigrants. The frontstage settings of the interviews with white employers were often at their business and may have had an influence on the way employers spoke about hiring immigrant workers. Many employers

insisted they do not knowingly hire undocumented workers, explaining they follow immigration law, denying the responsibility of breaking any immigration law. For instance, when I asked a white employer why managers even consider hiring undocumented workers, he responded with the following.

Jackson: Everybody that's here [pause] is legal. You know, again, I think if an employer is doing their due diligence and making, you know, getting the paperwork and going through the processes and procedures, I don't think they should be held accountable...you know again, I'm not naïve to go do, [**speaking quietly**] are every one of my guys...legal? As far as I'm concerned? Yes. [**small laugh**] Because they showed me documentation that *looked real* to me, you know? I don't think going after the employer- unless you just see rampant issues with it. In 18 years we have gotten two letters from corporate...I think that's a pretty good track record. [**getting angry/emotional**] So again, am I supposed to be punished for those two?

Jackson, operating from the frontstage, explains that he follows procedures when hiring immigrant workers and that employers should not be held accountable for any undocumented workers. At the same time, Jackson drops subtle non-verbal hints, including pausing, speaking quietly, and laughing after saying his immigrants are legal. This non-verbal data is significant for showing how white employers convey hidden meanings about their everyday thoughts about immigration. White employers see themselves as virtuous and aim to portray themselves as law-abiding citizens. Jackson here is walking a fine line as he balances his presentation of self as a legitimate employer, while subtly hinting he is aware of the reality of his undocumented workers. He never admits to any wrongdoing or breaking immigration laws, and actually takes a very defensive stance against the assertion that employers may be held accountable. During the interview, Jackson becomes visibly angry and emotional, raising his voice when saying that his immigrant documents appear real and that he should not be

punished for any wrong doing. This emotional outburst is a key part of the white racial frame, as white employers have in-depth emotional connections to their power and status over undocumented immigrant workers. I believe the interview questions had hit a nerve that challenged Jackson's perspective and he was actively defending his rights as a white employer. Several employers also speak about doing the bare minimum required, including looking at what appears to be a legitimate green card. They insist they are not be held liable for this process they engage in to maintain their labor force.

Many other employers insisted their workers were authorized to work when I would ask them issues regarding undocumented workers. Tom, a white male manager at a deli restaurant, explains the following about his workers.

Tom: I mean I treat them like they're legal, uh, I mean, as far as I know, they are all legal. You know, obviously there's that little bit in the back of your mind that says, oh I wonder how legal they are, and I mean, a lot of these guys I've sat down and talked with and how'd you get over here, and most of them are legal. Most of the reason that they won't go back home, you know, you talk to them and they've got a wife back home or a brother back home that they haven't seen in 12 years. And oh so why don't you go back home, oh because if I go back I can't come back. You know. So they don't, they don't go home, they don't see their family so that kinda makes you think, that the majority of them are legal. Um they came over legally and stayed legally but they can't go back because of their paperwork and how much it'll cost them to come back.

Tom explains that his workers are legal, although he does have some concerns and relies on ambiguous stories he has heard about how they can't go back to visit their family members as proof that they are legal. It is widely known that the reason many immigrants cannot travel back and forth from their countries of origin is because they are undocumented, yet the employer does not make this connection, instead choosing to stick by his belief that they are documented. Tom is in a frontstage setting and chooses

to present himself in a law-abiding way, even though it is not a logical argument for why they are legal workers. White employers will go to great lengths to present a law-abiding establishment and deny any wrong doing, as this protects their position in the labor market and maintains the employment of undocumented Latino laborers.

Some minority employers opened up to some of the issues of undocumented immigrants and shared how they noticed that white employers tend to go along with the masking of immigrant workers. For example, Niki, a south Asian women construction manager, was interviewed at a local café outside of her construction firm.

Niki: They, I have been, and this is between you and me, I know that they hire illegals. I am very well aware of that. And enough, and I have questioned that, how are you guys able to do, how are you able to do that? You know? And they said well, if they can come up with some kind of card, driver's license, or even a Texas ID, then they are valid. The excuse is, 'if we don't know about it, then we don't know' if we didn't see it then we don't know about it. So we take their word, and we act like we don't know.

Niki provides valuable information on the inside practices of white employers that deny the responsibility of hiring undocumented immigrants. She is absolutely certain the laborers are undocumented and has asked the white male managers of her construction company how they are able to hire them. She learns of their unofficial policy to accept documentation that appears to be legitimate and act as if they don't know. A crucial practice of employers is to feign that all workers are documented to protect the operation of the company. For all intents and purposes, all paperwork is in order and the standards have been met to place workers on payroll, and workers are considered authorized for working. The social reality is that employers are aware their immigrant workers are

undocumented and are committed to this façade where they feign their status in frontstage settings.

The Denial of Injury: Techniques Employers Use for Keeping Immigrant Laborers

While many employers deny the responsibility of hiring undocumented immigrants, they also deny any social harm their immigrant workers face based on their actually harsh working conditions. This is seen in more backstage settings with employers, where their presentations of self are in a more relaxed setting concerning their honest private views on hiring immigrant laborers. These employers usually are meeting outside their business establishment and are open to discussing illegitimate business practices that concern undocumented immigrants. Some of these employers would speak quietly when discussing immigration and ask for assurance that their information remains anonymous.

Niki: I mean its just, its you know, these are other companies, umm, it has been like we need workers, and if they have an ID that works, even if they don't have socials, that's ok, we just need them to do the jobs, and if there's a way to just you know give them money, then we will do that. You know, and if anyone comes to say anything we will deny it...you know, yeah lets just say I've been on both sides, not well, let me not say both sides, I've been very privileged to be in a certain situation. So they say for one person to get rich, many have to suffer.

In this backstage setting, Niki shares the behind the scenes operation of working as a construction manager. Niki is struggling with the practices of employers, where they deny their involvement of hiring undocumented laborers, but are highly devoted to maintaining a system of exploitation. She is adamant that exploitative conditions are happening that are not acknowledged by white managers, and refers to a saying that for people to get rich, many have to suffer. The denial of injury is happening amongst her

white employer co-managers that have developed an approach for maintaining the exploitative conditions necessary for massive profits from the labor of Latino laborers.

Employers are highly invested in keeping their immigrant workers and will go to great lengths using techniques and tricks to keep undocumented immigrants on their payrolls, even though issues may come up that negatively impact the worker. Several employers discussed switching identities of immigrants to keep them working, showing how involved they are in using their power and status to maintain their Latino labor force. Some employers also spoke about tips to keep workers by not terminating an identity in the payroll system, instead transferring it over to a new immigrant employee identity so that their human resource system would not pick up discrepancies. The employment of undocumented Latino laborers is normalized and defended, oftentimes at the expense of the workers. Javier, a Latino employer, shares behind-the-scenes issues faced by immigrant laborers and his strategies for the continual employment of undocumented immigrants, although they may experience institutional social harms associated with working as undocumented immigrants.

Javier: yeah, there's this one guy who is using someone's identity. I think they pay that person's identity, all those identities that are used, the guy still gets a cut, ok, cause I guess it goes on his taxes, like, yeah and so whoever it looks like or whoever set it up, they get a cut of whatever they get, their paycheck or they pay them a yearly fee. I don't know, whatever, but they get paid. Umm yeah... this one guy that he was using, he started getting, what was it called, not back taxes, no its uh, where they take your, they just take your wage garnishment, I think it was unpaid child support.

Interviewer; so basically the worker was paying off the guys child support?

Javier: for a while yeah, for a time. yeah he left, and then he came back.

Javier provides this insightful account of backstage techniques used for keeping immigrant laborers on the payroll. Employers are very aware of the payroll issues, and

will do anything in their power to keep their favorable immigrant laborers on the job. This process heavily exploits the Latino laborers in multifaceted ways. Latino laborers have to pay US taxes without receiving a return on benefits, they must pay to use a false identity, as well as other costs associated with using a false identity, such as this example of paying for child support payments. Employers will go to great lengths in providing an appearance of legitimacy for immigrant laborers, often using loopholes or techniques such as switching names on payrolls to keep the undocumented immigrant employed. This everyday process becomes normalized behind the scenes and there is little acknowledgement of the system of exploitation that causes major social harms to the marginalized undocumented Latino laborer.

Employers also provide insights on another backstage strategy for absolving themselves of responsibility of hiring undocumented Latino laborers known as subcontracting, a widespread practice in construction businesses. Will, a construction manager, shares how the subcontracting process helps cover up illegitimate employer practices.

Will: and because it's cheaper for the company at the expense of safety and because no one is going to say anything about it, nobody is going to do anything about it.

Interviewer: and if it gets brought up where your in a situation where your fired?

Will: absolutely, no one is going to bring it up. And at the same time half of them were on payroll, their payroll handled it and that's why there are payroll companies that will take care of your company's payroll. Because they may all be illegal, and if you don't know that, and your not the one paying them, then you hands are clean. And that's why you contract that labor out and if they gave you a fake social, you just take that up there to the office, with all your other employee's shit and they input it into the system and they get a check.

Will was discussing how businesses often put profits ahead of safety issues, where he notices many Latino laborers that are involved in high-risk labor are subcontracted out for different payroll companies. This strategy allows employer to deny responsibility of hiring undocumented immigrants, as well as deny injuries seen in the exploitative conditions that cause Latinos to face higher likelihood of injuries. White employers point to the subcontractors to be held responsible for the work status of laborers as well as any risks involved in labor safety. White employers are then able to appear as a operating a legitimate business, all the while having little concern for the safety of their immigrant employees.

Condemning the Condemners: Employers Hiring Undocumented Immigrants

Along with denial of responsibility and the denial of injury, several white employers engaged in condemning the condemners, blaming regulations and anti-immigrant perspectives for the problems associated with hiring undocumented immigrants. White employers see themselves as running legitimate businesses and the regulations are a major hurdle to work around to hire Latino laborers. Many white employers discussed their discontent with the e-verify system, a voluntary government program for verifying social security numbers that many companies have been requiring for their businesses nationwide. Employers see e-verify as a problem for their everyday operation and are often looking for techniques for passing Latino immigrant employees. They were also found to take a defensive stance against public sentiment that is anti-immigration.

Some employers discuss their unhappiness with the regulations of e-verify, a regulation that is often imposed on employers by higher management in larger businesses. For example, Kevin speaks about the e-verify system

Kevin: Oh not happy about it. The founders of the company, they sold this company 1 year ago, we are owned by an investment firm from California. Umm, and, they don't really have a real understanding of how is business conducted, certainly in south or central to south Texas. It's a little big different, in terms of your kitchen staff. And what this is forcing people to do is hire more local workers and more of them... Its going to cut way into profit margins, so ultimately, restaurants are going to have a choice, in that the results ultimately menu prices across the board are going to go up.

Kevin expresses his concerns about a new higher management, a California financial investment firm that has bought out the regional restaurant business. The new owners have adopted a mandate of e-verify for all new hires that has created a major setback in the employment of Latino laborers. Kevin, along with fellow employers at his company, are worried about the repercussions of this action. He explains that the new management is disconnected from the region and is not aware of how business is conducted in Texas. For Kevin, it is routine to hire undocumented Latino laborers, he has heavily relied on this group to meet his labor needs and increasingly higher profits. This new pressure from elite white men who control this massive investment firm is causing major problems in his retainment and hiring of Latino laborers, believing he will have to increase restaurant menu prices to maintain his profits.

Another employer, Jackson, makes the case that the federal government is getting in the way of hiring immigrants.

Jackson: I think when the state, before it became a national issue, I think the state had it very well under control. I think once it became a federal issue, or the national government got involved, that's when the issue started. I bet you if you

talked to most people in, in Texas, uh Arizona, New Mexico, if we had all those border states, nobody really had an issue [laughs] until the federal government got in the way.

Jackson's argument that the federal government is getting involved is a critique of the national policy cracking down on immigration. The emphasis on states rights has historically been a white conservative perspective for allocating white men more power in the southern states to continue the practice of slavery. Jackson is tapping into this historical argument that white male employers know far better about the border region and that whites should have the power to decide whether or not undocumented Latino laborers should be employable. Jackson believes that the border states have developed a hands off approach to targeting white employers, instead they are known for more problematic targeting of immigrants, such as the case in Arizona.

A few employers were more direct in their distaste of immigrant regulation. Gary was one of the few white employers that shared bluntly his views on the process of hiring undocumented immigrants.

Gary: And the whole illegal immigration bullshit? I fucking hate it. They have a green card, they have a green card...

Interviewer: That's how it works?

Gary: I'm not digging deep. Do I ask to see their green cards? No. Off the record. Off the record, I don't ask to see their green cards...I'm not fucking immigration. I'm not ICE. I'm not trying to bust you. You want a job? You got a job. You have a card? Yeah? You got a card with a number on it with your name? Good to go.

Gary speaks very informally in a backstage setting where he expresses anger about immigration paperwork, cursing about regulations and openly admitting he is not looking at green cards after being assured his views are "off the record". He shares his strong disagreement with immigration custom enforcement (ICE), pointing out their

hypocrisies and proudly confessing he does not look at green cards for work authorization. The emotional power of white men contains this privilege of defending their right to seek and maintain marginalized workers with little threat of repercussions. The passion stems from white men's strong racial framing for maintaining their power and control of Latino laborers. The condemners are the immigration regulatory agency that are dismissed for their lack of understanding the need of hiring Latino laborers.

White Employers Co-opting Pro-Immigrant Counter-Frames

Interestingly, a number of employers took part in condemning the condemners by using pro-immigrant counter-frames for defending their own involvement in hiring immigrant workers. A counter-frame is usually developed by people of color from their own home culture in response to the prevalent white racial framing of society (Feagin 2013). The pro-immigrant counter-frames are often heard in immigration protests and liberal groups have used them to garner support for the Latino immigration community. White employers are far removed from the origins of the pro-immigrant counter-frames as they often hold white conservative perspectives on work ethic and a strong devotion to the capitalist system they hold power in. The research finds that white employers appropriate pro-immigrant counter-frames in support of Latino immigrants that stems from their own rationalization and justification of hiring undocumented immigrants in their businesses. White male employers will go to great lengths to defend their right to hire marginalized workers. For instance, when I asked Billy about anti-immigrant sentiment, he explains the following.

Billy: Um, are they all Native American? Uh, are all of them Native American? That would be my argument. Like, you're family came here, you descended from

somewhere. Like, Czech or German or whatever it may be, you came from another country. You had the opportunity. So why because you set up a government that says you're not allowed, then you're not allowed, that doesn't really make sense to me.

Billy sarcastically asks if groups condemning undocumented immigrants are actually Native American, drawn from the counter-frame that all Americans are descendent from immigrants. Billy, who is a white male employer, speaks about the Czech and German communities in the area of central Texas and implies that all whites can trace their ancestor to immigrant groups. He claims that those with anti-immigrant views had an opportunity awarded to their immigrant ancestors and that supporting policy that cracks down on undocumented immigrants is hypocritical. Surprisingly, some employers have adopted this liberal view of immigration, often focusing on the hypocrisy of the anti-immigrant sentiment found in US society. Billy explains that the anti-immigrant perspective does not make sense, likely due to his position as a white employer that seeks immigrant workers for the operation of his business. Another example is seen in Kevin's use of a similar counter-frame based on what he believes is the hypocrisy of the anti-immigrant movement in the US.

Kevin: I think its hypocrisy, I think its wild hypocrisy, I mean, the, the entire nation was built on, on immigration. Right? The entire country. Our, our past with very, very few exceptions to somebody who may be a native American, of native American descent, we were all descendants of immigrants, umm, some more legal than others, there, for a long time, Irish were looked down upon, and what not. Umm, at this point more people immigrate from Canada down here than from Mexico up here. Which I think is hilarious, (laugh) I think they don't worry about that because they are white. I think it's less hilarious. But no... the country would come to a screeching halt, products that we, because people, local workers do not want to do the jobs that a lot of migrant workers will do.

Kevin is adamant that immense hypocrisy is occurring from anti-immigrant groups and policies that target undocumented immigrants. He makes the argument that all Americans are descendent from immigrants and have had different experiences, pointing to the Irish as facing discrimination. He also brings up more recent figures that show immigration from Mexico is at an all-time low. Kevin is immersed in several pro-immigrant counter-frames against anti-immigrant groups, making a compelling argument that US society would fall apart if migrant workers were not available. I argue that this sharp analysis stems from the position of a white employer as highly dependent on this labor. White employers condemn the condemners by appropriating the counter frames developed by people of color.

While several employers discussed this idea of being tolerant towards immigrants and critiquing the anti-immigrant sentiment, Kevin goes a bit further in his analysis. He shares a critical counter-frame against the e-verify system that is imposed upon his business that had been recently bought out by a venture capitalist financial company run by elite white men.

Kevin: Across the board I don't think there's a soul that is happy about [e-verify]. I think a lot of this is marketing...umm..

Interviewer: In what way?

Kevin: Just the American imperialism, we, we are the best, we don't, the Donald Trumps of the world... We are by the book, that's the whole thing. And I think a lot of it is part of it. Part of the reason why the sticker is on the window, letting people know that hey, we got *good ole 'Mericans* cooking your food.

Kevin is highly critical of the e-verify system that has been a significant obstacle for hiring undocumented Latino immigrants. When pressed on explaining his views, he brings up a number of issues, including American Imperialism and the 'Donald Trumps

of the world', linking them to the way e-verify symbolizes the power of American society to control Latino immigration. He focuses on the e-verify sticker that he is required to show on the front door of the restaurant, seen next to the hours of operation. The e-verify sticker carries with it a racial framing of who is allowed to work in his restaurant, the 'good ole 'Mericans' as Kevin refers to them. As customers approach this restaurant, they are being reminded that undocumented immigration is not tolerated, at least in the frontstage for these businesses. In the backstage is where Kevin is walking a fine line using every technique he can to maintain his undocumented Latino laborers, placing him in a very tight position. Being a white male employer requires this finesse of meeting the capitalist demands for profit, critiquing the regulations that block your access to cheap labor, and maintain the exploitative system in place for the marginalized Latino laborers. The e-verify system is being imposed on businesses from state laws and pressures to adopt the regulation. Elite white men have begun to impose the verification system unto their nationwide businesses, causing many middle range employers to deal with the consequences of limiting their access to undocumented immigrant laborers. White employers have significant disdain for the e-verify system, going along with the regulation in frontstage appearances, but working to bypass e-verify in backstage settings.

White Employers Appeal to Higher Loyalties: The White Male Capitalist System

White employers also defended their violations of immigration law by sharing their appeal to higher loyalties, namely the capitalist system that they are devoted for achieving power and status. White employers are highly committed to what they believe

is the greater good provided by the capitalist system that incentives workers to be rewarded for hard work. Any immigration regulations are seen significant barriers for allowing white employers to decide who should be rewarded with employment for offering their hard work. There is a general commitment to the interests of the white business community that relies on immigrant laborers and white businessmen are seen as superior overseers to decide who should be hireable and what immigration labor laws to justifiably ignore. This racial framing elevates the white employer as the proper authority in determining the suitable approach for dealing with marginalized Latino immigrants. An example of this thinking is seen in Will's desire for allocating the power of who should be employable to business managers.

Will: Work ethic – I'm from this country, but I don't know how it's viewed in the world. But to my knowledge up until recently, people saw this country as a place of opportunity that you could stand on the side of the road and get a job and go from there. And go anywhere you want, as big as you want, how hard do you want to work, lets go work harder than everyone else so you can get ahead....I believe that in this country it should be as easy, would you like to buy this, 'yes', here, you sell that and that is just business right there. That is a business transaction you just started your business and I think it should be that easy to start your business, and I think it should be that easy to work. I don't think it should be that easy to come over here and not work. ***If you're here to work, if you're here to contribute, you can be here.*** If you're not, or its negative contributions than go home. Or go to jail, or whatever, you came here, by the law.

Will is appealing to higher loyalties through his devotion to the capitalist system and his adoption of cultural hegemonic ideologies that favor the elite white male ruling class.

Will is deeply committed to the American capitalist system, viewing the US as an exceptional country that rewards those that work hard. From the white employer perspective, the capitalist system is structured to provide a pool of hard-working Latino

laborers who seek to get ahead by demonstrating their capacity to provide a high work ethic. Will argues that employing a laborer is a business transaction that should be an easy process and implies employers will provide rewards towards laborers for offering their hard work. He puts it simply that anyone can be here if they are here to work, meaning that white employers should be allowed to hire whoever they want that will do the hardest amount of work, a clear dismissal of contemporary US immigration laws. Notably, Will is also quick to support imprisoning immigrant laborers that are not committed to working hard in the capitalist system. As long as Latino immigrants serve their role as exploitable laborers for white employers, they are seen as dependable and have earned their right for belonging in US society.

White employers also profess their loyalty to other like-minded white business groups that are believed to understand the need of hiring undocumented immigrant workers. White businessmen have an implicit understanding their interests will be met, regardless of any regulations that stand in the way of carrying out the pursuits of capitalist accumulation. An example is seen in Jackson's response to general public's anti-immigrant rhetoric that threatens to impact his Latino workforce.

Jackson: I think, you know, it's just rhetoric, like you said. I don't think anything's ever gonna happen like that [keeping out immigrants]. Um, I think the wall – 'cause then you know, it would shut people out of goin' both ways [laugh]. 'Cause there's, you know, American businesses that do business down in Mexico, so, you know again it sounds great, it'll get maybe somebody elected or somethin' but, you know, in reality, I think businessmen are businessmen, and if he's a businessman like he claims he is [laughs] you know, he understands what's happening.

Jackson shares his strong loyalty to the capitalist system, believing that anti-immigrant rhetoric is contrary to the success of businesses in America. He claims that anti-

immigrant rhetoric is overall a threat to conducting business across borders and it is counter-intuitive to the operation of capitalism. Although he does claim that anti-immigrant rhetoric ‘sounds good’ politically and may be helpful for getting elected, a subtle reference to Donald Trump’s presidential campaign of 2016. Although he sees the influence the anti-immigrant view has on political power of Trump, he ultimately insists that Trump is a white businessman and is surely loyal to the needs of the white business community. White employers are loyal to serving the interests of elite white men who will in turn reward them with less regulation and opportunities for achieving success as white business owners for exploiting undocumented Latino immigrants.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the ways in which white employers rationalize their own violations of breaking immigration laws. White male employers protect their own sense of virtuousness that lies in the center of their white racial framing of their own self-identity. The research finds white employers meander between frontstage and backstage settings, at times denying hiring undocumented immigrants and at other times acknowledging not following immigration regulations. White employers also carry a multitude of rationalizations, motives, and attitudes that justify violating immigration laws. The techniques of neutralization were used to organize these justifications found in the data where employers denied responsibility, denied injury, condemned the condemners, and appealed to higher loyalties. White employers have immense power to frame their violations of immigration law in positive ways, explaining the widespread hiring of undocumented Latino laborers and the lack of any threat of enforcement that

would challenge the white racial structure. A prevailing finding was how far white employers are willing to go in the name of capitalist profit to maintain their power and status with little regard for following immigration laws. Their position in the racial hierarchy within the capitalist society is well protected and maintained through their techniques of rationalization.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

Social research has focused very little on white employers, although they wield immense power in determining the opportunities for mobility and labor conditions for immigrants and people of color. This dissertation research has provided critical insights on the racial framing used by white employers of undocumented Latino immigrants for understanding the racial hierarchy in labor-intensive work. White employers shared substantial racial framing through their racialized thinking, narratives, interpretations, and emotional responses to their discussion of race in the workplace and undocumented Latino immigration. This study exposes some of the behind-the-scenes insights and rationalizations white employers' use for employing the millions of undocumented Latino immigrants in the US. In this concluding chapter I will recap the main research findings and what they suggest for future studies of white employers, racial framing in labor-intensive work, and undocumented Latino immigrants in the workplace.

White Employers and the White Racial Frame

As this study has demonstrated in Chapter IV, white employers are extensively operating out of the white racial frame, with major consequences for racial issues in the workplace. White employers uphold white virtue through their preference for white men as authority figures in management. There is a trend of providing white men with pathways for mobility based on bestowing them privileges in the labor market. White employers appear to have a racial and cultural affinity with white men that causes a higher likelihood of placing whites into these more lucrative positions of authority. At

many establishments, white employers had white supervisors and whites in training for management locations.

At the same time, one of the most interesting findings was that white employers tend to only reward select white males with positions of authority while being largely dismissive of many white workers that are not demonstrating complacency in labor-intensive work. Many white laborers are seen as temporary workers, such as part-time students, and are expected to leave the labor-intensive industries for better employment opportunities. The class interests of white employers influences their desire to employ marginalized and complacent workers, which are the not qualities seen in many white workers. Instead, white employers turn their attention to Latino immigrant laborers as the most desirable workers based on their perceived subservience to their white authority.

In Chapter V, I analyzed the racial framing white employers have developed for Latino immigrant laborers for justifying their exploitation. I refer to this process as *pro-immigrant racial framing*, a self-serving praising of Latinos for their perceived natural ability for working hard that masks the extent of marginalization and hyper-exploitation Latinos face in the labor market. White employers use racial metaphors describing Latinos as naturalized beast of burden, a process of dehumanization that justifies their exploitative treatment. They engage in problematic employment practices for controlling the labor of Latinos, including the monitoring of their overtime, discouraging Latinos from reporting injuries, and creating significant barriers for access to promotions. These practices are based on the targeting of a highly vulnerable Latino immigrant population

in order to reap massive profits that reward white employers in their businesses. Interestingly, some employers of color presented critical counter-framing against the practices of white employers, showing some challenges to this racially exploitative system.

In Chapter VI, the study focuses on the presentation-of-self white employers engage in when discussing their own violations of immigration laws for hiring undocumented Latino laborers. White employers meander between frontstage and backstage settings as they carefully discuss their involvement in breaking immigration laws. I demonstrate how white employers engage in techniques of neutralization as a way of rationalizing their actions in hiring undocumented immigrants. The research findings demonstrate how white employers deny their responsibility of hiring undocumented immigrants, deny the injuries Latino laborers face, condemn the condemners that target employer hiring, and appeal to higher loyalties of the white business community based on the necessity of capitalist accumulation.

Future Discussions

This study demonstrates that the racial framing used by employers are significant for understanding the racial hierarchy in the workplace. White employers have in-depth racial framing that is rarely studied or scrutinized by social research, although their racial views of whites, blacks, and Latinos greatly defines their social position in the workforce. This lack of scholarly attention has major consequences in the study of racial inequality in the labor force. A major responsibility of white employers is to determine wages, promotions, benefits, safety standards, and overall labor standards, all of which

are highly influenced through their racial views. Social researchers studying inequality in the workforce would benefit by including the context of the white employer as a cause of racial inequality. Research has focused on major consequences of racial inequality as seen through Latino wage disparities, labor violations, and counter-framing labor movements, yet the white employers that play a central part of establishing these conditions have received little attention. As covered in the literature review in Chapter III, some researchers in recent years have begun to critically examine the role of employers in shaping labor conditions for racial minorities and women in the labor force.

It is vital to highlight that throughout this study elite white men were an omnipresent influence that shape the labor practices and racial framing of middle range white employers. Elite white men are in control of the US economy that profit tremendously from the status quo. The middle range employers would at times subtly refer to elite whites as very rich and powerful owners of construction companies and nationwide restaurant chains. Far beyond the scope of this study, elite whites wield power and could change the labor conditions faced by undocumented Latino laborers, yet they choose to demand massive profits and place continuous pressure upon middle range white employers to exploit undocumented Latino immigrants. Several of the white employers in this study discussed their views of higher management, including regional or nationwide CEOs, as social actors knowledgeable about the widespread practice of hiring undocumented Latino laborers. White employers would also share the pressure from higher management as a challenge for maintaining healthy profit revenues, and the

expectation of hiring undocumented Latino laborers was an unofficial requirement. I was routinely warned that higher management would not take the time to participate in this study, with many employers worried to recommend an interview with their superiors. At one scheduled interview I was rushed out the door as a regional manager was making a visit to the establishment, showing their power to avoid scrutiny. For methodological considerations, future research on white employers would benefit from creative forms of accessing this elusive group for a larger sample of participants. Scholars have provided frameworks for researching the views of elite white men and the power they hold over social, economic, and political resources in US society. (Feagin and O'Brien 2004; Feagin and Ducey 2017). Further research should take this approach into consideration, carefully considering the issue of access and strategies of developing rapport or having connections from high access acquaintances. Major obstacles continue to exist that will place strain on inquiring the racial views of elite whites, yet this data is crucial for providing a sociological analysis of those at the top.

Furthermore, major policy implications exist in the study of the white employer perspective on undocumented immigration. White men have in-depth racial framing of Latino immigrants and struggle with strategies for providing employment for the undocumented. Their disdain for immigration regulations and commitment to capitalist accumulation creates these conditions for the desirability of Latino immigrants for their subservience in the workforce. White employers, through their social, economic, and political power, may be an unlikely source of pressure towards deregulating immigration laws and providing legal work status for millions of Latino immigrant workers. Derrick

Bell provides the theoretical concept of *interest convergence*, a view that whites will support racial justice when they determine that it benefits them in significant ways.

There has been historical precedent for white employers supporting immigration reform, as seen in the 1986 passage of IRCA that was largely passed through the lobbying efforts of agricultural employers. This immigration act was the most recent significant legislation that provided legalization for nearly three million undocumented immigrants. Some of the white employers in this study spoke about their lobbying efforts through the Texas Restaurant Association to block mandatory e-verify regulations from passing the Texas state legislature. Elite white men, including elite business owners and legislators, have substantial interests in blocking any crack down on immigrant laborers to protect the capitalist interests. Further research is needed for understanding to what extent white employers are willing to use their powerful position to protect their Latino laborers. For instance, it is not as clear whether white employers would support complete legalization or instead low enforcement approach that would continue to keep Latino immigrants in a marginalized state in their work access. Further studies on employers would shed light on their overall commitment and strategies for maintaining the Latino labor force.

REFERENCES

- Acuna, Rodolfo. 1972. "Occupied America. The Chicano's Struggle Toward Liberation."
- Arrow, Kenneth Joseph. 1973. "The theory of discrimination."
- Barrera, Mario. 1979. *Race and class in the Southwest: A theory of racial inequality*:
University of Notre Dame Press.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2006. *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the
persistence of racial inequality in the United States*: Rowman & Littlefield
Publishers.
- Burawoy, Michael. 1998. "The extended-case method." *Sociological Theory* 16(1):4-33
- Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*.
Routledge. New York, NY.
- Calavit, Kitty. 1990. "Employer Sanctions Violations: Towards a Dialectical Model of
White-Collar Crime. *Law & Society Review*. 24(4):1041-1070
- Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A practical guide through
qualitative analysis*. SAGE Publications. Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Chavez, Maria. 2011. *Everyday injustice: Latino professionals and racism*: Rowman &
Littlefield Publishers. Lanham, MD.
- Chavez, Maria, Jessica L Lavariega Monforti, and Melissa R Michelson. 2015. *Living
the dream: New immigration policies and the lives of undocumented Latino
youth*: Routledge. New York, NY

- Cobas, José A, Jorge Duany, and Joe F Feagin. 2009. "Racializing Latinos: Historical Background and Current Forms." *How the United States Racializes Latinos: White Hegemony and Its Consequences*. Paradigm Publishers. New York, NY.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge. New York, NY.
- Cox, Oliver Cromwell. 1948. *Caste, class, & race: A study in social dynamics*. Doubleday & Co. New York, NY.
- Crenshaw, Kimberly. 1991. "Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women." *Stanford Law Review*. 43(6):1241-1299
- Cauterucci, Christina. 2016 "A Federal Court ruled that companies can fire people just for having dreadlocks." *Slate*. Retrieved October 10th, 2016 (http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2016/09/21/a_federal_court_ruled_that_employers_can_fire_people_just_for_having_dreadlocks.html)
- DiTomaso, Nancy. 2013. *The American non-dilemma: Racial inequality without racism*. Russell Sage Foundation. New York, NY
- Du Bois, W. E. B. 1934. *Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*. New York Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Dunbar, Erica Armstrong. 2015. "George Washington, Slave Catcher." *The New York Times*. Retrieved October 5th, 2016 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/16/opinion/george-washington-slave-catcher.html>.)

- Flores-Yeffal, Nadia Yamel. 2013. *Migration-trust networks: Social cohesion in Mexican US-bound emigration*: Texas A&M University Press.
- Friedman, Milton. 1962. "1982, Capitalism and Freedom." University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Feagin, Joe R. 2006. *Systemic Racism: A Theory of Oppression*. Routledge.
- Feagin, Joe R. 2013. *The White Racial Frame: Centuries of Racial Framing and Counter-Framing*. Routledge. New York, NY. 2nd ed.
- Feagin, Joe R and Jose Cobas. 2015. *Latinos Facing Racism: Discrimination, Resistance and Endurance*. Routledge.
- Feagin, Joe. R. and Kimberly Ducey. 2017 *Elite white men ruling:who, what, when, where, and how*. Routledge. New York, NY.
- Feagin, Joe R. and Melvin Sikes. 1995. *Living with Racism: The Black Middle Class Experience*. Beacon Press.
- Galeano, Eduardo. 1971. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillaging of a Continent*. Montly Review Press. New York, NY.
- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 2015. "Settler Colonialism as Structure: A Framework for Comparative Studies of U.S. Race and Gender Formation." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*. 1(1):52-72
- Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Gordon, Milton Myron. 1964. *Assimilation in American life: The role of race, religion, and national origins*: Oxford University Press on Demand.

- Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*. Lawrence & Wishart Ltd; Revised Edition.
- Gutierrez, Ramon A. 2004. "Internal colonialism: An American theory of race." *Du Bois Review* 1(02):281-95.
- Harrison, Jill Lindsey, and Sarah E Lloyd. 2013. "New Jobs, new workers, and new inequalities: explaining employers' roles in occupational segregation by nativity and race." *Social Problems* 60(3):281-301.
- Hartigan, John, and Alexandra Wigdor. 1989. "Fairness in employment testing." *Science* 245(4913):14-14.
- Hertz, Rosanna and Jonathan B. Imber. 1995. *Studying Elites Using Qualitative Methods*. Sage Publications.
- Holmes, Seth M. 2007. "'Oaxacans like to work bent over': the naturalization of social suffering among berry farm workers." *International Migration* 45(3):39-68.
- Hossfeld, Karen J. 1994. "Hiring immigrant women: Silicon Valley's 'simple formula'." *Women of color in US society*: 65-93.
- Jamal, Samina. 2006. Critical Ethnography: An effective way to conduct anti-racism research. In *Critical Issues in anti-racist methodologies*. Edited by George J Sefa Dei and Gurpreet Singh Johal. Peter Lang Inc., New York, NY.
- Jiménez, Tomás Roberto. 2010. *Replenished ethnicity: Mexican Americans, immigration, and identity*: Univ of California Press.
- Katznelson, Ira. 2005. *When affirmative action was white: An untold history of racial inequality in twentieth-century America*: WW Norton & Company.

- Kvale, Steinar and Svend Brinkmann. *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. SAGE Publications, Inc. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Kirschenman, Joleen, and Kathryn M Neckerman. 1991. "We'd love to hire them, but...": The meaning of race for employers." *The urban underclass* 203:203-32.
- Kieffer, Scott M. and John J. Sloan. 2009. "Overcoming Moral Hurdles: Using Techniques of Neutralization by White-Collar Suspects as an Interrogation Tool." *Security Journal*. 22:317-330.
- Ladner, Joyce A. 1998. *The death of white sociology*. Black Classic Press. Baltimore, MD.
- Lerner, Gerda 1987. *The creation of patriarchy*. Oxford University Press. London, UK.
- Lopez, Ian Haney. 1997. *White by law: The legal construction of race*: NYU Press. New York, NY.
- Lopez, Ian. 2015. *Dog whistle politics: How coded racial appeals have reinvented racism and wrecked the middle class*: Oxford University Press.
- Madison, Soyini D. 2005. *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance*. Sage Publications. Thousand Oaks, CA
- Majzler, Robert David. 2016. "The white man problem: exploring intersectional consciousness, whiteness, masculinities, and solidarity among white, male-identified activists." Phd dissertation. Department of Psychology. University of California, Santa Cruz.

- Maldonado, Marta Maria. 2009. "'It is their nature to do menial labour': the racialization of 'Latino/a workers' by agricultural employers." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32(6):1017-36.
- Manicas, Peter T. 2006. *A Realist Philosophy of the Social Sciences: Explanation and Understanding*. Cambridge University Press. New York, NY.
- Massey, Doug, Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone. 2003. *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration*. Russel Sage Foundation. New York, NY.
- McDonald, Steve. 2011. "What's in the "old boys" network? Accessing social capital in gendered and racialized networks." *Social Networks* 33(4):317-30.
- McIntosh, Petty 1988. *White priveledge and male priveledge: A personal account of coming to see the corespondence through work in women's studies*. Center for Research on Women. Wellsey College.
- Morris, Aldon. 2015. *The scholar denied: WEB Du Bois and the birth of modern sociology*: Univ of California Press.
- Moss, Philip, and Chris Tilly. 2001. *Stories employers tell: Race, skill, and hiring in America*: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Murguia, Edward. 1975. *Assimilation, colonialism, and the Mexican American people*: University Press of Amer.
- Oxfam America. 2016. "No Relief: Denial of Bathroom Breaks in Poultry Industry" *Oxfam Report*.

- Phelps, Edmund S. 1972. "The statistical theory of racism and sexism." *The American Economic Review* 62(4):659-61.
- Picca, Leslie H, and Joe R Feagin. 2007. *Two-faced racism: Whites in the backstage and frontstage*.
- Portes, Alejandro, and Min Zhou. 1993. "The new second generation: Segmented assimilation and its variants." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530(1):74-96.
- Romero, Mary. 2008. "Crossing the immigration and race border: A critical race theory approach to immigration studies." *Contemporary Justice Review* 11(1):23-37.
- Royster, Deirdre. 2003. *Race and the invisible hand: how white networks exclude black men from blue-collar jobs*. Univ of California Press. Berkley, CA
- Salanda, Johnny. 2009. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. SAGE Publications. Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Saucedo, Leticia M. 2006. "Employer preference for the subservient worker and the making of the brown collar workplace." *Ohio St. LJ* 67:961.
- Shih, Johanna. 2002. "'... Yeah, I could hire this one, but I know it's gonna be a problem': how race, nativity and gender affect employers' perceptions of the manageability of job seekers." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25(1):99-119.
- Slatton, Brittany. 2014 *Mythologizing black women: unvieling white men's deep frame on gender and race*. Paradigm Publishers. New York, NY.
- Sykes, Gresham, and David Matza. 1957. Techniques of neutralization: A theory of delinquency. *American Sociological Review* 22:664-670.

- Thurow, Lester C. 1975. *Generating Inequality: Mechanisms of Distribution in the US Economy*: Basic Books.
- Ture, Kwame and Charles Hamilton. 2011. *Black power: Politics of liberation in America*: Vintage.
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [EEOC]. "EEOC Releases Fiscal Year 2015 Enforcement and Litigation Data." Retrieved October 10th 2016 (<https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/2-11-16.cfm>)
- Valenzuela, Abel. 2003. "Day Labor Work" *Annual Review of Sociology*. 29:307-333
- Waldinger, Roger, and Michael I Lichter. 2003. *How the other half works: Immigration and the social organization of labor*: Univ of California Press.
- Ward, Thomas F. 2003. "The meaning of race to employers." *The Sociological Quarterly* 44(2):227-42.
- Wilson, William Julius. 1978. "The declining significance of race." *Society* 15(5):11-11.
- Yancy, George. 2012. *Look, a white!: Philosophical essays on whiteness*: Temple University Press.
- Zamudio, Margaret M, and Michael I Lichter. 2008. "Bad attitudes and good soldiers: Soft skills as a code for tractability in the hiring of immigrant Latina/os over native Blacks in the hotel industry." *Social Problems* 55(4):573-89.
- Zuberi, Tukufu and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. 2008. *White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Lanham, MD.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Open Ended Employer Survey

General Questions

1. Tell me about your role in this business and how you arrived into your position?
2. Can you tell me a bit about the background/history of your business?
3. What are the various types of jobs people do here?
4. Can you give me a description of the age, gender, and ethnicity of the workers in this business?
5. Is the breakdown different for certain jobs? Are there certain positions at which you have more men, different ethnic groups, different age groups?
6. How did the breakdown turn out this way? What do you think are the things that produced these different roles for different groups? Particular hiring practices or is characteristics of the labor?
7. What is something that is beneficial about the area in which you work for your business?
8. What are the types of skills you look for in a worker?
9. I've talked to employers who say that there are significant differences in the kind and quality of work they can get from different types of workers. For example the kind of work they get from Whites vs. the kind of work they get from Hispanics or Blacks. What can you say about that?
10. Also, do you believe there are differences in the kind of work businesses get from men versus the kind of work businesses get from women?
11. Can you speak about how you find your workers? Do you get all workers the same way? Do you draw from walk-ins, referrals, or other forms? Any examples of recent hires?

Immigration Questions

1. What primary role do immigrants fill in your business? Any examples of the type of roles they fit?
2. How are immigrants recruited into your business? Do you draw from applicant walk-ins, referrals, or other forms? Any examples of recent hires?
3. What kinds of qualities do you look for in immigrant employees? Do immigrants have any qualities that stand out? Any examples?
4. How would you describe the reliability of immigrant workers? How would you compare their reliability to local workers? Any examples of this?
5. In your experience, do immigrants get promoted or do they generally stay at the same level? Why or why not? Any examples?
6. Do you believe immigrant workers have ambition? How would you compare the ambition of immigrant workers with local workers? Any examples come to mind?
7. In terms of employment, would you prefer to hire a newly arrived immigrant or an immigrant who has lived in US for a long period? Why or why not, any examples?
8. In your opinion, would your business survive without immigrant employees? Why or why not? What value do you believe they bring and how do they help your business? Any examples?
9. Some businesses support the E-Verify program, an internet based government service that checks worker's social security number with a federal database. How would you feel if this program would be a requirement for your business?

Immigration Scenarios

Please read the following scenarios and answer the following questions concerning your thoughts about these scenarios.

Scenario 1

An employer hires several employees that include a white employee, a black employee, and an immigrant employee. For various reasons, the employer feels the immigrant employee is best fit for the job.

What do you think about that scenario?
Has anyone you know felt this way? If so, provide an example.
Have you ever felt this way? If so, provide an example.

Scenario 2

An employer believes it is wrong for workers to speak Spanish or listen to Spanish music while on the job. This employer imposes an English-only policy for the workplace, hoping to make the workplace better for the business needs.

What do you think about that scenario?
Has anyone you know felt this way? If so, provide an example.
Have you ever felt this way? If so, provide an example.

Immigration Enforcement Scenarios

Scenario 1

A US born worker becomes upset with his employer. The worker accuses his employer of hiring illegal immigrants and wants to call immigration customs enforcement. In response, the employer considers letting go of immigrant employees with questionable documentation.

What do you think about that scenario?
Has anyone you know ever talked about this sort of situation? If so, provide an example.
Have you ever had to face something like this? If so, provide an example.

Scenario 2

Many anti-immigrant groups argue that employers should be punished for hiring illegal immigrants. They believe jobs are taken from Americans and that illegal immigrants are a drain on social services. Some employers have been known to take a similar position and hire only native born for their businesses.

What do you think about that scenario?
Has anyone you know ever talked about this sort of situation? If so, provide an example.
Have you ever had to face something like this? If so, provide an example.

Scenario 3 (Completely Confidential)

Based on current policy, employers are expected to do much of the policing over the hiring of immigrants. This puts considerable pressure to make sure employers are knowingly hiring legal migrant workers by accepting what appears to be legitimate documentation. Many employers aim to do their best to fulfill this role and meet their business needs.

What do you think about this situation? Why do you believe employers hire illegal immigrants?
Has anyone you know ever talked about dealing with this? If so, provide an example.
Have you ever felt pressure to go along with something like this? If so, provide an example. Also, why do you believe you had to do it?
How do you feel about your competitors using illegal immigrants in their workforce?