"Keep Race on the Table": Racial Attitudes and Diversity Discourse Among Leaders of Multiracial Organizations

THESIS

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Abstract

Leaders play a critical role in shaping organizational discourses around race and diversity. Understanding racial attitudes promoted by multiracial organizations thus requires attention to organizational leaders. This study analyzes 120 in-depth interviews from the Religious Leadership and Diversity project to examine attitudes about racial inequality held by leaders of multiracial religious organizations as well as their discourses on diversity. From this analysis, I build a typology of leadership racial attitudes and diversity discourse that highlights the characteristics of and constraints on leaders of multiracial organizations. The fact that I find significant variation among leaders suggests the need for a renewed focus on leadership discourse as a factor mediating the effects of multiracial organizations.
Dedication

For Dele and Cadence who make everything I do possible. For the tireless men and women leading multiracial congregations, my work is for you.
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Introduction

While multiracial organizations promoting “diversity” have become common features of American life, discussions of diversity within them often fail to attend to systemic racial inequality (Bell and Hartmann 2007). This neglect occurs, in part, because multiracial organizations intentionally create a common in-group identity to improve feelings of cohesion. Since discussions of racial stratification could hinder the development of that identity, they are often avoided. As a result, members of multiracial organizations do not recognize systemic racial inequality and are unlikely to support civic and political efforts seeking to combat it (Dovidio, Gaertner, and Saguy 2015). When multiracial organizations mask racial inequality, they may reify stratification instead of remedying it.

The impact of multiracial organizations on members’ attitudes concerning racial inequality has been a particular focus in the study of multiracial religious congregations. Consistent with critical race theory, some scholars have shown that these congregations act as racialized institutions that reinforce racial dominance. Multiracial organizations do this by catering to the needs of Whites and influencing thinking in ways that benefit Whites (Edwards 2008). These scholars find that multiracial organizations promote understandings of racial inequality that are more individualistic, such as citing lack of motivation on the part of Blacks for their lower average income compared to Whites.
By contrast, other scholars contend that intergroup contact within multiracial organizations reduces racial prejudices and promotes positive out-group attitudes as it meets the conditions of contact theory (Allport 1954; Pettigrew and Tropp 2008). These scholars find multiracial organizations promote attributions of racial inequality that are less individualistic and more structural, such as blaming lack of educational opportunities for the lower average income of Blacks compared to Whites (Emerson 2006; Yancey 2007).

Missing from such accounts is the influence of leaders. Leaders play a critical role in creating organizational culture and affect how members interact within multiracial organizations (Homan 2013; Gratton, Voigt, and Erickson 2007). Researchers recognizing the importance of leaders have turned their focus to a contingent theory of diversity, which examines the processes within organizations to better understand inconsistent effects of diversity (van Knippenberg and Schippers 2007). Applied to the abovementioned debate about the impact of multiracial religious congregations on racial attitudes, a contingent perspective would point to the potential mediating role of leadership in how diversity in numbers plays out. A first step in this direction is understanding the racial attitudes held by leaders of multiracial organizations -- a gap my research seeks to fill. Along with leaders’ personal views, I also include attention to their public discourse as organizational representatives. Leaders’ abilities to champion organizational understandings of racial inequality may be constrained or enabled by the social structures in which they are embedded (Edwards 2014).
My analysis draws on 120 semi-structured interviews from head clergy of multiracial religious organizations across the U.S. Leaders of multiracial organizations who attribute racial inequality to structural causes, such as lack of educational opportunities or discrimination, may promote this understanding within their organizations’ culture. I also compare leaders’ self-described racial attitudes with their public diversity discourse, or discussions of diversity. Various factors -- including societal diversity discourse, organizational pressures, and leaders’ positions in the racial hierarchy-- could affect how and whether leaders talk about racial inequality, independent of their personal racial attitudes.

From the interview data on leaders’ personal racial attitudes and public diversity discourse, I build a typology of leaders to show how race and diversity are conceptualized differently within the discourse of each type of leader. Understanding the racial attitudes and diversity discourse of leaders is a first step towards understanding leaders as the mediators of racial attitudes in multiracial organizations. In addition, the characteristics of, and social structures surrounding, leaders who promote structural attributions of racial inequality in their organizations can be instructive as to when leaders challenge dominant, and sometimes problematic, narratives about diversity.
Conceptual Framework

_Diversity and Discourse_

In multiracial organizations, and the nation as a whole, diversity is often spoken of in glowing, almost universally positive terms as accepting “all people for who they are, their value, their contributions to society” (Bell and Hartmann 2007 p. 899). This type of diversity thinking was codified in _Grutter v. Bollinger_ where diversity was upheld as a public good that benefited students as they interacted with others (Berrey 2006). This was a shift in language away from rectifying past discrimination. Gone was the traditional language of correcting historic inequalities, in favor of something more universal. Diversity became about benefits to all, especially the majority, as they learned from “diverse” perspectives. This narrative replaced one that advocated providing opportunities to historically disadvantaged groups.

An issue with this reframing is that in its optimism, diversity language glosses over systemic inequality. Diversity discourse implies group-based inequality- no one, for example speaks of eye color diversity, even though that is a difference- but it fails to explicitly interrogate that inequality. Due to current constructions of diversity, even politically astute persons have trouble speaking of diversity and racial inequality in the same context (Bell and Hartmann 2007). Individuals in the United States use diversity to talk about race without acknowledging racial inequality in American society. This way
of talking about diversity is problematic if the goal of diversity discourse is to create change in racial hierarchies. Without a clear conception of race, the need for structural remedies for racial inequality seems nonsensical.

A related issue with diversity language is that it can serve to “other” peoples of color, reinforcing Whiteness as normative (Bell and Hartmann 2007). Setting apart minorities in popular discourse is not benign. For instance, Roscigno et al. provide an analysis of public communication that occurred prior to the massacre at Wounded Knee (2015). The government used a strategy of effectively “othering” the Sioux in order to justify their extermination. When populations are set apart as different, it can serve to “legitimize social control and inequality” (Roscigno 2015 p.35). In its less explicit version, othering results in the production of “cultural explanations for structural problems” (Lipsitz 1995 p.379). For instance, this allows media commentary to chide people of color for the problems of joblessness, family structure, and housing values within their communities, while ignoring the societal and legal factors that generated those outcomes (see also Guetzkow, 2010).

Diversity discourse also commoditizes racial minorities. Businesses speak of the business case for diversity which details how minorities and women in an organization can increase profitability (Herring 2009). Whites in diverse neighborhoods think of diversity as adding “a little flavor” to their daily life (Carter 2009 p. 11). Ethnographic studies of White separatist and antiracist organizations alike record the commoditization of people of color. Having a Black friend exempts members of these organizations from charges of racism and provides them a social credential that purchases legitimacy in the
eyes of others (Hughey 2012). People of color become a resource for the benefit of Whites when they are commoditized by diversity discourse and the impact of diversity on their lives is ignored.

Paradoxically, diversity discourse marks racial minorities as other, while at the same time pressuring them to conform to White standards. Diverse others, particularly racial minorities, add spice to life via their food, dress, and other customs, but are otherwise expected to adhere to normative standards of behavior and are assumed to have normative (read White) experiences. When they fail to do so, multiracial organizations lose their appeal for Whites who do not desire changes in their core standards (Fish 1997). This type of diversity is selectively inclusive, focusing on including minorities who are high status and familiar with middle class White habitus (Berrey 2015).

Finally, diversity can be colorblind. While these two terms seem contradictory, they can represent surprisingly similar concepts given the nebulous meaning of diversity. Their convergence occurs mainly when diversity discourse emphasizes differences as nonessential. For example, a corporate diversity manager described a world “where extraneous attributes of race, religion, ethnicity, and gender do not influence how the person is perceived” (Berrey 2015 p. 266). How unfortunate if the person in question considered these attributes part of their identity. By deciding that a person’s identity should not matter, multiracial organizations featuring colorblind diversity discourse deny them the experiences that identity has specifically afforded them. Those subscribing to colorblind narratives can ignore racial differences resulting from systemic inequality (Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, and Embrick 2004). If there are no real differences between races,
then why would their erasure not be the next logical step? While diversity and diversity discourses can be positive in that they can decrease boundaries and lead to the appreciation of racial and ethnic differences, the issues noted above have led to calls for a critical diversity perspective that not only celebrates differences between people, but also seeks to address issues of inequity (Herring and Henderson 2012).

**Substantive Diversity**

Another common problem with diversity discourse is that diversity is described as something to be counted. This may result from the abovementioned commoditization of racial minorities. Organizations use the language of including all cultural perspectives to promote support for diversity initiatives. In practice however, those initiatives are nearly always operationalized using statistics to track proportional representation of people of color (Berrey 2015). Focusing on numbers alone ignores the quality of interactions and opportunities within the organization for all, termed *substantive diversity* (Roscigno and Yavorsky 2014). Measurement of substantive diversity would require understanding feelings of belonging or inclusion, and levels of intergroup contact, as well as the proportion of minority representation found in all levels and sub-segments of an organization. Simple representation is critical, but it may only be part of the story.

A substantive diversity discourse, by extension, impresses hearers that the concerns of all members within an organization matter. Minority groups are not simply present; their presence is felt in the way that the organization operates. This influence holds regardless of whether a group is in the numerical majority or holds financial power within the organization. Substantive diversity discourse also encourages the members of
an organization to have equivalent levels intergroup and intragroup contact. Finally, substantive diversity discourse highlights the leadership of minority members of the organization. It reinforces opportunity for all within an organization by giving voice to all, rather than having a few repeat rhetoric concerning opportunity. Because it promotes the leveling of racial hierarchies within the organization, as well as gives voice to experiences of all, substantive diversity discourse positions an organization to address systemic racial inequality.

*Multiracial Religious Organizations and Racial Attitudes*

The study of racially diverse religious congregations has intensified as their number has increased within the United States. Cultural and demographic factors, such as increases in the percentage of racial minorities, have enabled the number of multiracial religious organizations to quickly multiply. The number of multiracial churches in the U.S. (defined as those in which no racial group comprises more than 80% of the congregation) made up fewer than 7% of churches in 2000; by 2010 this number had nearly doubled (Edwards, Christerson, & Emerson 2013). Organizations are said to be multiracial when they reach at least 20% racial/ethnic diversity, because there is a 99% chance of contact with other racial groups and the proportion of minority members is large enough to have an impact on the organization’s operations (Sigelman et al 1996). Racially diverse congregations are not monolithic; they encompass a broad spectrum of differences in neighborhood composition, leadership identity, religious tradition, and worship style (Dougherty and Huyser 2008).
A key debate in studies of multiracial churches has been whether these churches are able to promote structural understandings of racial inequality in their members. The early promise of multiracial churches was publicized among Conservative Protestants via Emerson and Smith’s *Divided By Faith* (2000). One of their key findings was that “high contact” White Christians, those who had a Black person currently living in their neighborhood and who had a Black person over for dinner in the past few years, were more likely to cite structural instead of individualistic reasons for racial inequality. More recent work has confirmed a positive association between attending a multiracial church and progressive racial attitudes among Whites (Emerson 2006; Yancey 2007). Furthermore, multiracial churches have been shown to decrease social distance when interracial neighborhoods did not (Yancy 1999).

Not all studies examining attendance of a multiracial religious congregation and structural attributions of racial inequality show an association between the two. An analysis drawn from paired data in the General Social Survey and National Congregations Study showed that Whites within multiracial congregations were no more likely to attribute racial inequality to structural causes than Whites who attend homogenous congregations (Cobb, Perry, and Dougherty 2015). Whites in this study chose lack of motivation on the part of Blacks as the primary explanation for Black/White racial inequality. Even more surprisingly, Blacks in this study were less likely than Blacks in non-multiracial congregations to embrace structural explanations of racial inequality.
Clues to whether congregants view inequality individualistically or structurally may lie in the organizational diversity discourse of their congregations. A review of current research by Edwards, Christerson, and Emerson (2013) cites two major findings in studies of multiracial churches. The first is that multiracial churches, like other multiracial organizations, subordinate race to a broader identity as Christians. Becker (1998) found that multiracial religious organizations underplay the importance of race in order to stress congregant unity in Christ. In her ethnographic study of multiracial churches in Oak Park, IL, the congregation discussed race as personal instead of structural. Organizational discourse focused on the personal experiences of the congregants but steered away from broader racial or political issues.

The other key finding was that the dynamics of racialized society were replicated within the walls of the church, creating conflicts between different racial and ethnic groups. Edwards’ 2008 study of multiracial churches found that they are similar to majority White churches in structures and activities. In addition, White congregants tend to win out in disagreements over religious and nonreligious matters due to their power in the organization (Edwards 2008). This dynamic occurs even when Whites are not the numerical majority or the senior leader in a congregation. When Whites are privileged, hierarchical relationships in which Whites have more power than people of color are modeled and reinforced within multiracial churches.

Both of these findings could be informed by the way leaders talk about diversity within multiracial churches. When racial and ethnic identities are subordinated in favor of unity, members of different groups do not discuss their broader social and political
contexts, and contact between races is less effective at promoting structural racial attitudes (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008). The second finding, concerning the replication of racial structures in the church, follows from ignoring racial and ethnic identity. In the absence of collectively dealing with race, an organization will be ill positioned to escape, let alone change, the broader context concerning race in which it is positioned.

For this reason, the current study seeks to understand the racial attitudes and diversity discourse of leaders within a national sample of multiracial congregations. The proposed study differs from previous studies of multiracial congregations due to its focus on leaders and its broad-based qualitative approach. Previous studies have examined racial attitudes within the congregation but have not focused on leaders. Leaders have a critical role as their racial attitudes can shape organizational discourse, and by extension, congregants’ racial attitudes. In addition, previous ethnographies have only captured a small slice of the variation in multiracial churches, and survey studies can be limited in their ability to capture processes operating within multiracial congregations. These variations and details matter. For example, the way in which poverty is discussed within churches, not whether it is discussed, has been shown to impact congregant views on antipoverty government programs (Brown et al. 2016). The fact that an organization is multiracial may ultimately mean very little in terms of racial attitudes and racial inequality. Understanding the varying elements within these organizations, particularly leaders’ discourse, may be more instructive for investigating inequality.
Leadership of Multiracial Religious Organizations

Leaders play a critical role as the arbiters of institutional culture by shaping and promoting values (Selznick 1957, Kraatz and Moore 2002). As such, analyzing how leaders promote diversity within multiracial organizations is critical to understanding the impact of such organizations on the racial structure. This study begins that analysis by examining the racial attitudes that underlie leaders’ self-reported public speech and evaluating whether those attitudes are more structural or individualistic. Although the racial attitudes of leaders have been minimally studied to date, Buttner, Lowe and Billings-Harris (2006) found high correlation between leaders’ racial awareness and their advocacy for diversity. Therefore, leaders with a structural understanding of race, and who have managed to personalize that understanding to their own experience, should be more likely to employ a substantive diversity discourse focusing on inclusion.

Leaders’ attitudes, however, cannot be evaluated without an eye towards their context. Even when leaders hold structural views of race and racial inequality, and want to reflect those in diversity discourse, they may be hindered from or encouraged to do so by several factors. The first factor that may impact the discourse of leaders is market competition. Because religious affiliation in America is a voluntary activity, a religious marketplace emerges where participants are free to choose the organization that best meets their needs. Organizations that seek to survive in this marketplace legitimate themselves by drawing practices from the surrounding culture to broaden their appeal (Powell and DiMaggio 1991, Meyer and Rowan 1977, Wilde et al. 2010). As noted above, cultural understandings of diversity neglect racial inequality. Leaders using
cultural cues to legitimate their organizations would be expected to do the same. To the extent that competitive concerns are foremost in the minds of leaders, these concerns will shape the diversity discourse.

A second factor that may hinder or encourage a leader expressing views on racial inequality is the expectations of congregations and denominations. Within their local congregations, leaders must be attentive to the needs of their attenders as a key source of support. This attention may shape leaders’ discursive strategies. For example, it may be that the minorities who are attracted to multiracial organizations already embrace White racial frames, and would not support leadership speaking of structural racial inequality (Cobb, Perry, and Dougherty, 2015). Pitt (2010) argues that multiracial churches attract middle class Blacks whose education and employment choices are more like that of their White peers. This likeness may also be present in racial attitudes. It has been shown that privileged Blacks are less structural in their analysis of racial inequality (Shelton and Greene, 2012). Certainly, we see this in the realm of housing, where currently more than half of middle and upper income Blacks live in majority non-Black neighborhoods, as opposed to just 33% in the 1970s (Sharkey, 2014).

Expectations on leaders could also be shaped by racial concentration within the organization. Racial or ethnic groups representing less than 15% of an organization, or tokens, may experience high visibility, polarization, and pressure to assimilate (Kanter, 1977). If an organization has several token minority groups, their representation may not be sufficient to give leaders freedom to speak about issues of race pertinent to those
groups. If Whites are the token group, conversely, leaders may be encouraged towards a heavy focus on racial inequality in their diversity discourse.

The third factor that may shape diversity discourse is the demographic characteristics of the leaders themselves. Minority leaders in particular face a special set of challenges when leading multiracial organizations. Whiteness is broadly seen as a qualification for leadership (Rosette, et al., 2008). Therefore, minority leaders may have difficulty maintaining their organizations. In addition, when minorities are promoted, they are more likely to be in losing situations in which their organization is not meeting its objectives (Cook and Glass, 2013). It may be that minority leaders are less likely to speak about race if their organization is already in a tenuous position. Finally, minorities who desire to increase the racial or ethnic diversity of their organizations may be less able to do so. For example, as the number of multiracial churches has increased in recent years, this expansion has predominantly occurred under White leadership. White congregations now boast more minority members, but the percentage of majority minority churches that have White members has not changed (Edwards, Christerson, and Emerson 2013).

Contemporary portrayals of diversity within multiracial contexts may contribute to stratification by ignoring racial inequality, commoditizing the presence of people of color, and normalizing Whiteness. Leaders of multiracial organizations could be instrumental in changing diversity discourse within their organizations, but there are two critical factors that are necessary for this to occur. First, leaders of multiracial organizations must themselves attribute racial inequality to structural factors. Second,
leaders must be able to communicate their attitudes freely and take action in line with these attitudes. To examine barriers to these two factors converging, I examine racial attitudes and the diversity discourse of head clergy of multiracial religious organizations. I address two main questions: 1) Do leaders of multiracial organizations promote structural attributions of racial inequality? and 2) What factors promote or constrain the leader’s efforts in this direction?
Methods

Data for this research project come from The Religious Leadership and Diversity Project (RLDP) based at The Ohio State University. The RLDP is the first-ever comprehensive study of leaders of racially and ethnically diverse churches in the United States. It is a national study that employs a multi-method research design. Central to the project are face-to-face in-depth interviews with head clergy of multiracial churches and leaders of their denominations. The study also includes focus group interviews with congregants of these head clergy. Finally, surveys provide supplemental data about the congregations of participating head clergy such as racial composition and annual income.

During Phase I of the RLDP, interviews were conducted with head clergy and denomination leaders yielding 123 semi-structured interviews with head clergy who lead congregations located in all four U.S. census regions. These interviews address a variety of topics including respondents’ conceptualizations of race, attitudes about racial inequality, and perspectives on race-related social policy and events, such as the Black Lives Matter Movement. The interviews also gather background information about the head clergy, including previous experiences that led them to their role of leadership of a multiracial church or denomination. About 85% of participating head clergy completed an online survey providing demographic information about the congregants, church
resources, and the structure of lay leadership for their churches. Interviews with leaders from nine major denominations in the U.S. were also conducted during Phase I to situate the pastors within their leadership structure and enable an understanding of denominational expectations and resources that may impact the attitudes of head clergy. In Phase II of the RLDP, congregant focus groups for 16 of these head clergy were conducted. The focus groups address congregants’ views about and experiences attending a racially and ethnically diverse congregation, including their perspectives on their pastor’s leadership on matters related to race, ethnicity, and diversity.

The data for this study are derived from Phase I. Members of the RLDP project team of various race/ethnic background and ages conducted interviews of head clergy. Responses were audio recorded with the permission of the respondent. Two respondents did not give permission for their interviews to be recorded, and one other is awaiting transcription; these interviews are omitted from the sample (n=120). A professional transcription company transcribed sound files and members of the RLDP project team subsequently reviewed them. Transcriptions were then de-identified by research assistants for coding.

Transcripts were manually coded in NVivo. Coding was done by members of the RLDP project team, primarily at the paragraph level. Initial coding was done using a codebook created from the interview guide. The codebook utilizes 8 primary codes. Relevant codes for this study include: Race and Ethnicity- any mention of matters related to race and ethnicity, Diversity- any mention of diversity, Religious Leadership- decisions, actions, views or plans respondent made while a leader, and Church Diversity
Strategy—any practice or plan intended to foster, sustain or affirm diversity of any kind in some way or/and attract a new group of people to the respondent’s church. Detail was then added through predefined secondary and tertiary codes.

Using the head clergy interviews, I investigate leader’s conceptualizations of race and attitudes about racial inequality. In particular, I focus on whether these pastors talk about racial inequality in largely systemic ways, attending to inequality in broader society, or individualistic ways, perhaps even focusing on the experiences of specific congregants. Given that some of the interviews were conducted during controversies over the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and Eric Garner in New York, I analyzed data on views expressed related to these events. Using demographic data from the surveys, as well as the pastors’ self-descriptions, I determine how these attitudes vary by pastoral and church characteristics.

Another area for investigation is whether leaders’ attitudes are openly expressed to multiracial congregations. Separate codes for events involving race and ethnicity occurring within the church versus outside of the church allow me to understand whether race and ethnicity are reported to be the topics of sermons, classes, or discussions within the church. Finally, diversity discourse used within the congregation is contrasted with personal views of the head clergy or involvement with issues of race and ethnicity outside of the church, as expressed to interviewers.
Analysis

In this study, I evaluate leaders’ racial attitudes as to whether they display more structural or individualistic attributions of racial inequality. A leader judged to be structural speaks about racial inequality and attributes it to systemic causes such as institutional discrimination or lack of educational opportunities. A leader judged to be individualistic in their racial attitudes would either neglect to report any perceptions about racial inequality, or attribute inequality to individual causes, such as lack of motivation.

Leaders were also evaluated on diversity discourse. Those with pronounced diversity discourse would speak often about having a diverse congregation as a goal of their church. They will likely promote the diversity by means of a mission or vision statement as well as sermons during worship gatherings. The opposite end of the spectrum is a limited diversity discourse. This would include leaders who speak about diversity rarely and do not allow the diversity of their congregations to impact the way in which their organization operates.

Based on patterns in respondents’ racial attitudes and the ways in which they talk about diversity, I propose four archetypes. These archetypes illuminate how different types of leaders conceptualize race and diversity within their organizations. Leaders whose racial attitudes and diversity discourse are well aligned are typed as either structuralists or assimilationists. Structuralists have well-developed and structural
conceptions of racial inequality. They are vocal in communicating with their congregations, and perhaps the broader community, concerning issues of race. *Assimilationists* express limited awareness of race or racial inequality. Controversies related to race, such as the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri are not discussed within their congregations. The fact that the congregation is multiracial is ignored in how they “do” church. Discussions of diversity are rare, and when they occur are done in a colorblind way, asserting the equality of all gathered. These leaders discuss diversity as would be expected given their self-professed racial attitudes.

The remaining two archetypes represent mismatches or, at a minimum, tension between racial attitudes and diversity discourse. *Opportunists* have a prominent diversity discourse, but lack the expected underlying racial attitudes. Such leaders appear to manipulate diversity in order to gain market advantage over other churches. Their actions most closely reflect broader society in that they hold diversity as a sacred value while ignoring ideas of racial inequality underlying it (Bell and Hartman 2007). *Conformists* have strong and structural racial attitudes, but their diversity discourse is limited. They are somehow constrained in what they can communicate regarding diversity. Leaders of multiracial churches are constrained by congregational and denominational expectations of pastoral leadership, and on a macro-level by the racialized structure of society. As a result, their own expectations of their role remain unmet, and their agency to enact diversity practices based on their personal beliefs is suppressed.
Archetypes in Detail

Structuralists (n = 52):
Leaders demonstrating a structural understanding of racial inequality and a pronounced diversity discourse are classified as structuralists. Structuralists are characterized by an explicit commitment to racial justice in their public speech. As such, they are the most likely to report discussing racial events in the news, such as unrest in Ferguson, with their attenders. When structuralists conduct these discussions, usually in the context of Sunday sermons, they do so in a way that highlights structural racial inequality. When asked what he communicated about the events in Ferguson in a sermon, Pastor Steve, a 1.5 generation Asian Mainline Protestant, responded, “Um…the talk about the system
that is broken.” Pastor Daniel, a White Mainline Protestant from the Midwest, used the event

\[\text{just to highlight, say, you know, so this, this kind of systemic racism’s been going on. It’s not just bad individual decisions, but there’s, uh, uh, a spiritual component that’s much bigger than that, and we need to be praying against that as well as acting against it.}\]

These pastors, like the majority of structuralists, reported speaking about the “system” or “systemic racism” within their sermons. This shows both that they are thinking about race as structural and that they are encouraging their congregations to do the same, or minimally, making the assumption that their congregants already think about race in this way. They welcome and encourage conversations about race as a religious duty. Pastor Nick, a White Mainline Protestant encouraged other multiracial church leaders in this way:

\[\text{Um I would say find ways to keep race on the table. It’s not gone from your generation. I think it will be a little tougher... for your own spiritual development, you will have to do this. You will have to go to race. You will have to go to spirituality and justice. In order to know what the faith is really about, you have got to there.}\]

Pastor Dave, a deep-voiced Asian-American pastor, felt it was important to speak on Ferguson as a racial justice issue in his Conservative Protestant church, although his congregation is only 10% African American.

\[\text{Ferguson and – and, uh, Eric Garner. And, you know, realistically, it’s – it, um, it’s challenging even for someone as attuned to justice and issues—issues as an Asian-American—to feel a part of that conversation, but I don’t think that necessarily gives me any reason not to be involved. So, I mean, for instance, a couple of weeks ago, I gave a sermon—actually, one of the sermons on race ... we just tend to believe Biblical justice is recognizing, uh, systemic issues of sin, along with personal issues of – it’s not an either/or, it’s both together.}\]
Like Pastor Dave, structuralists are willing to speak out even if their attenders’ demographics might lead them to remain silent. Another example of this is Pastor Julia, a White Mainline Protestant, who uniquely described her congregation as interfaith. She took a public stand about systemic racism in her community despite the fact that it angered people of power in her social circle.

*Um-hum. Yeah. Yeah. And then, I got a lot of flak from White people, and I got a lot of, “Thank you,” from brown and Black people. And then, um, because this church is a church that speaks about relevant issues, so I spoke about it the next Sunday, and my administrator said I, “shouldn’t have spoken.” Like, during the service when we have talkback time, which is not at my other church either, like, you had the microphone to people, she said that I, “should not have spoken.” She’s a former mayor, and she was my administrator that was employed by the church. And, one of the Black people – I did have three Black people in the church at that – when I came here. When she stood up, the only Black person in church that Sunday stood up and said, “If my pastor hadn’t spoken up, I wouldn’t be – she wouldn’t be my pastor.”*

Structuralists do not just speak about issues of race out of the needs in their congregation; there is a personal connection. In line with Buttner, Lowe and Billings-Harris (2006), all the leaders in this quadrant have a personal understanding of the impact of race in their own lives that extends into their organizational discourse. Pastor Paul, a blond, blue-eyed, Mainstream Protestant described how race impacts him this way:

*Um, I think it’s allowed me to – I hope to be non – to be less defensive than I might be about race and gender and sexuality um, and trying to listen to others – I think it’s kind of – I can be aware of my privilege because I have in a way I don’t have to defend it. Um, I hope it helps me, uh, or encourages me to listen to others and try to name my privileges and not pretend like I got here. You know. They said about George Bush he was born on third base and somebody hit a triple.*
Here, Pastor Paul recognized his privileged position as a White male and, in a sense, said that those who don’t are “pretending” about their place in life. He believed this understanding allowed him to reach out to a cross section of congregants.

Structuralist leaders of color recognize their relative disadvantage in the racial hierarchy. Mainline Protestant Pastor Wess, a direct, but gentle Asian American here described his, and other Asian pastors’, job prospects relative to their White counterparts.

So you get to be extra and I was telling our fellows if you are the same or equal in stature and ability and education, like the White folks, you are going to make it. You have got to be beyond. You’ve got to be super. If he is a star, you have to be a super star. That’s the only way in which you can be employed. If not, then you cannot. And but you can take on uh declining parishes and make yourself valuable once you get that done.

Pastor Wess felt that they, as Asian Americans, were more likely to receive low-income parish assignments. Although he did not speak of a systemic fix to inequality, instead relying on individual high performance to overcome racial bias, he nonetheless recognized a racialized standard of pastor evaluations.

Finally, structuralists are characterized by a substantive diversity discourse that focuses on intragroup relationships and representation of all attenders present. Again from Pastor Dave:

Um, even if it's 1 percent of the church, you make that 1 percent feel like they’re a valued member. Again, not just to put them in front so that people see, but I think there’s some issues of highlighting, uh, our differences, um, not as a way to separate, but to unite, actually or to give more glory to God, saying, “Wow, look at the amazing power of God, that He can build bridges between people who, in the world’s eyes, would have nothing to do with each other;” because, in Christ, we’re one here, but we’re different, too and we express the diversity of who God is.
This idea of focusing on even “one percent of the church” is consistent with how above, Pastor Dave talked about issues of race that directly impact only a minority of his congregation. Diversity for the structuralist pastor is about authentic inclusion of everyone present. Pastor Diego, a Latino mainline Protestant echoed the idea of authentic inclusion being central to his church’s identity. “It’s not just going to be White people leading the music. Not just because it needs to send a message, but because there’s another rich—cultural richness—that we’re not incorporating into who we are.” Instead of advocating a semblance of inclusion, such as having Whites sing in other languages, Pastor Diego focused on including the people, not just the culture.

Opportunists (n=29)

Leaders with pronounced diversity discourse, but lacking a structural view of race are classified as opportunists. This group behaves in line with the “managed diversity,” Baron (2016) highlighted in her ethnography of Downtown Church. Downtown Church featured highly visible Black volunteers and attempts by the pastor to mimic a Black preaching style, but individualistic racial attitudes.

Opportunists are driven by an orientation towards market competition. This is the least racially diverse group of pastors; all but two of the opportunists in this study are White. Either experiencing, or just sensing, a high level of competition, these leaders adapt and seek to appeal to the breadth of potential attenders in their communities. Their behavior is in line with seeking to legitimize their organization to outsiders (Powell and DiMaggio 1991, Meyer and Rowan 1977, Wilde et al. 2010). It is logical that their racial
attitudes and discursive strategies most closely align with the features of contemporary diversity discourse. That is, they publically promote diversity, but neither have nor communicate an understanding of structural racial inequality.

In an increasingly pluralistic society, competition that drives opportunists to focus on diversity takes a range of forms from ethnic affinity churches to yoga gatherings. Pastor Ben, a White Mainline Protestant, noted

During while we worshiping here, you've got 70 people doing yoga in a beer hall six blocks north of here. So-- The people are available, but you look though, you know. So-so here's the image. You know. There's no diversity in that group. You know. But they're looking for that spiritual experience and community, social, relational. Know when they're done they can get a beer or whatever and hang out there because they've got ping-pong tables and bean-bag tossings and picnic table in that hall, so it's place they could spend their whole day at.

Here potential church attendees were having their relational needs met at a yoga gathering rather than a church service. The goal of reaching these people loomed large for Pastor Ben. He, and other opportunists, recognized that diversity has power to attract people to their churches, which were either struggling financially or had turned around after a period of financial struggle. Pastor Judy, a friendly, bi-vocational, Mainline Protestant related the needed turnaround of her church to a popular movie:

Did you see the movie Sister Act? You, how the church was died and then when, when uh Whoopie Grol—Goldberg came in there and livened up the music and everything, people on the outside, “That sounds like the kind of stuff I like. I’ll give it a try.” And so that’s what changed and it brought people into the church. And I think particularly the churches that have been around a long time, if they don’t change their ways and adapt to the people that are now living around there, they will definitely die.
Like Pastor Judy, opportunists feel their churches need to change or they will die. Neighborhood demographic change brought about the need for Pastor Judy to reach out. She made explicit efforts to reach Latinos and Asians in her area.

Opportunists also reach out to racial minorities because of the value of diversity to liberal Whites. Pastor Saul, a young, personable Mainline Protestant recognized the excitement in his friendship circle at the prospect of a multiracial church.

*You know...it’s kind of like...how do I want to say it? This make it sound so bad...it’s kind of like you know...you get the new iPhone6 and they’re like...Oh wow! You got the new iPhone6! Oh man...I wish I had that [laughter]. Um...so it’s kind of like that right now. It’s more of from White friends. From Black friends they’re like um...it’s not so much of an intense feeling. They’re like...Wow! That’s really awesome. I’m so happy that’s what’s going on there.*

In this case, the value of a multiracial church was the “cool factor.” Pastor Saul recognized that his discourse might sound “bad” to others, revealing potential guilt concerning the way he spoke about his diverse congregation. Notably, as opportunists are nearly universally White, it could be suggested that only White leaders have the ability to benefit from the commoditization of diversity that Pastor Saul typifies.

Because of their focus on marketing, like structuralists, opportunists are willing to talk about events related to race, but only in ways that are comfortable for all sides. Members of this group have a negative reaction to just speaking in favor of the police or Blacks, for example, when discussing the unrest in Ferguson. When asked if she would talk about Ferguson in a sermon, Pastor Judy responded
Earlier in the interview, she expressed frustration with someone who only prayed for the police during an interfaith service and felt the need to balance his approach. By offending no one, opportunists attempt to reach everyone.

Opportunists don’t just market diversity, they enact it in visible ways in their pursuit of organizational legitimacy. Pastor Tom, a young White Conservative Protestant, valued staff diversity for the sake of gaining acceptance within his community.

So, because if people go in and they go, “Wow. Somebody that I kind of connect with visually is there.” “So, let’s reflect our community by our staff.” I think that’s valuable. The opportunists’ diversity discourse epitomizes commoditization. They talk about diversity and even lead multiracial organizations because that is what is best for organizational success. In a different market situation, they would choose a different strategy. Here Pastor Scott, a White Conservative Protestant, talks about meeting the needs of his community.

Now, if it – if it didn’t require multiethnic churches, it required an African-American Church or a Chinese-American Church, that’s what we would have done, and I would have brought a pastor on who would have been on my staff that’d been over that church. But, where – where there was diversity, we’d had probably a church like – like I am, like I have.

Opportunists do not hold structural views of race. Even though these pastors are willing to pursue diversity in visible and intentional ways, they do so while promoting individualistic attributions of racial inequality. Opportunists such as Pastor John, a White Catholic priest reflected on racism coming down to individual action. “I don’t believe
that, I don’t believe everybody’s a racist, I mean I think it’s a waste of time. There are bad people and there’s good people well…” Pastor Sam, a gregarious Conservative Protestant pastor with a boisterous laugh, conflated individual cultural experience with race, and despaired, as a White man, that he couldn’t reflect his cultural competence more visibly. “I’ve seen this—that people who kind of like, live cross-culturally, but, you know, you appear White in all circumstances. How do you kind fight back when people say, “You don’t understand”. Pastor Sam felt as though his experiences in other cultures qualified him to speak to the experience of a racial minority, and was disappointed others did not agree.

An important thing to realize about opportunists is that they are not disingenuous as they focus on marketing their organizations and their faith. By limiting potentially offensive topics and reaching out to a wide niche of potential attenders, opportunists attempt to provide needed religious services to the largest number of people. The survival of their religious organizations and their religion itself is more important to them than anything else, including racial justice.

**Assimilationists (n=24)**

I classify leaders with an individualistic view of racial inequality and limited diversity discourse as assimilationists. Assimilationists maintain their congregations by emphasizing similarities in Christ. These leaders promote values in line with what Becker (1998) found in her ethnography of two philosophically different churches located in Oak Park, Chicago. Within those churches, differences were downplayed, and any speech or
activity that could lead to division was avoided. Assimilationists have colorblindness as a goal and feel that those wanting to discuss race are creating unnecessary divisions. Mainline Protestant Pastor Shad, a shy White Southerner, blamed an external source for the continuing significance of race, “Yeah, well I think media and culture wants to keep these divisions and um…and um…I think um…I think they’re not necessarily you know…I think at the end of the day um…we all kind of want the same thing um…and especially as Christians.” Pastor Vince, a Black Conservative Protestant, agreed on the influence of media, “And – and I think, mostly, you know, the – the – it’s, uh, the media sensationalizes, um, the race wars and everything that’s going on now for the sake of viewership, and just causing controversy, man, I feel like. Do you know what I mean?” Assimilationists feel that race could disappear if only people would not focus on it.

Assimilationists appeal to universal democratic values within their congregations and do not believe that special programs are needed to foster diversity. According to Pastor Kendrick, a Bi-racial Conservative Protestant, “This is the church. To say, um, “Look at what God will do. Look at the miracles God has performed. When we put people - we don’t care if people are White or Black.” The same programs are assumed to work equally for people of all races. Assimilationists are clear that congregants are expected to fit in to the dominant style of worship. Pastor Mike, an Asian American Conservative Protestant emphasized that although his church was diverse, there was no change to the style of service to accommodate that diversity. “Probably our default identity is ya know, probably the White middle class type style… even though our church is multiethnic, we are probably monocultural. Does that make sense?”
For most assimilationists, it is not appropriate to discuss issues of race within the church. Such issues are considered “ politicized,” and outside of the church’s concerns. Pastor Kris, a committed Indian Catholic was clear he did not see any room in worship services for discussions of Ferguson.

Q: Gotcha. So do you ever talk about political or racial issues like immigration or like what’s happening in the Ferguson/New York stuff? Do you ever talk about that during your worship service? 
A: Not from the pulpit.
Q: Okay.
A: Anything that has to do with political stuff we intentionally um, uh – do not address things that are politicized

For assimilationists, talking about race is on par with talking about political candidates, which is illegal for 501(c)(3) organizations, the not for profit type of most churches. No assimilationists make a link between racial equality and religious issues of justice, as occurs with structuralists.

Understandings of race and racial inequality within this group are individualistic; the vast majority are unable to think of any impact race has on their lives outside of what they like to eat. The few assimilationists willing to talk about race with their congregations promote this individualistic view. For example, Pastor Vince reported publically justifying the shooting in Ferguson, as well as a beating Pastor Vince himself experienced at the hands of the police, as caused by disrespect for authority.

If we would just respect the authorities that we’ve been given in the country, you know, I think that it – we wouldn’t get to the tasings and the chokings, and the shootings. Do you know what I mean? 
Q: Yeah.
A: But, um, I say, “Tupac killed Mike Brown.” You know, that’s one thing I told them, “I feel like, you know, Tupac—” 
Q: Explain that.
A: Tupac said, you know, in his music, “F the police,” you know, and our culture grew up hearing “F the police” and seeing Tupac shooting the cops and, um, the – the hip-hop culture has made us feel like the cops are the enemy; but, if you look at, um, Romans 13:1-7, it just speaks on any authority that’s been given through the government, has been given by God. You know, God ordained these people to be in that position and they’re – if you do the right things, they’re here for your good

For the assimilationist, all societal issues can be tackled via individual heart change. If there is an unjust occurrence, it is likely the result of someone’s failure to follow scripture, as in Pastor Vince’s assertion above. Police involved violence results from an individual’s failure to obey the authorities. Teaching the scripture, therefore, becomes an adequate solution to the issues faced by congregants.

Conformists (n=15)

Conformists evidence structural views of race in personal comments or activities outside of church, but report limited diversity discourse in their congregations. This smallest group is characterized by constraint, and provides a clear example of Edwards’ (2014 p. 58) assertion that “an individual-level approach to understanding their leadership overlooks an important social reality—that head clergy are embedded in and constrained by social structure.” Conformists feel an imbalance of power relative to their congregation, and as a result do not openly express their understandings of race and racial inequality. For White pastors, this silence about race comes from a self-perceived lack of cultural capital that disqualifies them from leading effectively on race. Pastor Mitch, a White Conservative Protestant in a dense urban area, stated “Um- maybe, maybe
someone would be better suited then me to lead this multiracial church, but God has called me here and now and I’m going to do the best that I can.” Similarly, Pastor Diane, a White Mainline Protestant, sighed deeply at many questions, as though weighed down by leading a diverse church. She was at a loss about how to talk about Ferguson, despite her desire.

"We’ve – we’ve really got to do something as a church. We’ve got to figure out something, but we’ve got to come up with a process by which these things are – that - that we are educated and that we can help each other see through each other’s eyes.

Conformists have a structural view of race, even volunteering on community issues related to racial equality, such as police reform. These views, or anything provocative, do not make their way into the pulpit. For example, Mainline Protestant Pastor Jim, a nerdy but compassionate White pastor, tried to insert his racial attitudes in a sermon without provoking ire. In seeking to avoid offense, he obscured his message about race to only be understood by those already agreeing with him.

"I’m a little more - I tend to - I tend to be, you know, kind of like, uh, “Let the people who have ears to hear let them hear,” kind of thing. Right. So, if you’re paying attention for it, it’s definitely there. And you can definitely, um, I mean, I’m not – not hiding it, uh, but, you know. I mean, like, so I will. So, there will be some. Might be some very strong illusions to situations like the Israelites who had been enslaved by the Babylonians and then taken away. “And, what that – what does being enslaved for hundreds of years and how does that change your outlook about what deliverance looks like?” Right?. So, people who understood what that reference was about and could see a clear analogy to our 21st Century American situation would be able to see that. Other folks who might be less sensitive to that would not have picked up on that.

Jim did not see expecting congregants to connect Babylonian exile to 21st century racism as a stretch too far. Yet, the fact that he connects the two shows a clear understanding of racial inequality.
Conformists of color comprise about half the group. They note their position within the racial hierarchy and adjust their behavior accordingly to be accepted by their congregants. When asked why she didn’t talk about events related to race, Pastor Kelly, an Afro-Caribbean Mainline Protestant responded, “I don’t address them because I don’t think it’s where the congregation wants to go. Um…should I be addressing them? Probably. Maybe it’s because I’m partly uncomfortable with it.” Her discussion of race was dependent on what the congregation deemed acceptable. Pastor Matt, a Black Mainline Protestant with an engaging personality, was even more explicit that he cannot talk about certain issues from the pulpit because of his race.

A: Right. Right. Yeah. PC is always, uh, something I got to be careful of. Politically correct.
Q: Yeah. I hear you. Okay. Tell me about like why? How are you sort of – give me an example of something you’ve been careful on, and how often are you careful?
A: I’m careful all the time. [Laughter].
Q: Yeah. [Laughter].
A: Particularly – particularly in the pulpit. Particularly in the pulpit. I’m careful all the time, but particularly in the pulpit. Now, you get me in a – you get me in a small group, it might be different.
Q: Yeah. And so, um, do you get, uh, less PC where you’re in a, um, do you feel like your get less PC when you’re around a group of Black congregants or are you just PC all the time?
A: I’m less PC around African-Americans

The conformist’s limited approach to diversity within their congregations can allow racial divisions between attenders to stand. Similar to assimilationists, conformists appeal to universalist democratic values when instructing their congregations. Here Pastor Kelly addressed issues of intergroup interaction in her diverse congregation, but
talked about hospitality rather than what may be creating “affinity” between certain congregants.

That I’m pretty strong on but as far as...because I have not seen...at least...it hasn’t been obvious to me that anybody in here has discriminated against anybody else because of their ethnicity. I see how they welcome visitors. It does not matter. Um...everybody will go up to them and greet them at the peace. People will help usher them to coffee hour. Now, when they get to coffee hour that’s a whole different thing because people then go to their affinity groups, but it has nothing to do with their ethnicity. It’s the fact that they are new so they’re not necessarily part of one of those groups. So I...I also address hospitality, you know. Is it hospitable to do blah, blah, blah?

[Laughter]

Pastor Kelly, having already noted her discomfort talking about race in the church, preferred to address this challenge to diversity as a hospitality issue. Conformists are indirect about diversity, at least with their congregations, but their deeply held values may ascertained by congregants who already think about race and racial inequality structurally.

These archetypes show the broad variation found in pastors of multiracial churches. Except for the mostly White leaders categorized as opportunists, race is not a significant factor in determining the leader archetype. Similarly, leaders from all three types of churches, Catholic, Mainline Protestant, and Conservative Protestant, are found in all the archetypes. Structural attributions of racial inequality characterize both structuralists and conformists, who have an orientation towards racial justice. The difference between them is how this orientation shows up in their congregations. While structuralists implement a substantive diversity discourse that focuses on
including all present, conformists shy away from talking about diversity or race at all because they feel limited by their congregation’s needs. The other two archetypes, opportunists and assimilationists, have individualistic views on racial inequality, but express these views somewhat differently. Opportunists see race as analogous to culture, and emphasize difference as attractive without reference to racial inequality. This is expressed in a commoditized diversity discourse that uses the presence of diversity as a marketing tool. Finally, assimilationists believe that race is a false construct, best ignored, and implement a colorblind diversity discourse to downplay it.

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Table 1. Summary of Leader Typology

Comparison to Congregant Typology

In *The Elusive Dream*, Edwards devised a typology of interracial church attendees. Her typology focused on the maintenance of White hegemony within these organizations and was race-based. Whites were classified as “experimenters,” “conditional believers,” or “structuralists.” These groups varied in relation to their commitment to interracial church. Of these, only structuralists were willing to “affirm
religio-cultural preferences of African Americans” (Edwards 2008, p. 131). African Americans too were divided into 3 archetypes. “Defectors” were the largest group and prioritized the religious structure of the group, rather than diversity. “Disillusioned integrationists” were former defectors who had come to appreciate racial diversity, but were not willing to make sacrifices to maintain it. The smallest group were advocates who value diversity and were “willing to acquiesce to White to keep them in the church” (Edwards 2008, p. 131).

Contrasting the present study’s typology of leaders with Edwards’ typology of congregants reveals instructive differences between the two groups. Firstly, race is only a factor in one of my four archetypes, while Edwards’ typology is based around race. This may indicate that social categories become a less pronounced factor for leaders as they make decisions concerning the needs of the organization. Secondly, leaders appear more committed to multiracial churches than congregants. The structuralist and advocate archetypes in Edwards’ scheme are the most highly committed congregants, but also the smallest groups. The largest group of leaders in the current sample falls into the structuralist archetype, which is the most highly committed to multiracial churches. Structuralists are likely to remain committed to promoting diversity within the church even if it causes some congregant backlash. This may have implications for the longevity of multiracial congregations; if structuralist leaders push for more sacrifice than congregants are willing to tolerate, organizational viability is threatened.

Thirdly, high levels of commitment to the multiracial church on the part of leaders and congregants may not lead them to the same course of action. When highly committed
structuralist leaders interact with highly committed attenders, the two can be working at cross purposes. One example of this was seen in the interview of Pastor Nick. Nick is a White Mainline Protestant who displayed a prominent diversity discourse and often discussed issues of racial inequality within his congregation. Pastor Nick’s level of inclusion made some congregants of color nervous because they desired not to make Whites in their congregation uncomfortable.

And it got complicated because um some of our members sort of got permission from me or felt permission from me and to be more Afro centric. So we are not an Afro centric church, but they began to wear more Afro centric stuff. The people that gave them the flak were the Black members rather than the White members. So that was a learning from me. So a couple of them were saying “Well, yeah, our goal is to make you feel comfortable, the White man feel comfortable.”

In this example, Pastor Nick was acting as an structuralist, displaying a prominent diversity discourse that sought to include the needs of African American members of the congregation. Some of his advocate congregants, however, recognized that his stance might make Whites in the congregation uncomfortable and asked him to bring the congregation back in line with Whites’ expectations. This is another example of the difficulties leaders may face in challenging dominant diversity discourse.
Discussion

Multiracial religious organizations have a mixed record of promoting structural attributions of racial inequality within their membership (Emerson and Smith 2000, Cobb, Perry and Dougherty, 2015). Without grounding in a structural understanding of race, multiracial organizations are likely to reify the existing racial hierarchy (Dovidio, Gaertner, and Saguy 2015). Contemporary diversity discourse has contributed to this problem by failing to attend to structural inequality, commoditizing racial minorities, and advocating numerical, rather than substantive, diversity. It is argued that leaders, as shapers of organizational discourse, could be instrumental in bringing systemic issues of race to light.

For leaders to change diversity discourse, the leaders themselves would have to hold a structural view of racial inequality. To date, few studies have been completed on racial attitudes of leaders. In addition, leaders would have to be “agents of change” rather than “cogs in the machine” (Srivastava and Sherman 2015). In other words, leaders would need the agency to present a diversity discourse that speaks to racial inequality while maintaining their organization. If leaders are entirely constrained by broader cultural expectations regarding diversity discourse, role expectations of their members and organizations, and limitations on their leadership due to their position in the
racial hierarchy, leaders’ individual attitudes would matter little; they would be unable to influence change.

Evidence for the role of leaders as potential agents of change is somewhat hopeful here, in that a plurality of leaders do hold to structural attributions of racial inequality and report a diversity discourse consistent with these structural views. Leaders classified here as structuralists implement a substantive diversity discourse which would be conducive to inclusion and advancement of minority groups within their organizations. Interestingly, racial identity does not factor prominently in which leaders are structuralists. That having a leader of color alone does not determine outcomes agrees with findings that having a CEO of color does not alone correlate with better diversity outcomes in businesses (Cook and Glass 2015).

Although race is not a significant factor for this group, that does not mean biography is unimportant. The structuralists in this study spoke convincingly about what race meant in their own lives and implemented substantive diversity in a manner qualitatively different than the business decision makers found in Berrey’s (2015) investigation of diversity. Background is a potential explanation for this difference because business leaders come from a narrow band of schools and backgrounds that may constrain their ability to understand race structurally (Ho 2009, Rivera 2015). Religious organizations conversely, afford marginalized persons high status leadership positions (Edwards 2008). Multiracial organizations in fields where a broader cross-section of people lead may be more likely to promote structural understandings of racial inequality.
Tension between racial attitudes and diversity discourse was seen in nearly half of the leaders interviewed. Most of the time, this was seen in leaders speaking about diversity prominently while maintaining individualistic racial attitudes that mimic contemporary diversity discourse. Of the potential reasons for this mismatch, including the leaders’ social category and the racial composition of their organization, the most significant was a focus on organizational survival. The opportunists in this study were driven by perceived high levels of competition in their organizational field. Their interest in legitimation of their firms, or even their faith, was propelled by destabilization in their environment such as increased secularization in society or increased racial diversity in their surrounding community. This created a desire to mimic diversity discourse in broader society without regard to their personal beliefs. Notably, this group was nearly all White. Their homogeneity suggests that only a leader dominant in the racial hierarchy can use diversity discourse legitimate his/her organization.

This study is limited in that it examines the self-reported speech of leaders, rather than their actions or the impact of their speech on the members of their organizations. Phase two of the RLDP will enable further investigation of these topics. In addition, the typology defined in this study does not reveal whether one type of leadership is preferable to another. For example, structuralist leaders might be so focused on impacting racial inequality that they neglect organizational survival. If structuralists are unable to keep congregations together, they may ultimately undermine their efforts to promote racial justice in multiracial congregations.
Despite these qualifications, this study advances our understandings of leadership within multiracial organizations. The head clergy leading this broad sample of congregations employ very different strategies in diversity discourse. These differences may be a reason that the effects of multiracial congregations are not consistent across studies. Leaders who are opportunists, conformists, and assimilationists largely reinforce dominant diversity narratives which ignore structural racial inequality. Only structuralists present a substantive diversity discourse that includes all present and a structural perspective on racial inequality to their congregants. As a result, variation in racial attitudes of congregants should be anticipated. The presence of a multiethnic congregation alone does not alter racial attitudes, but the processes and messages employed within a multiracial congregation may.
Conclusion

My findings arguably have relevance for the broader study of organizations. Although religious organizations may be distinct in that they are voluntary associations, church employees have similar experiences to employees in similarly sized-businesses (Boggs and Fields 2010, Wood and Fields 2007). Leaders of religious and secular organizations alike face challenges of determining their organization’s niche, managing bureaucratic structures, and promoting organizational culture. This study’s findings on diversity discourse underscore those similarities when compared to previous investigations. Except for structuralists, the diversity discourse of leaders in this study parallels that in Embrick’s (2007) study of business leaders; both types of leaders rarely focus on structural racial inequality. In addition, the leaders in this study mirror societal diversity discourse in choosing colorblind or commoditized discourses. Religious organizations are conducive to the study of leadership in diversity as a rapidly increasing number of them are multiracial and there are no legal constraints prompting diversity as with equal employment laws in workplaces. As a result, the role of leaders can be better disentangled from other influences. The sociology of religion has long borrowed from organizational theory (Scheitle and Dougherty 2008), leaders’ impact on diversity is an area where the inverse may be instructive.
Leaders of multiracial organizations show significant variation in their racial attitudes and diversity discourse. These differences could make a difference in how numerical diversity in organizations ultimately plays out. Multiracial organizations could ameliorate racial inequality, but if the structural nature of this inequality is ignored within diversity discourse, multiracial organizations may instead recreate inequality. To the extent that leadership can change this pattern, this study finds a number of leaders able, and even more willing, to do so in their discourse.
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