

UCL Centre on US Politics
Working Paper Series in American Politics



**UCL CENTRE
ON US POLITICS**

Working Paper No. 2023-2

Dilemmas of Accommodation:
Diverse Associations and the Avoidance of Difference

Jasmine English
(MIT)

jenglish@mit.edu

CUSP Working Papers have not undergone formal peer review and are made publicly available to encourage feedback before formal publication.

Copyright belongs to the author(s).

**Dilemmas of Accommodation:
Diverse Associations and the Avoidance of Difference¹**

Jasmine English²

May 15, 2023

Abstract

This article proposes that racially diverse associations are caught in a predicament. A key democratic contribution of these associations depends on their ability to facilitate discussions that teach us how racial issues affect others, and that encourage collective problem-solving across racial difference. In the presence of deep racial divisions, however, these activities are potentially fatal for associational harmony. I refer to these choices between harmony and racial tension as *dilemmas of accommodation*, and I argue that associations tend to deal with these dilemmas by developing understandings of “how we do things here” (“styles”) that involve the avoidance of racial issues. These styles undermine the deliberative and political value of racial diversity because they provide paths out of deliberation and political action about race. I develop these arguments inductively with case studies of two racially diverse churches in Boston. These case studies draw on thirteen months of ethnographic and interview-based fieldwork in America’s most prevalent association.

¹ This research was funded by an APSA/NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant.

² PhD Candidate in Political Science, MIT (jenglish@mit.edu)

Introduction

Sarah is a longtime member of Fairview Community Church in Boston.³ She regularly attends Black Lives Matter demonstrations, and says that she, a white woman, is engaged in “a constant process of learning about race and privilege.” Many of her fellow white and non-white churchgoers attend similar demonstrations and protests. Several participate in activism and organizing with communities of color in Boston. The vast majority of these churchgoers are liberal, and most appear excited about interracial interactions and networks, at least based on their continued commitment to a racially diverse church. Given this information, we might expect Fairview to foster deliberation and political action on issues related to race. During my fieldwork in Fairview, however, deliberation and political action on racial issues never occurred. In almost any church service or gathering, the discussion *could* have widened out to broader racial issues and solutions, but these kinds of involvements never materialized.

Moreover, this puzzle is not unique to Fairview. In March 2021, I started observing and conducting interviews in 72 churches of varying racial compositions in Boston. A striking picture emerged in the racially diverse churches. These churches were home to churchgoers who might have used church meetings and gatherings to reflect on their race-related involvements or to wonder aloud about racial issues. These churchgoers might have used these diverse gatherings to plan racial justice actions and demonstrations of the kind pursued by many churches. During the time I spent in these churches, however, this kind of engagement with racial issues did not take place. Why, given the personal and political commitments of these diverse churchgoers, did deliberation and political action

³ I use pseudonyms for all churches and participants. “Fairview” has 60 regular members: 21 are white and non-Hispanic, 15 are black or African-American, 14 are Hispanic or Latino, and 10 are Asian. The pastor is white, and the other staff are African-American (2) and Hispanic (1).

about race never occur? More broadly, what can this puzzle teach us about the possibility of deliberation and action on racial issues in the presence of deep racial divisions?

This article addresses these questions, drawing on thirteen months of ethnographic and interview-based fieldwork in churches that I conducted between March 2021 and April 2022. During this time, I attended 72 churches in Boston and was an active and regular participant in four churches: two racially diverse churches, a predominantly white church, and a predominantly African-American church. In these four churches, I attended worship services, leadership and staff meetings, fellowship activities, and social gatherings and took detailed field notes on front and backstage behaviors and meanings. I conducted interviews with pastors, churchgoers, men, women, newcomers, old-timers, members of different races and ethnicities, and members with and without leadership roles. I collected a variety of archival materials alongside these data, including church records (e.g., meeting agendas, subgroup reports, expenditures), event flyers, announcements, letters to the congregation, church e-mail threads, interactions on social media, and newspaper articles about church activities.

This fieldwork highlighted the challenges that *racial diversity* presents for deliberation and political action on racial issues. In this article, I draw inductively on these data to develop three claims about racially diverse associations in contexts with deep racial divisions.⁴ First, I argue that racial diversity forces associational members to repeatedly choose between harmony and racial tension. Second, I argue that these choices lead members toward understandings of “how we do things here” (what I term, “styles”) that maintain harmony through the avoidance of issues related to race. Finally,

⁴ These arguments are geared toward racial divisions in the United States but have nothing to do with race as such. The theory could apply to any context in which different social groups have different experiences of the social context, whether the relevant division is race, ethnicity, religion, class, or caste. I will return to the scope conditions when I introduce the data and empirical approach.

I argue that these styles undermine the deliberative and political value of racial diversity because they provide paths out of deliberation and political action on racial issues. This outcome is troubling because it suggests that *diverse* associations—i.e., those that could facilitate deliberation and political action about race—are unlikely to deliver on this potential.

This article makes five main contributions. First, it offers a revised picture of the democratic effects of associations in diverse societies (Tocqueville [1835] 1969; Fung 2003; Putnam 2000; Skocpol 2003), and suggests that associations are unlikely to harness the deliberative and political value of diversity without resisting the pull toward avoiding racial issues. Second, the article highlights the limits of the contact hypothesis (Allport 1954; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006) by showing how contact can lead to the avoidance of deliberation and political action on racial issues. My findings suggest that contact may be more effective in producing some outcomes (reducing prejudice) than others (fostering deliberation and action that draws on the understandings of different groups). My findings also suggest that experimental contact-based interventions may be failing to account for longer-term adaptations in group norms: do short-term impacts on prejudice and outgroup evaluations remain if diverse groups develop norms for avoiding their differences?

Third, the study presents a troubling companion to the tradeoff between deliberative and participatory democracy (Mutz 2006). According to Mutz, diverse political discussion networks provide exposure to multiple viewpoints but discourage political participation, due in part to the discomfort of conflict in social settings. This study shows how diversity can lead to the avoidance of different experiences and viewpoints altogether, and suggests that diverse networks might face a tradeoff between harmony versus deliberation *and* political action on issues related to difference (i.e.,

that diverse networks are unlikely to become diverse political discussion networks).⁵ Fourth, the study extends a mostly sociological literature on diverse churches by drawing out the deliberative and political costs of decisions to downplay racial conflict in worship and interactions (Edwards 2008; Edwards, Christerson, and Emerson 2013).⁶ Finally, alongside a growing body of research, the study aims to illustrate the value of inductive theory-building in the study of American political behavior (Cramer 2004; 2006; 2012; Nuamah 2021; Ternullo 2022; Weaver, Prowse, and Piston 2019).

Racial Diversity as a Deliberative and Political Resource in Associations

When political scientists talk about efforts to bridge lines of difference, what they generally have in mind are engagements across the partisan divide (Mutz 2006; Mutz and Mondak 2006; Matthes et al. 2019; Levendusky and Stecula 2021; Santoro and Broockman 2022). Yet there are plenty of reasons to think that deliberation and action across lines of racial difference are valuable outcomes for democracy. Insofar as racial groups occupy different social positions, they have different perspectives on those positions and their consequences (Young 1997, 2000). These different perspectives offer what Donna Haraway calls “situated knowledge,” or points of view held by social groups due to their

⁵ This point coheres with Mutz’s finding that diverse political discussion networks are rare in the American context. In addition, Mutz was dealing with partisan rather than racial diversity. By extending her framework to racial diversity, this study highlights the avoidance of racial issues as an important form of political avoidance (and one that can occur even among the politically like-minded).

⁶ Although once viewed as the nation’s most segregated institution, racial diversity is on the rise in congregations in the United States. Churches in which one racial group comprise less than 80 percent grew from 6 percent in 1998 to 16 percent in 2018–2019 (Dougherty, Chaves, and Emerson 2020).

position in relations of structural inequality (Haraway 1988). Because situated knowledges are partial with respect to the whole society, inclusive political action requires the perspectives of differently positioned groups (Young 1997, 2000; Bohman 1996). Racial diversity is a resource for inclusive deliberation and political action, then, if discussion and action draw on the understandings of different racial groups to situate partial perspectives in a wider context, teach us how racial issues affect others, and improve our ability to interpret events and problems from a range of group perspectives.

According to social epistemologists, this point is particularly important with respect to what privileged groups can learn from less privileged groups (Fricker 2007; Mills 2007; Anderson 2010). In the United States, for instance, black Americans tend to have fundamentally different experiences of the government than white Americans (Cohen 2010; Soss and Weaver 2017; Cohen and Luttig 2020). As a result, significant portions of the daily experiences of black Americans remain invisible to whites (Mills 2007; Anderson 2010, 44-50). Deliberation and action that draw on different racial perspectives, then, promise to not only generate more inclusive outcomes, but to also improve white Americans' understanding of the experiences of communities of color.

A long tradition of research in political science suggests that voluntary associations are well-positioned to harness these deliberative and political benefits of diversity in discussion and collective action. Running back to Tocqueville, this research emphasizes how associations can cultivate civic virtues, educate citizens, and create space for public deliberation (Putnam 2000; Fung 2003; Skocpol 2003).⁷ In so doing, associations replace narrow self-interest with an awareness of the needs of others, or “self-interest rightly understood” (Tocqueville [1835] 1969). Diverse associations, then, should be

⁷ On the mechanisms by which associations undergird deliberation and democratic engagement, see, e.g., Warren (2001), Cohen and Rogers (1995), Rosenblum (1998), Han (2014).

able mobilize racial diversity as a deliberative and political resource by pooling the situated knowledges of different races to generate more inclusive discussion and political action on racial issues.

Theory: Dilemmas of Accommodation in Diverse Associations

In this article, I argue that racial diversity presents challenges for deliberation and political action on racial issues in associations with deep racial divisions. I developed this argument inductively during my fieldwork. For clarity, this section distills the three steps of that argument.

First, I argue that racial diversity forces members of associations to repeatedly choose between harmony and racial tension. I develop several examples from churches in the empirical material (Would preaching about racial violence retraumatize our people of color? Would a cost-effective English survey spark discontent among non-native speakers?), but one can imagine similar choices in other diverse associations (Would a class on racial violence retraumatize students of color? Would workplace diversity initiative risk difficult conversations and compromise team spirit?).

Second, I argue that as members of diverse associations repeatedly face these choices, they gravitate toward understandings of “how we do things here” (“styles”) that privilege the maintenance of harmony. Styles, here, refer to patterns of interaction that arise from shared assumptions about good and appropriate group behavior (Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003).⁸ I refer to these repeated choices between harmony and racial tension as *dilemmas of accommodation*, and I argue that diverse

⁸ Eliasoph and Lichterman (2003, 739) identify three dimensions of group styles: assumptions about the group’s relationship to the world (“group boundaries”); assumptions about members’ mutual responsibilities (“group bonds”); and assumptions about appropriate speech in the group context (“speech norms”). I used these three dimensions to organize my observations during fieldwork.

associations tend to deal with these dilemmas by gravitating toward particular kinds of styles—namely, those that maintain harmony through the systematic avoidance of racial issues.

Finally, I argue that these styles undermine the deliberative and political value of racial diversity because they provide paths out of conversations and action on race—a valuable path, on some occasions, but a path that restricts the exchange of “situated knowledge” and the likelihood of inclusive political action on racial issues. This outcome offers a troubling picture because it suggests that diverse associations are unlikely to deliver on the democratic potential of their racial diversity.

Implications for Literature on Diversity and Contact

This theory engages several leading theories about diversity and contact in political science. First, the theory poses problems for the larger theoretical framework in which voluntary associations are deemed important for social integration in diverse societies (Tocqueville [1835] 1969; Warren 2001; Fung 2003; Putnam 2000; Skocpol 2003). According to this literature, associations should be promising avenues for deliberation and action that improve our ability to interpret problems from multiple perspectives and devise solutions that are responsive to different racial groups. My theory suggests that associations with deep racial divisions are unlikely to realize the deliberative and political value of diversity when diversity management involves the avoidance of racial issues.

Second, the theory casts new light on intergroup contact. A long literature proposes that contact across group lines can reduce intergroup prejudice (Allport 1954; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). This study, however, shows how contact can contribute to the avoidance of conversations and action about racial issues, despite frequent and positive intergroup contact. This point suggests that contact may be more effective in producing some outcomes (reducing prejudice) than others (fostering

deliberation and action that draws on the understandings of different groups).⁹ However, this point also suggests that experimental interventions may be failing to account for longer-term adaptations in group norms (Mousa 2020; Scacco and Warren 2018; Green and Wong 2009). Do short-term impacts on prejudice and outgroup evaluations remain if diverse groups develop norms for avoiding their differences? This insight coheres with recent experimental research that finds ambiguous long-term effects of contact (Asimovic, Dittmann, and Samii 2022). Finally, my theory suggests that contact is limited in its ability to change power relations and intergroup inequalities (Denis 2015). If privileged groups have more to learn about the experiences of less privileged groups (Fricker 2007; Mills 2007; Anderson 2010), then the avoidance of group-specific issues and problems allows the privileged to remain ignorant about the perspectives of differently positioned groups.

Third, my theory presents a more troubling companion to the tradeoff between deliberative and participatory democracy (Mutz 2002; Mutz 2006). According to Mutz, diverse political discussion networks foster tolerance and an awareness of multiple viewpoints but discourage political participation. Conflict avoidance explains the tradeoff: members of diverse networks retreat from participation because they do not want to put their social relationships at risk. In this study, however, I argue that these kinds of discomfort can lead members of diverse networks to avoid their different experiences and viewpoints altogether. This point suggests that before diverse networks become

⁹ This point also suggests a different mechanism for research on the “irony of harmony” in social psychology. According to this literature, intergroup contact can undermine collective action to remedy inequalities by creating the false impression of equality (Saguy et al. 2009). In this study, however, contact undermines this kind of collective action because groups gravitate toward the avoidance of divisive issues. This study thus shows how contact can undermine collective action to remedy inequalities even when members remain aware of the existence of intergroup inequalities.

diverse political discussion networks, their members face a tradeoff between harmony, on the one hand, and deliberation and political action on issues related to their differences, on the other. Insights from my fieldwork suggest that harmony is likely to win out—a point which coheres with Mutz’s finding that diverse political discussion networks are extremely rare in the American context. In addition, my theory extends Mutz’s framework from partisan to racial diversity. In so doing, I highlight the avoidance of *racial* issues as an important form of political avoidance (and importantly, one that can occur even among the politically like-minded).

Empirical Approach

Case Selection and Fieldwork

My arguments about racial diversity in associations draw from ethnographic and interview-based fieldwork in churches in Boston. I conducted this fieldwork between March 2021 and April 2022. During this time, I attended 72 churches and was an active and regular participant in four churches. I began this fieldwork by compiling a list of Christian churches in Boston using Google Maps and denominational locators. I proceeded to conduct observations and interviews in 72 diverse and homogenous churches from this list. This fieldwork was inductive in nature: although I was initially interested in how diverse churches approached political and collective action, this fieldwork revealed that diverse churches were particularly reluctant to engage with *racial* issues. I used this fieldwork to develop the building blocks of my argument: that diverse churches face pressures and that the avoidance of racial issues is a characteristic response to these pressures.

After this first round of fieldwork, I narrowed my sample to four churches to investigate this puzzle in more detail: two racially diverse churches, a predominantly white church, and a predominantly African-American church. I selected these churches for variation in denomination, neighborhood, and the income, education, and politics of churchgoers. I used this fieldwork to round

out my argument about how choices between harmony and racial tension contribute to styles of avoidance that undermine the deliberative and political value of diversity. This study draws on data from the two diverse churches to develop this theory in detail, although the argument was certainly informed by the other churches in my first and second rounds of fieldwork.¹⁰

Data Limitations

This is not a study of churches in Boston. Rather, this is a study of racial diversity and associations that is conducted in churches in Boston (Geertz 1973, 22; Cramer 2016, 21). My aim is to use these churches as a window into the implications of deep divisions in associations—to observe how people experience these divisions, and to grasp the political significance of their responses. It is by trying to make sense of these responses, I argue, that we uncover a dynamic that I suspect is present beyond churches: that members of racially diverse associations are pulled toward the avoidance of racial issues; that this avoidance constrains deliberation and political action about racial difference; and that something valuable can be lost in the process.

However, there are important limits to what we can learn from my fieldwork. The first issue is generalizability. My data focus only on a sample of churches in Boston and there may be features of churches that limit my ability to generalize to other associations. For instance, churches might place great value on harmony and be uniquely sensitive to the perceived risk of racial tensions. This may be particularly likely in urban contexts like Boston, where churchgoers have many viable alternatives in the event of discord. That said, the pressures of racial tension are not unique to churches, and the

¹⁰ See Appendix A for details about the churches, Appendix B for details about fieldwork and analysis, Appendix C for ethical considerations, and Appendix D for my interview guide. I discuss how the other churches from my fieldwork informed my theory development in Appendix B.

voluminous guidance literature on “race-talk” suggests that these pressures are commonplace in contexts like diverse schools and workplaces.¹¹

A related generalizability concern is that my theory might not apply to other time periods or to salient divisions other than race (e.g., sect or class). I conducted my fieldwork in the two years after the murder of George Floyd, and it is possible that the subsequent “racial reckoning” uniquely amplified the perceived risks of conversations about race. However, the avoidance of racial issues has long been documented in group settings in the United States (Eliasoph 1999; Bonilla-Silva 2010; Feagin 2010; McKinney 2005). Moreover, scholars have observed avoidance norms along other lines of division in other divided contexts: studies of Quebec, Northern Ireland, and settler-colonialism in Ontario, for instance, find that intergroup interactions often avoid divisive concerns to maintain harmony (Taylor, Dube, and Bellerose 1986; Trew 1986; Pettigrew 1998; Denis 2015).

A second limitation is that there are plausible alternative explanations for the deliberative and political involvements of the churches from my fieldwork. These explanations include the possibility that churchgoers have “self-selected” into churches that avoid racial issues, that these diverse groups lack the capacity for collective action, or that divisive issues of all kinds are taboo. I address each of these concerns with data from fieldwork, but no explanation can be categorically ruled out with observations from two churches.

Despite these limitations, these data retain important characteristics that make them suited to understanding the barriers to deliberation and action in the presence of racial deep divisions. This is because these data capture the *experience* of divisions—what actually goes on for people when they

¹¹ A brief search for best-sellers yields titles like “How to Have Difficult Conversations About Race: Practical Tools for Necessary Change in the Workplace and Beyond” (Christian 2022) and “What We Still Don’t Know About Teaching Race: How to Talk About it in the Classroom” (Hughes 2006).

encounter racial difference in their community, and what blocks the transition from merely encountering difference to engaging with difference in dialogue and action. For the task of inductively figuring out *why* people respond to diversity in certain ways, I found no better substitute than observing and listening—joining people in their churches and hearing how they themselves make sense of diversity and its demands.

Overview of Evidence

The sections that follow illustrate my argument with data from fieldwork in two racially diverse churches: Fairview Community Church and St. Joseph Parish. First, I describe the diversity of these churches, show that this diversity is exogenous to current political involvements, and use observations from fieldwork to characterize the choices between harmony and racial tension (i.e., the dilemmas of accommodation). Second, I show how members respond to these choices by gravitating toward understandings of “how we do things here” (“styles”) that guide behavior in church. These styles are illustrative (I do not expect all associations to develop these particular styles) but reveal *how* members of associations might gravitate toward the avoidance of racial issues. Third, I show how these styles undermine the deliberative and political potential of racial diversity in these churches. Finally, I address several alternative explanations and consider the broader theoretical significance of the case studies.

Evidence from Diverse Churches

Introducing Fairview and St. Joseph Parish

At 11am on Sunday morning, the pews of Fairview Community Church teem with churchgoers. To my front, a Hispanic man and two elderly white women exchange menu predictions for the church picnic. Four African-American women gather to my left and, from time to time, pause their conversation to welcome churchgoers. At 10 past the hour, Pastor Jennifer walks to the front of the

church. After several rounds of throat clearing, Jennifer is rewarded with the attention of her congregation. The opening African-American spiritual is helped along by a clap, courtesy of the Hispanic family on my right.

These scenes depict a typical Sunday at Fairview Community Church. Fairview is a non-denominational church that serves a range of races and ethnicities in Boston. Of the 60 regular members of Fairview, 21 are white and non-Hispanic, 15 are black or African-American, 14 are Hispanic or Latino, and 10 are Asian. The pastor is white, and the other staff are African-American (2) and Hispanic (1). This racial diversity stems from the 1990s, when the predominantly white congregation migrated to other suburbs and a consultant gave Fairview three options: shut down, move to the suburbs, or become diverse. Fairview chose the third option and hired a pastor with experience in multi-racial churches. We can understand Fairview's racial diversity, then, as a survival decision from a previous generation.

I first attended Fairview after the Asian spa shootings in Atlanta in March 2021. After the violence, Pastor Jennifer had opened her sermon with a prayer for the victims, and I wanted to press her on aspects of her approach (Why a prayer rather than call to action? Why not a sermon?). In a conversation after the service, Jennifer explained as follows: "I really wanted to talk about the violence, but I wanted to talk in a way that challenged our white people, but didn't re-traumatize our Asian-Americans and other people of color...That's the challenge with a multi-racial congregation...I want to give people a space where they can get away from all that." Here, we learn that Pastor Jennifer struggles to address racism and racial violence in a way that meets the needs of all churchgoers. We learn that she avoids calls to action despite her desire to challenge white churchgoers.

St. Joseph Parish offers another window into the pressures of racial diversity in church. St. Joseph is a Catholic church with a massive structure in the Romanesque style, with semicircular windows, decorative arches, and a large tower. On my first visit to the church food pantry, Fiona (the

pantry organizer) introduced me to the priest (Father Murphy), her husband (Bobby), four Vietnamese women, a young Hispanic couple, and seven white churchgoers. Four of the seven are Irish, and after some discussion of the distance between their ancestral hometowns (in the south) and my own (in the north), Fiona welcomed me to their “very own league of nations.” This league of nations mirrors the congregation: St. Joseph’s 47 regular churchgoers are white (18), Hispanic (14), and Vietnamese (15). The priest is white, the deacon is Hispanic, and the other staff are white (2) and Hispanic (1).¹²

St. Joseph was established in the 19th century and served an Irish congregation for most of the 20th. This composition changed after the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. Faced with legal expenses and declining attendance, the Archdiocese closed and merged several parishes in the early 2000s. After St. Joseph incorporated the nearby St. Paul, the local Catholic populations were Vietnamese, Hispanic, and white. In a conversation about this diversity, the parish sister (Sister Frances) offered the following reflection:

I’m still finding my way around the different cultures...When I first got here, one of our Vietnamese women wanted to put flowers up for the Lunar New Year. Well, I was on my way to buy flowers and I suddenly thought I better check the type of flowers. So, I call and she’s bringing two types, one for the north and one for the south. And there I am nearly buying the wrong flowers because I didn’t know the culture.

After listing the various symbols of the Lunar New Year, Sister Frances remarked that, “It’s important that us clergy know this stuff. How can we provide genuine care if we don’t understand their world?” Here, we learn that Frances chooses to provide “genuine care” despite the required

¹² The priest is nearing retirement. The Hispanic deacon gives most sermons and oversees day-to-day decisions about worship and church activities.

investment in an unfamiliar culture. We learn that Frances made this investment to reduce the risk of neglecting her Vietnamese churchgoers.

These examples offer windows into Fairview and St. Joseph. However, we can also use these examples to characterize the dilemmas of accommodation in associations with deep racial divisions. Notice, in particular, how racial diversity presents choices between harmony and racial tension. In Fairview, Pastor Jennifer chose a prayer for victims over a sermon that might upset or retraumatize her people of color. In more general terms, this is a choice between harmony and the risk of fallout among non-white members. In St. Joseph, Sister Frances invested in new cultural rituals to avoid discontent among her Vietnamese churchgoers. Again, in more general terms, this is a choice between harmony and discontent among a racial subgroup.¹³ The conclusion to draw from these examples is that racial diversity generates choices between harmony and racial tension. The account that follows links these dilemmas to understandings of “how we do things here” (“styles”), and styles to the truncation of the deliberative and political value of diversity in associations.

From Diversity to “Style” in Fairview

One Sunday in April, Fairview’s Pastor Jennifer ended the sermon with the following message

This week, I got stuck in the weeds of Christian social media. I was hurt by what I saw. We are so quick to tell each other who belongs and who doesn’t belong. We are so quick to tell each other who is inside the line and who is outside the line. We are so quick to write off someone’s humanity if they don’t think like we do. And all this from

¹³ These choices do not only involve discontent among people of color: consider St. Joseph’s quickly reversed decision to abandon the St. Patrick’s Day parade as an example of the choice between harmony and discontent among Irish churchgoers.

both “progressive” and “conservative” Christians! This, Fairview, is where we are going wrong. We are told that if we don’t believe the way the group does, then there is no room for us. We must grow out of this stubbornness.

Here, Jennifer uses conflict on Christian social media to remind churchgoers to rise above disagreements (to “grow out of this stubbornness”). Jennifer enjoins churchgoers to look beyond their differences and creates a space in which difference can be cast aside. Efrem, a longtime member, offered a similar account of Fairview: “Our approach is very much like, ‘God loves you...Leave all that other stuff at the door’...It’s a diverse place, but we don’t get hung up on that other baggage.”

Together, these accounts reveal the “style” of Fairview. Life in Fairview consists in the *deflection* of attention away from racial difference—away, as Efrem put it, from “that other baggage.” Fairview provides refuge from division and brings churchgoers together to focus on their faith. This style (deflection) represents an understanding of “how we do things here” that ties together the activities of the church. By minimizing the significance of race, Fairview avoids the prioritization of some racial groups over others and steers clear of difficult conversations about the experience of race and privilege. This style helps Fairview navigate the pressures of racial diversity—quickly, consistently, and in a manner of its own.

How did the pressures of diversity produce this style? A conversation with Pastor Jennifer offered a window into the evolution of deflection in Fairview. In that conversation, we talked about several of the “low points” in her ministry journey. This account of Jennifer’s description of a low point draws on fieldnotes written after the conversation:

Have you heard of Oxfam hunger events? Well, when you arrive at the dinner, everyone gets a little tag. And, say, two people get a full dinner, five people get meat and rice, fifty people just rice, and everybody else gets nothing. It’s supposed to be representative of how food is distributed in the world. It’s a lesson on inequality. Anyway, I tried it

out at Easter and people got really angry. Some were like, “But where’s the food?” Other people tried to explain the message about inequality, and that didn’t go down well.

Jennifer paused, and then continued:

At the time, I was thinking, “Why are people getting so mad about this?” But later, I reflected and realized that some of our members really don’t need a lesson on inequality. Several of our members from [a poor and black neighborhood in Boston] bring their kids to church events for a decent meal. They were mad because they didn’t need a lesson on division and inequality. I wish I’d thought of that before hosting the dinner. We don’t need to rehash the divisions. I remind myself of that all the time.

From this account, we learn that Jennifer tried to facilitate a conversation about inequality in a racially diverse congregation, and that her efforts prompted anger among churchgoers whose different class (and in this context, racial) backgrounds shaped their experience of the dinner. Notice, first, how this episode represents a choice between racial tension and harmony: here, Jennifer chose between a dinner with or without difficult conversations about race and inequality. Notice also how the fallout from Jennifer’s choice set Fairview on the path toward its style by reminding Jennifer that they “don’t need to rehash the divisions.” This commitment is the essence of deflection.¹⁴

¹⁴ It is possible that Jennifer felt these pressures more acutely as a white pastor. However, I found that pastors of color faced similar pressures during my fieldwork. For instance, one black pastor shared that he had been fired from a previous diverse church for “speaking too much about Black Lives Matter” and now chose to stay away from racially-charged issues in church. Churchgoers of color referenced similar pressures in conversations and interviews. For instance, when I asked why race was

Importantly, this “triggering event” did not singlehandedly produce this style.¹⁵ Rather, this event is representative of episodes that regularly occur in Fairview. These episodes are internalized by participants (Jennifer reminds herself of the dinner “all the time”), and are shared with churchgoers as rationale for behavior and decisions that align with the style of the church. Together, these episodes impart lessons that cumulate over time and give to Fairview a coherent and distinctive style (“deflection”).¹⁶

From Diversity to “Style” in St. Joseph Parish

The “two-names, two-needs” policy encapsulates the distinctive style of St. Joseph Parish. Every Sunday, the clergy learn or practice the names of two churchgoers of different races and listen to their concerns. “Two-names, two-needs” ensures that all groups feel valued and heard. This logic informs life at St. Joseph: the church holds regular trilingual services; a quota guarantees white, Vietnamese,

so rarely brought up in Fairview, one black churchgoer told me that she “didn’t want to shake anything up” and another did not want to “offend anyone.”

¹⁵ I borrow the term “triggering event” from Fine’s (1979) discussion of group culture formation. These events involve interactions that provide a “spark” which produces the group culture (or “style”).

¹⁶ Jennifer’s account raises an interesting question about the role of leaders in the evolution of styles. My fieldwork suggested that pastors held the most power to shift and enforce understandings of “how we do things here.” However, other churchgoers (e.g., food pantry organizers, finance team volunteers, churchgoers with social standing) certainly felt the pressure to maintain harmony over racial tension and responded in ways that reinforced the “style” of the church.

and Hispanic representation on the church council; the church office sign reads “Welcome! Let’s Talk” in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese; and the clergy solicit requests for cultural events for each group (last year’s events, for instance, included a Hispanic Heritage Month “Paint Night,” a Vietnamese district fieldtrip, and a St. Patrick’s Day brunch).

These observations reveal the style of St. Joseph Parish. Life at St. Joseph centers on *parity*—the church places equal value on all racial groups in the congregation. This style alleviates the pressures of racial diversity in the congregation: by tending to each race in equal measure, the church avoids the tensions that might arise from the prioritization of some groups over others.

The “survey incident” offers a window into the development of this style. Soon after Sister Frances joined the church, the Archdiocese asked its parishes to run a church evaluation survey. This account draws on fieldnotes from a conversation with Frances:

I get the survey from up high and it’s in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. No Vietnamese. I write back and request a Vietnamese option. Now, two weeks pass before we get the new survey. And this time, the instructions are in Vietnamese, but there are no Vietnamese questions. I write back, and they claim the questions are simple enough for the Vietnamese to understand. Now I know they don’t want to pay the translator twice, and I don’t want to get in trouble, but I also know that some of our Vietnamese won’t understand these questions. So, I write back, angry this time, and I demand the translation. I had to! We’ll never know what they need if they don’t understand the questions.

Notice how this episode represents a choice between harmony and racial tension: Sister Frances chose a fair survey over the risk of discontent among a racial subgroup. Notice also how this dilemma contributed to the emergence of parity: the incident reinforced an image of St. Joseph as equally responsible for the needs of each group of churchgoers. Over time, episodes of this kind have

imparted lessons about “how things are done” at St. Joseph Parish: lessons which capture the ethos of the church, and which, as will I argue next, constrain deliberation and political action about issues related to race.

The Deliberative and Political Consequences of Deflection and Parity

Up to now, I have described how racial diversity produced *deflection* in Fairview and *parity* in St. Joseph. I will now shift my attention to the deliberative and political implications of this journey. Consider the following conversation about the racial justice activities of another church with Gabrielle, a member of Fairview. In that conversation, Gabrielle shared that “We don’t really do that kind of political and social justice work...I’d actually say we draw a clear line between the spiritual and political.” This delineation aligns with Pastor Jennifer’s account of her response to the Asian-American violence in Atlanta (recall: “That’s the challenge with a multi-racial congregation...I want to give people a space where they can get away from all that”). As Jennifer described in another conversation about racial justice demonstrations, “Politics isn’t really what we do at Fairview...I don’t know how to approach that in church. Or even whether I should. It’s not something any of us know how to do together.”

Notice how these descriptions cohere with deflection. This style consists in the deflection of attention from racial difference. By offering a refuge from difference, Fairview forecloses the exchange of differing racial perspectives. As Efrem put it, Fairview leaves “that other stuff at the door.” Churchgoers do not share political opinions or opportunities. Churchgoers do not explore their different positions or racial backgrounds, nor do they form new positions through discussion and action on issues related to race. Although the regular contact may reduce racial prejudice and stereotypes (Allport 1954; Pettigrew 1998), churchgoers in Fairview are not confronted with the different “situated knowledges” of this diverse congregation. Churchgoers do not draw from different their racial perspectives in deliberation and political action, and white churchgoers, in particular, are

not meaningfully exposed to the perspectives of the less privileged racial groups in the church. Deflection, then, constrains deliberation and political action that draw on the perspectives and experiences of different races.

Observations from St. Joseph Parish tell a similar story. Several months into my fieldwork, I arrived before the service to meet with Father Murphy, and to learn about the kinds of conversations he had with churchgoers. When I asked if churchgoers raised topics related to race or politics, Father Murphy reflected that he gets asked “to pray about things like racism and the police...and about discord in the country around election time.” I asked if those requests led to action, to which he responded that he “provides an ear,” but that the church had not pursued parish-level action.

An exchange at the food pantry cohered with this account. After a conversation with Father Murphy ran its course, he turned to Nicoleta, a Romanian churchgoer, and asked quietly about the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Nicoleta shared her concerns, and the pair took a moment to pray. I noted this exchange in my fieldnotes because of the contrast with the predominantly white church from my in-depth fieldwork. At that service, a churchgoer of Polish descent read, through tears, from a “letter to Putin,” the church held an emergency discussion, and clergy shared information about support initiatives. No such response occurred in St. Joseph: Nicoleta shared her concerns with Murphy; Murphy listened and prayed; and the pair returned to work at the pantry.

As I described in the previous section, life at St. Joseph Parish centers on *parity*—i.e., on an equal commitment to each racial group. St. Joseph’s engagement with race and racial issues reflects this understanding. Clergy strive to hear from members of each group in private conversation before or after the service. In these conversations, churchgoers can and do raise concerns about distinctly political phenomena (policing, discrimination, voting) and issues that reflect racial inequalities (“My health insurance doesn’t pay enough,” “I’m worried about the public schools in my neighborhood”).

At this point, however, the work of the church is complete: churchgoers raised concerns, clergy listened to each group, and no further discussion takes place.

Parity in St. Joseph Parish, then, comes at the cost of deliberation and political action about race: the church hears from each group of churchgoers, but never brings their differences or perspectives into conversation. As in Fairview, churchgoers do not entertain different racial perspectives on problems and events. Churchgoers do not think collectively about racial issues or refine their positions through deliberation. Despite the regular and positive intergroup contact, churchgoers do not draw on their different situated knowledges to pursue action together, and white churchgoers are not exposed to the perspectives of less privileged racial groups. Like deflection, then, parity limits the ability of this diverse church to harness the deliberative and political value of that diversity (Tocqueville [1835] 1969), shows how regular and positive intergroup contact can fail to generate meaningful engagement with racial issues (Allport 1954), and reveals how diversity can generate a tradeoff between harmony versus deliberation and political action on issues related to difference (Mutz 2006).

Are there alternative explanations for the absence of deliberation and action on racial issues in Fairview and St. Joseph? First, it is not the case that Fairview and St. Joseph lack the skills or capacity for collective action. In Fairview, churchgoers hone their administrative and fundraising skills on the leadership team, practice public speaking during the service, and supervise a homeless drop-in center and school volunteer program. In St. Joseph Parish, churchgoers organize the finance council, a fundraiser for families in need, and a food pantry with over 400 registered families.¹⁷ These activities

¹⁷ The food pantry, in particular, speaks to the capacity for collective action at St. Joseph. Fiona (the pantry organizer) and her husband do the organizational work (record-keeping, fundraiser preparations, etc.). Other churchgoers divide the remaining labor: younger volunteers carry the food

undermine alternative explanations rooted in varied opportunities for civic skill development (Verba, Brady, and Schlozman 1995). Moreover, these activities alleviate the concern that diverse groups lack the capacity for collective action due to barriers like language differences or weak social sanctioning mechanisms (Habyarimana et al. 2007). On a theoretical note, this observation highlights how the avoidance of tension can undermine collective action on divisive issues even when diverse groups have the capacity for collective action. This avoidance thus offers an alternative mechanism for the longstanding negative relationship between diversity and collective action (Alesina, Baqir, and Easterly 1999; Miguel and Gugerty 2005).¹⁸

Second, it is not the case that members of Fairview and St. Joseph Parish lack the resources or interest for political engagement (Verba, Brady, and Schlozman 1995; Verba and Nie 1972), or that individuals without interest in deliberation and action on racial issues have “self-selected” into these churches. Pastor Jennifer organized with an anti-racism group during divinity school, and several churchgoers regularly (and separately) attend Black Lives Matter demonstrations and protests. In St. Joseph, one member worked for the state legislature and co-hosts a political podcast, another works

boxes from pantry to table; older churchgoers bag the food items; and one churchgoer (usually a young male) wheels out empty boxes for recycling. The bagging system is similarly efficient: a churchgoer saw me struggling with my first bag and offered a well-drilled demonstration (“Cereal first. Milk and juice cartons on their side. Beans next, at the bottom end of the cartons. Stack the tuna on the beans. Two bags of rice side by side. Pasta on top. Lift the handles to make room. Double knot”).

¹⁸ These collective actions are certainly important (and “political” in that they involve the pooling of resources for shared concerns). However, these actions do not involve discussion or action on racial issues and thus preclude opportunities to draw on and learn from different racial perspectives.

on city council campaigns, and several work with an organizing group on affordable housing and retail district revitalization in a predominantly black neighborhood in Boston. While impossible to rule out the role of self-selection, I take my conversations in and knowledge of these communities as evidence that self-selection is not the entire story, and that churchgoers would at least be willing to engage in the kind of deliberation and action about racial issues that the “styles” of these churches foreclose.¹⁹

Third, disagreement itself is not taboo in Fairview or St. Joseph. In both churches, I witnessed animated debates about fundraising options, budget decisions, the provision and scheduling of youth group programming, the timing of breaks on food pantry shifts, and other such issues. More than a few churchgoers were willing to express unpopular opinions on issues like the order of service and hiring decisions. These observations suggest that these churches are not home to Noelle-Neumann’s (1984) “spiral of silence,” in which people refrain from expressing unpopular viewpoints in public. Churchgoers avoided deliberation and debate about race, not debate or disagreement in general.

The conclusion to draw from this section, then, is that it is *deflection* and *parity* that lead Fairview and St. Joseph away from deliberation and political action about race. In her commitment to deflection in Fairview, Pastor Jennifer missed the opportunity to use racial violence in Atlanta to facilitate a conversation about churchgoers’ differing experiences of race and privilege. In his commitment to parity, Father Murphy continued to make his rounds at the pantry and missed the opportunity to encourage Nicoleta, the Romanian member, to share her perspective with the diverse churchgoers of

¹⁹ The political activities of these churchgoers do raise an interesting question the political benefits of contact even in the absence of deliberation about racial issues and perspectives. It is certainly possible that contact could foster understanding and shape political attitudes and actions without this kind of deliberation. While undoubtedly valuable, I would argue that these effects are limited without deliberation that draws on different racial perspectives and addresses racial inequalities.

St. Joseph. This argument, importantly, is not that either of these decisions were wrong: associations cannot always push for difficult conversations, and there are certainly occasions to step back from racial issues. What I have tried to demonstrate with Fairview and St. Joseph, however, is that associations that rigidly commit to styles like deflection or parity will *repeatedly* miss opportunities for deliberation and political action about race. These styles offer paths out of conversations about racial difference and in so doing undermine the deliberative and political value of racial diversity.

This argument, finally, is not about the generalizability of deflection and parity. These styles are illustrations of mechanisms, and I expect that there are other styles that perform this work of avoidance in diverse associations. What I have tried to offer in this section, rather, is an illustrative articulation of the dilemmas of one set of actors (clergy and churchgoers) in one kind of diverse association (churches). In so doing, I have tried to shed light on what I suspect is a broader dynamic—one that occurs when racial diversity forces choices between harmony and racial tension; when these choices lead to the avoidance of racial issues; and when the result truncates the democratic contributions of diverse associations. This argument aspires to significance beyond churches, and offers a revised picture of associations with deep racial divisions: not so we abandon their democratic potential, but so we can approach it with an appreciation for the dilemmas to which we should attend.

Conclusion and Future Directions

In this article, I have argued that members of diverse associations are caught in a predicament. A key democratic contribution of these associations depends on their ability to facilitate discussion and action on issues related to race—i.e., discussion that teaches us how thorny racial issues affect others, and that encourages collective problem-solving with others differently situated. Yet in the presence of deep racial divisions, these activities are potentially fatal for associational harmony. I refer to these choices between harmony and racial tension as *dilemmas of accommodation*, and I argue that members of

diverse associations tend to deal with these choices by gravitating toward understandings of “how we do things here” (“styles”) that involve the systematic avoidance of deliberation and action about race. This outcome is troubling because it suggests that diverse associations are unlikely to deliver on the deliberative and political value of diversity without efforts to resist the pull toward the avoidance of racial issues.

This study has several implications for research on diversity, contact, and cross-cutting exposure. First, it shows how racial avoidance can undermine the democratic contributions of diverse associations in contexts with deep divisions. In so doing, the study allows us to better appreciate the limits of the theoretical framework in which associations contribute to integration in diverse societies (Tocqueville [1835] 1969; Fung 2003; Warren 2001; Putnam 2000; Skocpol 2003). Second, this study places important limits on the contact hypothesis (Allport 1954; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). In particular, my findings show how contact can fail to generate deliberation and political action about race, and how privileged groups can remain ignorant of the experiences of less privileged groups despite frequent and positive contact. Third, the study casts new light on the tradeoff between deliberative and participatory democracy (Mutz 2006), and suggests that diverse networks may gravitate toward harmony at the expense of deliberation and political action on issues related to difference. Finally, the study extends sociological research on racial diversity in congregations, which finds that diverse congregations tend to adopt racialized power structures and minimize racial conflict (Edwards 2008; Oyakawa 2019; Wadsworth 2010; Priest and Priest 2007; Cobb, Perry, and Dougherty 2015). My findings draw out the political costs of this tendency: namely, the failure to realize the deliberative and political value of diversity, and the missed opportunity for white churchgoers to learn from the situated knowledge of less privileged groups.

These insights are based on close observations and interviews in several churches in Boston. These data are well-suited to the task of inductively figuring out how people experience and adapt to

diversity, but limit my ability to generalize to other populations, associations, and divisions. These limitations suggest two avenues for future research. First, future research could investigate whether and how my claims about diversity operate in other associations and contexts. Investigations of a larger and more representative sample of churches could be beneficial, particularly those that investigate churches with different denominations, racial compositions, and locations. Future studies could also analyze how the avoidance of divisive issues plays out in other diverse associations (e.g., workplaces, schools, sports teams) to explore how my arguments extend beyond churches.²⁰ In addition, future work could investigate my arguments about diversity and avoidance in divided contexts other than the United States, where the role of racial division might be assumed by differences in sect or class.

Second, this study did not examine diverse associations that *do* facilitate deliberation and political action on racial issues. I found no examples of such associations in my fieldwork, but this is not to say that these associations do not or cannot exist. Thus, an equally important avenue for research is the question of how to overcome the dilemmas described in this study. Overcoming these dilemmas may require institutional solutions, such as programs that build interracial relationships to reduce the risk of conversations about race (Warren 2010; Han and Arora 2022), or mechanisms for conflict resolution and sanctions that reduce the stakes of racial tension and disagreement (Ostrom 1990; Levine 2022). This aim might also require the strengthening of deliberative norms to replace norms of avoidance (Mansbridge et al. 2006; Niemeyer et al. 2023). Future research might also

²⁰ For instance, it would be interesting to explore whether diverse workplaces and sports teams are more likely to avoid racial tensions than churches because the aims of the job or team demand harmony (i.e., whether these associations avoid racial tensions in the name of “team spirit”).

investigate the role of long-term institutional support for deliberation and decision-making, such as civic education (Allen 2016; Allen and Kidd 2022).

These avenues for future research, then, comprise an agenda that takes up two inter-related questions. First, what are the barriers to deliberation and political action about race in diverse associations? And second, how might these barriers be overcome? This study opens up a line of inquiry into first question, in the hope that future research might more fruitfully explore the second.

References

- Alesina, Alberto, Reza Baqir, and William Easterly. 1999. "Public Goods and Ethnic Divisions." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 114(4):1243–84.
- Allen, Danielle. 2016. *Education and Equality*. University of Chicago Press.
- Allen, Danielle, and David Kidd. 2022. "Civic Learning for the 21st Century: Disentangling the "Thin" and "Thick" Elements of Civic Identity to Support Civic Learning." In *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Education*. Curran, Randall (ed). Routledge.
- Allport, Gordon. 1954. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Basic Books.
- Anderson, Elizabeth. 2010. *The Imperative of Integration*. Princeton University Press.
- Asimovic, Nejl, Ruth Dittmann, and Cyrus Samii. 2022. "Estimating the Effect of Intergroup Contact Over Years: Evidence from a Youth Program in Israel." Working paper.
- Bohman, James. 1996. *Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity, and Democracy*. MIT Press.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2010. *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and Racial Inequality in Contemporary America*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Christian, Kwame. 2022. *How to Have Difficult Conversations About Race: Practical Tools for Necessary Change in the Workplace and Beyond*. BenBella Books.
- Cobb, Ryon, Samuel Perry, and Kevin Dougherty. 2015. "United by Faith? Race/Ethnicity, Congregational Diversity, and Explanations of Racial Inequality." *Sociology of Religion* 76(2):177-98.
- Cohen, Joshua, and Joel Rogers. 1995. *Associations and Democracy*. Verso.
- Cohen, Cathy. 2010. *Democracy Remixed: Black Youth and the Future of American Politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, Cathy, and Matthew Luttig. 2020. "Reconceptualizing Political Knowledge: Race, Ethnicity, and Carceral Violence." *Perspectives on Politics* 18(3):805–18.

- Cramer, Katherine. 2004. *Talking about Politics: Informal Groups and Social Identity in American Life*. University of Chicago Press.
- Cramer, Katherine. 2006. "Applying Norton's Challenge to the Study of Political Behavior: Focus on Process, the Particular and the Ordinary." *Perspectives on Politics* 4(2):353–59.
- Cramer, Katherine. 2012. "Putting Inequality In Its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 106(3):517-532.
- Cramer, Katherine. 2016. *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*. University of Chicago Press.
- Denis, Jeffrey. 2015. "Contact Theory in a Small-Town Settler-Colonial Context: The Reproduction of Laissez-Faire Racism in Indigenous-White Canadian Relations." *American Sociological Review* 80(1):218–242.
- Dougherty, Kevin, Mark Chaves, and Michael Emerson. 2020. "Racial Diversity in US Congregations, 1998–2019." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 59(4):651–62.
- Feagin, Joe. 2010. *The White Racial Frame: Centuries of Racial Framing and Counter-Framing*. Routledge.
- Fung, Archon. 2003. "Associations and Democracy: Between Theories, Hopes, and Realities." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29:515-39.
- Edwards, Korie. 2008. *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Multiracial Churches*. Oxford University Press.
- Edwards, Korie., Brad Christerson and Michael Emerson. 2013. "Race, Religious Organizations, and Integration." *Annual Review of Sociology* 39:211-228.
- Eliasoph, Nina, and Paul Lichterman. 2003. "Culture in Interaction." *American Journal of Sociology* 108(4):735-794
- Eliasoph, Nina. 1999. "Everyday Racism in a Culture of Political Avoidance: Civil Society, Speech, and Taboo." *Social Problems* 46(4):479–502.

- Fine, Gary Alan. 1979. "Small Groups and Culture Creation: The Idioculture of Little League Baseball Teams." *American Sociological Review* 44(5):733–45.
- Fricker, Miranda. 2007. *Epistemic Injustice*. Oxford University Press.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books.
- Green, Donald and Janelle Wong. 2009. "Tolerance and the Contact Hypothesis: A Field Experiment," *The Political Psychology of Democratic Citizenship* 1–23.
- Habyarimana, James, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel Posner, and Jeremy Weinstein. 2007. "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?" *American Political Science Review* 101(4):709–25.
- Han, Hahrie. 2014. *How Organizations Develop Activists: Civic Associations and Leadership in the 21st Century*. Oxford University Press.
- Han, Hahrie, and Maneesh Arora. 2022. "Igniting Change: An Evangelical Megachurch's Racial Justice Program." *Perspectives on Politics* 20(4):1260–74.
- Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14(3):575-599.
- Hughes, Sherick. 2006. *What We Still Don't Know About Teaching Race How to Talk About it in the Classroom*. Edwin Mellen Press.
- Levendusky, Matthew, and Dominik Stecula. 2021. *We Need to Talk: How Cross-Party Dialogue Reduces Affective Polarization*. Cambridge University Press.
- Levine, Peter. 2022. *What Should We Do? A Theory of Civic Life*. Oxford University Press.
- Mansbridge, Jane, Janette Hartz-Karp, Matthew Amengual, and John Gastil. 2006. "Norms of Deliberation: An Inductive Study," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 2(1).

- Matthes, Jörg, Johannes Knoll, Sebastián Valenzuela, David Nicolas Hopmann, and Christian Von Sikorski. 2019. "A Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Cross-Cutting Exposure on Political Participation," *Political Communication* 36(4):523-542.
- McKinney, Karyn. 2005. *Being White: Stories of Race and Racism*. Routledge.
- Miguel, Edward, and Mary Kay Gugerty. 2005. "Ethnic Diversity, Social Sanctions, and Public Goods in Kenya." *Journal of Public Economics* 89: 2325-2368.
- Mills, Charles. 2007. "White Ignorance," In *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*. Sullivan, Shannon, and Nancy Tuana (eds). State University of New York Press.
- Mousa, Salma. 2020. "Building Social Cohesion between Christians and Muslims through Soccer in Post-ISIS Iraq." *Science* 369(6505):866-870.
- Mutz, Diana. 2002. "The Consequences of Cross-Cutting Networks for Political Participation." *American Journal of Political Science* 46(4):838–855.
- Mutz, Diana. 2006. *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative Versus Participatory Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mutz, Diana, and Jeffrey Mondak. 2006. "The Workplace as a Context for Cross-Cutting Political Discourse." *The Journal of Politics* 68(1):140-156.
- Niemeyer, Simon, Francesco Veri, John Dryzek, and André Bächtiger. 2023. "How Deliberation Happens: Enabling Deliberative Reason." *American Political Science Review* 1–18.
- Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth. 1984. *The Spiral of Silence. Public Opinion – Our Social Skin*. Chicago University Press.
- Nuamah, Sally. 2021. "The Cost of Participating While Poor and Black: Toward a Theory of Collective Participatory Debt." *Perspectives on Politics* 19(4):1115–30.
- Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge University Press.

- Oyakawa, Michelle. 2019. "Racial Reconciliation as a Suppressive Frame in Evangelical Multiracial Churches." *Sociology of Religion* 80(4):496-517.
- Pettigrew, Thomas. 1998. "Intergroup Contact Theory." *Annual Review of Psychology* 49:65–85.
- Pettigrew, Thomas, and Linda Tropp. 2006. "A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90(5):751–783.
- Priest, Kersten Bayt, and Robert Priest. 2007. "Divergent Worship Practices in the Sunday Morning Hour: Analysis of a "Multiracial" Church Merger Attempt." In *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith*. Priest, Robert, and Alvaro Nieves (eds). Oxford University Press.
- Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon & Schuster.
- Rosenblum, Nancy. 1998. *Membership and Morals: The Personal Uses of Pluralism in America*. Princeton University Press.
- Saguy, Tamar, Nicole Tausch, John Dovidio, and Felicia Pratto. 2009. The Irony of Harmony: Intergroup Contact Can Produce False Expectations for Equality. *Psychological Science* 20(1):114–121.
- Santoro, Eric, and David Broockman. 2022. "The Promise and Pitfalls of Cross-Partisan Conversations for Reducing Affective Polarization: Evidence from Randomized Experiments." *Science Advances* 8(25).
- Scacco, Alexandra, and Shana Warren. 2018. "Can Social Contact Reduce Prejudice and Discrimination? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Nigeria." *American Political Science Review* 112(3): 654–77.
- Skocpol, Theda. 2003. *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life*. University of Oklahoma Press.
- Soss, Joe, and Vesla Weaver. 2017. "Police Are Our Government: Politics, Political Science, and the Policing of Race–Class Subjugated Communities." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20:565-591.

- Taylor, Donald, Lisa Dube, and Jeanette Bellerose. 1986. "Intergroup Contact in Quebec: Myth or Reality?" In *Contact and Conflict in Intergroup Encounters*. Hewstone, Miles, and Rupert Brown (eds). Blackwell.
- Ternullo, Stephanie. 2022. "I'm Not Sure What to Believe?: Media Distrust and Opinion Formation during the COVID-19 Pandemic." *American Political Science Review* 116(3):1096–1109.
- Trew, Karen. 1986. "Catholic-Protestant Contact in Northern Ireland." In *Contact and Conflict in Intergroup Encounters*. Hewstone, Miles & Rupert Brown (eds). Blackwell.
- Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1835. *Democracy in America*. Harper Perennial.
- Verba, Sidney, Henry Brady, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Harvard University Press.
- Verba, Sidney, and Norman Nie. 1972. *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. Harper and Row.
- Wadsworth, Nancy. 2010. "Bridging Racial Change: Political Orientations in the United States Evangelical Multiracial Church Movement." *Politics and Religion* 3(3):439-68.
- Warren, Mark. 2001. *Democracy and Association*. Princeton University Press.
- Warren, Mark. 2010. *Fire in the Heart: How White Activists Embrace Racial Justice*. Oxford University Press.
- Weaver, Vesla, Gwen Prowse, and Spencer Piston. 2019. "Too Much Knowledge, Too Little Power: An Assessment of Political Knowledge in Highly Policed Communities." *The Journal of Politics* 81(3):1153-1166.
- Young, Iris Marion. 1997. "Difference as a Resource for Democratic Communication." In *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics*. Bohman, James, and William Rehg (eds). MIT Press.
- Young, Iris Marion. 2000. *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford University Press.