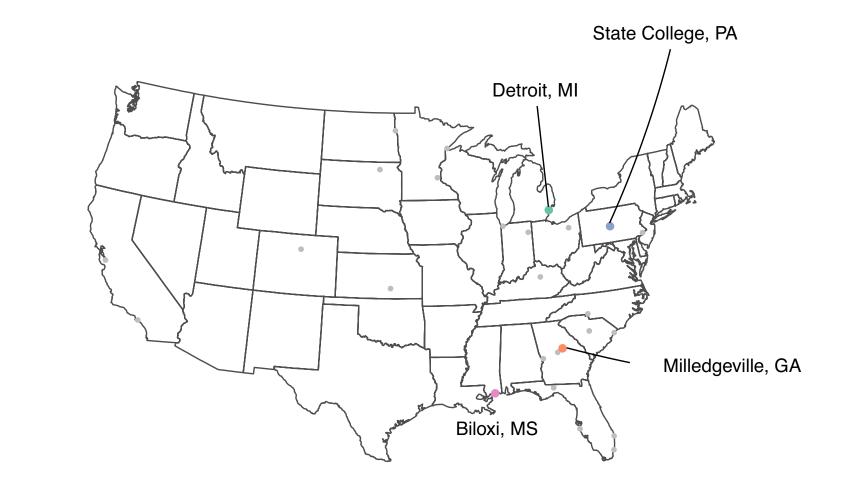
A Tale of Four Cities

Exploring the Soul of Biloxi, Detroit, Milledgeville, and State College

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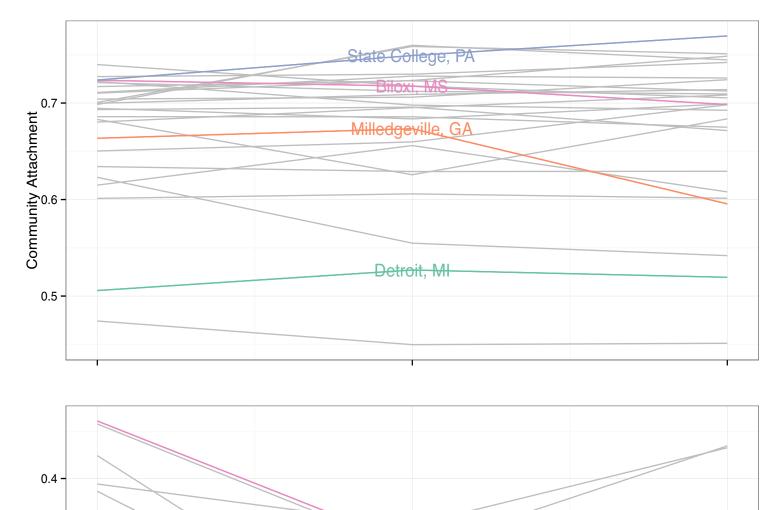
Overview

The data were provided by the Soul of the Community project run by Gallup and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The study began in 2008 and investigates community attachment in 26 cities across the United States. We explore four cit-

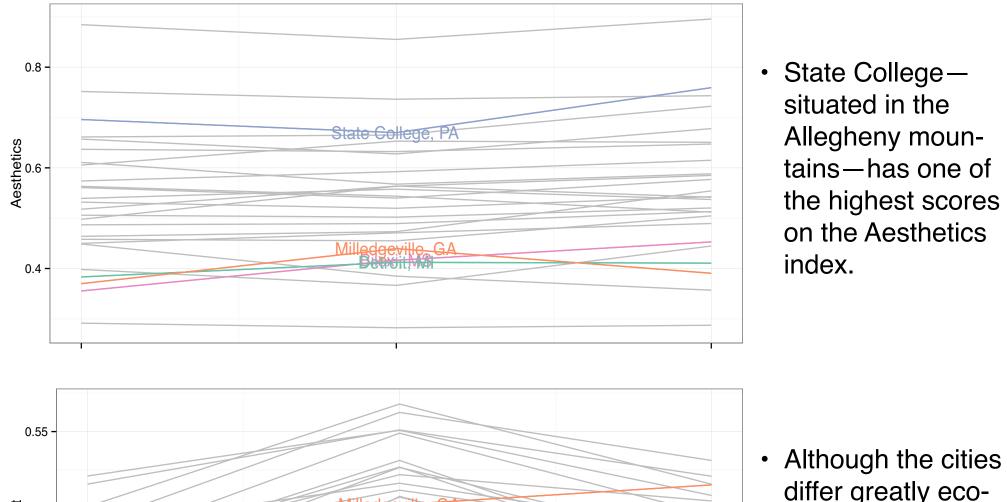
- Biloxi, MS a gulf coast city affected by the BP oil spill
- Detroit, MI a city recovering from the auto industry collapse
- Milledgeville, GA a town down on its luck
- State College, PA a poster child for community attachment

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..."

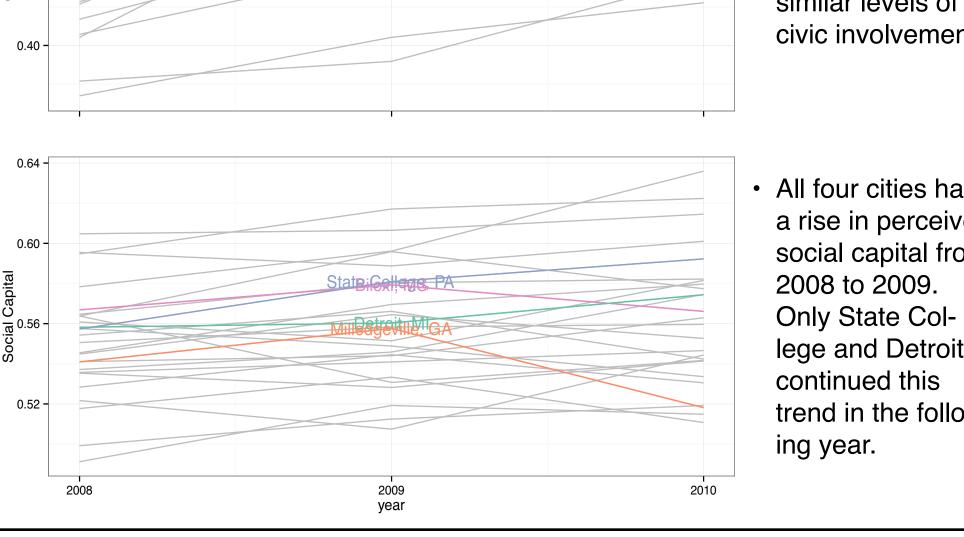
Below we use city-level index variables to explore overarching changes in community opinion between 2008 and 2010.



- State College has one the highest community attachments, and experienced increasing attachment between 2008 and
- Detroit has one of the lowest com-
- Economic outlook rebounded in most communities in 2010.
- This is not the case for Biloxi (BP oil spill) or Milledgeville (hospital



Although the cities differ greatly economically and in community attachment, they display similar levels of civic involvement



All four cities had a rise in perceived social capital from

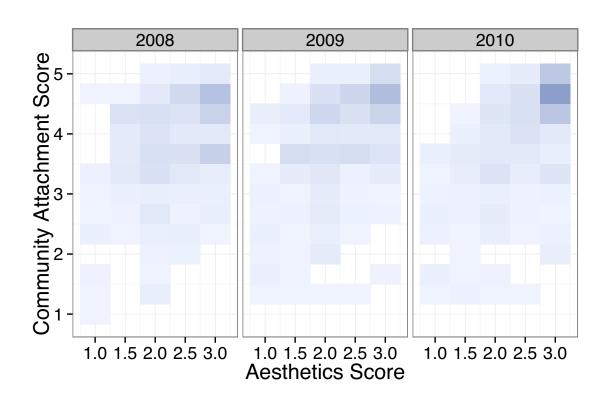
Only State College and Detroit trend in the follow-

City Spotlights: Zooming in on the Cities and their Residents

In the plots below use binned scatterplots to display resident-level variables adjusted for survey weights.

State College, PA

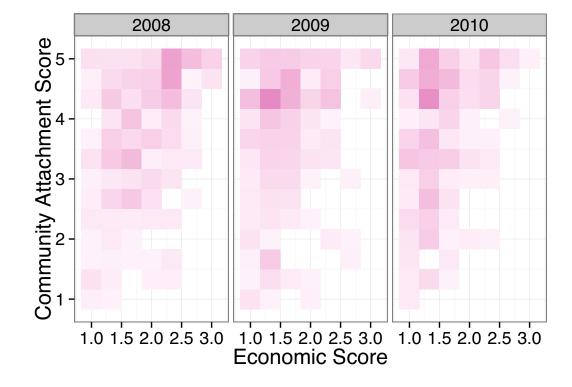
 (From left sidebar) State College has the highest community attachment in 2010 and scores highly on the economic, aesthetic, and social capital indices while it is rather average with respect to perceived civic involvement.



(Left) Scores on the aesthetic and community attachment indices rose from 2008 to 2010.

Biloxi, MS

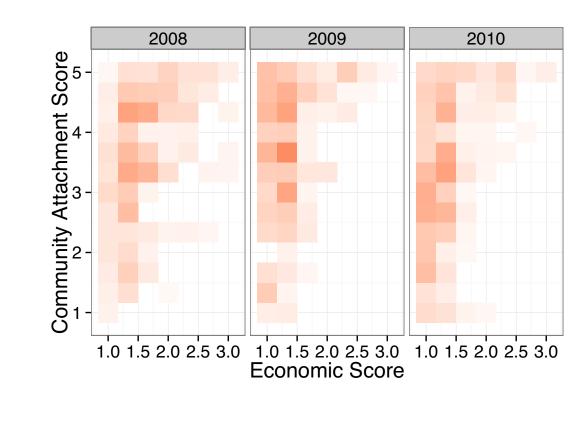
 (From left sidebar) Biloxi did not experience a recovery in economic outlook between 2009 and 2010. This may be due to the BP oil spill, which lasted nearly three months (April 20 to July 15, 2010) and hurt Biloxi's important tourism and seafood industries.



 (Left) Residents perceived a downturn in the economy (seen in 2009) and a year later felt less attached to their community.

Milledgeville, GA

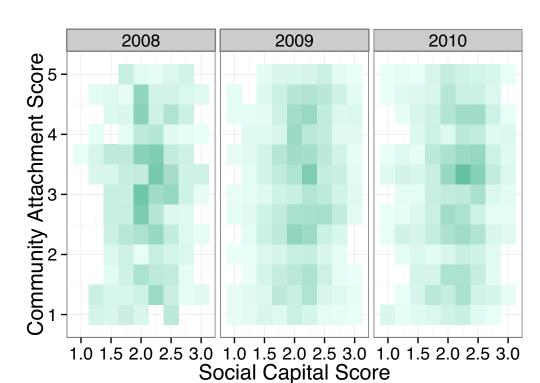
 (From left sidebar) Milledgeville did not experience a recovery in economic outlook between 2009 and 2010. This may be due to the fact that in 2010 Central State Hospital, a large employer in the town, announced it would close. During the same period, community attachment and social capital also decreased.



(Left) Like Biloxi, residents first noticed the economic downturn and then responded that they felt less attached to their community the following

Detroit, MI

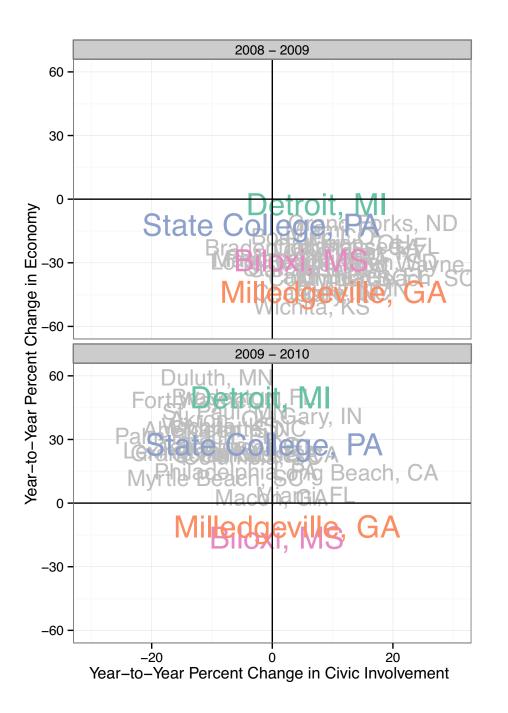
(From left sidebar) Detroit's economy is heavily rooted in the auto industry and Chrysler and GM publicly announced their financial trouble in late 2008. Consequently, Detroit citizens perceived economic hardship earlier than the other communities, explaining why Detroit did not experience a drop in its economic index between 2008 and 2009.



(Left) For all levels of community attachment there is an increase in social capital from 2008 to 2010.

Digging a Little Deeper

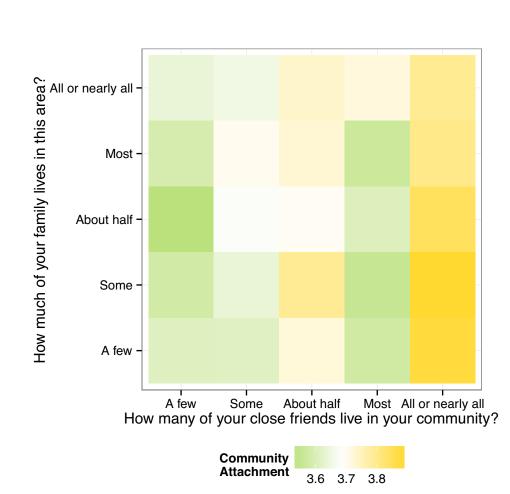
How are the economy and civic involvement related?



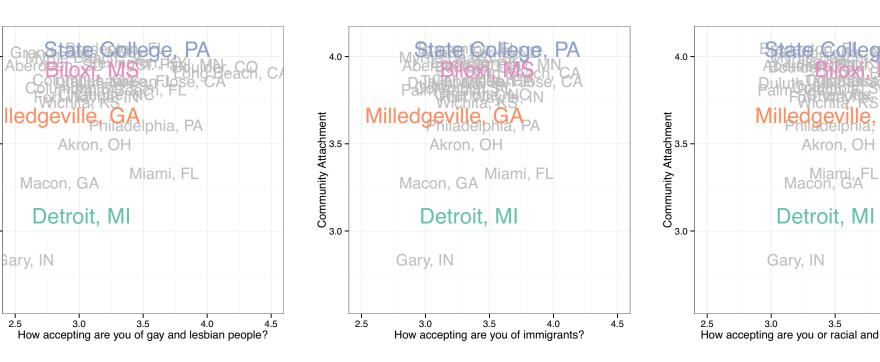
- Almost universally, the country had a worse view on the economy, but a better view on civic involvement in 2009, as compared to 2008.
- Aside from Biloxi and Milledgeville, communities had a more favorable view of the economy in 2010, which is paired with a decrease in civic involvement.
- Gary, Long Beach, Miami, and Milledgeville did not see such a decrease, but we did not find an explanation for this.

What's more important: friends or family?

- Proximity to friends is more important than proximity to family with regard to community attachment.
- Oddly, it appears that people with "Most" of their close friends in their community tend to have lower community attachment than those with "About half".



Are people more attached to accepting communities?

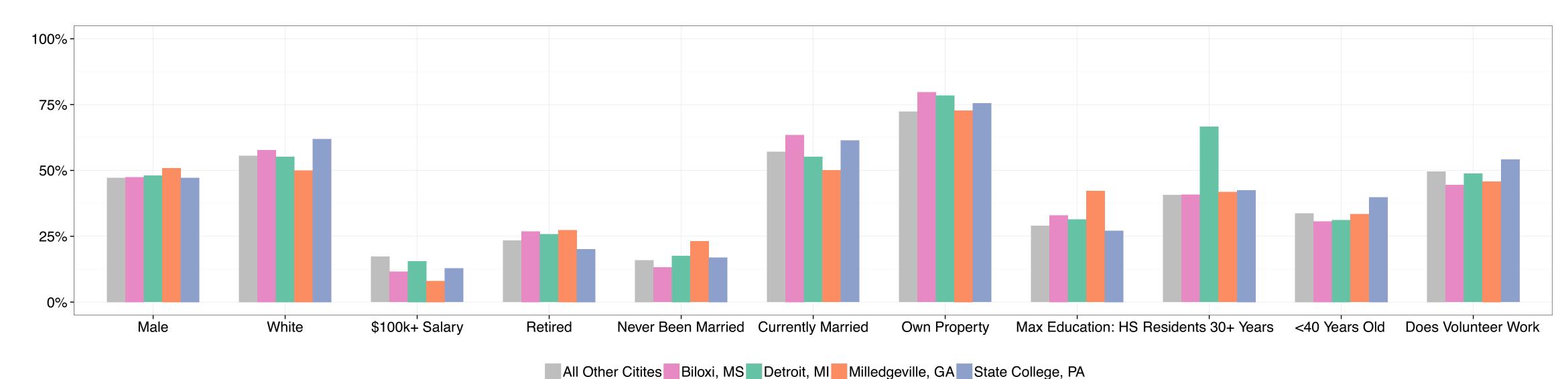


- Communities with high acceptance of gay and lesbian people (Left), immigrants (Middle), and racial and ethnic minorities (Right) have high community attachment.
- While there is evidence that more accepting communities have higher community attachment, this is only one piece of the puzzle as communities with low acceptance can have anywhere from low to high community attachment.

How do They Compare?

The four cities are not overly different than the others surveyed. The main differences are:

- Milledgeville has more citizens with at most a high school education
- Detroit has far more long-term residents (30+ years)



Tools Used

R + ggplot2, RColorBrewer, plyr, reshape2, gridExtra