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## Place, Time, and Philanthropy: Exploring Geographic Mobility and Philanthropic Engagement

*America is a nation of movers, and this has implications for public and nonprofit managers who rely on donations and volunteers to increase the capacity of nonprofits and to strengthen local communities. This article explores the impact of time and place on philanthropic engagement, focusing on how three aspects of community—sense of belonging, social connections, and regional culture—are related to volunteering and giving to local organizations. The authors find that geographic mobility affects philanthropic engagement. Drawing on a survey of active older Americans, the authors find that three community factors—sense of community, social networks, and regional cultures—are related to one or both types of philanthropic behavior. The authors conclude by offering thoughts for future research and practice.*

America is a nation of movers. According to census data from 2009, 37.1 million Americans changed residences within a year's time. Annually, roughly 1.5 percent of the population moves between two and four census regions, and another 1.3 percent move to a different state within the same census region (Molloy, Smith, and Wozniak 2011, 178). "In total, slightly less than one-third of the population lives in a different state than they were born, while slightly less than one-fifth live in a different Census region" (Molloy, Smith, and Wozniak 2011, 178). Such population movement has implications for public and nonprofit managers who work together to strengthen a community's social economy (Lohmann 2007).

The impact of population changes on the civic and philanthropic life of receiving communities is unsettled in the literature. On the one hand, population growth is seen as an economic development strategy (Isserman, Feser, and Warren 2009). Labor moves to a growing region to exploit earning opportunities in

more profitable locations (Schiff 1992), which spurs additional economic expansion, which leads to additional population growth, and so on. In addition to expanding the tax base for local governments, population growth also increases the pool of potential donors for nonprofit organizations. On the other hand, not all scholars agree that an influx of newcomers to a region is associated with improved economic well-being for the general community (Isserman, Feser, and Warren 2009). Rupasingha, Goezt, and Freshwater

(2006) concluded from their research that communities with long-term residents have more civic and philanthropic activity. While population growth may expand the pool of potential donors and volunteers for local organizations, newcomers may be less connected to their communities and less likely to give to local needs.

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Community service providers often receive direct support from residents (Edwards and Foley 2001), and as local service delivery systems increasingly rely on private resources to support local services (Bloomfield 2006; Ferris 1984), nonprofit managers must learn how newcomers to their communities make connections to local civic life. In addition, it is useful to ask whether who gives and receives philanthropic attention is influenced by cultural differences, as noted by Elazar (1975), Schneider (1996), and others. In this article, we explore how moving affects one's philanthropic engagement. By uncovering the relationship between individuals' geographic mobility, connection to their communities, and level of philanthropic activity, local government and nonprofit leaders can better develop strategies to strengthen and increase ties of newcomers to their current and past communities of residence.

We begin by reviewing the literature on philanthropic behavior and civic engagement to identify the processes by which time and place may affect philanthropic

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engagement. Our focus on time includes length of residence, and our focus on place includes movement to and from communities and an individual's personal sense of community. We then present findings from a survey of older residents in southeastern North Carolina, showing patterns in their philanthropic behavior that are linked to geographic mobility. We conclude by offering recommendations for administrative and organizational practice and research.

## Geographic Mobility and Philanthropic Engagement

There is growing research on individual-level determinants of philanthropy, including age, income, education, and social determinants such as class and race (Bekkers and Wiepking 2010). To complement this line of research, scholars have called for a greater understanding of the contextual and macrosocial determinants of engagement (Sampson 1988). As a study of charity in the United Kingdom described, charitable expressions can largely be understood as “inherently geographical and deeply embedded in local social networks of inclusion as well as exclusion” (Bryson, McGuinness, and Ford 2002, 48). Despite recognition of the importance of local context, we have little understanding of how place and geographic movement may influence philanthropic behavior (Bielefeld, Rooney, and Steinberg 2005; Wolpert 1988). Inasmuch as regional philanthropic traditions exist (Bielefeld, Rooney, and Steinberg 2005), moving may place individuals in a new institutional context. This is particularly true for individuals moving from one region of the country to another, who may face new regional norms about philanthropy and, in some cases, new organizational practices.

Various measures of place and one's commitment to place have occasionally been incorporated into studies of philanthropic engagement. For example, in a review of 50 years of philanthropic research, Bekkers and Wiepking (2006) found that studies that include measures of community size provide mixed results. Their review also suggested that although immigrants may be less likely to donate, and when they do donate, they give less; these differences are largely attributable to income and education levels. As immigrants increase their time spent in the United States, the gap disappears. Most often, time and place variables are introduced as control variables, and little is known about how geographic movement influences philanthropic behavior.

## Community Connectedness

### *Sense of Community*

The literature suggests three aspects of an individual's community connectedness—sense of community, social ties, and regional cultures—that may affect philanthropic behavior. Sense of community is the feeling that “members have of belonging, of significance to one another and to groups, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their relationships” (Peterson et al. 2008). A diverse body of research suggests that a strong sense of community will increase civic engagement. Those with a high sense of community feel compelled to contribute to their community, regardless of personal gain, through philanthropic gifts of time and resources (Speller, Lyons, and Twigger-Ross 2002). A survey on reasons why people in the metropolitan Atlanta area donate to nonprofits

revealed that 83 percent of metro Atlanta respondents cited giving “because of a sense of community” (Van Slyke and Brooks 2005).

Sense of community is a multidimensional construct defined through various aspects of people–place bonding, including sense of community cohesion, community satisfaction, “neighboring,” social bonds, geographic identity, and dependence on place (Chow and Healey 2008). As such, sense of community includes behavior, cognition, and affect (Obst, Smith, and Zinkiewicz 2002). Nowell and Boyd (2010) extended the traditional needs-based description of sense of community to include a values-based perspective: those with a strong sense of community may act to benefit their communities, even at substantial costs to themselves, because of higher-order ideals, personal values, and a sense of responsibility.

As people and place change, sense of community changes (Speller, Lyons, and Twigger-Ross 2002). We expect that movement from one community to another will weaken one's sense of community and influence—not only affective and cognitive commitment to the community, but also community behaviors. Some evidence suggests that length of time in the community is positively related to sense of community (Chipuer and Pretty 1999). We also expect that sense of community changes

with life-cycle changes. Individuals have a deep association with and consciousness of the places where they were born and grew up, where they live now, or where they have had particularly salient experiences. These associations seem to be sources of individual and cultural identity and security (Relph 1976).

Sense of community may differ across geographic regions, creating further barriers for newcomers to form a sense of community in their new location. This may be particularly true as people move from the North to the South. “A ‘southern sense of place’ is more than simply living in the South; it is feeling that your identity is grounded in the region. A southern sense of place is not only southerners' commitment to their homes and lives but also, in a much larger sense, to the region of which they are a part” (Falk and Webb 2010). Falk and Webb's argument supports the perception that the movement of newcomers into a community is not only difficult for the newcomer but also challenges the values of “old-timers” as well.

### *Social Ties*

Social ties reflect embeddedness in social networks. They are a key predictor of various forms of civic engagement, including philanthropic behavior. First, individuals become engaged in an activity, such as volunteering, because they are invited to join. Using a social networks perspective, Wiepking and Maas analyzed giving behavior in the Netherlands and found that “people with more extended networks and higher education are more generous. However, these effects can be completely explained by financial resources, church attendance, requests for donations, and prosocial personality characteristics. People with more extended social networks are mainly more generous because they receive more solicitations for donations, and are more integrated in extended religious networks that promote charitable giving” (2009, 1973).

Their findings support those of Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995), whose comprehensive study of political and civic engagement revealed that individuals are most likely to become engaged when they are asked to do so by someone else. Consistent with a large body of sociological literature, it is clear that groups recruit members through their own social contacts and those of their acquaintances (see, e.g., Cho and Rudolph 2008; McPherson, Popielarz, and Drobnic 1992).

While we expect that moving to a new community might disrupt social ties that support philanthropic activities, age may increase the density of social networks and the likelihood of civic engagement. There has been a general assumption that aging is negatively associated with social networks. In other words, and particularly important for our sample, individuals may become more socially isolated as they age. However, a study of older adults by Cornwell, Laumann, and Schumm (2008) found that although age is negatively related to network size and closeness to network members, age is positively related to frequency of socializing with neighbors, religious participation, and volunteering. Indeed, some life transitions, such as retirement, may be related to greater connections and participation. We might also expect that for older individuals, moving to a new location may prompt them to volunteer in order to increase their social networks.

### **Regional Cultures**

Regional cultures are also relevant to any discussion of philanthropic engagement. Evidence suggests that regions vary in residents' general attitudes toward the role of government involvement and the appropriateness of civic organizations in meeting community needs. Many of these differences mirror the historical regional debate of Federalists versus Jeffersonian Democrats and the appropriate role of government. In the late eighteenth century, the Northeastern states were dominated by Federalist supporters who wanted to put political control in the hands of a few elite, qualified men and supported private efforts toward civic engagement and giving to charity. In contrast, public institutions were preferred in the highly agrarian and Jeffersonian Democratic Southern states up to the Civil War because of concerns about the domination of the elite (Hall 1992).

Drawing on Elazar's (1975) work dealing with frameworks of cultural regions based on ethnicity, religion, and historical assessment of regional political cultures, Schneider (1996) proposed the existence of distinct philanthropic styles. The Northern boom in population and industry led to social reform movements and efforts to use newly found industrial wealth to provide opportunities for those less fortunate (Katz 1986; Walters 1978; Wright 1992). The antebellum South was culturally more stable and dominated by an aristocratic class structure that made efforts to maintain the status quo. There were few internal threats and a perceived mutual dependence between the poor and the rich (Goldfield 1981; Pease and Pease 1985; Schneider 1996). The Southern states emphasized personal decision making and individual religious conviction as the way to address any social issues, as opposed to large social movements that would change the social order (Ahlstrom 1972; Fischer 1989).

Philanthropic cultures are influenced by cultural, religious, and political belief systems that are embedded in geographic communities (Schneider 1996). A factor that may challenge newcomers'

abilities or decisions to become philanthropically engaged is the degree to which their philanthropic cultures match the cultures of their new communities and the ways in which their philanthropic traditions support philanthropic behavior. Most empirical research on philanthropic differences across geographic communities isolates particular demographic variables such as gender, race, income level, marital status, and religious affiliation and then projects these onto regional populations (Gittell and Tebaldi 2006; Havens and Schervish 2005, 2007; Bielefeld, Rooney, and Steinberg 2005). Race and religious affiliation may be particularly important individual characteristics that are relevant to a discussion of philanthropic cultures, particularly as it relates to patterns of generosity in Southern communities. However, a growing body of literature also supports the notion that local social norms shape attitudes about appropriate social action and expectations for philanthropic behavior (Barman 2006; Marquis, Glynn, and Davis 2007).

While philanthropic norms may differ across local communities, there is evidence that differences exist in philanthropic attitudes across geographic regions. In Southern communities, giving and volunteering often occur through the church, mutual aid and fraternal associations, and informal networks of relations, neighbors, and community members (Winters 1999). In contrast, the Northeast and Midwest are often characterized by more formal expressions of generosity through professional and institutionalized organizations (O'Donnell 1994). Northerners moving to the South from either the Midwest or the Northeast may encounter informal Southern philanthropic systems that have been influenced by centuries of political and racial divisions as well as strong religious traditions. These differences may be particularly sharp in the "Black Belt" subcultures of the south (Lieske 2010). An empirical example of this difference is that although 28.4 percent of volunteers in the Northeast reported volunteering for religious organizations, 40.6 percent of volunteers in the South reported volunteering for religious organizations (Corporation for National and Community Service 2010). Households in the South that attend religious services on a weekly basis give 143 percent more than Southern households that do not, the highest percentage difference of all the regions (Independent Sector 2007).

In addition, migrants who move from urban to more rural communities may encounter less well-developed nonprofit and philanthropic institutions (Wolpert 1988) and a nonprofit sector in which many organizations lack formal volunteering or giving programs. As a result, urban organizations have often been viewed as superior and more effective social agents (Boddie 2002). Such cultural differences may create tensions for individuals seeking to express their generosity in their new communities and for the organizations with which they engage, especially for Northern migrants to the South.

Though we have given examples of differences between North and South, we expect that any newcomer to a region may face norms and expectations of and venues for appropriate philanthropic behavior that may discourage them or make it difficult for them to engage in their new communities. For newcomers moving from a different geographic region, the differences between philanthropy in their old and new communities may be very distinct and salient. Such differences in traditions may create conflict for newcomers and numerous barriers to philanthropic engagement. Not only may newcomers

face barriers to philanthropic engagement, but also they may still be connected to the nonprofits in their previous communities, further inhibiting their capacity to engage philanthropically in their new communities.

Methodology

The data for this article come from a survey of residents in southeastern North Carolina (we refer to this as the local community in our analysis), a region characterized by recent population growth, particularly of individuals moving to the region for early retirement. During the last three decades, the Southern region of the United States has experienced unprecedented growth as Northerners have migrated south in response to growing economic opportunities and the large-scale retirement of early baby boomers seeking a Southern retirement location. During the twentieth century, the South’s population quadrupled from 25 million to 100 million people, and by 2000, more than one-third of the U.S. population lived in the South. Between 2000 and 2007, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina ranked fourth, ninth, and eleventh, respectively, in national growth rankings, even exceeding the growth rate of Florida (see <http://www.geomidpoint.com/population/growth-2007.html>). Southeastern North Carolina is one of the most rapidly growing regions in the country, experiencing a 38.4 percent growth rate in the last decade.

Survey respondents were solicited from participants in a university community outreach program that provides “lifelong” learning opportunities for community members over 50 years of age. Utilizing an outreach program allows us to explore the impact of moving on one fairly homogenous group: well-educated, more affluent community members. A homogenous sample allowed us to naturally control for many of the microdeterminants of philanthropic behavior. The lifelong learning program administrators sent program participants an e-mail invitation to participate in the survey by clicking on an embedded link. The e-mail was distributed to approximately 2,000 e-mail addresses contained in the program database. An undetermined number were returned as undeliverable. After removing those respondents who did not complete a majority of questions, 470 respondents remained. This resulted in a survey response rate of at least 23.5 percent, given that we do not know how many individuals actually received our request to participate in our study. Removing respondents with missing data on any of the

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variables of interest resulted in sample sizes of 335 (table 3, models 1 and 2) to 233 (table 4, model 7).

We explore the time and place determinants of philanthropic behavior using different dependent variables. Respondents were asked to identify those organizations that they were involved with: “Please list the names of up to ten nonprofit organizations that you have made a donation to or offered volunteer time to during the past year.”<sup>1</sup> For each organization identified, respondents were asked in

series of follow-up questions to determine how many hours they volunteered for that organization and their total financial donations to that organization. We report the descriptive statistics for these and other continuous variables in table 1. On average, respondents reported volunteering a total of 138 hours and donating \$4,666.51.

To determine the percentage of donations to local nonprofits, respondents were also asked to report the location (city, state) of each organization previously listed. Organizations were coded by location: whether it was located in their current home community (a local organization) or in another community. We then calculated the percentage of donations given to local versus nonlocal organizations. On average, respondents reported giving 65 percent of their donations to local organizations (see table 1). Consistent with the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, we distinguished between giving to secular nonprofits and places of worship. It is important to separate religious and secular giving because, as Ferris and Brown observe, “there are considerable differences in the forces at work in shaping the generosity toward religious and secular causes” (2007, 97). Based on the name of the organization, we identified houses of worship and categorized them as such. We exclude them from our analysis in table 3 (model 3) and table 4 (models 5 and 7) in order to focus on the forces influencing giving to secular nonprofits. We will explore giving to houses of worship versus secular nonprofits more explicitly in another publication.

Independent variables include an additive scale of sense of community. The sense of community scale includes 13 forced choice questions based on the original McMillan and Chavis (1986) scale.<sup>2</sup> We believe that the greater an individual’s sense of community, the more he or she will donate to local nonprofits.

Regional culture is captured by how many years a respondent reported living in up to 10 residences over his or her lifetime. We categorize each residence using the four U.S. census regions (Northeast, South, Midwest, and West).<sup>3</sup> A second set of dummy variables capture whether a respondent had lived more than 50 percent of his or her reported life in that region. In the regression models, the reference category excluded from the model is *Majority of Years Lived in the South*. As seen in table 2, 46 percent of our sample had lived in the South for at least half of their reported lives. About one-fifth had lived at least half of their lives in the Northeast, 9 percent in the Midwest, and 1 percent in the West or internationally. Some 21 percent indicated living a majority of their lives in more than one region.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics, Continuous Variables

| Variable   | N   | Mean     | Min.  | Max.       | SD        |
|--|-----|----------|-------|------------|-----------|
| Total donations (\$)                               | 335 | 4,666.51 | 0     | 504,500.00 | 27,637.90 |
| Total volunteer hours                              | 335 | 138.03   | 0.00  | 2,722.00   | 255.86    |
| Share of donations to local nonprofits (%)         | 309 | 65.13    | 0     | 100.00     | 35.42     |
| Share of donations to secular local nonprofits (%) | 238 | 51.52    | 0     | 100.00     | 37.11     |
| Years lived in local community                     | 335 | 13.78    | 1.00  | 65.00      | 12.72     |
| Total number of moves                              | 335 | 4.40     | 0.00  | 10.00      | 2.89      |
| Sense of community                                 | 335 | 9.98     | 2.00  | 13.00      | 2.13      |
| Social ties  | 335 | 1.89     | 0.00  | 17.00      | 2.08      |
| Age  | 335 | 64.51    | 24.00 | 85.00      | 9.74      |



**Table 2** Descriptive Statistics, Dichotomous Variables

| Variable   | Percent |
|--|---------|
| Majority of Years Lived—No Single Region           | 21      |
| Majority of Years Lived—Northeast                  | 22      |
| Majority of Years Lived—Midwest                    | 9       |
| Majority of Years Lived—West                       | 1       |
| Majority of Years Lived—International              | 1       |
| Majority of Years Lived—South (reference category) | 46      |
| Master's degree or higher                          | 51      |
| Married  | 72      |
| Retired  | 68      |

Note: n = 335.

Respondents were also asked how they became involved with the organizations that they previously identified. The variable *Social Ties* in table 1 sums the total number of times a respondent indicated that he or she became involved with an identified organization through friends, family, or coworkers. As seen in table 1, while the values of this variable range from 0 to 17, on average, respondents reported two social connections. Because the breadth of one's network is positively associated with donating and volunteering (the more people you know, the more people there are to ask you to donate or volunteer), we expect that the greater the number of social ties individuals have, the more they will donate or volunteer.

Finally, we controlled for respondents' personal characteristics. As seen in table 1, on average, individuals were 65 years old, had lived in the community for approximately 14 years, and had moved four times before moving to their current community. About half of respondents had a master's degree or higher, slightly more than two-thirds were retired, and almost three-fourths were married (see table 2).

## Findings

Here, we examine our results for respondents' overall philanthropic activity and their donations directed to local nonprofits located in southeastern North Carolina. Given the exploratory nature of our study, we focus more on the statistical significance and direction of relationships between our independent and dependent variables rather than interpreting the magnitude of the effects. In table 3, we report findings for our models using three dependent variables: *Total Volunteer Hours* (model 1), *Total Donations* (model 2), and *Total Donations to Secular Nonprofits* (model 3). Table 4 reports the results for four different dependent variables that focus on total and secular giving to local nonprofits: *Total Donations to Local Nonprofits* (model 4), *Donations to Local Secular Nonprofits* (model 5), *Percent of Total Donations to Local Nonprofits* (model 6), and *Percent of Donations to Local Secular Nonprofits* (model 7). In general, frequent religious attendance tends to have the largest impact on the volunteering and donating behavior of respondents, but it is not related to secular giving. Having larger social networks increases volunteering and the magnitude of donations, while a stronger sense of community is only related to the proportion of donations made to local nonprofits. The longer individuals live in southeastern North Carolina, the more they donate to local secular nonprofits and the greater the proportion of their total and secular giving that remains in the local community. We also find regional influences on an individual's philanthropy to local nonprofits. People who have lived a majority of their lives in the Midwest donate more to local secular nonprofits than people who have lived a majority of their

**Table 3** Regression Results: Total Philanthropic Activity

|  | Volunteer Hours (Model 1) | Donations (Model 2)   | Secular Donations (Model 3) |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Constant   | 9.38<br>(0.08)            | -262.65<br>(-0.09)    | 679.7<br>(0.38)             |
| Demographic Controls                                       |                           |                       |                             |
| Master's degree or higher                                  | 7.00<br>(0.26)            | 1,531.36**<br>(2.42)  | 849.45*<br>(2.03)           |
| Married  | 31.14<br>(1.02)           | 1,224.94*<br>(1.71)   | 343.19<br>(0.73)            |
| Age  | -0.96<br>(-0.54)          | 12.27<br>(0.29)       | 16.68<br>(0.62)             |
| Retired  | 64.84*<br>(1.78)          | -167.47<br>(-0.20)    | -197.74<br>(-0.36)          |
| High religious attendance                                  | 72.20***<br>(2.63)        | 2,742.71***<br>(4.24) | 35.58<br>(0.08)             |
| Total number of moves                                      | 9.13*<br>(1.73)           | 78.38<br>(0.63)       | -49.68<br>(-0.61)           |
| Years lived in local community                             | -0.38<br>(-0.35)          | 6.47<br>(0.25)        | -17.39<br>(-0.95)           |
| Community Connectedness                                    |                           |                       |                             |
| Sense of community   | -1.72<br>(-0.27)          | -149.77<br>(-0.98)    | -93.95<br>(-0.99)           |
| Social ties  | 19.09***<br>(2.91)        | 528.50***<br>(3.42)   | 419.35***<br>(4.23)         |
| Regional Influences  |                           |                       |                             |
| No region as majority of years                             | 82.38**<br>(2.21)         | -388.02<br>(-0.44)    | -505.44<br>(-0.52)          |
| Lived Northeast majority of years                          | 45.85<br>(1.21)           | -1,011.12<br>(-1.13)  | -1,402.69<br>(-1.58)        |
| Lived Midwest majority of years                            | -12.31<br>(-0.25)         | 93.99<br>(0.08)       | -774.89<br>(-0.81)          |
| Lived West majority of years                               | 79.58<br>(0.72)           | -1,544.46<br>(-0.59)  | -1,729.99<br>(-0.58)        |
| Interaction: Majority Northeast * Years in local community |                           |                       | 96.29<br>(1.22)             |
| Interaction: Majority Midwest * Years in local community   |                           |                       | 160.22**<br>(2.23)          |
| Interaction: No majority * Years in local community        |                           |                       | 59.81<br>(1.10)             |
| Interaction: Majority West * Years in local community      |                           |                       | 250.61<br>(0.96)            |
| Observations   | 335                       | 335                   | 295                         |
| R <sup>2</sup>   | 0.11                      | 0.13                  | 0.13                        |

t-statistics in parentheses.

\*\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*  $p < .1$ .

lives in the South. People who have lived a majority of their lives in the Northeast keep fewer of their donations in the local community, while people who have lived a majority of their lives in the Midwest keep more of their secular donations in the local community than people who have lived in the South for a majority of their lives.

### Community Connectedness

When looking at overall philanthropic activity (table 3, models 1, 2, and 3), we see that individuals with larger social networks are more philanthropically engaged. These findings affirm the notion that one of the most important avenues to philanthropic activity is "the ask." People volunteer and donate more, both overall and to secular nonprofits, when they are asked to do so by family, friends, and acquaintances. The other variable that is significant in this group is total number of moves. The more often an individual has moved, the more hours he or she volunteers. Indeed, frequent movers may use volunteering as a way to fit into their new communities.

**Table 4** Regression Results: Giving to Local Nonprofits

|  | Donations to Local<br>Nonprofits<br>(Model 4) | Donations to Local<br>Secular Nonprofits<br>(Model 5) | Share of Donations to Lo-<br>cal Nonprofits<br>(Model 6) | Share of Donations to<br>Local Secular Nonprofits<br>(Model 7) |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| Constant   | 904.92<br>(0.35)                              | -568.02<br>(-0.84)                                    | 53.05***<br>(3.10)                                       | 41.32**<br>(1.97)  |
| <b>Demographic Controls</b>                                |   |   |  |  |
| Master's degree or higher                                  | 1,201.65**<br>(1.99)                          | 381.44**<br>(2.40)                                    | 2.63<br>(0.69)   | -4.92<br>(-1.02)   |
| Married  | 1,325.61*<br>(1.94)                           | 186.21<br>(1.04)                                      | 5.44<br>(1.26)   | 1.83<br>(0.34)   |
| Age  | -9.21<br>(-0.23)                              | 5.55<br>(0.54)  | -0.36<br>(-1.44)   | -0.33<br>(-1.06)   |
| Retired  | -311.73<br>(-0.39)                            | -419.26**<br>(-2.01)                                  | 0.89<br>(0.18)   | -3.27<br>(-0.54)   |
| High religious attendance                                  | 2,258.94***<br>(3.70)                         | 8.01<br>(0.05)  | 15.91***<br>(4.11)                                       | -2.33<br>(-0.48)   |
| Total number of moves                                      | 12.43<br>(0.11)                               | 5.62<br>(0.18)  | -0.40<br>(-0.53)   | 0.20<br>(0.21)   |
| Years lived in local community                             | 5.52<br>(0.22)                                | 17.80***<br>(2.76)                                    | 0.47***<br>(2.95)  | 0.59***<br>(2.77)  |
| <b>Community Connectedness</b>                             |   |   |  |  |
| Sense of community   | -88.27<br>(-0.60)                             | 18.72<br>(0.48)                                       | 1.89*<br>(1.96)  | 2.17*<br>(1.77)  |
| Social ties  | 365.44**<br>(2.53)                            | 89.17**<br>(2.37)                                     | 0.91<br>(1.02)   | 0.54<br>(0.49)   |
| <b>Regional Influences</b>                                 |   |   |  |  |
| No region as majority of years                             | -429.12<br>(-0.52)                            | 302.67<br>(1.38)                                      | 9.38*<br>(1.84)  | 4.94<br>(0.45)   |
| Lived Northeast majority of years                          | -1,044.04<br>(-1.21)                          | 166.84<br>(0.73)                                      | -12.62**<br>(-2.29)                                      | -29.02***<br>(-2.72)   |
| Lived Midwest majority of years                            | -642.91<br>(-0.59)                            | 808.48***<br>(2.89)                                   | 1.19<br>(0.17)   | 22.44**<br>(2.05)  |
| Lived West majority of years                               | -779.12<br>(-0.30)                            | 1,539.35**<br>(2.33)                                  | 3.90<br>(0.25)   | -19.45<br>(-0.63)  |
| Interaction: Majority Northeast * Years in local community |   |   |  | 2.59***<br>(2.69)  |
| Interaction: Majority Midwest * Years in local community   |   |   |  | -0.90<br>(-1.19)   |
| Interaction: No majority * Years in local community        |   |   |  | 0.53<br>(0.86)   |
| Interaction: Majority West * Years in local community      |   |   |  | 3.77<br>(1.41)   |
| Observations   | 295   | 277   | 254  | 233  |
| R <sup>2</sup>   | 0.11  | 0.14  | 0.22   | 0.17   |

t-statistics in parentheses.

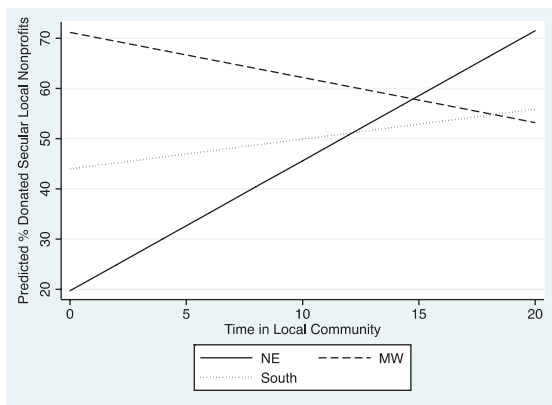
\*\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*  $p < .1$ .

A slightly different story emerges when we look at giving to local nonprofits (table 4, models 4, 5, 6, and 7). The size of an individual's social network still increases the magnitude of giving, both overall to local nonprofits and to local secular nonprofits, but it is not related to the proportion of donations given to local nonprofits. However, we find that as the number of years a respondent has lived in southeastern North Carolina and their sense of community increase, the proportion of donations to local nonprofits also increases. Deeper community roots, both in terms of time and social attachment to the community, means a greater proportion of philanthropy directed to local nonprofits. This finding hints at the importance of considering a nonprofit's role in the local geographic community. The more tightly coupled individuals are to the community, the more likely they are to be aware of and identify with the missions of local nonprofits and to support them financially.

### Regional Influences

Each region variable has at least one substantive and statistically significant impact on a respondent's philanthropic behavior relative to the reference group, those who have lived a majority of their lives in the South. In table 3 (model 1), we observe that respondents who have not spent a majority of their years in one region volunteer more hours than respondents who have spent a majority of their years in the South. This underscores our earlier finding that mobile individuals may use volunteering as a way to connect to their communities.

The three other region variables in our model—having lived a majority of one's life in the Northeast, West, or Midwest— Influence an individual's philanthropy in the local community. Although we find no difference in overall giving to local nonprofits (table 4, model 4), individuals from the West and Midwest



**Figure 1 Predicted Share of Donations Given to Local Secular Nonprofits**

donate more to local secular nonprofits than people from the South (table 4, model 5). Individuals from the Midwest give a greater proportion of their donations to local secular nonprofits (table 4, model 7), while individuals with no regional primacy give a greater proportion of their donations to local nonprofits (table 4, model 6). Northeasterners, however, give a significantly lower proportion of their donations to local nonprofits (table 4, models 6 and 7). Given our discussion about Northeasterners potentially encountering informal Southern philanthropic systems that may create conflict for newcomers and barriers to becoming philanthropically engaged, it is not surprising that people who have lived a majority of their lives in the Northeast give about 13 percent less of their donations to nonprofits in the local community (see table 4, model 6) and almost 29 percent less to local secular nonprofits (see table 4, model 7) than Southerners. We do not observe any differences between Northeasterners and Southerners in the proportion of giving to local secular nonprofits. This may also be attributable to differences in religious giving between Northeasterners and Southerners. We plan to explore these and other differences between sacred and secular giving in more detail in future research.

We also explored the interaction of regional influences on philanthropy with the amount of time lived in the local community to see whether time in the region can acculturate individuals to local giving and volunteering patterns. While we ran regressions with the interaction of each of the regions and time in the local community for all seven of our models, the interaction effects were statistically significant in only two of the models (table 3, model 3 and table 4, model 7); therefore, we report only the regressions with the interaction coefficients for those two models. In model 3 (table 3), we find that the longer someone who has spent a majority of their life in the Midwest lives in the local community, the greater his or her donations to secular nonprofits relative to people who have lived a majority of their lives in the South. Also relevant to our public policy discussion, we find in model 7 (table 4) that while people who have lived a majority of their lives in the Northeast initially give a smaller proportion of their donations to local secular nonprofits than Southerners, with each additional year they live in the local community, they give about two percentage points more to local secular nonprofits relative to Southerners.

We explore this finding by calculating *Predicted Percentage of Donations Given to Local Secular Nonprofits* (see figure 1). The values are computed based on the estimated coefficients in model 7 (table 4) for individuals who have spent the majority of their lives living in the Northeast, Midwest, and South, evaluating all other variables at their means. In interpreting this graph, remember that while the y-intercepts are all statistically significantly different, only the slope of the Northeast line is statistically significantly different from the slope of the South line. Even though the predicted percentage donated to local secular nonprofits for Midwesterners appears to decrease the longer they have lived in the local community, statistically, this is no different from the change in percentage that Southerners donate to local secular nonprofits. The interesting takeaway from figure 1 is that although Northeasterners tend to give a much smaller proportion of their donations to local secular nonprofits initially, the longer a Northeasterner lives in the local community, the greater the proportion of their philanthropy that goes to local secular nonprofits. Indeed, after about 11 to 14 years in the local community, Northeastern “transplants” surpass Southerners and Midwesterners in the proportion of their secular philanthropy given locally.

While this is an interesting story, there is a caveat to the foregoing interpretation. Because we are only examining cross-sectional data, what we might be observing is a cohort effect. Northeasterners drawn to southeastern North Carolina 10 to 15 years ago may be fundamentally different from much more recent transplants. Rather than Northeasterners taking longer to assimilate into the local community’s philanthropic culture than people from other regions, what we may be observing is that more recent transplants from the Northeast have less interest in local secular nonprofits than the previous wave of transplants, and this is not something that will change over time. We hope to explore these two competing interpretations of this finding in future research.

### Demographic Controls

Education, being married, being retired, age, and religious attendance are statistically significant control variables in our models. Respondents with at least a master’s degree donate more than those with lower levels of education. Unfortunately, our data do not contain accurate financial information, but we suspect that education may be acting as a proxy for income or wealth. Similarly, people who are married donate more than people who are unmarried, both overall and in their donations to local nonprofits. Retirees volunteer more than people who are currently in the workforce, but they donate less to local secular nonprofits. We also find that as age increases, the proportion of donations to local nonprofits decreases, potentially indicating that as people age, they may become less involved with local nonprofits on a day-to-day basis and focus their philanthropy on national nonprofits that rely more on checkbook participation. Weekly religious attendance increases the total number of hours volunteered and the amount of money donated (table 3, models 1 and 2). Frequent religious attendance also increases the proportion of donations made to nonprofits in the local community (table 4, models 4 and 6). However, as religious attendance is not related to secular giving (table 4, models 5 and 7), we expect that the reason for the significant relationship between at least weekly religious attendance and increased proportion of giving

staying within the local community is tied to religious giving to the respondent's place of worship.

Discussion

Even with geographic mobility in the United States trending down since the 1980s (Molloy, Smith, and Wozniak 2011), recent census returns confirm that movement to the South has not stopped. During the last decade, individuals have continued to move south in search of economic opportunity and pleasant weather (Ehlers and Barrett 2010). What does this continued movement suggest for philanthropy? Clearly, donations to local organizations increase with length of residency. Newcomers donate a smaller percentage of their gifts to local organizations. In addition, as we described earlier, our data provide us with a number of interesting findings relevant to the management of philanthropic engagement. The time and place connections discussed in our literature review—social ties, sense of community, region where a majority of one's life is spent—influence the philanthropic behavior of our respondents. We see these connections as having two different sets of implications: one for nonprofits in particular and one for communities in general. These implications underscore the role of key time and place factors that should be considered as organizations attempt to increase philanthropic activity overall and possible ways to keep it local.

Our study highlights the importance of basic fund-raising and volunteer recruitment activities for nonprofit managers in communities that are welcoming newcomers. The more people are asked to become involved with nonprofit organizations through their social connections, the more they donate and volunteer. If people are not asked to engage or give by friends, family, or colleagues, they are significantly less likely to donate or volunteer. The more these social connections increase an individual's sense of community, the greater the proportion of donations that are retained in the region. Fostering such connections may be particularly important in Southern communities receiving newcomers from the Northeast. Our findings are consistent with other recent studies that have demonstrated the connection between various measures of social capital and philanthropic behavior (Brooks 2005; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Wang and Graddy 2008).

What does continued in-migration mean for philanthropy in receiving communities? Clearly, donations to local secular organizations increase with time. However, a person's previous region of residence also matters. In some cases, newcomers from other regions (in our analysis, Midwesterners) are more generous contributors to local secular organizations than Southerners. For others (Northeasterners in our data), donations to local secular nonprofits are initially much lower, but over time (about 10 years), they seem to adopt the behaviors and attitudes of locals and increase the amount of their donations that remain in the region. Though, as we explained, we may be seeing evidence of a cohort effect, suggesting that, rather than offering simple generalizations about people from different regions, we

need to address possible generational shifts in giving patterns connected to those regions. This is potentially important for the health of local communities, not just for individual nonprofits. In the short term, population growth, especially from outside the region, may strain receiving communities' nonprofit capacity. However, over time, donations may catch up with the added demand of the newcomers for services, especially if the nonprofits encourage a sense of community and place among these newcomers.

As noted in our literature review, sense of community is a measure of an individual's perceptions of cohesion, community satisfaction, "neighboring," social bonds, geographic identity, and dependence on place (Chow and Healey 2008). The more individuals identify with their local geographic community, the greater the proportion of their donations to nonprofits in the local community. Sense of community has an important effect independent of the amount of time individuals have spent in the local community.

Sense of community has an important effect independent of the amount of time individuals have spent in the local community.

Can communities create a "sense of community" for newcomers from different regions? Can local leaders use local policy to increase a sense of belonging? Evidence suggests that various community characteristics, including the level of homeownership, short commute times, and even the presence of social institutions such as associations and nonprofits, are associated with aspects of philanthropic engagement (Corporation for National and Community Service 2010; Wang and Graddy 2008). If local government and nonprofit leaders can increase opportunities for civic engagement and the conditions that foster such engagements, they may be able to increase the retention rates of philanthropic dollars in their communities. At least in the southeastern North Carolina region, our data indicate that these communities may initially have an easier time incorporating people who have moved from the Midwest into their philanthropic and social fabric than people who have moved from the Northeast. However, over time, Northeasterners may assimilate to their new philanthropic environment and increase their giving to local secular nonprofits. More generally, while increasing a newcomer's sense of community may not make individuals more generous overall, it may influence where donations flow. If local communities can foster a sense of community, then they may be able to direct donations locally. The consequence of this redirection of philanthropy is that there may be fewer donations going back to their previous communities or to national nonprofits.

While our data provide us with interesting findings, there are some limitations that cause us to temper the generalizability of our results. As seen by looking at the range of observations in our regression tables (233–335 respondents), there are many missing data points. In future research, we need to refine our data collection strategies to capture as much information as possible related to an individual's wealth and how much he or she donates to particular organizations. It is also important to note that respondents may not have told us about all of their donations, even though we asked them to give us

Our study highlights the importance of basic fund-raising and volunteer recruitment activities for nonprofit managers in communities that are welcoming newcomers.



a complete list. Our analyses are based on what were likely the most salient donations to them, which are likely their largest ones.

To the extent that we find statistically significant results with these data, we believe that more complete data will increase the robustness of our findings. Also, as noted earlier, we use a convenient homogeneous sample to naturally control for many of the microdeterminants of philanthropic behavior. This sample population is older, more highly educated, and most likely wealthier than the general population. On the one hand, this particular segment of the population is of great interest to the nonprofit community because of its greater than average capacities for philanthropic activity and is deserving of being studied on its own merits. On the other hand, we are unsure whether the findings related to community connectedness and regional influences are generalizable to other age cohorts facing different life cycle pressures on both their geographic mobility and philanthropy. Although we plan to have more diverse sample of residents from the Southeast in our future research, we encourage others to examine the impact of moving to new communities in other regions of the country. For example, do Southerners moving to the Northeast also face problems integrating into their new philanthropic communities?

Even with these limitations, our research provides another step in understanding the community-level factors that may influence individuals', particularly newcomers', philanthropic engagement in their local communities. Additional research is necessary to more fully understand the complex relationship between time, place, and various forms of philanthropic engagement. For example, our analysis would benefit greatly from additional exploration of how place and commitment to place moderate and mediate the relationships between individual characteristics and philanthropic engagement. Furthermore, our study describes these relationships at one point in time. What is the process by which newcomers transfer their philanthropic behavior? Is volunteering a "gateway" to philanthropic giving for newcomers? If so, how do newcomers find and make a decision to volunteer for an organization when they move to a new community? Finally, our work would benefit greatly from case studies of communities that have intentionally sought to increase newcomers' commitment to place. Of course, this line of research also raises the need to understand the impact of out-migration on nonprofits; money retained by nonprofits in an individual's new community is most likely transferred from somewhere else. What, if anything, do those nonprofits do in an attempt to keep connected to individuals who have moved away?

While these questions may seem like basic variables in increasingly sophisticated philanthropic research models, they are key issues for local government and nonprofit leaders in communities facing rapid population growth or decline. As communities increasingly rely on residents to address (and fund) local responses to complex social issues (Bloomfield 2006; Ferris 1984), it is imperative that we understand how and when newcomers are likely to become philanthropically engaged in their local communities and when they are likely to continue to support institutions located in their previous geographic community.

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## Notes

1. In future research, we need to be more specific about the nonprofits that we want respondents to identify—for example, the most important or the most salient nonprofits that they have donated to or volunteered for. However, because respondents reported four nonprofits on average, we feel that we are picking up on the ones that are most salient to them.
2. Two examples of these questions are as follows: (1) If there is a problem in this community, people who live here can get it solved. (2) My community cares about me.
3. We recognize that U.S. census region is a crude proxy for regional culture. The census "regions" divide states into geographic units such as West (e.g., California, Montana) Midwest (e.g., Kansas, Missouri), South (e.g., Texas, Florida), and Northeast (e.g., Pennsylvania, Maine); see [http://www.census.gov/geo/www/us\\_regdiv.pdf](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/us_regdiv.pdf). The census regions are used as convenient ways to report U.S. census data by the Census Bureau rather than assembled to capture historical or cultural bonds. Indeed, there may be differences in philanthropic cultures between states within the same census region (e.g., California relative to Wyoming), much less within the same state (e.g., Northern California relative to Southern California). However, we chose this operationalization of regional culture for two reasons: (1) we expect to find greater variation in philanthropic cultures across census regions than within census regions, and (2) given our data, any finer grained categorization would result in many categories having no observations.

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