

Denominational Differences in White Christian Housing-related Racial Attitudes

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Abstract

The current study finds that Detroit area white Evangelical Protestants are less likely than are white Mainline Protestants and Catholics to believe that housing discrimination exists. However, white Evangelicals are more likely than are white non-Evangelicals to prefer living in racially integrated neighborhoods. This paper maintains that Evangelical Protestants' reliance upon freewill individualist cultural tools, which de-emphasize structural inequality and racial group distinctions, explain such findings. Nonetheless, white Evangelicals and white non-Evangelicals maintain similar support for and opposition to open housing policies.

Introduction

[1] This study assesses the extent to which white Evangelical Protestant attitudes about racial integration differed from that of white Mainline Protestants and Catholics during the white flight era (e.g. 1967-1990) from the city of Detroit, Michigan. Previous studies have relied upon cross-sectional data to describe differences in the racial attitudes of white Christians of various denominations (Emerson and Smith; Hinojosa and Park). By examining such differences over time, the current study makes claims about the consistency of church culture on racial attitudes. Metropolitan Detroit is an ideal context to carry out such a study because Mainline Protestant and Catholic Church clergy were heavily involved in Detroit's Open Housing Movement of the 1960s. In contrast, Evangelical Protestant clergy were either neutral bystanders or, in some cases, involved in the pro-segregation Homeowners' Rights Movement (Darden et al.; Sugrue). However, relative to non-Evangelicals, a notable change in racial attitudes occurred such that by the mid 1970s, white Evangelical Protestants became increasingly more likely than did Mainliners and Catholics to view blacks as individuals and potential neighbors. However, this did not translate into Evangelicals being

more supportive than others of policies aimed at actually reducing levels of residential racial segregation. This study relies upon cultural toolkit theory (Swidler) to explain denominational differences in whites' recognition of institutional racism in the housing market and support for principals versus policies aimed at reducing racial segregation. The remainder of the paper provides a more detailed explanation of cultural toolkit theory as well as an in-depth discussion and analyses of race, religion, and conflict in greater Detroit.

Evangelical Church Culture

[2] Religious culture consists of a set of norms, values, and beliefs that develop and are agreed upon by members that voluntarily join or associate with a specific religious tradition (Swidler; Wood). This is not to deny the possibility of contested points of view or beliefs. Overall, however, there is a commitment to a predominate schema of social reality. Consistent with the cultural toolkit thesis, symbols, stories, beliefs, and rituals are utilized by members to gain an understanding of social reality (Swidler). These tools are less important in defining ends of action than in providing meaningful strategies to accomplish goals (Swidler). In essence, culture allows group members to develop a common understanding of social reality and to develop agreed upon solutions to concerns.

[3] White Evangelical Protestants tend to make sense of human behavior via free-will individualistic cultural tools (Emerson and Smith). Free-will individualism is based on the premise that individuals exist independent of structures, institutions, and even history. Because individuals are granted free-will from God, they are recognized as being fully responsible for their actions (Stark and Glock). From this perspective, racial group distinctions have a negligible impact on life chances. Rather, such distinctions are artificial social constructions that only serve to divide individuals (Emerson and Smith). For conservative Protestants, one's relationship with the risen Christ has the most impact on behavior as it distances humans from sin and makes them aware of God's will. To that end, because individuals, none of whom are immune to sin, run governments, white Evangelicals tend to view public policies as inadequate solutions to race and other problems in America. Rather, they place more emphasis on the transcendent belief in Christ as a key strategy in moving society, one person at a time, to reducing human strife and suffering (Emerson and Smith).

[4] The empirical work of Emerson and Smith and Hinojosa and Park provide compelling evidence that white Evangelicals maintain a distinctively less structural cultural toolkit than do white non-Evangelicals. By and large, their work suggests that white Evangelicals are less likely than are white Catholics and Mainline Protestants to believe that racial inequality is the result of blacks not having access to quality educational systems or to racial discrimination. Conversely, white Evangelicals are more likely than are non-Evangelicals to believe that racial inequality is the result of individual blacks not trying hard enough. Emerson and Smith's qualitative work suggest that such distinctions are linked to the tendency among Evangelicals to reject the saliency of racial group distinctions and, subsequently, racism in American society. They report that a number of respondents in their study had difficulty identifying factors that contribute to racial inequality because they reject the notion that racial group distinctions are real. A quote from a Baptist woman in their study stands out in

this regard: “It’s just very difficult for me to understand why someone would be against a group of people. You want to see them as individuals” (75).

[5] The above statement is illustrative of the inability and/or unwillingness of some white Evangelical Protestants to recognize the connection between blackness and marginalization in America. It is plausible that white liberal Christians were more likely than were Evangelicals to recognize institutional racism during the era of white flight in Detroit. Taking the Evangelical cultural tool kit to its logical conclusion, however, would suggest that if Evangelicals truly decouple persons of African descent from a racial group laden with negative stereotypes, then they should have been more comfortable than other whites with the idea of living near blacks. Nonetheless, as stated above, this is not to suggest that Evangelical Protestants would have been any more likely than would others to support policies aimed at actually increasing racial integration.

Church Culture and Racial Group Threat

[6] Evangelicals’ call for transcendental change among individuals and rejection of government intervention as a solution to racial equality is reminiscent of Kinder and Sanders argument of the distinction between whites’ support for the principal versus implementation of public policies aimed at increasing racial equality. National opinion data indicates that between the early 1960s and early 1990s, whites were consistently more comfortable with the idea of having a black neighbor than they were to support laws restricting homeowner discrimination (Kinder and Sanders; Schuman et al.). Racial group interests is said to be at the heart of white resistance to such policies (Kinder and Sanders). Group interest theory posits that dominant group members are oriented in preserving their group position and maintaining social dominance over minorities (Blumer). From this perspective, white attitudes about race-based policies are viewed as a “constituent part of their group’s ideological defense of their interests” (Jackman: 480). Kinder and Sanders empirically show that white opposition to school desegregation, fair employment, and affirmative action policies are linked to perceptions of blacks gaining unfair advantages in hiring and college admissions. If racial group interest is the driving force behind whites’ opposition to race-based policies, then denominational affiliation may play a limited role in whites’ support of and objection to policies aimed at reducing racial inequality. That is, the more structurally conscious white Catholic and Mainliner should be as likely as the more anti-structuralist white Evangelical to support and oppose open housing policy. This expectation is in line with prior studies that find white Evangelicals to be as likely as white non-Evangelicals to oppose Affirmative Action policies (Wald and Calhoun-Brown).

[7] Blanchard’s study provides the best indication of behavioral differences in the residential choices of white religious persons. His study indicates white Evangelicals are more likely than are white non-Christians to live in metropolitan counties with lower levels of racial dissimilarity and isolation.¹ However, white Mainline Protestants are also more likely than are

¹ The isolation index measures the probability that minorities reside within predominantly minority neighborhoods. The dissimilarity, which ranges from 0 (complete integration) to 1 (complete segregation), measures the percentage of a group’s population that would have to change residence for each neighborhood to have the same percent of that group as the metropolitan area overall.

white non-Christians to live in less racially isolated metropolitan counties. While his study does not provide neighborhood level data, the hyper-segregated context of metropolitan Detroit (e.g. racial dissimilarity score of 89), makes it unlikely that denominational differences among white Detroiters persist in neighborhood segregation. Admittedly, assessing denominational differences in the neighborhoods in which white Christians actually live is beyond the scope of the present study. However, by assessing racial attitudes, this study speaks to the extent to which church culture impact perceptions of racial inequality and support for principals versus policies aimed at increasing racial integration.

Detroit Racial History

[8] The period of 1969 through 1995 in Detroit is an ideal period to explore the impact of church culture on white racial attitudes because it represents the era of white flight from the inner city (Farley, Danziger, and Holzer). While whites and industry began migrating from Detroit during the early 1950s, after 1967, the year of Detroit's most violent racial unrest, the "gradual white exodus [from Detroit] became a stampede" (Welch et al.: 27). For whites, the unrest reinforced stereotypes of black lawlessness and was an impending sign that the city was no longer safe for whites. "Between 1960 and 1990, the city's white population declined from more than 1.1 million to 360,000, a drop of two thirds" (Welch et al.: 27). By 1990, less than ten percent of metropolitan whites lived in Detroit city proper. In less than twenty years, Detroit went from a majority white city to a majority black city. As whites left, so too did businesses. Between 1970 and 1990, Detroit city's share of metropolitan employment fell from 38% to 21% (Farley, Danziger, and Holzer). By 1990, metropolitan Detroit was the most racially segregated region in the country and Detroit was the country's blackest and poorest large city (Farley, Danziger, and Holzer).

[9] A number of studies suggest that many whites simply did not feel comfortable living in a racially integrated city. This is not to suggest that race was the only contributing factor to white flight from Detroit, but it did play a significant role. In a 1969 study commissioned by New Detroit Inc., half of whites stated that they preferred living in all white neighborhoods. Conversely, only seven percent of blacks preferred living in all black neighborhoods (Papa). In both 1976 and 1992, a majority of whites felt uncomfortable with the prospect of living in neighborhoods that were over one-third black (Farley, Danziger, and Holzer). Conversely, an overwhelming majority of blacks in both years, roughly eighty percent, were willing to live in neighborhoods that were between one- and two-thirds white (Farley, Danziger, and Holzer).

[10] As the Detroit metropolitan area continued down the road of racial apartheid, surprisingly, a racial reconciliation movement was growing among local Southern Baptists. Consistent with the Evangelical ideal of free-will individualism, the central goal of the movement was to move Christians to the realization that racial divisions are artificial because all people are equal in God's eyes. The Greater Detroit Baptist Association (GDBA) is the local chapter of the Southern Baptist Convention. In an effort to promote racial harmony, the GDBA maintained committees dedicated to interracial and/or Black relations throughout the post-civil rights era (BSCM; GDBA). In 1966, the Baptist State Convention of Michigan, the state chapter of the Southern Baptist Convention, passed Resolutions 13 and 14 in support of civil rights. Resolution 13 "reaffirm[ed] [their] desire for the

achievement of equal rights for all, including the right to hear and respond to the Gospel.” Resolution 14 commended minority groups that fought for their “equal rights through legal, moral, and spiritual means.”

[11] Although GDBA leadership acknowledged racism, their approach to redressing racism was wholly anti-structural. That is, they did not encourage affiliated congregations to participate in Detroit’s Open Housing Movement during the 1960s. And, during the thirty years following the 1967 unrest in Detroit, the GDBA was not a member of the Fair Housing Conference of Metropolitan Detroit or other civil rights organizations (BSCM; GDBA). Rather, GDBA adopted a more individualistic approach in addressing racism as they sponsored a number of programs aimed at educating their membership that racial divisions are contrary to God’s will of a unified Church.

[12] Race Relations Sunday, established in 1965 and continued throughout the post-civil rights era, is a preeminent example of the Southern Baptists’ commitment to challenging racial divisions and emphasizing the oneness of humankind. As an example, the Race Relations Sunday advertisement in the January 1989 edition of the *Michigan Baptist Advocate*, the official publication of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan, states:

The Bible teaches that all people are created in God’s image, that Christ died for all, that all are to love their neighbors . . . The Bible’s message rings with the truth of God’s inclusive love and expectation that the people of God will embrace all without regard to skin color or speech pattern (Parham: 1-2).

Race Relations Sunday was held on the second Sunday of every February, which at the time of its establishment, fell within Negro History Week. Programs featured clergy participating in pulpit exchanges across racial lines, shared services between black and white churches, and sermons emphasizing the shared humanity of all God’s children. Similarly, from 1966 on, the conference sponsored annual interracial weekend retreats for black and white laywomen to develop stronger friendships with one another. From 1967 to 1990, building relationships and evangelizing within Detroit’s black community was a central part of GDBA’s church growth strategy (BSCM; GDBA).

[13] In contrast to the GDBA, during the 1960s, liberal churches in metro Detroit challenged institutional racism via their participation in Detroit’s Open Housing Movement (Findlay; McGreevy). In January of 1963, the Archdiocese of Detroit and Mainline Protestant Churches sponsored the Metropolitan Conference on Open Occupancy to discuss public policy strategies to racially integrate Detroit neighborhoods (MCOO). Six months later, Catholic and Mainline Protestant clergy joined black Protestant and Jewish leaders in the March on Freedom on Detroit’s Woodward Ave. With 125,000 marchers, this was the nation’s largest civil rights demonstration to date. That same year, the Archdiocese of Detroit (AOD) created Project Commitment, the goal of which was to create a core of Catholics committed to improving race relations in each parish (McGreevy 1998). In 1967 and 1968, lobbying for fair housing legislation in Michigan were top priorities for the Metropolitan Christian Council (MCC), the local version of the National Council of Churches, and the AOD. However, by 1969, fighting for open housing was no longer a central priority of the MCC or the AOD (MDCC 1969-1995; McGreevy).

[14] It is plausible that liberal Christian lay sentiment, which largely rejected the liberal Christian toolkit on race, impacted their Churches' shift in priorities. For the most part, white Mainline and Catholic laity did not agree with policy mandated racial integration as a solution to racial inequality (MCOO; Sugrue). As the MCC and the AOD were successfully lobbying for fair housing legislation in Michigan during the late 1960s, white Presbyterians, Lutherans, United Methodist, and Catholics quietly voiced their opinion of these efforts by leaving racially transitioning Detroit city neighborhoods for all white suburban ones (Sugrue). White lay public opinion of their Churches' civil rights efforts was unambiguously articulated in a 1972 study commissioned by the National Council of Churches. Supporting minority groups was one of the top church priorities that members ranked as being "unimportant" (MDCC 1972). The MCC and AOD seemingly took their cues from this study and the ongoing difficulty they faced in mobilizing their laity to participate in civil rights activities as they both shifted their core agenda away from racial integration during the post-civil rights era (Findlay; MDCC 1969-1995; McGreevy).

[15] The above accounts are not to suggest that Detroit's liberal Christian organizations completely abandoned their commitment to racial equality after 1968. Since its founding in 1979, the MCC and AOD were fairly consistent members of the Metropolitan Detroit Fair Housing Conference. Between 1988 and 1994, there was a renewed interest in race among MCC leadership. The *Covenant Church* project, established in 1990, attempted to educate church leaders and laity about racism in the Detroit area. Mainline church leaders and laity were encouraged to sign a petition indicating their support in fighting racism (MDCC 1990). However, unlike the racial justice efforts of the 1960s, the Covenant Church Project lacked a social movement component aimed at reducing racial segregation via public policy.

Hypotheses

[16] Detroit area liberal Christians' historical emphasis in challenging institutional racism combined with the individualistic toolkit of conservative Christians, may have contributed to white liberal Christians being more aware of housing discrimination than were white Evangelicals during the post-civil rights era. At the same time, to the extent that Detroit's Southern Baptist culture of detaching individuals from racial group identities is representative of area Evangelical Protestants, white Evangelicals may have been more willing than others to articulate a willingness to live near blacks. The resentment among liberal Christians of their clergy's participation in the open housing movement may also contribute to such a finding. However, as Kinder and Sanders argue, there is a difference between supporting principals of racial equality and policies aimed at bringing about such equality. The difference lays in the threat the implementation of such policies pose to white racial group interests. Moreover, while Evangelicals tend to disdain structural explanations and solutions to social problems, the historical record in the Detroit area suggests that neither conservative Protestants nor liberal lay Christians were enthusiastic about policy solutions to residential segregation. This leads to the following alternative and null hypotheses:

H₁: White Mainline Protestants and Catholics were *more* likely than were white Evangelical Protestants to recognize housing discrimination.

H₂: White Mainline Protestants and Catholics were *less* likely than were white Evangelical Protestants to prefer living near blacks.

H₀: No denominational differences persist in whites' support for open-housing legislation.

Sample

[17] The current study relies upon the white sub-samples from the Detroit Area Studies (DAS) of 1969, 1975, 1976, 1992, 1994, and 1995. These data points are selected because they are the only surveys during this period with questions about denominational affiliation and attitudes about racial integration. The University of Michigan has collected data for the DAS from random samples of Wayne, Macomb, and Oakland counties in Michigan every year since 1953 (for more information on how these data were collected, see Rodgers et al.; Farley, Reynolds, and Schuman; Farley; Katz, Irwin, and Schuman; Steeh; Jackson and Williams).

Measures

Dependent Variables: Recognition of Housing Discrimination

[18] The housing discrimination variables attempt to measure whites' acknowledgement of structural racism in metropolitan Detroit's housing market. In 1969, 1992, and 1994, respondents were asked if they believed that at least some or no blacks faced housing discrimination. And, in 1976 and 1992, respondents were asked if they believed that blacks miss out on good housing because white homeowners would not rent or sell to blacks and because real estate agents steered blacks away from quality neighborhoods.

Residential Preferences

[19] While the residential preference questions are slightly different each year, these variables maintain some level of construct validity as they all measure the personal preference of whites to voluntarily live near blacks. In 1969, this study measures if whites did not mind their neighbors selling their house to a black couple that could afford and wanted to buy it. In 1975, this study assesses if respondents prefer living in more racially integrated or all white neighborhoods. In 1976 and 1992, this study assesses if respondents would be comfortable living in neighborhoods with five black and nine white families. Finally, in 1995, this study assesses if respondents believe that racially integrated or all white neighborhoods are more desirable.

Support for Open Housing Policy

[20] From 1969 to 1994, this study assesses support for laws that restrict homeowners from racially discriminating against potential buyers when placing their house on the market.

Independent Variables: Denominational Affiliation

[21] Similar to the quantitative studies of Emerson and Smith and Hinojosa and Park, denominational affiliation serves as a proxy for distinctions in the cultural toolkits of white Evangelicals and white non-Evangelicals. While limited in scope, this measure is the closest the Detroit Area Studies consistently came to measuring this construct. As such, this study

relies upon Streensland et al.'s classification of religious denominations. Membership status in national religious organizations such as the National Council of Churches and the National Association of Evangelicals are used to classify various Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian denominations into Mainline and Evangelical Protestant traditions. As such, respondents were divided into the nominal categories of white Evangelical, Mainline Protestant, Catholic, and Secular. For the purpose of these analyses, white Mainliners, Catholics, and non-believers are displayed in the analyses and white Evangelicals serve as the comparison variable. The Appendix includes the denominational bodies represented in each nominal category.

Control Variables

[22] Because past studies have found demographic correlates to white racial attitudes (Farley et al.; Kinder and Sanders; Emerson and Smith; Hinojosa and Park), the current study controls for frequency of church attendance, college education, family income, age, gender, marital status, number of school aged children, being Republican, having black neighbors, being raised in the South, and maintaining a professional or management position on one's job.²

Results

Church Culture and Recognition of Housing Discrimination

[23] The bivariate and multivariate analyses presented in Tables 1 and 2 respectively indicate that, as predicted, Mainliners and Catholics were more likely than were Evangelicals to recognize housing discrimination during the white flight era in Detroit. The bivariate analyses of Table 1 indicate that in 1969, Mainliners were more likely than were Evangelicals to recognize housing discrimination against blacks. In 1976, Mainliners were more likely than were Evangelicals to recognize the role that homeowners and the real estate industry play in limiting the housing options of blacks. In 1992, both Mainliners and Catholics were more likely than were Evangelicals to recognize the roles that housing discrimination in general, homeowners, and the real estate industry play in limiting housing options for blacks. Secular whites were also more likely than were Evangelicals to recognize housing discrimination in 1992. Finally, in 1994, both Mainliners and Catholics were more likely than were Evangelicals to recognize housing discrimination.

Table 1. Denominational Differences in Whites' Recognition of Housing Discrimination between 1969 and 1994: Chi-Square Analyses

| | 1969 General | 1976 Homeowner | 1976 Real Estate | 1992 General | 1992 Homeowner | 1992 Real Estate | 1994 General |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Evangelical | 41.18% | 48.00% | 46.67% | 63.57% | 73.57% | 50.71% | 45.59% |
| Mainline | 54.76* | 63.64** | 57.89* | 82.28** | 82.91* | 60.76* | 62.92** |
| Catholic | 46.01 | 57.04 | 52.82 | 75.15** | 81.90* | 61.04* | 61.27** |
| Secular | --- | 60.76 | 58.23 | 81.01** | 82.28 | 56.96 | 52.38 |

² Missing values for age, church attendance, and income were imputed. The imputations did not significantly or substantively alter the analyses.

Denominational Differences in Racial Attitudes

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Total | 47.97% | 58.85% | 55.28% | 74.83% | 80.29% | 58.59% | 57.58% |
| *<.05, **<.01 | (One-tailed sig. test) | (Sig. different from Evangelical Protestants) | | | | | |

[24] Similar to the bivariate analyses of Table 1, the multivariate analyses of Table 2 indicates that Mainline Protestants were more likely than were Evangelical Protestants to recognize housing discrimination in 1969. These analyses also suggest that in 1976, Mainliners were more likely than were Evangelicals to state that homeowners were a source of housing discrimination. In 1992, Mainliners and Catholics were more likely than were Evangelicals to recognize housing discrimination in a general sense and, more specifically, the roles homeowners and the real estate industry play in such discrimination. In 1994, both Mainliners and Catholics were more likely than were Evangelicals to recognize housing discrimination. These analyses also indicate that the social-demographic characteristics of college education, age, gender, being Republican, and having black neighbors inconsistently predict whites' recognition of housing discrimination.

Table 2. Denominational Differences in Whites' Recognition of Housing Discrimination between 1969 and 1994: Logit Regression

| | 1969 General | 1976 Homeowner | 1976 Real Estate | 1992 General | 1992 Homeowner | 1992 Real Estate | 1994 General |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Denomination</i> ³ | | | | | | | |
| Mainline | 1.667 (0.482)* | 1.622 (0.473)* | 1.478 (0.430) | 0.900 (0.284)** | 0.519 (0.298)* | 0.429 (0.243)* | 0.719 (0.341)* |
| Catholic | 1.354 (0.400) | 1.227 (0.340) | 1.121 (0.311) | 0.544 (0.232)** | 0.428 (0.255)* | 0.404 (0.213)* | 0.637 (0.298)* |
| Secular | --- | 1.516 (0.540) | 1.552 (0.552) | 0.819 (0.366)* | 0.259 (0.385) | 0.139 (0.307) | 0.038 (0.421) |
| <i>Controls</i> | | | | | | | |
| Church Attendance | 1.016 (0.046) | 1.050 (0.055) | 1.038 (0.054) | -0.048 (0.066) | -0.121 (0.072) | -0.024 (0.058) | -0.150 (0.080) |
| College Education | 2.615 (0.859)** | 1.781 (0.478)* | 1.620 (0.421) | 0.082 (0.259) | 0.205 (0.271) | 0.039 (0.214) | 0.030 (0.266) |
| Income | 0.965 (0.045) | 1.042 (0.037) | 1.017 (0.036) | 0.039 (0.023) | -0.013 (0.024) | 0.020 (0.020) | -0.038 (0.028) |

³ Evangelical Protestant serves as the reference category. The "Other Religion" category is included in the analyses. However, because it is comprised of smaller non-Christian groupings and is, therefore, substantively unimportant, it is not shown in this and subsequent analyses.

Denominational Differences in Racial Attitudes

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Age | 0.978 (0.007)** | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | -0.005 (0.007) |
| Female | 1.038 (0.179) | 0.988 (0.160) | 0.906 (0.146) | 0.193 (0.183) | 0.293 (0.197) | -0.098 (0.158) | 0.426 (0.207)* |
| Married | 0.883 (0.206) | 0.699 (0.145) | 0.815 (0.166) | 0.513 (0.205)* | 0.412 (0.222) | -0.167 (0.180) | 0.220 (0.221) |
| Children | 1.135 (0.230) | 1.122 (0.185) | 1.529 (0.251)** | 0.062 (0.215) | -0.039 (0.235) | 0.065 (0.191) | --- |
| Republican | 1.300 (0.285) | --- | --- | 0.122 (0.212) | -0.407 (0.214) | -0.310 (0.178) | -0.086 (0.233) |
| Black Neighbor | 0.618 (0.130)* | 0.873 (0.140) | 0.807 (0.128) | 0.309 (0.358) | -0.490 (0.362) | 0.033 (0.317) | -0.044 (0.233) |
| Raised in South | 1.345 (0.403) | 0.778 (0.200) | 0.737 (0.190) | -0.253 (0.376) | -0.347 (0.395) | 0.053 (0.352) | --- |
| Professional | 1.235 (0.260) | 0.833 (0.176) | 0.812 (0.170) | 0.152 (0.243) | -0.105 (0.251) | 0.076 (0.202) | -0.176 (0.259) |
| N | 640 | 729 | 729 | 751 | 751 | 751 | 429 |
| Log-likelihood | -420.633 | -484.641 | -490.651 | -405.718 | -363.106 | -504.345 | -283.312 |

Standard errors in parentheses; * $<.05$, ** $<.01$ (One-tailed for *Denomination Variables*; Two-tailed for *Control Variables*)

Church Culture and Residential Integration Attitudes

[25] The analyses presented in the bivariate and multivariate Tables 3 and 4 respectively indicate that, as predicted, Mainliners and Catholics were less likely than were Evangelicals to prefer living in more racially integrated neighborhoods. The bivariate analyses presented in Table 3 suggest that in 1969, Mainliners and Catholics were as likely as were Evangelicals to not mind their neighbors selling their house to a black family. However, in 1975, Catholics were less comfortable than were Evangelicals with the idea of living in a racially integrated neighborhood. In 1976, both Mainliners and Catholics were less comfortable with the idea of living in a neighborhood that is roughly one-third black. In 1992, Mainliners were less comfortable with the idea of living in such a neighborhood. And, in 1995, Mainliners were less likely than were Evangelicals to rate racially integrated neighborhoods as desirable places to live.

Table 3. Denominational Differences in Whites' Comfort with Living in Racially Integrated Neighborhoods between 1969 and 1995: Chi Square Analyses

| | 1969 | 1975 | 1976 | 1992 | 1995 |
|--|---------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| | Does Not | Prefers Living | Comfortable | Comfortable | Ranks Racially |
| | Mind | in Racially | Living in | Living in | Integrated |
| | Neighbors | Integrated | Neighborhood | Neighborhood | Neighborhoods as |
| | Selling House | Neighborhoods | that is 1/3 Black | that is 1/3 Black | being More Desirable |
| | to Blacks | | | | than all White |
| | | | | | Neighborhoods |

Denominational Differences in Racial Attitudes

| | | | | | |
|-------------|--------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| Evangelical | 49.41% | 60.00% | 28.00% | 48.11% | 54.93% |
| Mainline | 45.24 | 53.66 | 11.00** | 36.52* | 39.45* |
| Catholic | 45.65 | 47.25** | 15.49** | 39.01 | 45.41 |
| Secular | --- | --- | 24.05 | 48.28 | 48.48 |
| Total | 47.66% | 53.63% | 17.42% | 40.63% | 47.50% |

* $<.05$, ** $<.01$ (One-tailed); All non-Evangelicals are tested against Evangelical Protestants

[26] The multivariate analyses presented in Tables 4 suggest that in 1969, white non-Evangelicals were as likely as were white Evangelicals to not mind their neighbor selling their house to blacks. In 1975, white Catholics were less likely than were Evangelicals to express their preference for living in racially integrated neighborhoods. In 1976 and 1992, both Mainliners and Catholics were less likely than were Evangelicals to prefer living in neighborhoods that were roughly one-third black. And, in 1995, Mainliners and Catholics were less likely to positively evaluate racially integrated neighborhoods. These analyses also indicate that, on a fairly consistent basis, the college educated, women, and those already living near blacks tend to be more comfortable with the idea of living in racially integrated neighborhoods.

Table 4. Denominational Differences in Whites' Comfort with Living in Racially Integrated Neighborhoods between 1969 and 1995: Logit Regression

| | 1969 Does Not Mind Neighbors Selling House to Blacks | 1975 Prefers Integrated Neighborhoods | 1976 Comfortable in 1/3 Black Neighborhood | 1992 Comfortable in 1/3 Black Neighborhood | 1995 Integrated Neighborhoods are Desirable |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|---|--|
| <i>Denomination^a</i> | | | | | |
| Mainline | -0.198 (0.287) | -0.355 (0.223) | -1.520 (0.378)** | -0.618 (0.296)* | -0.781 (0.328)* |
| Catholic | -0.225 (0.292) | -0.452 (0.214)* | -1.132 (0.339)** | -0.554 (0.262)* | -0.633 (0.290)* |
| Secular | --- | --- | -0.382 (0.430) | -0.184 (0.365) | -0.398 (0.374) |
| <i>Controls</i> | | | | | |
| Church Attendance | 0.071 (0.045) | -0.070 (0.067) | 0.042 (0.070) | -0.033 (0.074) | 0.076 (0.081) |
| College Education | 0.820 (0.315)** | 1.361 (0.257)** | 0.579 (0.310) | 0.077 (0.250) | 0.611 (0.243)* |
| Income | -0.023 (0.046) | 0.024 (0.057) | 0.022 (0.048) | 0.051 (0.024)* | 0.000 (0.000) |
| Age | -0.012 (0.007) | -0.021 (0.005)** | --- | --- | -0.008 (0.006) |

Denominational Differences in Racial Attitudes

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Female | 0.131 (0.173) | 0.381 (0.155)* | 0.628 (0.226)** | 0.005 (0.196) | -0.019 (0.048) |
| Married | -0.460 (0.233)* | 0.045 (0.187) | -0.274 (0.269) | 0.061 (0.230) | -0.365 (0.193) |
| Children | 0.125 (0.203) | 0.434 (0.163)** | 0.235 (0.220) | -0.494 (0.241)* | --- |
| Republican | 0.192 (0.218) | --- | --- | -0.372 (0.221) | -0.306 (0.209) |
| Black Neighbor | 0.784 (0.208)** | 0.372 (0.148)* | 0.545 (0.209)** | 2.123 (0.428)** | 0.406 (0.474) |
| Raised in South | -0.109 (0.299) | --- | -0.992 (0.414)* | -0.404 (0.462) | --- |
| Professional | -0.045 (0.211) | -0.092 (0.221) | 0.269 (0.279) | 0.087 (0.239) | 0.363 (0.232) |
| N | 640 | 882 | 729 | 539 | 520 |
| Log-likelihood | -421.045 | -562.164 | -310.919 | -339.203 | -341.560 |

Standard errors in parentheses; * $<.05$, ** $<.01$ (One-tailed for *Denomination Variables*; Two-tailed for *Control Variables*)

^aEvangelical Protestant serves as the reference category.

Denominational Differences in Support for Open Housing Policy

[27] As expected, the bivariate and multivariate analyses presented in Tables 5 and 6 respectively provide no statistical evidence that denominational differences persist in support for open housing policy. Rather, Table 6 indicates that being college educated, younger, female, currently living near blacks, and being a professional or manager is associated with support for open housing policy. In sum, this study suggests that, consistent with the Evangelical cultural toolkit thesis, Evangelicals were less likely than were Mainliners and Catholics to recognize housing discrimination in Detroit. On the other hand, the individualistic orientation of Evangelicals may have contributed to their greater support for the principal of racial integration because Evangelicals were more likely than others to state their comfort with black neighbors. Finally, church culture is largely unimportant to policy support for racial integration because white Evangelicals were as likely as were white non-Evangelicals to support open housing policy.

Table 5. Denominational Differences in Whites' Support for Open Housing Policy between 1969 and 1994: Chi-Square Analyses

| | 1969 | 1975 | 1992 | 1994 |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Evangelical | 10.59% | 32.14% | 55.00% | 52.94% |
| Mainline | 18.57 | 31.01 | 63.92 | 52.81 |

Denominational Differences in Racial Attitudes

| | | | | |
|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Catholic | 13.47 | 28.57 | 59.20 | 53.18 |
| Secular | --- | --- | 56.96 | 59.52 |
| Total | 15.78% | 31.07% | 59.92% | 53.61% |

*<.05, **<.01 (One-tailed sig. test)

*<.05, **<.01 (One-tailed); All non-Evangelicals are tested against Evangelical Protestants

Table 6. Denominational Differences in Whites' Support for Open Housing Policy between 1969 and 1994: Logit Regression

| | 1969 | 1975 | 1992 | 1994 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Denomination^a</i> | | | | |
| Mainline | 0.556 (0.440) | -0.069 (0.232) | 0.340 (0.249) | -0.004 (0.356) |
| Catholic | 0.287 (0.457) | -0.010 (0.225) | 0.177 (0.217) | -0.049 (0.313) |
| Secular | --- | --- | -0.068 (0.311) | -0.123 (0.452) |
| <i>Controls</i> | | | | |
| Church Attendance | 0.006 (0.063) | -0.201 (0.072)** | -0.080 (0.059) | -.126 (0.083) |
| College Education | 0.844 (0.347)* | 0.737 (0.230)** | 0.138 (0.221) | 0.467 (0.281) |
| Income | -0.007 (0.062) | -0.002 (0.059) | 0.031 (0.020) | 0.063 (0.029)* |
| Age | -0.023 (0.009)** | -0.015 (0.005)** | --- | -0.023 (0.007)** |
| Female | 0.326 (0.241) | 0.280 (0.161) | 0.171 (0.160) | 0.461 (0.218)* |
| Married | -0.420 (0.305) | 0.135 (0.195) | -0.036 (0.183) | 0.129 (0.231) |
| Children | -0.542 (0.269)* | 0.055 (0.166) | -0.047 (0.195) | --- |
| Republican | -0.317 (0.301) | --- | -0.179 (0.182) | -0.237 (0.244) |
| Black Neighbors | -0.076 (0.288) | -0.086 (0.155) | 1.088 (0.366)** | 0.952 (0.241)** |

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Raised in South | 0.480 (0.393) | --- | -0.044 (0.357) | --- |
| Professional | 0.600 (0.276)* | -0.041 (0.222) | 0.472 (0.210)* | -0.228 (0.272) |
| N | 640 | 882 | 751 | 429 |
| Log-likelihood | -257.068 | -526.244 | -490.377 | -265.305 |

Standard errors in parentheses; * $<.05$, ** $<.01$ (One-tailed for *Denomination Variables*; Two-tailed for *Control Variables*)

^aEvangelical Protestant serves as the reference category.

Discussion

[28] The current study applied cultural toolkit theory (Swidler) to explain denominational differences in whites' recognition of housing discrimination, preferences for living in racially integrated neighborhoods, and support for policies aimed at reducing racial segregation in metropolitan Detroit. Cultural toolkit theory suggests that culture provides groups with agreed upon symbols to interpret and make meaning of their social reality (Swidler). White Evangelical Protestants tend to maintain a free-will individualistic ethic that emphasizes that individual choice and opportunities exist independent of social structures (Emerson and Smith). From this perspective, racial group distinctions are seen as having a negligible impact on life chances. In contrast, Mainline Protestant and Catholic social thought tend to place greater emphasis on the role structural forces, such as race, play in creating and constraining opportunities (Hinojosa and Park). As such, this study expected and found white Evangelical Protestants to be less likely than white non-Evangelicals to acknowledge the existence of institutional racism in Detroit's housing market. At the same, white Evangelicals' de-emphasis of the saliency of race led to the assertion that white Evangelicals should be more open than are other whites to the prospect of living in more racially integrated neighborhoods, which they were.

[29] While white Evangelicals and non-Evangelicals differ in their acknowledgement of housing discrimination and their willingness to live in racially integrated neighborhoods, they maintain a similar level of support for and opposition to open housing policies. A common racial group interest among white Evangelicals and non-Evangelicals may account for such similarities. Group interest theory posits that dominant group members are interested in maintaining their dominance over minorities (Blumer). From this perspective, white opposition to policies aimed at reducing racial inequality are viewed as a means to protect their dominant social-political position (Jackman; Kinder and Sanders). It is plausible that denominational culture takes a backseat to racial group interest when it comes to accounting for white support of policies aimed at reducing racial segregation.

[30] In some respects, these findings are a testament to the saliency of cultural differences in how white Christians talk about race. As mentioned earlier, the Evangelical racial toolkit takes an individualist approach to race and racism. This study suggests that white Evangelicals' tendency to reject the saliency of racial groups as a valid social construct lends itself to a rejection of negative stereotypes attached to racial groups. These findings may have much to do with the racial reconciliation efforts of Detroit area Southern Baptists and

other Evangelical denominations aimed at tearing down artificial racial barriers that keep Christians separated from one another (Bartkowski; GDBA). The angst among white Mainliners and Catholics of their churches politically challenging racial segregation may have also contributed to these findings.

[31] Even though white Evangelicals were more likely than others to state their preference for living near blacks during this period, this study does *not* suggest that denominational differences persist in the neighborhoods in which whites *actually* live. In fact, this study indicates that white Evangelicals are *no* more likely than are others to support public policies aimed at increasing racial integration across the region. The individualistic orientation of Evangelical leaders contributed to them never pushing their laity to engage in civil rights movement activities. Instead, Southern Baptist clergy emphasized changing the hearts of individuals and improving relationships between blacks and whites within the context of the Church, one person at a time (BSCM; GDBA). While this strategy may have changed the hearts of many individuals, it did nothing to challenge structural forces, such as racial steering or the provision of inaccurate information to potential black homebuyers and racist lending practices that reduce opportunities for racial integration (Farley, Danziger, and Holzer; Massey and Denton).

[32] This study also points to the conflict between Mainliners and Catholics' awareness of institutional racism in the housing market and their reduced willingness to engage in individual efforts and support policies aimed at increasing racial equality. Some of the loudest critics of clergy political activism in the Detroit area during the civil rights era came from Mainline and Catholic laity that believed their rights to racially discriminate as homeowners were called to question by the open housing social movement activities of their clergy (Findlay; McGreevy). The historical record indicates that the core rationale behind such resistance efforts was the threat that black neighbors posed to property values and whiteness (Sugrue). Research done on white racial attitudes suggests that the perceived threat that blacks posed to white Detroiters during this era may have had less to do with concern over individual well being than for concern of their racial group. This research indicates that nationally, very few whites, less than fifteen percent, report having been passed over for a job, denied a promotion, or denied access to higher education because of race-based programs that favor minorities (Steeh and Krysan). Additionally, fears of being adversely affected by race-based policies are unrelated to white support and opposition to such policies (Kinder and Sanders). Rather, such opposition is linked to a belief that blacks will gain unfair advantages over whites as a whole (Kinder and Sanders). As such, it would not be inconceivable if concerns over racial group positioning in the metropolitan area played more of a role than denominational culture in Detroit area whites' support for and/or opposition to open housing policy.

[33] The racial group interest implication of this study is made with a degree of caution because the analyses do not include measures of racial group interests or threat. As such one cannot rule out that non-racial factors may also play a role in whites' support for or opposition to policies aimed at restricting housing discrimination. It is apparent, however, that while church culture plays a role in whites' recognition of housing discrimination and principled support for racial integration, other factors are linked to support for open housing policy. Future research is needed to assess the impact of both church culture and racial

group interests on white support for policies aimed at reducing racial segregation specifically and inequality more broadly.

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Appendix

Representation of Religious Groups in the 1969-1995 Detroit Area Studies

| | 1969 | 1975 | 1976 | 1992 | 1994 | 1995 |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Evangelical Protestant | 13.28% (N=85) | 15.87% (N=140) | 10.29% (N=75) | 18.64% (N=140) | 15.85% (N=68) | 13.65% (N=71) |
| <i>Baptist, Unspecified</i> | (N=53) | (N=74) | (N=53) | (N=72) | (N=32) | (N=46) |
| <i>Non-denom.</i> | (N=13) | (N=27) | (N=5) | (N=39) | (N=10) | (N=14) |
| <i>Other Evangelical^a</i> | (N=19) | (N=39) | (N=17) | (N=29) | (N=26) | (N=11) |
| Mainline Protestant | 32.81% (N=210) | 32.54% (N=287) | 28.67% (N=209) | 21.04% (N=158) | 20.75% (N=89) | 20.96% (N=109) |
| <i>Lutheran, Unspecified</i> | (N=62) | (N=94) | (N=66) | (N=68) | (N=37) | (N=52) |
| <i>Presbyterian, Unspecified</i> | (N=37) | (N=64) | (N=56) | (N=32) | (N=17) | (N=15) |
| <i>Methodist, Unspecified</i> | (N=71) | (N=72) | (N=53) | (N=32) | (N=24) | (N=28) |
| <i>Episcopal Church</i> | (N=21) | (N=31) | (N=23) | (N=10) | (N=0) | (N=7) |
| <i>Other Mainline^b</i> | (N=19) | (N=26) | (N=11) | (N=16) | (N=11) | (N=7) |
| Roman Catholic | 43.13% (N=276) | 41.27% (N=364) | 38.96% (N=284) | 43.41% (N=326) | 40.33% (N=173) | 41.92% (N=218) |
| Other Faiths ^c | 10.78% (N=69) | 10.32% (N=91) | 11.25% (N=82) | 6.39% (N=48) | 13.29% (N=57) | 10.77% (N=56) |
| Secular | 0% (N=0) | 0% (N=0) | 10.84% (N=79) | 10.52% (N=79) | 9.79% (N=42) | 12.69% (N=66) |
| Total | 100% (N=640) | 100% (N=882) | 100% (N=729) | 100% (N=751) | 100% (N=429) | 100% (N=520) |

^aTop three other Evangelical Denominations include: Assemblies of God, Church of God, and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

^bTop three other Mainline Denominations include: Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., American Lutheran Church, and United Methodist Church.

^cTop three other faiths include: Islam, Judaism, and other Non Christian.