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Abstract

Factors beside material self-interest may explain public attitudes toward cross-community sharing of resources in metropolitan areas. This article considers whether religion is a factor that influences public support for this regional perspective. Employing original survey data from metropolitan areas in Georgia, it examines the effects of religious tradition and religious salience on the breadth and strength of public support for the regional perspective, holding other factors constant (e.g., suburban residence and homeownership). The findings provide evidence that the choices people may make in metropolitan areas regarding whether to commune with others are open to multiple sources of influence, inclusive of religion.

Keywords

religion, regional governance, metropolitan area, defensive localism, suburb, city, public attitude

Communities sharing metropolitan areas should share resources to solve collective problems (Downs 1973, 1994; Orfield 1998; Weir 2000; Dreier,

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Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001; Weir, Holman, and Swanstrom 2005; Pastor, Benner, and Matsuoka 2009; Pavel and Anthony 2009). This normative claim is what Downs (1994, 183) calls the “regional perspective.” Yet defensive localism—the decisions of institutions (legislatures) and the attitudes of individuals (voters) that prevent purposive redistribution of resources from one community to another community within the same metropolitan area—is a barrier to advancing the regional perspective (Danielson 1976; Weir 1994, 1996; Orfield 1998; Cashin 2000; Norris 2001). Often, but not always, such defensive localism is “premised upon hoarding resources for one’s own community” (Lipsitz 2004, 518). Informed by normative and theoretical arguments for interlocal cooperation within metropolitan areas (Downs 1973; Swanstrom 1996; Orfield 1998; Steinacker 2004) as well as calls for studies of the intersection of cultural differences and local decision making (Sharp 2007), this article studies whether religion is a factor alongside material self-interest that influences support for the regional perspective. It tests whether religious traditions and religious salience, in particular, affect the breadth and strength of public support for the regional perspective.

A study of religion in relation to the regional perspective fits with calls for urban affairs scholars to attend more to the broader influences and manifestations of religious behavior, belief, and belonging in the metropolis (Ramsay 1998; Gamm 1999; Crawford and Olson 2001; Diamond 2003; Pratt 2004; Owens 2007; Djupe and Olson 2007; Swarts 2008) and for scholars of religion to attend more to urban politics and community conflicts over the mobilization and distribution of resources for collective action (Djupe and Olson 2007; Owens 2007). A study of religion also dovetails with appeals to social scientists to determine the existence and effects of postmaterialist values on political attitudes and behavior (Davis 2000). Yet a focus on religion is unconventional given that scholars of the regional perspective tend to study institutions over individuals. Moreover, when they focus on individuals and attitudes, scholars primarily study correlations between demographic attributes and attitudes supporting policy choices consonant with the regional perspective (e.g., growth controls) without conceptualization and measurement of cross-community transfers of resources to address collective problems and often to the exclusion of culture and values as explanatory variables (e.g., Collins 1975; Gainsborough 2002; Steinacker 2004; Wassmer and Lascher 2006).

Positing that dimensions of religion may generate and cleave support for the regional perspective, this article focuses on the potential of religion at the organizational and individual levels (i.e., identification and affiliation with

particular religious traditions and the salience of religion in guiding personal decisions) to influence public attitudes concerning collective problem solving in metropolitan areas. It employs multivariate analysis of original survey data from a random sample of adults living in 15 metropolitan areas in the state of Georgia in 2008. Its particular findings suggest that religious affiliations with evangelical Protestantism and Catholicism, along with religious salience in terms of the degree of religious guidance for daily living, affect support for the regional perspective. In addition, the findings confirm that material self-interest such as homeownership, along with gender and partisanship, influence the breadth and strength of support for the regional perspective at the individual level. Furthermore, suburban residence may increase broad support for the general idea of the regional perspective while weakening support for key policies that would advance cross-community sharing of resources.

Beyond raising new questions for consideration and providing measures of the regional perspective (and defensive localism), the findings show that the choices metropolitan residents may make in terms of communing with others are open to multiple sources of influence, inclusive of religion. As well, the findings enhance our understanding of how religion at the individual level may increase or diminish religious resources for affecting policy choices on behalf of communities sharing metropolitan areas.

Religion in Relation to the Regional Perspective

Generally, the literature on defensive localism as an attitude and its effect on the enactment of policies consonant with the regional perspective addresses the role of self-interest in value formation and political behavior (Downs 1994; Orfield 1997; Weir 2000; Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001). It emphasizes the four Es of arguing for the regional perspective in the United States: efficiency, equity, economic interdependence and competitiveness, and environmental concern. The slow diffusion of the regional perspective as measured by policy changes implies that it is necessary but not sufficient to base arguments for cross-community sharing of resources on those categories of concern (Downs 1973; Swanstrom 1996; Bollens 2003). Accordingly, some contend that arguments for cross-community sharing of resources need to resonate with deeply held values alongside or beyond self-interest such as moral or religious values such as stewardship (Orfield 1998). They aver that “right values will lead to the right social [and political] arrangements” (Kleidman 2004, 411).

Religion may be one of multiple factors that assist in developing and applying reason beyond self-interest as well as informing and affecting preferences

and behaviors for individuals and institutions regarding public decisions, especially decisions involving metropolitan matters of race, space, and inequality. This is not a new notion. During the 1970s, for instance, as suburbs began to boom and cities began to go bust, Christian theologians inquired into the potential of religious teachings and guidance to develop a “responsible suburban church” to affect the suburban attitudes and behaviors of Whites in relation to race and inequality in the metropolis (Noyce 1970). They reasoned that religion at the individual and organizational levels of congregations, denominations, and other faith-based organizations affected the values that people sharing a metropolitan area hold. The reasoning fit the expectation that moral preferences and decisions are open to influence, and it coheres with findings that religion at the individual and organizational levels influences the political preferences and behaviors of individuals and communities.

For some individuals, religion is the fountainhead from which their political preferences and behaviors in relation to public policies emerge (Djupe and Gilbert 2003, 2009). It provides resources for inviting collective thinking about and subsequent engagement with public issues (Greenawalt 1988; Porpora 2001). This is consistently and routinely confirmed by studies of how dimensions of religious values, experiences, and practices by individuals and organizations affect the “formation of citizen’s politics” (Djupe and Gilbert 2009, 8), inclusive of vote choice, protest mobilization, and the development of political leaders in communities (e.g., Morgan and Meier 1980; Hart 1992; Djupe and Grant 2001; Pratt 2004; Djupe and Olson 2007; Owens 2007; Djupe and Gilbert 2009; Djupe and Grant 2001). Yet not all individuals open to religious influence are similarly affected by it, especially not politically.

“Religious people not only differ widely in the kinds of guidance they think they receive from religious sources,” as Greenawalt (1988, 34) observes, “they vary in degrees of confidence they assign to their conclusions.” Hence, religious salience and religious traditions may not necessarily elicit what Etzioni (1990, 45) terms “ethical decisions” by individuals sharing a metropolitan area; religion may not influence the choices by individuals (and institutions) that uphold rules of behavior and “entail some restraint of impulse, delay of gratification, or considerable effort.” In addition, religious values like all “moral values are necessary, indeed inescapable, for policy deliberations to occur; but they are neither sufficient nor does their authority trump other forms of authority” (Coffin 2000, 129).

It is plausible that religion negatively affects individual attitudes, especially those of suburban and exurban residents, about sharing resources across communities in a common locale. Adherents of some religious traditions may

practice behaviors and hold viewpoints consonant with defensive localism. White mainline Protestants, Jews, and Catholics, for instance, were among the groups that fled to (or remained in) the suburbs in their quest for security from the social ills and burdens of cities and opportunities to create new communities of interest and control (Sennett 1970a, 1970b; Gamm 1999).¹ Their pursuit of better environs from residential, cultural, economic, and political perspectives then, which is also true of the evangelical Protestants who followed and often leapfrogged mainline Protestants and Jews, may influence their thinking about being (and choices to remain) politically and fiscally apart from cities now. It may also influence the perspectives and practices of their religious organizations, especially their congregations, in ways that hinder their support of the regional perspective and prevent their participation in campaigns pushing it.

In addition, support for the regional perspective requires a willingness to collaborate and trust others. But religious traditions yield varying degrees of openness to and trust of others and different forms of social capital and political action (Wuthnow and Evans 2002; Beyerlein and Chaves 2003; Beyerlein and Hipp 2005, 2006; Blanchard 2007). Putnam (2000, 77–78), for example, finds that Christians who are “evangelicals are more likely to be involved in activities within their own religious community [and more likely to generate and possess bonding capital] but are less likely to be involved in the broader community . . . [while] mainline Protestants and Catholics are more likely to be involved in volunteering and service in the wider community,” particularly in ways yielding bridging capital inviting collaboration among different groups. The variation in trust and social capital production may influence cooperation with others as well as affect contact with and recognition of certain problems as collective problems, thereby affecting collective action, such as cross-community sharing of resources, to address metropolitan problems and influencing the endurance of problems in the metropolis.

Furthermore, religion might not induce positive support for the regional perspective because religious adherents may not be proximate to or concerned about problems in other communities. Studies of community conflict in metropolitan areas and the potential of religious adherents to reduce it find a direct correlation between the spatial proximity of religious leaders to problems requiring collective action at the community level and the attention by and willingness of religious leaders to assist in addressing the problems (Sokhey 2007). Also, some religious adherents, particularly White evangelical Protestants, hold beliefs about the causes of socioeconomic and spatial inequality common to metropolitan areas that favor individual-level responses over systemic or institutional actions by government to reduce disparities

(Emerson and Smith 2001). However, religion can create resources for collective action that may influence private and public decisions and the contexts in which individuals and institutions make decisions (Owens 2007).

Generally, religion at the individual and organizational levels provides “opportunities and information that help structure the civic engagement and political opinions” by religious adherents and others (Djupe and Grant 2009, 4). Diamond (2003, chap. 5), for instance, shows in his analysis of the adoption of Unigov in Indianapolis during the 1960s that policy makers favoring a regional perspective and their supporters strategically based their appeals for consolidated city–county government on religious tenets and directed them at religious congregations and leaders, seeing them as conduits for spreading the information and culling support for the regional perspective among their members and other religious adherents. They employed religion at the organizational and individual levels to assist people in forming their decisions about what would be best for their communities. Thus, borrowing from Greenawalt (1988, 32), “rather than prescribing behavior, religious sources may recommend attitudes of heart and mind, such as injunctions to love one’s neighbor or one’s enemies, or they may indicate whether what many people regard as goods really are worth attaining.” Orfield (1998, 169–70), one of the foremost advocates of interlocal sharing of resources within metropolitan areas, applies this argument in an evocative way:

Churches and other houses of worship and religious organizations can bring a powerful new dimension to the debate—the moral dimension. How moral is it, they will ask, to divide a region into two communities, one prospering and enjoying all the benefits of metropolitan citizenship while the other bears most of its burdens? How moral is it to strand the region’s poor people on a melting ice floe of resources at the region’s core, or to destroy forests and farmland while older cities decline?

Moral consideration and argument placed within religious frames and used by religious leaders and the laity might invite individuals to form new considerations of the problems of cities and the responsibilities of suburbs (Downs 1973; Dittes 1973; Amerson 1976; Ramsay 1998). Moreover, they may permit old considerations of cities, suburbs, and metropolitan areas to include moral and theological reasoning, in addition to rational choices and individual responsibilities for the collective good.

Even if the influence of religion on the development of a regional perspective among individuals may be limited, mobilizing the cultural and material

resources of religion at the organizational level can influence the effectiveness of campaigns advocating for policy choices that cohere with the regional perspective. Through what Swarts (2008, xvi) describes as the “combination of democratic deliberation, intensive leadership development, and a praxis that links the strategic pursuit of power to shared religious values,” faith-based regional equity coalitions have demonstrated success at influencing political decisions regarding interlocal sharing of resources, regional transportation, workforce development, and education reform, to name a few policy areas (Warren 2001; Wood 2002; Swarts 2008; Pastor, Benner, and Matsuoka 2009). Plus, there is widespread evidence from other initiatives to foster metropolitan cooperation and to pursue social justice to better community outcomes for disadvantaged groups relying on them that the religious resources of congregations, denominations, and other types of faith-based organizations often prove invaluable to pushing and achieving political change (Crawford and Olson 2001; Diamond 2003; Pratt 2004; Owens 2007; Djupe and Olson 2007).

Hypotheses

Religion at the individual and organizational levels should be consequential to advancing (or retarding) political perspectives and agendas in the metropolis. This should apply to public support for the regional perspective. In particular, affiliations with particular religious traditions and the salience of religion should affect public attitudes toward the notion that communities sharing metropolitan areas should share resources to solve collective problems.

Religious tradition hypothesis. Like memberships in social networks generally (Putnam 2000), affiliations with particular religious traditions (i.e., groupings of religious adherents sharing a similar and historic set of religious and political orientations derived from participation or connection to particular religious institutions) influence how people think about politics. The literature consistently confirms the effect of religious traditions on political attitudes and behavior (Kellstedt et al. 1996; Steensland et al. 2000; Wuthnow and Evans 2002; Beyerlein and Chaves 2003; Hinojosa and Park 2004; Beyerlein and Hipp 2005, 2006; Blanchard 2007; Doherty, Johnson, and Polson 2007). It demonstrates that religious affiliations shape how we define problems, influence our opinions about how to resolve problems, and affect our willingness and likelihood of cooperating with others to solve problems. Accordingly, and in line with the positions of scholars who believe that “denominations, and especially religious traditions are [rich] proxies for the political messages to which committed individual should be exposed”

(Djupe and Gilbert 2009, 249), I predict that religious tradition will influence the breadth and strength of the regional perspective at the individual level. My hypothesis is that individuals belonging to more liberal religious traditions generally possessing larger stores of bridging social capital than bonding social capital and traditions associated with support for economic redistribution and concern for reducing inequality through government action will express greater support for the regional perspective than those affiliated with more conservative religious traditions. Here "more liberal religious traditions" refers to mainline Protestants, Black Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. They are more likely than evangelical Protestants to favor social welfare policies benefiting cities and the poor and to get involved in political action in support of their causes (Gainsborough 2001; Wuthnow and Evans 2002; Beyerlein and Chaves 2003; Owens 2007). Moreover, advocates for the regional perspective often mobilize and leverage the resources of these religious traditions to start, expand, and sustain their campaigns (Warren 2001; Wood 2002; Swarts 2008; Pastor, Benner, and Matsuoka 2009).

Religious salience hypothesis. The salience of religion for individuals influences how they respond to a range of issues, inclusive of religious, social, and political issues (Kellstedt et al. 1996; Layman 2001). By *religious salience* I mean the perceived importance of religion in shaping the lives of individuals and/or its perceived relevance to the attitudes and actions of individuals (Guth and Green 1993, 158). For my purposes, I pursue the general proposition that regardless of religious tradition people who perceive their decisions guided greatly by religion tend to favor sharing more than hoarding. I hypothesize that individuals who make decisions guided by their religion will have a broader and stronger regional perspective than those who are less or not at all guided by religion when it comes to choices about their lives. The hypothesis is informed by the argument that religious salience in a general way affects values that are commonly linked to religious tenets and directives and the less proximate "issues are from tenets of faith . . . the less impact general salience will have" (Guth and Green 1993, 160).² In the case of the regional perspective and defensive localism, religious salience should positively influence support for interlocal sharing of resources, if we accept sharing to be a general religious imperative. This is plausible given that appeals to share cut across religious traditions (e.g., benevolence in Christianity, *zakat* or almsgiving in Islam, and *tzedakah* in Judaism) and function as universal imperatives for creating and maintaining community through assistance to others, and religious traditions deem transfers of resources to those in need as divine (Armstrong 1994).

Data and Measures

Conventional public opinion surveys with national samples do not include measures of support for the regional perspective. They do not include data on attitudes toward taxes that consider the geographic distribution of expenditures at the local level or between communities sharing metropolitan areas. Fielding a new national survey was cost prohibitive. My data are from a state-wide survey of residents in Georgia. I contracted with the Survey Research Center at the University of Georgia to include a set of questions on one of its biannual polls of Georgia residents in 2008.³ The data I employ here are from a subsample of 420 residents of 15 metropolitan areas. The data may not be generalizable to residents of all metropolitan areas in the United States but offer leverage for theory building and empirical testing.

Dependent variables. The first dependent variable measures the general degree to which respondents possess a regional perspective. Respondents were asked, "Do you think that the suburban, city, and county governments in your area should *share* their financial resources and work with each other (1) to protect and preserve the natural environment such as air, water, and green space, (2) to develop and implement a regional plan to reduce traffic congestion and suburban sprawl, and (3) to expand access to good jobs and better housing for low-income families living in cities and in suburbs?" Posed as three separate questions, respondents were instructed to answer yes or no for each issue area. Responses were summed to create an additive regional perspective index that identifies breadth of support for the perspective. Scores range from 0 to 3. Higher values equal a broader regional perspective at the individual level; lower values correspond to a narrower perspective.

The second dependent variable taps attitudes about the distribution of resources from one community to another community. My measure gauges the strength of support for a form of cross-community sharing of resources that is often central to arguments about and opposition to adopting the regional perspective, namely interlocal sharing of tax revenue. Respondents were asked to express the strength of their approval or disapproval of their local elected officials voting for legislation that would allow local governments in their area to increase taxes to pay for regional programs to expand access to good jobs and better housing for low-income families in (1) their own communities and (2) the communities of others.⁴ Their degree of approval for favoring a tax for helping low-income families in communities *other* than their own is a metric of the strength of their support for increased taxation for cross-community spending.

Independent variables. I measure Protestant Christian religious traditions with conventional dichotomous measures of religious belonging (Layman 2001) created by collapsing a set of 26 denominational categories available to respondents in the survey into three distinct categories of Protestantism: evangelical Protestant (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*), mainline Protestant (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*), and Black Protestant (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*). I also include a dummy variable for Catholic (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*). The numbers of Jews, Muslims, and other religious adherents in the Georgia sample were too small to permit their inclusion in the analysis as explanatory variables. Religious salience, following Guth and Green (1993), is measured by the degree to which religion guides the day-to-day lives of respondents (1 = *quite a bit or a great deal*, 0 = *none to some*) and is created by collapsing an ordinal variable with four categories (*a great deal, quite a bit, some, and none*).⁵

Acknowledging that a regional perspective is informed by an array of factors, with religion being but one of them, I account for the possibility of independent effects on the regional perspective from a set of residential, political, and demographic attributes. Suburban residence, in particular, should influence the regional perspective among individuals. People residing outside of cities but in metropolitan areas search for security from the heterogeneity, vagaries, and disorder of city life and their quest to preserve their economic, political, and civic autonomy (Sennett 1970a, 1970b; Abbott 1981; Kirp, Dwyer, and Rosenthal 1997; Basolo 2003; Barron and Frug 2005). Accordingly, "since [their] community's resources are perceived as belonging to its residents, outsiders cannot share in these resources without local consent," they may favor hoarding their resources from use by others (Danielson 1976, 40; also see Weir 1994, 338). Sharing resources to improve the conditions of central city residents, for example, financially costs suburban residents and yields little direct and quantifiable benefits to suburban communities. Residents of suburbs and exurbs may exercise their voices and votes "largely free from the need to adjust their interests to those of other local jurisdictions and residents in the metropolis" (Danielson 1976, 39). Thus suburban and exurban residents should express less support for the regional perspective (and greater defensive localism) than those residing in cities (Danielson 1976; Weir 1994; Gainsborough 2001). I measure place of residence through dummy variables: resident of suburb of a large city or suburban town (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*) and exurb (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*).⁶ Residents of cities regardless of size are the reference categories.⁷

In addition, I include a dichotomous measure for residence in a consolidated city-county government (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*), of which there are four such jurisdictions in Georgia, assuming that residents of areas where institutions derived from the regional perspective have been adopted will express broader

and stronger support for the regional perspective than residents of independent cities and unincorporated county areas. Also, I include a measure of homeownership (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*) to control for whether homeowners are less likely than renters to express broad and strong support for the regional perspective (Fischel 2001; Barreto, Marks, and Woods 2007).⁸

Guided by the empirical findings of political opposition to metropolitan governance by African-American voters and politicians opposing the adoption and implementation of institutions aligned with the regional perspective (Fleischman 2000; Savitch and Vogel 2004; Diamond 2003), I predict that race will influence support for the regional perspective. Racial minorities, especially those with high degrees of political incorporation in local government or residing in places with severe racial polarization, may act in a defensively local manner as a bulwark against the threat of regionalism as a political strategy to dilute their descriptive and substantive representation and diminish their influence over existing governmental resources (powell 2000; Fleischman 2000; Gainsborough 2002; Steinacker 2004). Racial minorities may oppose regionalism too because they recognize that the institutionalization of the regional perspective requires compromises that permit some resource inequalities and disparities of power to endure (Diamond 2003; Savitch and Vogel 2004). If so, Blacks should express less regionalism and greater defensive localism than Whites. Dummy variables for non-Hispanic Black respondents (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*), as well as other minority respondents inclusive of Latinos and Asians (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*), are included, with non-Hispanic Whites being the excluded category.

Furthermore, I expect gender (1 = *male*, 0 = *female*) to affect the likelihood of respondents to favor intrametropolitan sharing; men should be less likely than women to show broad and strong support for the regional perspective given that men express lesser support for government action generally (Schlesinger and Heldman 2001) and a greater unwillingness to pay for it to resolve problems (Alozie and McNamara 2010). Likewise, since the regional perspective generally aligns with support for redistribution of resources in some form, I anticipate that older respondents (measured in years) and higher-income respondents (income measured from low to high as less than \$25,000, \$25,000–\$50,000, and greater than \$50,000) will express narrower and weaker support for the regional perspective than younger respondents and lower-income respondents. I derive my expectations from studies of support for redistribution as measured by social responsibility (Bobo 1991), willingness to pay for municipal services (Steinacker 2001, 2004; Alozie and McNamara 2010), and general government spending on redistributive programs for the poor (Gainsborough 2001).

Finally, partisanship should affect attitudes toward cross-community sharing of resources. This is the case for attitudes toward redistribution generally (Gainsborough 2001), and it should be the case for intrametropolitan redistribution when it involves increased taxation for the purposes of addressing problems in communities other than one where respondents reside. I anticipate that Democrats (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*) will be more likely to favor intrametropolitan sharing while Republicans (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*) will be less likely to favor it. Independents are the reference category.

Findings

Public support for the regional perspective in metropolitan areas of Georgia is high. A clear majority agreed that the suburban, city, and county governments in their areas should share their financial resources and work with each other to protect and preserve the natural environment, to reduce traffic congestion and sprawl, and to expand access to good jobs and better housing for low-income families. Of the respondents from the 15 metropolitan areas in the state, 72% expressed the broadest regional perspective, measured as scoring a 3 on the regional perspective index. Just 2% of respondents did not support the regional perspective at all, negatively responding to all three questions composing the index.

Support of respondents remained high across the three areas for community collaboration, but their degree of support varied on the issues, showing greater support for the regional perspective to aid the natural environment than to aid poor people. Specifically, 69%, 62%, and 58% of respondents, respectively, agreed that local governments in their area should share their financial resources and cooperate for the purposes of protecting and preserving air, water, and green space, ameliorating congestion and sprawl, and expanding employment and housing opportunities for low-income families. Still, the main finding is that most respondents support the idea of cross-community planning and sharing of resources.

Comparing the religious traditions by the regional perspective index, Figure 1 shows that Black Protestants were the group with the greatest proportion of respondents (82%) having the broadest regional perspective, followed by Catholics (72%), mainline Protestants (70%), and evangelical Protestants (61%). This lends initial support to the propositions that adherents of more liberal religious traditions are more likely to favor the regional perspective than adherents of more conservative traditions. As for religious salience, the results (not shown) did not yield discernible differences between those whose decisions are guided strongly by their religion and those who are less or not at all

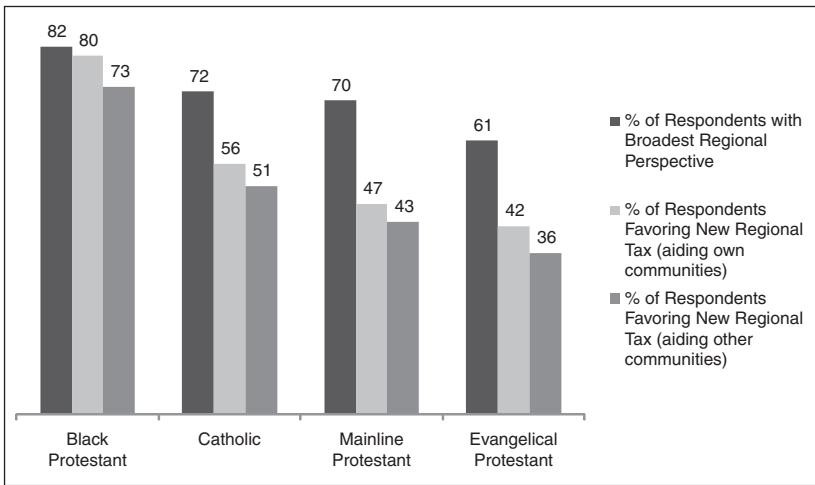


Figure 1. Support for the regional perspective by religious tradition
Source: 2008 Spring Georgia Poll.

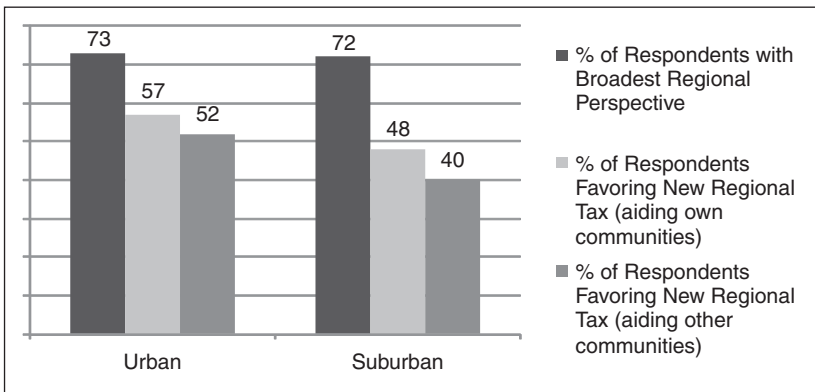


Figure 2. Residence and support for the regional perspective
Source: 2008 Spring Georgia Poll.

guided by religion when it comes to choices about their lives. The same was true for place of residence, with nearly identical proportions of urban and suburban respondents expressing the broadest regional perspective (see Figure 2).

Despite overall support for the regional perspective, respondents demonstrated defensive localism. While a large majority of respondents expressed the broadest regional perspective (i.e., scored a 3 on the regional perspective index), the size of that majority declined when respondents were asked if they favored increased taxation for interjurisdictional sharing of financial resources to solve problems in their own communities versus sharing resources to address problems in the communities of other people. In particular, 52% of respondents would approve or strongly approve of their local elected officials voting for legislation that would allow governments in their area to charge an additional one-penny sales tax to pay for regional programs to expand access to good jobs and better housing for low-income families in their communities, but the approval rate declined to 45% when respondents were aware that the increased revenue would help low-income families in communities other than their own.⁹

The same pattern of declining support for increased taxation for cross-community sharing occurred in relation to religious tradition and residence (Figures 1 and 2). Among Black Protestants, support for the legislation to increase taxes fell from 80% to 73% when the beneficiary of the tax switched from one's own community to the communities of others. Catholic support dropped from 56% to 51%, with support among mainline Protestants and evangelical Protestants decreasing 4 percentage points and 6 percentage points, respectively. On one hand, the results show that regardless of religious tradition respondents express defensive localism; most people would favor taxation for use in their own communities rather than in the communities of others. On the other hand, the degree of difference in their defensive localism suggests that the type of religious tradition influences attitudes about cross-community sharing of resources. We see, for instance, that a smaller proportion of adherents of more conservative religious traditions would favor regional perspective taxation than those from more liberal religious traditions. Turning to residential differences, among suburban residents (inclusive of those residing in suburbs of large cities, suburban towns, and exurbs) support for the proposed legislation declined from 48% to 40% compared to the dip in support from 57% to 52% for urban residents.¹⁰

We may draw three tentative conclusions from the descriptive statistics. First, support for the regional perspective is highest when framed in general terms that mask transfers of resources from one community to another in the same metropolitan area. Second, broad support for the regional perspective does not necessarily translate into strong support for particular manifestations of the regional perspective via policy choices such as the cross-community redistribution of tax revenues. Third, groups in metropolitan areas differ in

their support for the regional perspective, regardless of the measure used. Do the differences hold when controlling for other factors? Do the factors that predict general support for the regional perspective correlate with particular support for it in terms of the redistribution of specific resources across communities?

Table 1 reports the results of two ordered logit models. Ordered logit was an appropriate analytical tool given that it allows one to estimate the effects of independent variables on dependent variables measured as ordered categorical data. Model 1 shows the correlates of broad support for the regional perspective measured by scores on the index. Model 2 shows the correlates of strong support for the regional perspective as measured by support for increased taxation for interlocal sharing of resources to aid low-income families in communities other than those of respondents. The results of models 1 and 2 identify the effects of religious, residential, and demographic variables related to the regional perspective. To gauge the importance of these effects, Table 1 includes estimated predicted probabilities (and average changes). This permits a direct interpretation of the substantive effects of the predictor variables (holding other independent variables constant) on the likelihood of respondents scoring a 3 on the regional perspective and them strongly favoring interlocal sharing of tax revenue associated. Generally, the factors that predict broad support for the regional perspective are the factors that predict strong support for cross-community sharing of tax revenue to achieve particular goals within the metropolis. The religious measures yield mixed results.

The results from model 1 indicate that a mix of religious, residential, ideological, and demographic factors influence broad support for the regional perspective as measured by scores on the regional perspective index. First, the results support the religious traditions hypothesis to a degree. Individuals belonging to more conservative religious traditions associated with less bonding social capital among their adherents express a narrower regional perspective than those unaffiliated with more conservative religious traditions, holding constant other factors. There is a substantial inverse relationship between being an evangelical Protestant and having a broad regional perspective. Holding all other variables constant, a respondent who is an evangelical Protestant is 15% less likely to show the broadest support (a score of 3 on the index) for the regional perspective than a respondent who is not an evangelical Protestant. The effects of the remaining religious traditions in the model are indistinguishable from each other. This is surprising given extant research on the importance of Catholics and Black Protestants to progressive policy-making campaigns and candidates at the local level (Warren 2001; Wood 2002; Swarts 2008).

Table 1. Effect of Religious Tradition, Religious Guidance, and Other Factors on the Regional Perspective

	Model 1			Model 2		
	Regionalism Index (N = 310)			Cross-Community Tax Revenue Sharing (N = 355)		
	Coefficient (S.E.)	Average Change in Probability	Predicted Probability	Coefficient (S.E.)	Average Change in Probability	Predicted Probability
Evangelical Protestant	-0.8548** (0.4024)	0.0776	-0.1553	0.1239 (0.2809)	0.0123	0.0092
Mainline Protestant	-0.2729 (0.4485)	0.0236	-0.0472	0.3054 (0.2908)	0.0304	0.0242
Black Protestant	-0.6408 (0.7709)	0.0600	-0.1201	-0.0405 (0.4498)	0.0040	-0.0029
Catholic	-0.3220 (0.5357)	0.0284	-0.0568	0.7450** (0.3653)	0.0732	0.0701
Religious Guidance	0.8481** (0.3392)	0.0776	0.1553	-0.1355 (0.2303)	0.0135	-0.0102
Suburb	0.5646* (0.3046)	0.0452	0.0904	-0.4608** (0.2119)	0.0455	-0.0328
Exurb	0.1612 (0.5328)	0.0127	0.0254	-0.3800 (0.3660)	0.0370	-0.0244
Consolidated Area	0.2026 (0.8259)	0.0158	0.0316	0.2794 (0.4601)	0.0279	0.0227
Black	-0.1416 (0.6660)	0.0119	-0.0238	0.8993** (0.3981)	0.0881	0.0827

Continued

Table 1. Continued

	Model 1 Regionalism Index (N = 310)			Model 2 Cross-Community Tax Revenue Sharing (N = 355)		
	Coefficient (S.E.)	Average Change in Probability	Predicted Probability	Coefficient (S.E.)	Average Change in Probability	Predicted Probability
Male	-1.0908*** (0.2889)	0.0983	-0.1966	-0.6126** (0.2161)	0.0599	-0.0415
Income	-0.1186 (0.1951)	0.0193	-0.0387	-0.0898 (0.1428)	0.0178	-0.0132
Democrat	1.2367** (0.4624)	0.0895	0.1790	0.6136** (0.2667)	0.0608	0.0498
Republican	-0.7017** (0.3211)	0.0615	-0.1231	-0.0933 (0.2421)	0.0092	-0.0067
Age	0.0048 (0.0090)	0.0283	0.0566	-0.0020 (0.0062)	0.0145	-0.0106
Homeownership	-0.9547* (0.5565)	0.0648	-0.1296	-0.7549** (0.3165)	0.0743	-0.0685
cut1	-4.471496			-3.255971		
cut2	-3.309474			-1.591364		
cut3	-1.863815			-7.67495		
cut4				1.543404		
Pseudo R2	.1343			.0638		

* $p \leq .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$.

Second, the religious salience hypothesis finds support in model 1. Respondents whose daily decisions are guided quite a bit or a great deal by religion are more likely to score higher on the regionalist perspective index than those whose daily living is less or not at all guided by religion. The likelihood of scoring the highest on the regional perspective index increases by 15% among respondents for whom religion guides their daily decisions compared to those respondents for whom religion is not salient to their decisions. This suggests that there is a strong relationship between religious salience and broader support for the regional perspective measured generally.

Third, as expected, men, homeowners, and Republicans express less support for the regional perspective than do women, renters, and Independents, while Democrats express more support for it than Independents. In terms of gender, men are about 19% less likely than women to score a 3 on the regional perspective index. As for housing tenure, homeowners are 13% less likely than renters to maintain the broadest regional perspective. Regarding partisanship, when respondents are Republicans instead of Independents, their likelihood of having the broadest regional perspective declines by 12%, but it increases by 12% when respondents are Democrats.

Fourth, the results show a residential effect. Surprisingly, the effect of residence is counter to the findings of the literature and the hypothesis that suburban residents would be less likely than nonsuburban residents to favor the regional perspective, as measured by my index. Rather, suburban residents in the sample are 9% more likely than urban residents to express the broadest support for the regional perspective as measured by scores on the regional perspective index.¹¹ Moreover, there is no exurban effect on the regional perspective at the individual level. Bear in mind that model 1 presents results for a generic regional perspective measure. I show that using a measure that requires respondents to identify the strength of their support for the regional perspective produces a different suburban effect, one in line with theoretical expectations.

The findings also fail to support the proposition that residents of jurisdictions covered by consolidated city-county government possess a broader regional perspective than those residing in independent municipalities or parts of unincorporated counties. This suggests that the implementation of the regionalist perspective via public policy does not necessarily influence public attitudes toward the general idea of communities sharing their resources. Furthermore, race proved insignificant in explaining the scores respondents earned on the regional perspective index. Blacks, along with other minorities in the sample, are indistinguishable from Whites in relation to this measure. Perhaps this is because the regional perspective index does

not directly address political power relations among groups in the metropolis. Income too does not appear to influence general dispositions toward the regional perspective.

Looking at model 2, the results continue to align with many theoretical expectations. As was the case with model 1, the religious tradition hypothesis finds support in the results of model 2. Here, however, the statistically significant predictor is Catholic, not evangelical Protestant. While evangelical Protestantism has no discernible impact, Catholicism is positively and significantly associated with support for the regional perspective in terms of strongly approving of local elected officials voting for legislation that would allow local governments in their area to increase taxes to pay for regional programs to expand access to good jobs and better housing for low-income families in the communities of others. Catholic respondents are 7% more likely than non-Catholics to strongly approve of their local elected officials voting for legislation that would allow local governments in their area to increase taxes to pay for regional programs to expand access to good jobs and better housing for low-income families in communities not their own.

Yet the results continue to yield insignificant findings for the other liberal religious traditions, namely, mainline Protestantism and Black Protestantism. This finding elicits a clarification to the religious tradition hypothesis. Respondents affiliated with some but not all liberal religious denominations typically possessing greater stores of bridging capital than bonding capital are more likely than those affiliated with more conservative religious traditions to favor cross-community sharing of fiscal resources to aid low-income families in other communities, which fits with the idea of bridging capital creating ties among different types of people and circumstances and such ties informing attitudes toward assisting others different from them. Perhaps this is a function of particular social and political cues clergy give adherents within the different traditions (Djupe and Gilbert 2003, 2009), or maybe it relates to the types of bridging capital produced within different liberal religious traditions (Beyerlein and Hipp 2005, 2006). As for the religious salience hypothesis, the measure of religious salience failed to achieve statistical significance in relation to cross-community sharing of resources to aid low-income families. Religious guidance may influence general attitudes but not necessarily particular choices among metropolitan residents.

Furthermore, unlike the results from model 1, the estimates of model 2 suggest that there is a race effect in relation to public support for cross-community sharing of resources to aid low-income families. Blacks are 8% more likely than Whites to strongly approve of their local elected officials voting for legislation that would allow local governments in their area to

increase taxes to pay for regional programs to expand access to good jobs and better housing for low-income families in communities not their own. This suggests that Blacks more than Whites favor fiscal designs that manifest the regional perspective to reduce inequality, even if in some contexts Blacks more than Whites oppose political designs that would affect political representation and decisions in the metropolis (e.g., city–county consolidations).

In addition, we have further confirmation that homeowners are less likely than renters to support interlocal revenue redistribution, especially to aid low-income families in other communities. Homeowners are 7% less likely than renters to strongly approve of local elected officials voting for legislation that would allow local governments in their area to increase taxes to pay for regional programs to expand access to good jobs and better housing for low-income families in the communities of others. Also, the results of model 2 showing that men are less likely to strongly approve a vote for intercommunity revenue sharing strengthen the argument that gender influences the regional perspective, which is true of support for redistribution overall (Bobo 1991; Gainsborough 2001; Steinacker 2001, 2004; Alozie and McNamara 2010).

Although the Republican measure does not achieve statistical significance in model 2, the measure of Democratic partisanship does, demonstrating a partisan effect in relation to the regional perspective and defensive localism. Democrats are 5% more likely than Independents to strongly approve interlocal revenue redistribution. In addition, suburbanites express greater defensive localism than urbanites when it comes to redistributing their tax revenues to other communities. The finding that suburban residents are 3% less likely than city residents to strongly approve cross-community sharing of financial resources to aid low-income families supports my hypothesis and the defensive localism literature (Danielson 1976; Weir 1994; Gainsborough 2001). As for residents of consolidated city–county areas and respondents of independent municipalities and unincorporated county areas, there is no difference between them and others in relation to attitudes toward cross-community redistribution of tax revenue to aid the poor in communities not their own.

Implications and Conclusions

There is a normative position in the urban affairs literature: Communities sharing metropolitan areas should share resources to solve collective problems. This article sought to identify factors that influence support for this regional perspective at the individual level. Holding other factors constant, particularly measures of material self-interest, such as homeownership and income, along with suburban residence, the study focused on the potential

effects of religion at the individual level to influence support for the regional perspective among residents of metropolitan areas.

The findings suggest that particular religious traditions (evangelical Protestantism and Catholicism) and religious salience to a degree affect individual support for the regional perspective. The findings also confirm, extend, and to a degree amend the theoretical and empirical literatures on defensive localism by demonstrating the negative effects of material self-interest, partisanship, and gender on the regional perspective at the individual level and the mixed effects of suburban residence on attitudes consonant with the regional perspective. Last, the study, using novel measures of the regional perspective, found that the framing of the regional perspective influences public support for cross-community sharing of resources within metropolitan areas.

Nonetheless, because the findings are based on a modest sample size from metropolitan areas in one state, we must exercise caution in making generalizations. Research in other metropolitan areas in the United States and among a larger and less Christian sample is warranted to confirm the findings. This is particularly necessary given that the findings failed to fully support the religious traditions and religious salience hypotheses, even if the results are suggestive.

Looking at and past the results of this study in terms of individual religion as well as placing them in relation to studies of organizational religion in the metropolis, advocates of cross-community sharing of resources should continue to identify and mobilize religious resources, especially those possessed by a particular liberal religious tradition—Catholics. Catholics have been central to campaigns that cohere with the objectives of the regional perspective (Warren 2001; Wood 2002; Swarts 2008). As the Georgia data suggest, more than other religious people in the metropolis, or at least other Christians, Catholics are likely to support robust regional appeals that call for greater cross-community sharing of tax resources to reduce inequality. They stand out as the religious group favoring the regional perspective in its most serious form, the cross-community sharing of financial resources to improve the conditions of low-income families in the metropolis, which is often central to regional equity campaigns (Orfield 1998; Bollens 2003; Pastor, Benner, and Matsuoka 2009).

While Catholics stand out in metropolitan coalitions for regional equity, evangelical Protestants are invisible, even oppositional, to such coalitions. Although many evangelical Protestants in metropolitan areas may not support the hoarding of resources from communities not their own, the findings from Georgia provide evidence that as a group they are less likely to support

aspects of the regional perspective, and extant studies suggest that many of their beliefs about inequality and government would militate against their acceptance of key elements of the regional perspective such as structural explanations of inequality and the need for policies to redistribute resources (Emerson and Smith 2001; Hinojosa and Park 2004). This makes them a difficult group of religious people to recruit and mobilize on behalf of the regional perspective, especially if a focus of such campaigns is regional equity through collective action rather than individual behavior change. Catholics, therefore, may provide a political counterweight to conservative evangelical Protestants, especially when such Protestants are mobilized in opposition to implementing the regional perspective to reduce inequality.

Regional perspective advocates should also continue to recruit and incorporate leaders and laity from the Catholic Church and other more liberal religious traditions into their coalitions and campaigns, thereby linking organizational religion to individual religion. At a minimum, this is because of the roles clergy and appointed lay leaders can play as political elites and opinion shapers within their communities, religious and otherwise (Pratt 2004; Owens 2007). After all, it may be correct that religious leaders and the laity permit regional perspective coalitions to act in ways that they could not if they were led and joined solely by secular leaders. As Orfield (quoted in Kleidman 2004, 419) suggests,

It allows you to raise issues that no one else can in the political debate, particularly when it's a rabbi, a Baptist minister, a Catholic priest, a Muslim all together at once asking the same question. . . . One of things that happens when the religious community gets involved in it is they up the ante—they say this isn't a big enough step you're taking . . . because [the problem is] just so unjust.

Thus advancing the regional perspective may be incomprehensible without leveraging dimensions of organizational and individual religion.

The combination of the cultural and material resources of religious organizations with a political understanding that policy change is possible by individuals through solidarity and coalition building, as well as problem definition drawing from the cultural and material resources of congregations, denominations, and faith-based organizations, can yield a powerful force in metropolitan politics (Warren 2001; Wood 2002; Swarts 2008). Moreover, the wedding of religious values to political interests, finding solidarity in and across religious organizations, and leveraging resources within their particular religious traditions to support and sustain interfaith initiatives with connections to labor unions and

secular community organizations can provide positive social change, especially in the pursuit of equity across metropolitan communities.

Still, a serious challenge remains for those seeking the diffusion of the regional perspective. As the findings from this study make apparent, an obstacle to the diffusion of the regional perspective is that material self-interests, such as homeownership, as well as partisanship and even gender, remain as salient as postmaterialist interests in metropolitan areas. The protection of individual income and the hoarding of collective fiscal resources sustain the barriers that defensive localism erects to advancing the regional perspective (Weir 1994, 1996; Cashin 2000). Unfortunately, neither religious nor moral or ethical appeals alone, nor routine rhetoric rooted in efficiency, equity, economic interdependence or competitiveness, and environmental concern, will necessarily create new opportunities for voters and policy makers to adopt and implement regional perspective policies.

Yet the pursuit of cross-community sharing of resources across communities within metropolitan areas is not quixotic. Urban–suburban alliances for regional equity and the collective good of metropolitan areas can be created and sustained under the right conditions (Pastor, Benner, and Matsuoka 2009; Pavel and Anthony 2009), with individual and organizational religion aiding in the advancement of the regional perspective.

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Notes

1. A majority of evangelical Protestants reside in suburbs, but the same is true of mainline Protestants (Wuthnow and Evans 2002). Moreover, the original concern that particular religious traditions could isolate suburbanites and foster civic

disregard for collective problems in the metropolis and cross-community sharing of resources focused on mainline Protestants, not evangelical ones (Winter 1962; Noyce 1970).

2. Religious adherents may interpret their imperatives to share differently or ignore them altogether, particularly in light of political ideology. Individuals who make decisions guided by their religion may express more defensive localism than those who are less or not at all guided by religion when it comes to choices about their lives when they also express greater political conservatism. In the case of some types of evangelical Christians, the guidance they derive from religion favors individual action to assist others rather than collective action (Emerson and Smith 2001). Furthermore, religious salience could be another measure of evangelical Protestantism because adherents of that religious tradition tend cluster on the high end of such a variable (Guth and Green 1993). However, religious adherents of mainline Protestantism and Black Protestantism cluster on the high end of the variable, and some people who do not adhere to religious traditions may still be guided by religious tenets and principles.
3. The 2008 Spring Georgia Poll was conducted by telephone between April 29 and June 12. It included a probability sample of 549 adults with a sampling error of plus or minus 4.2% with a 95% confidence interval and a 32% response rate. The religious questions in the survey were not moral or ethical questions. They were questions about religious affiliation, salience, and behavior (e.g., attendance and prayer). Ideally, the data would include questions that capture religious and moral sentiments. Unfortunately, we still have, echoing the words of Swanstrom (1996, 13), "no survey that asks citizens about their values and moral beliefs pertaining to the new regionalism." I treat the religious measures with care in assuming that they are proxies for moral measures, even if the measures are adequate for the literature to branch out from measures of material self-interest.
4. The specific questions were posed in this order: (1) "Your local elected officials may vote for legislation that would allow suburban, city, and county governments in your area to charge an additional one-penny sales tax to pay for regional programs to expand access to good jobs and better housing for low-income families in your community. Would you say you strongly approve, approve, not sure, disapprove, or strongly disapprove?" and (2) "Your local elected officials may vote for legislation that would allow suburban, city, and county governments in your area to charge an additional one-penny sales tax to pay for regional programs to expand access to good jobs and better housing for low-income families in communities other than your community. Would you say you strongly approve, approve, not sure, disapprove, or strongly disapprove?"
5. As expected, majorities of Black Protestants (90%), evangelical Protestants (86%), mainline Protestants (77%), and Catholics (51%) reported that religion

guided their day-to-day living. Bivariate correlations, however, revealed weak linear relationships between the religious traditions and religious salience. Moreover, examinations of the tolerances and variation inflation factors did not suggest multicollinearity. Therefore I include the religious tradition dummies and religious salience measure in my models.

6. Towns in the metropolitan areas of Georgia are suburban municipalities or unincorporated areas of counties. I treat suburban areas not near large cities but within metropolitan areas as suburban towns and rural areas inside metropolitan areas as exurbs. I created a suburban measure that combined residents of suburbs of large cities and suburban towns, keeping exurban respondents distinct. I use these measures in the analyses shown in this article. But I also use a measure that combined residents of all noncity areas (suburbs of large cities, suburban towns, and exurbs) into a dummy variable of suburban residence. Neither are all measures of suburban residence linked to particular political boundaries in the suburbs or exurbs, nor do they identify suburbs and exurbs in relation to a specific scale of cities. They are nominal categories that do not distinguish population size and area size.
7. The Georgia data suggest that religious adherents reside in all quarters of the metropolis. Variation in rates of suburban residence by evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants, and Black Protestants in the Georgia sample was slight and not statistically significant. Catholics reported the highest rate of residence in cities (44%) among all respondents identifying with a religious tradition. The Catholic presence in cities remains a function of the enduring urban institution of Catholicism, namely, the Catholic parish, and the continued residential proximity of Catholics to them (Gamm 1999). Evangelical Protestants reported the lowest rate of residence in cities (33%), which supports the conventional wisdom and empirical findings that evangelicals are a suburban people (Hsu 2006).
8. The political behavior of homeowners affects public choices about local taxation and land use (Fischel 2001; Barreto, Marks, and Woods 2007), even if homeownership does not consistently or significantly affect the political attitudes and behaviors of suburban residents (Gainsborough 2001). Plus, homeowners pay more local taxes than renters do, which is a reality that may influence defensive localism (Fischel 2001).
9. As a further test, I looked at responses to another question in the survey regarding cross-community sharing of resources that focused on reducing traffic congestion and sprawl. I observed the same effect: Of respondents, 49% approved of interlocal sharing of tax revenues to reduce traffic and sprawl in their communities, while 34% approved of cross-community sharing of resources to reduce traffic and sprawl in other communities.
10. Concerning the results for religious salience, the same pattern occurred. Although there were no significant differences between those with higher religious salience

- and those with lower religious salience in terms of supporting taxation to benefit their own community (52% vs. 51%), a slightly higher proportion of respondents for whom religion was highly salient supported increased taxation to benefit the communities of others than those with lower religious salience (46% vs. 42%), suggesting that religious salience perhaps weakens defensive localism to a degree.
11. A supplemental model (not shown) using three distinct dummy variables for suburban residence (suburbs of large cities, suburban towns, and exurbs) to explain broader support for the regional perspective, controlling for the other factors, produced a statistically significant suburban effect, with respondents from suburbs of large cities but not respondents of suburban towns and exurbs scoring higher on the regional perspective index. Another model (not shown) employed a dichotomous suburban residential measure (*resident of a suburb of a large city, suburban town, or exurb* = 1). It failed to produce a statistically significant effect. Models with interactions between the types of suburban residence and religious traditions (not shown), as well as an interaction between suburban residence and community poverty levels and religious traditions and community poverty levels, also failed to produce significant effects or improve model fit.

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