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### Summary

*Why is there so much geographical variation in the extent of religious affiliation, diversity and practice? For the 2001 Census, 88 per cent of the population of Wigan in the North West reported a religious affiliation (the highest) while 63 per cent of Norwich did so (the lowest). The proportion of the population reporting a non-Christian religious affiliation varied from 39 per cent of the population of Tower Hamlets, London, to 0.4 per cent of the population in Allerdale, Cumbria. Church attendance also appears to vary significantly by area, from 17 per cent of Kensington and Chelsea as estimated by the 2005 English Church Census, to 2.6 per cent of North East Lincolnshire.*

*This paper examines ecological data from the 376 district (or municipal) authorities of England and Wales to test three possible explanations for this variation. These comprise differences in composition of the local population originating in economic structure and migration history; the differential presence of religious organisations across England and Wales; and differences between neighbourhoods in their local religious cultures.*

*Data on affiliation and diversity are drawn from the 2001 Census and the 2010 Integrated Household Survey, while evidence on religious practice is drawn from the 2005 English Church Census. Linear and spatial regression analysis methods are used to account for the drivers of affiliation, diversity and attendance, and to identify spatial clusters and particularly spatial outliers – areas which are significantly more or less religious than their neighbours. The role for mixed-method approaches in the spatial analysis of religion is finally noted.*

