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Race, Difference and Power: Recursions of Coloniality in Work and Organizations

The coloniality of labor: Migrant Black African youths' experiences of looking for and finding work in an Australian deindustrializing city

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Abstract

This paper explores migrant Black African youths' experiences of looking for and finding work in Newcastle, a deindustrializing Australian city. Data for this paper were drawn from interviews conducted with young people who migrated to Australia as temporary and permanent residents. Drawing on concepts of coloniality, racialization, bodywork, and hidden labor, this paper demonstrates how, when looking for work, participants' names get attached to their racialized bodies—a situation which deems them as suitable or not for specific kinds of work. Their strategies of finding work differ according to their migration status; that is, temporary residents draw on their personal networks, whereas some permanent residents with full citizenship rights rely on social welfare support services to find work. However, irrespective of the different strategies used to find work, they all end up doing jobs that they described as “work which others do not wish to do.” I argue that these experiences re-articulate the coloniality of labor because, as workers in these jobs, they play a crucial role in the economic transformation taking place in the city due to deindustrialization. This is not merely because they form part of the workforce responsible for working in unwanted jobs, but because they are also consumers of Newcastle's emerging welfare support and

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educational services sectors. The paper contributes to an understanding of how race shapes the labor market experiences of racialized youth in deindustrializing labor markets.

KEYWORDS

coloniality, deindustrialization, labor, migration, racialization, youth

1 | INTRODUCTION

This paper offers an exploration of migrant Black African youths' experiences of looking for and finding work in Newcastle, a deindustrializing Australian city. The way processes like deindustrialization have reorganized economies in the global North and how this has resulted in the emergence of service economies characterized by precarious and feminized work is well documented (May et al., 2007; Sassen, 2001; Wills et al., 2010). These changes have affected young people's ability to negotiate work in deindustrializing labor markets. For example, racialized young migrant workers with or without citizenship rights dominate low-end service jobs in deindustrializing labor markets (Krivonos, 2019; McDowell et al., 2016; Robertson, 2016). This situation re-articulates the persistence of long-standing inequalities in the global organization of labor (Iimki, 2018; Quijano, 2000; Rodríguez, 2014). It demonstrates that organizations employ new modes of re-articulating differences to ensure that labor is distributed in a manner that privileges Whiteness (Rodríguez, 2014). These re-articulations of difference require new ways of conceptualizing difference in the field capable of accounting for how it becomes institutionalized as "a political and ethical signifier of exploitation and inequality" (Iimki, 2018, p. 328). This paper contributes to these debates by offering an exploration of how race shapes the experiences of migrant Black African youth looking for work in deindustrializing Newcastle. Newcastle is a regional town in New South Wales, Australia that is undergoing economic transformation resulting from a decline in manufacturing jobs and a rise in service labor.

Data for this paper were drawn from 20 interviews I conducted with Black African youth in 2018 aged between 18 and 30 years. I demonstrate how, when looking for work, their names get attached to their racialized bodies—a situation that deems them as suitable or not for specific kinds of work in this labor market. This highlights how their names serve as impressions (Ahmed, 2004; Swan & Flowers, 2018) about their racial identity and showcases how Whiteness is preserved through coloniality (Quijano, 2000). Their strategies of finding work differ according to their migration status. For instance, temporary residents draw on their personal networks (Nyland et al., 2009; Sassen, 1996; Wills et al., 2010), whereas some permanent residents with full citizenship rights rely on social welfare support services to find work (Krivonos, 2019; McDowell et al., 2016). However, irrespective of the different strategies used to find work, they have all ended up doing jobs that they described as "work which others do not wish to do." This shows how the naturalization of certain bodies as "fit" for certain kinds of work as well as the invisibility of labor (Hatton, 2017) reproduces degradation of their work in Newcastle's labor market. I argue that these experiences re-articulate the coloniality of labor because, as workers in these jobs, migrant Black African youth play a crucial role in the local economy. This is not merely because they serve as cheap labor or form part of the workforce responsible for working in "unwanted jobs," but because they are also consumers of Newcastle's emerging welfare support and educational services sectors. These industries play a critical role in the economic transformation taking place in the city due to deindustrialization. The paper begins this exploration by describing racial and migrant discrimination in the labor market.

2 | RACIAL AND MIGRANT DISCRIMINATION IN THE LABOR MARKET

Various field experiments have established patterns of racial bias in organizations' hiring practices (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Booth et al., 2010; Kaas & Manger, 2011). For example, in Australia, Booth et al. (2010) found that ethnic minorities with Italian, Chinese, and Middle Eastern names would need to apply for more jobs in order to receive a call-back for a job interview even if they noted that they attended school in Australia on their résumé. Field experiments conducted in other social settings, like the United States of America and Germany, also indicate that employers infer race to the names listed on job applicants' résumés, which impacts the job applicants' probability of receiving a call-back for an interview (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Booth et al., 2010; Kaas & Manger, 2011). This paper contributes to this literature by exploring how these biases are experienced from the perspective of job seekers with unwanted names.

To explore this issue it is crucial to understand the type of labor available to young people in Newcastle's labor market. To achieve this, I conceptualize this labor market as a post-industrial service labor market. In this labor regime, because workers interact directly with consumers while delivering a service, their embodied bodily and social attributes (e.g., workers' accents, ethnicity, race, and gender) play a crucial role in the way organizations see them as desirable workers (Kalemba, 2021; McDowell, 2009). Organizations check workers' suitability for jobs against their social and bodily attributes. For example, McDowell et al. (2016) found that employers have a hierarchy of eligibility for gender, nationality, and race for hiring young people in low-wage service jobs. Young Black men are stereotyped by employers as troublesome and less likely to remain on the job. Consequently, they are constructed as non-desirable workers on employers' rank order of preferred job applicants (McDowell et al., 2016). Similarly, Farrugia et al. (2018, p. 273) found that young White women were the preferred workers for "front-of-house" bar work in Melbourne. However, since organizations remain gendered, classed, and biased toward the able-bodied, the preference for White youth as workers for this work does not mean that all White people benefit equally from embodying Whiteness (Nkomo & Ariss, 2014). For example, Farrugia et al. (2018) argue that young White women are preferred workers for these jobs because they are perceived as naturally embodying the ability to interact with others and their presence—especially their bodies in these services—serves as visually consumable for bar patrons. Service labor is thus characterized as normative employment that may be widely available to young people in deindustrializing labor markets. Yet, there are issues connected with gender and race in the way that organizations position young people as desired and undesired workers within these jobs.

In the service economy, irrespective of their citizenship status and legal rights, racialized young migrants converge in occupations that are characterized as precarious because they are low-wage, low-skilled, and unattractive (Krivonos, 2019; McDowell et al., 2016; Robertson, 2016). For instance, in Australia, temporary migrants on temporary visas experience barriers to employment that matches their skills, especially professional employment (Robertson, 2016). This barrier is related to conditions attached to their visas, such as restrictions on their right to work (Robertson, 2016). This leaves temporary migrants like international students susceptible to working in low-wage, low-skill, and illegal jobs in the service economy (Coffey et al., 2021). On the other hand, racialized migrants with full citizenship rights have lower employment rates than that of the White population (Krivonos, 2019). For instance, migrants from North and sub-Saharan Africa experience the highest levels of unemployment in comparison with other demographic groups in Australia (Gatwiri, 2021). These factors may create an imperative for racialized migrants with full citizenship rights to turn to welfare support schemes to gain assistance with seeking employment.

Literature on racialized young migrant experiences of using these services to secure work illustrates how gendered logics of racialization about skills these youth naturally possess are used to channel them into particular types of jobs (Krivonos, 2019; McDowell et al., 2016). These social services channel racialized young migrants into work that they do not have the qualifications for or skills or interests in (Krivonos, 2019). Therefore, societal institutions use factors such as immigration status to position young, racialized migrants as suitable workers for certain jobs in the service economy. I contribute to this literature on migrant and racial discrimination in the labor market by exploring migrant

Black African youth experiences in Newcastle's labor market. To make this exploration it is crucial to offer an account of racialization in Australia's migration regime. This is a topic of discussion for the proceeding section.

3 | RACIALIZATION AND MIGRATION

To understand mobility in relation to labor, it is important to account for Australia's racial profile in the context of its historical migration policies—specifically, the racist immigration policy known as the “White Australia” policy. This refers to the Immigration Restriction Act (1901) which was enacted to keep Australia White by prohibiting non-Whites, such as Black Africans, from migrating to Australia. Although the policy was abolished in 1973, it reflects the way hegemonic Whiteness operates in a settler-colonial context and how it synonymizes “Australian-ness” with Whiteness (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). This process took place through the denial of Aboriginal sovereignty and the subsequent marginalization of Aboriginal people from Australia's economic, social, and political landscape (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). These factors play a role in the racialization of Black Africans because they stand out as being visibly different, and, through their race, have come to symbolize the “other.” It is important here to clarify what I mean by racialization. I understand racialization as a process of attributing certain:

[c]haracteristics, appearances, traditions, and lifestyles ... to groups of different “others” with negative signifiers that are deemed to be natural and insurmountable. The development of a racialised discourse about a group of people provides justification for their discrimination. It puts into words the very thing about a particular group that is said to disturb us and pose a threat to our way of life. (Lentin, 2008, pp. 12–13)

Put differently, racialization justifies the way racialized groups are subordinated by the dominant race in a given society. In Australia, the racialization of non-White subjects contributes toward symbolically coding Australia as a space reserved for Whiteness (Hage, 1998). The visibility of Black Africans and other non-White migrants is important for sustaining the hegemony of Whiteness in Australia, which can be understood in terms of Hage's (1998) concept of the Australian *White Nation Fantasy*. This fantasy was born out of European colonial expansion, which depended on the containment of non-Whites, making it possible for spaces like Australia to become coded as White spaces. In present-day multicultural Australia, the White nation fantasy is maintained through the governance of non-Whites. This is achieved by controlling who can and cannot travel to Australia. Thus, despite the changes to the migration schemes outlined above, the mobilities of non-whites into Australian society are regulated and circumscribed because of the fear that their presence “erodes the centrality of White people” (Hage, 1998, p. 22). This is especially true for African migrants as they arrived in Newcastle more recently, with 2005 being the peak year for the largest group of African refugee arrivals and other Africans arriving in the city as skilled migrants and international students (Newcastle City Council, 2016b). According to the 2016 Census, 00.55% of the total Novocastrian population claimed to be born on the African continent (City of Newcastle Community Profile, n.d.). Presently, Black Africans of different ethnicities, languages, and English accents, due to their multi-lingual and cultural backgrounds (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007), form part of a small and “new” racial minority group within the Newcastle community. The presence of Black Africans in Australia threatens the fantasy of the ideal national order, and the loss of this order is expressed in discourses of White decline (Hage, 1998). This illustrates that Whiteness does not merely relate to the color of one's skin but is about achieving structural authority over the racialized other in settler colonial contexts like Australia (Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

The White Australia policy also cemented racial hierarchies, which persist and frame how White and non-White subjects interact with one another in the Australian labor market (Kamaloni, 2019). For example, studies indicate that Black Africans face discrimination in the Australian labor market from organizations concerning their qualifications, age, local work experience, ability to perform certain work tasks and, in certain instances, fear of terrorism in

Australia (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Majavu, 2016, 2018; Ndhlovu, 2014). This discrimination impacts their ability to secure work matching their skills, education, ability, and expectations because they are perceived as lacking the desired attributes for employability by organizations (Gatwiri, 2021; Mwanri et al., 2021). The racialization of Black Africans shows that Whiteness is situated in a privileged position in Australian society. Whiteness is a resource that can be used to racialize others by dictating the terms of inclusion and exclusion for racialized subjects in the Australian labor market and in organizations (Kalemba, 2021; Liu, 2017a, 2017b). This framework is critical for accounting for how logics of racialization originating from colonialism concealed in processes like the management of migration presently contribute to how Black Africans are depicted as racialized subjects in the Australian labor market. However, it does not provide ways of accounting for the impact of migrant Black African youths' racial identity in how they relate with potential employers when searching for work. To understand how this process manifests, I draw on theorizations of racialized embodied encounters.

3.1 | The surfacing of race and bodywork

Ahmed's (2004, 2010) account of racialized bodily encounters is particularly useful for exploring the material politics of embodying Blackness (Dar & Ibrahim, 2019) in Newcastle's deindustrializing labor market for this paper's participants. Ahmed (2004) offers an account of the role emotion plays in the "surfacing" of race. Ahmed (2004) posits that our bodily encounters with others are not merely structured by individual emotions but are shaped by collective histories of racism and colonialism. The past therefore generates new relations in the present. This is illustrated in the way certain emotions "stick" to certain bodies to influence relations across time and place, and this naturalizes emotional responses to difference (Ahmed, 2004). This conceptualization is important for describing the processes through which Blackness is materialized and negotiated in migrant Black African youths' experiences of looking for work in Newcastle. This permits me to illustrate how the inscription of an outsider status to racialized migrants contributes to constructing them as desired workers for invisible low-end service-sector jobs in Newcastle. Jobs were previously carried out by other marginalized groups like women, who were formerly confined to the family unit and unremunerated but are now commonly found in service-based jobs, including caring for the aged, sick, or those with a disability (McDowell, 2009). Changes in the service economy have contributed to the incorporation of these marginalized groups and these low-end service jobs in the labor force (McDowell, 2009). This means that, when looking for work, the local population has more options as to which jobs they can engage in; subsequently, fewer people are willing to work in these types of jobs—a process that has resulted in the degradation of these jobs and made them ideal for workers ascribed an outsider status like racialized migrants.

This type of labor is also known as "bodywork" because it involves caring, disciplining, pleasuring, and curing the bodies of others (Wolkowitz, 2002, p. 497). Bodywork is racialized and gendered because it is embedded in a global division of reproductive labor (Twigg et al., 2011). Intersecting mechanisms of invisibility like cultural, legal, and spatial factors contribute to making this work hidden (Hatton, 2017). For instance, it is hidden work because it is carried out in non-traditional workplaces like people's homes (Twigg, 2000). Additionally, bodywork may become legally hidden in situations when the work that workers do is not legally regarded as work by existing labor laws (Hatton, 2017). These factors contribute to the degradation of bodywork.

An example of this type of job is domestic work, where workers are employed to exempt their employers from carrying out domestic duties in the global North. Rodríguez (2014) notes how this work is mostly carried out by women in general and racialized migrant women in particular. For Rodríguez (2014), the presence of racialized migrant women in this occupation re-articulates the "differential systems established through migration policies" (p. 49) connected to how racialized migrant women are perceived in society and in the labor market as workers. Rodríguez's (2014) observation supports the point made by Wolkowitz (2002) about workers becoming associated with the stigma of the jobs they engage in. Hence, the racialized migrant's social status as an outsider is re-articulated in the low-status work available to them in the labor market (Rodríguez, 2014). Drawing on theorizations of the

surfacing of race and bodywork, permits the paper to explore how race shapes migrant Black African youths' experiences of finding work in deindustrializing Newcastle.

4 | METHODS

To make this exploration, data for this paper were drawn from a qualitative study exploring the labor market experiences of 20 Black African youth who migrated to deindustrializing Newcastle. Participants comprised of nine males and 11 females, aged between 18 and 30 years old. These young people migrated under heterogeneous pathways, 10 as temporary residents on a student visa, and 10 as permanent residents who were dependents of their carers who traveled to Australia as skilled migrants or as refugees. These young people originated from different countries on the African continent, including the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Kenya, Nigeria, Liberia, Uganda, and Ghana. All the young people who participated in this study completed their secondary school education. Some were in the process of attaining post-secondary qualifications at vocational colleges and the local university. All the participants had lived in Newcastle for a period of over 1 year and within that year had engaged in work for more than 3 months.

Participants were recruited using purposive and snowballing sampling techniques. A purposive sampling technique took place when participants were recruited through an African community organization in Newcastle. Representatives from the community organization connected me with young people who fit the criteria outlined above. This recruitment strategy was complemented with a snowballing sampling technique, which involves the researcher asking interviewees to recommend other participants who fit the research criteria (Parker et al., 2019). The snowballing sampling technique thus took place when I repetitively asked interviewed participants to refer potential participants who fit the selection criteria. To ensure that informed consent was given and the privacy of the potential participants was protected, the interviewed participant would pass on the details of the study to the young person and not the young person's details to me. This way, if the young person showed interest in participating in the study, they would get in touch with me. We would then arrange a time and place to meet. If they were not interested, I would not hear from them.

Data were collected using semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conversational and informal in tone, and they allowed for an open response in the participants' own words as opposed to a "yes or no" response (Longhurst, 2003). The interviews explored topics relating to experiences of looking for and finding work in Newcastle. Interviews proceeded to inform a conversation between myself and the participants. Interviews were semi-structured and were guided by an interview guide (Legard et al., 2003). The structure of the interview was flexible enough to permit topics to be covered that were important to the participant. This allowed responses to be fully probed and explored and permitted me to be responsive to issues raised spontaneously by participants.

During interviews with participants, my racial identity as a Black African researcher mattered. This is illustrated in how participants used the words "they or them" during our conversations. These words were used differently depending on what we were discussing during the interview process. To illustrate this point, "they or them" referred to the adults in their lives, while in conversations about race and racism "they and them" referred to the perpetrators of racism. Interestingly, the terms "they or them" were used differently depending on the young person's residency status. For those who were temporary residents, "they or them" referred to "Australians," meaning people (White or Black) with citizenship rights. Young people with citizenship rights, on the other hand, used "they or them" to refer to people they regarded as "White" people. Reflecting on how the young people comfortably used these words around me indicates that they did not consider me as an adult, a person capable of perpetrating racism, or as an Australian. In other words, I was not "they or them" to migrant Black African youth; I was considered one of them.

The data collected from the interview were analyzed using thematic analysis as articulated by Braun and Clarke (2012). The process of analyzing data unfolded as follows. I analyzed the information provided by the participants by noting their gender, visa status, education background, work experience, length of stay in Newcastle, and

job/s worked in Newcastle. I then used inductive analysis by coding the data without trying to fit it into pre-existing coding or theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This permitted me to tease out labor market experiences that appeared in the interview transcripts, like wrong names, strategies of looking for work in relation to non/citizenship rights and working in care. Thereafter I organized these codes to mirror participants' language and the conceptual framework outlined above (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This permitted me to formulate two interpretive frames to understand these themes; these are experiences of looking for work and experiences of finding work. Finally, I prepared the data for presentation as it appears below by re/scanning participants' responses for similarities, differences, exceptions, and contradictions.

5 | EXPERIENCES OF LOOKING FOR WORK

5.1 | Wrong names

Existing studies quantitatively hypothesize how racialized subjects experience looking for work in a competitive labor market and showcase that organizations use subtle practices to eliminate undesired workers (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Booth et al., 2010; Kaas & Manger, 2011). Below, I qualitatively demonstrate how the racialized subject experiences this process of elimination from their perspective by discussing how some young people attributed their names as determining factors of whether they would get invited for a job interview or not. This permits me to illuminate how names get attached to bodies, which are then deemed suitable or not for specific kinds of work.

Some of the young people interviewed reported that when they started looking for work, they expected to work in modest roles attuned with their migration status, qualifications, and experiences. However, once they started looking for work, they realized that certain jobs were not available to them because they did not embody the right attributes for these jobs. This was demonstrated through the way they attributed their African-sounding name listed on their résumés as a determining factor in the way organizations did not consider hiring them. An example of this was Abul, a participant who migrated to Australia when he was 7 years old, who reported that:

White people are so dodgy when it comes to giving work to people of other races, especially Africans. Like I did my RSA,¹ like to work in places like this [Bar where the interview was being conducted], you need certification so that they know you know how to serve. But from my experience, even after getting that certificate and showing it to them, they still didn't hire me. They told me that they will put me on a waiting list and that if a spot becomes available, they will give it to me. They put my name on that waiting list next to White Australian names. I just knew that I won't get that job with my Sudanese name. Man, the way it works here is if they can't say your name properly, you are definitely not Australian. For me, I feel like we don't get jobs because of our names. When they look at the names, they automatically know this one is not one of us (Abul).

Irrespective of the fact that Abul has full citizenship rights, completed all of his schooling in Australia, had adopted Australian linguistic norms, and completed the necessary certification required to carry out the job, his Sudanese name constructed him as an outsider, and employers used it to disqualify him as their desired candidate. Abul's experience demonstrates the way that labor market engagement becomes a racializing process for these young people. The act of writing his name next to "White names" on the waiting list demonstrates how impressions (names as White, Black, African, Australian, and so on) surface as racialized bodies (Ahmed, 2004). This experience reinforces existing distinctions between Black and White job seekers and, for Abul, contributes to the formation of a racialized subjectivity. That is, it reinforces a sense of self in which his Black African identity plays a central role in how he navigates the labor market. This notion supports previous work, which has found that jobs like the one Abul is searching for are advertised informally (Threadgold et al., 2021). That is workers get these jobs through introductions

and by positioning themselves as the right worker to employers. This involves having the right look, which goes with the brand of the venue. Consequently, *résumés* or hospitality training are irrelevant to getting a job in this industry (Threadgold et al., 2021). Migrant Black African youths experiences demonstrate that, while hiring practices like listing names on a waiting appear as open and equitable, they are not as the playing field is not leveled for them. Since migrant Black African youth compete for work under unequal conditions, these hiring practices ensure that the racial distribution of labor continues while presenting the hiring process as equal and just.

The following quote from Patricia is in line with Abul's assertion that employers use job applicants' names listed on their *résumé* to assess the applicant's suitability to work in these types of roles. Patricia stated that she thought a prospective employer invited her to job interviews only because she had a White Australian-sounding name. When asked why she thought this was the case, Patricia stated:

Once I go for the interview and they see that I am Black, then I wouldn't get any call-backs. For example, there was this time I remember I went for a hostess job interview at the cinema in the shopping mall. It was a group interview, and I was the only Black girl there. The rest of the people were blonde-haired with blue eyes. You know they were kids; some of them said they were still in high school; I thought I would get the job but, after the interview, I did not get any call back. I remember I went home and cried to my sister, and my sister said I was lucky that I at least went for an interview, and she told me that these jobs where you must serve people are for the blonde-haired, blue-eyed Australians (Patricia).

Patricia does not have previous work experience or qualifications to work in this industry and is in Australia on a student visa with limited working rights. As such, she searched for jobs in the low-end service sector that required little or no skill; that is, jobs that are embodied in their nature and where young White women are the preferred workers, as described in previous works (see: Farrugia et al., 2018; Kalemba, 2021; McDowell, 2009). The fact that Patricia's White, feminine-sounding name gets her an interview indicates that, on paper, she is seen as qualified to do this type of work. In other words, her name provides impressions about her gendered and racialized bodily attributes, which, in her view, is the reason she is invited to the group interview. Her encounter at the group interview speaks to how race and gender determine how racialized subjects occupy and shape the physical and social spaces they move in (Ahmed, 2004). That is how the racialized body materializes by being related to and separated from White bodily others. This process takes place in a way that shows that difference is not found on the skin or body but is established as a relation between bodies. This highlights that racialized bodies carry impressions (like names) of the differences (Swan & Flowers, 2018) that surface on their bodies in their encounters with non-Black others (Ahmed, 2004). This process of constructing Black African youth as undesirable workers for visible jobs in the labor market privileges Whiteness by ensuring that these jobs are not accessible to Black African youth. Employers deploy subtle institutional practices, like screening out the wrong type of workers using names listed on the job applicants' *résumés*. In relation to bodywork, this means that Black Africans are denied chances to work in visible jobs and ensures that White people dominate visible work as it is more public (Duffy, 2005). Therefore, in this situation, White people have an invested interest in perpetuating these hierarchical distinctions in the way work is distributed (Wolkowitz, 2002). The question then begs, what types of jobs are available to Black African youth in this labor market? This is the topic of discussion in the following section.

6 | EXPERIENCES OF FINDING WORK

6.1 | Finding work as a temporary resident

Below I explore how temporary migrants' restrictions connected to immigration policies function as a disciplinary tool that forces Black African youth into precarious jobs in the service economy—jobs that are reserved for people who

are prone to being exploited. Migrant Black African youth in Australia as temporary residents are an example here because of the conditions of their outsider status as racialized migrants. Migrants help one another to secure these jobs and, in doing so, assume labor market functions by recruiting, training, and socializing their peers into these jobs (Sassen, 1996). Four participants on a temporary visa reported using this strategy to find work. Below, Patricia explains how this process took place:

After my experience of receiving [many] rejections, I asked a friend for help; he said he would talk to his boss at the butchery he was working in. Before I knew it, I was invited for what I thought was an interview but turned out to be training. I was “trained” [for] two full days without pay. I knew it wasn't right, but I kept on going because I just thought it was better than sitting at home doing nothing. Then we started getting paid \$12 per hour; it didn't matter whether it was Sunday or Monday; that rate was [the] standard rate for coming to work.² The owner told us that this was fine because we were not paying any tax (Patricia).

The local population with access to welfare services might reject these jobs because they are exploitative (Wills et al., 2010). However, as Patricia explained, she had no choice but to do this job because she had limited options as far as working was concerned. Patricia's story is consistent with Nyland et al.'s (2009) view that international student-workers are susceptible to being exploited in the manner that Patricia is because they lack local kin support and cultural knowledge. Furthermore, because they do not have support systems offered to permanent residents and Australian citizens, they do not have bargaining power. Consequently, they work jobs that deliver critical services to the city but are socio-legally hidden (Hatton, 2017). Patricia's experience shows how racism and temporary visa status, intersect to mediate her experiences of looking for and finding work. It demonstrates how racism maintains and reinforces employment practices which dictate access to opportunities for migrant Black African youth like Patricia on Newcastle's deindustrializing labor market.

Obasanjo, a 30-year-old male participant, migrated to Newcastle from Nigeria as an international student to pursue his postgraduate studies in finance. Prior to moving to Newcastle, Obasanjo worked as an accountant in Nigeria. Obasanjo used savings from his accountant job to fund his move to Newcastle. Once in Australia, Obasanjo's savings were being depleted, so he needed to work. Due to work restrictions attached to his student visa, Obasanjo searched for work closely aligned with his profession as a “bank teller, bookkeeper or in data capturing” but was unsuccessful. Below, Obasanjo provides his account of searching for work in Newcastle:

My friend helped me get a job at his workplace as a cleaner. We worked at the cinemas as cleaners; you see, the job was shit because I got paid \$13.00 per hour, we only got paid for 3 h of work. Although most of the time we worked for more than 3 h, the guy didn't care; he only paid us for 3 h of work. I worked Sunday to Sunday to make enough money. At the time, I needed the job so that I could do an aged care certificate (Obasanjo).

According to the Australian Fair Work Ombudsman (n.d.), the Australian national minimum wage is A\$19.49 per hour. In addition, employees not employed permanently, as was Obasanjo in his cleaning job, are entitled to 25% casual loading. Therefore, this cleaning job is, in Hatton's (2017) terms, socio-legally hidden: as a worker, Obasanjo is not covered by Australian labor laws, a situation that makes the work he does economically devalued. Cleaning is described in the literature as a “dirty job,” meaning it is socially tainted because the worker is required to have a servile attitude to others (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Obasanjo's purpose for engaging in this labor was so that he could afford to pay for his certificate course, which would permit him to work in aged care. This concurs with a study that found that Africans with existing expertise who experience challenges securing jobs that matched their skills, education, abilities, and expectations expressed a willingness and readiness to take any opportunities to work (Mwanri et al., 2021). This speaks to Ahmed's (2010, p. 215) observation that when racialized bodies are moved,

affected, “twisted and turned,” they learn to develop an ethical orientation in how they exist as racialized subjects. In relation to Obasanjo, through his experience of not being able to secure work he expected to work in, he learned that if he wants to secure work in this labor market, he should aspire to work in jobs or industries that hire people like him—like aged care. Therefore, it can reasonably be concluded that Obasanjo's racialized migrant identity contributes to positioning him as a consumer of the educational sector and as an invisible worker doing labor that is illegal, poorly remunerated, and below his skill level.

6.2 | Finding work with full citizenship rights

As discussed earlier, different residency statuses have different working rights. Young people with full citizenship rights, for instance, have access to Australia's welfare support services, which assists them in finding work in instances when they are unable to secure work by themselves. Three young people I interviewed who had full citizenship rights reported using these services to find work. Below, Abul explains the strategy he used to find work:

Because I couldn't find anything by myself, I went to an agency which helps people find work, and they assisted me to get a job as a laborer, with this job ... you don't like, need a qualification because you use your hands and the job is very tough and physical ... We work around the clock ... I had no choice but to take it because it was what [was] available to me at that time ... it's not something I see myself doing for the rest of my life (Abul).

This job is considered unskilled labor. Furthermore, without the assistance of the welfare support services, Abul could not have found this job. Although they assisted him with finding a job, the work they found for him was not what he expected to work in, but because he wanted to work, he had no choice but to accept this job.

Glenda, a female participant who also made use of social services to find work, had the following to say about the work they “sent” her to do:

First, they sent me to work as a casual traffic control officer, this job I used to work at night, and it was always far from where I stayed. I have a child, so sometimes I couldn't go to work because I didn't have someone to look after her, so they stopped calling me to come and work after a month or so of doing the job (Glenda).

Above, Glenda describes the jobs she was “sent” to do, meaning she would not have done this job had she not been sent to do it. This illustrates the marginal position Black African youth—despite having full citizenship rights—occupy in this labor market because without the help of welfare support services, these young people would be unemployed. In relation to racialization, it can be argued that these young people experience mis-interpellation as conceptualized by Hage (2011), referring to the process of “foreclosure of identification” (p. 125) as a racialized subject. This means that the racialized subject thinks they have qualified to be accepted into the dominant culture and they are no longer racialized, so they try to take up a normal, universal, non-racialized subject positioning. When they do so, however, racializing logics at play remind them that they are simply racialized subjects and society has a specific role for them. Above, mis-interpellation occurs when Black African youth try to use their citizenship rights to gain employment on their own and, for whatever reason, are unsuccessful, they then resort to making use of social welfare support services, which place them in very specific positions in the labor market not congruent with their expectations (Krivonos, 2019; McDowell et al., 2016). This process of mis-interpellation results in social desegregation for the racialized subject, meaning they become conscious of their racialized position in debilitating ways (Hage, 2011). In the above, this is clear in how interviewees argued that they got these jobs because others did not want them.

6.3 | Working in care

Not all young people who migrated to Australia as permanent residents made use of social welfare support services to find employment. Some, like Jennifer, a 22 year-old female participant who migrated to Australia when she was 14 years old, drew on advice from her networks about doing a certificate in aged care because the care industry was easy for people like her to get into:

After school, I knew I needed to work so a family friend told me that I should do an aged care course. I did one and got a job during placement (Alison).

Out of the 20 young people I interviewed for this project, only five did not work in the care sector. Out of these five, two were temporary residents on a student visa, and the remaining three were permanent residents. One young person from this group of three, Abul, was planning to enroll in a vocational course that would enable him to work in the care sector as a youth worker. This speaks to how it is known within the African community that the care industry is much more accepting of them than other industries like those highlighted in the previous section. This acceptance can be attributed to the fact that caring jobs in the western context are historically and culturally undervalued. The local population finds this work unattractive because it is historically and culturally associated with women whose work is undervalued and hidden (Dyer et al., 2008; Simpson & Lewis, 2005). To fill shortages in the care industry, employers recruit migrants who become suited workers for these jobs because of their outsider status (Huang et al., 2012). Thus, scholars argue that employer demand for flexible workers and state regulations contribute to situating migrants at the bottom end of polarized labor markets as unskilled workers, creating a "migrant division of labor" (May et al., 2007). It has been shown in this paper that there are other power relations like racialization in which this division takes place. Thus, it is not merely that there is a migrant division of labor due to the demand of flexible workers and state regulations, but that this division is also entangled in power relations built on race.

Due to deindustrialization, the city of Newcastle's main economic activity has shifted from an industrial-to a service-based economy, and industries like the health and education services have joined the city's main employers for Newcastle's working population (Newcastle City Council, 2016a). To sustain their growth, these industries require the mobility of people, capital, objects, knowledge, and labor (Urry, 2012). These mobilities to the city from over the world play a critical role in the daily functioning of a de-industrializing city (Amin, 2011). Newcastle benefits from the labor market position of migrant Black African youth economically when they become consumers of these services, like the education sector, while working in low-end service-sector jobs in the care industry. This is evident in the extract below:

Most of my friends worked in aged care, and they told me that if I did the certificate, then I would get a job during placement. That was when I decided to enroll for night classes in aged care. But because it was expensive, I decided to defer one of my courses at uni; I then took the fees for the uni course and enrolled at a college for an aged care certificate (Beatrice).

Beatrice stated that she did not mind using the money her parents sent for her university tuition fees to pay for the aged care course because she was told by her peers working in the industry that she would definitely get work after completing this course. Beatrice explained that after completing the course and getting a job, she planned to re-enroll for the university course, which she de-enrolled to pay for the aged care course. When asked why it was important for her to get a job if her parents were able to pay her fees, she explained that "I wanted to work so that I could pay for my own fees."

Many young people who worked in the care industry explained that they became aware that this industry had a lot of work for them through their personal networks. Young people explained that their peers offered them strategies of getting work in this industry, like where to do their care certification and which agencies to approach after they

received their certification that have good connections with the African community. For example, while conducting fieldwork, I was invited to Independence Day celebrations hosted by the Nigerian community in Newcastle. At the event, the organizers had arranged for a representative from an aged care agency based in the city to be a guest speaker. The representative announced that they donated some funds to the association and used the opportunity to encourage attendees to apply for jobs as aged carers at their agency. I was therefore not surprised when Beatrice reported that she thinks she is guaranteed a job that will pay her well enough to fund her studies. As the number of Black Africans in Newcastle increases, people like Beatrice who have passed through the system and established ties with industries like the aged care industry, relay their experiences onto newcomers. Therefore, the agency will have a reserve of labor to tap into.

Migrant Black African youth thus also contribute to the functioning of the growing Australian educational sector of the economy—as consumers and as workers. For example, international students enroll for aged care courses in some cases while simultaneously enrolled as university students. By cross-studying between universities and Vocational Education Training colleges, they contribute to the education sector, which the Newcastle City Council (2016a) describes as one of the biggest employers in the city. This is followed by the health sector, the industry where participants work after completing their certificates. In doing so, they play a critical role in economic transformations taking place in the city as part of deindustrialization, being low-level workers and consumers of the educational sector.

Young people like Jade expressed their views as to why they thought work in the care industry is readily available to people like herself. Jade describes the range of tasks she is required to complete as an aged care worker:

So our job as support workers is to assist elderly people with day-to-day tasks from waking them up, bathing, feeding, or toileting them. We also do some aspects of nursing like giving them their medications; these people are too old, they can't really do these things on their own (Jade).

The description of this work provided by Jade suggests that the role involves working with stigmatized people in society and working with the body in its unbounded form or unbounded parts of the body (Wolkowitz, 2002). For example, Jade described how she helps clients with toileting or cleaning their homes. According to Hatton (2017), this type of work is socio-culturally devalued because hegemonic cultural ideologies construct it as unskilled labor. This process naturalizes the workers' bodily skills like bathing or toileting their clients (Hatton, 2017). Furthermore, this type of work is devalued because the worker performs their labor in the domestic sphere, or the worker does not have a fixed worksite. This is illustrated in Abigail's account of her job description when she stated that in addition to "cleaning her client's homes, part of her job includes taking clients to appointments." Since the worker does not have a fixed worksite, this work is socio-spatially hidden as it is carried out in spaces that society does not regard as spaces where "real" work takes place (Hatton, 2017, p. 343). These spaces include the client's home. Wolkowitz (2002) posits that workers become attached with the stigma or stereotypes society attaches to their job. Therefore, their racialized migrant social status positions them as outsiders, and this outsider status is re-articulated in the low-status and hidden work they do. Although this work is devalued, their labor market position is important because they provide critical services that lessen the burden of caring for the old, sick, aged, or those with a disability for the local population. Their positioning as a precarious labor force re-articulates the continuation of long-standing inequalities in the global organization of labor.

7 | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: THE COLONIALITY OF LABOR IN MIGRANT BLACK AFRICAN YOUTHS' EXPERIENCES OF LOOKING FOR AND FINDING WORK

In this section, I conclude the paper by offering a reading of the findings on migrant Black African youths' experiences of looking for and finding work in deindustrializing Newcastle's labor market through the analytic coloniality. To understand coloniality it is crucial to describe the coloniality of power, which is a concept that refers to a societal

system of exploitation by associating value with race (Quijano, 2000). It describes how Spanish and Portuguese colonialization of the Americas in the 16th century established a laboring system where White labor was considered productive and superior, and the labor of enslaved populations was considered inferior and exploitable. Here, an ambiguous situation unfolded wherein, although the colonized were positioned as cheap labor, they became useful objects/commodities for colonizers' economic gain. This process articulated a new form of domination and exploitation that made it seem like race and labor were naturally associated. Coloniality refers to how colonialism is an ongoing project, which dictates contemporary economic, political, cultural, and social relations (Quijano, 2000). In relation to labor, coloniality is articulated in the way gendered, classed, and racialized subjects are positioned as objects of subordination to the global organization of work (limki, 2018). Coloniality is crucial for accounting for the historical development of Whiteness and how Whiteness is currently articulated in the global organization of labor through processes like migration.

When the findings of this paper are read through the analytic coloniality they demonstrate that processes like deindustrialization have, for these young people, produced very specific laboring experiences like the coloniality of labor, which are tied to their social positioning as racialized subjects. The coloniality of labor here refers to how these young people do not merely serve as cheap labor or the workforce responsible for working in unwanted jobs, but how they also simultaneously become consumers for emerging welfare support and education service-sector industries in the process (Kalemba & Farrugia, 2021).

The coloniality of labor is articulated in how their racial identity determined how they were unable to break into front-of-house service jobs in Newcastle's labor market. This is showcased in how migrant Black African youths' racialized bodies carried impressions of differences that surfaced on their bodies in their encounters with non-Black others (Ahmed, 2004) when searching for work. This illuminated how names get attached to bodies, which are then deemed suitable or not for specific kinds of work. With this, I have contributed toward an understanding of racialized subjects' experiences looking for work in competitive labor markets (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Booth et al., 2010; Kaas & Manger, 2011). Focusing on migrant Black African youths' experiences has permitted me to make visible the subtle practices organizations use to eliminate racialized subjects as desired candidates from the perspective of the racialized job seeker. Existing literature on White youth experiences of finding work in the service economy of deindustrializing context like Newcastle, indicates that White youth get these jobs informally through their personal networks (Threadgold et al., 2021). In this paper I have shown how these hiring practices ensure that the racial distribution of labor continues, because they guarantee that migrant Black African youth compete for work under unequal conditions. This proves, further, how Whiteness comes to be preserved through coloniality; that is, even in low-end service jobs, young White job seekers are advantaged (McDowell et al., 2016). This illustrates a re-articulation of the colonial matrix of power (Quijano, 2000), which produces a logic of differentiation that reproduces social hierarchies, re-articulating a process of racialization in the global organization of labor.

In relation to finding work, I have shown how the coloniality of labor is articulated in the different strategies migrant Black African youth used to find work. I showed that the strategies for finding work differed according to the young person's residency status. For instance, international students rely on their personal networks to secure work and end up in jobs that are legally hidden (Hatton, 2017). The young people who work in these jobs are skilled and qualified to work in jobs, which are visible in the service economy, but logics of racialization and differentiation construct them as unsuitable for this type of labor. This situation orients migrant Black African youth toward enrolling in vocational courses, which are necessary for gaining work hidden from the public like in the care sector—an industry that participants (irrespective of their residency status) described as being accepting of people like them. I showed how some permanent residents used their citizenship rights to seek assistance from welfare support services to gain employment. Irrespective of the different strategies these young people used, they ultimately ended up doing work that they described as “work that others do not wish to do.” This work involves servicing the bodily needs of others (Wolkowitz, 2002). This discussion has shown that their labor market position is not merely a result of the demand of flexible workers and state regulations as described by May and colleagues, but that this division is also entangled in power relations built on race (May et al., 2007). I made this contribution by focusing on migrant Black African youth's

experiences of finding work, which showcased how the naturalization of certain bodies as “fit” for certain kinds of work as well as how hidden aspects of the labor reproduce degradation in Newcastle’s labor market.

Overall, when these results are read through the analytic coloniality they make visible how the positioning of migrants as an exploited labor force re-articulates the coloniality of labor; that is, it illustrates the ambivalence that takes place when racialized migrants are constructed as undesired workers for certain jobs in the service economy. The coloniality of labor refers to how after being constructed as such, racialized migrants are positioned as suitable workers for hidden jobs at the bottom end of this labor market. This demonstrates the ambivalence present when, after being constructed as suitable workers for undervalued and degraded jobs at the bottom end of the labor market, migrant Black African youths’ labor market positioning is important for the functioning of Newcastle as a deindustrializing city.

In conclusion owing to the small sample of this study, the findings presented above are not generalizable to other social settings like Newcastle. However, this small sample has permitted the paper to engage with the data more deeply. This has permitted me to make visible the different ways in which the coloniality of labor is articulated in migrant Black African youth experiences of looking for and finding work in deindustrializing Newcastle. This demonstrates the need for further research on the topic. Although beyond the scope of this paper, future studies can explore racialized migrants’ experiences of interacting with their White colleagues in the workplace. This research can provide important knowledge on how race shapes racialized migrants workplace interactions with their White colleagues at a micro interpersonal level.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The New South Wales Government (n.d. n.p) describes RSA as “competency training in the Responsible Service of Alcohol for people who want to work in a licensed premise that sell alcohol”.
- 2 The \$12 rate is below the national Australian set minimum wage.

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