

# Regional Differences in Well-Being

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# Collaborators

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# Psychological Well-Being

- People's subjective cognitive and affective evaluations of their quality of life
- High well-being is associated with:
  - High income
  - Productivity at work
  - Having social support
  - Good physical health

# Psychological Well-Being

- Psychological well-being is also linked to personality traits:
  - Extraversion
  - Agreeableness
  - Conscientiousness
  - Neuroticism
  - Openness

# National Levels of Well-Being

- National levels of well-being are associated with:
  - Wealth
  - Freedom and democracy
  - Individualism
  - Long life expectancy
  - Low Neuroticism

# Regional Differences in Well-Being?

- Regions within nations vary on the same social, economic, and health indicators as do nations
- There are also regional differences in personality



# Regional Differences in Well-Being?

- Regions within nations vary on the same social, economic, and health indicators as do nations
- There are also regional differences in personality
- The relations between people and their environments are more proximal at a regional as compared to national level

# Research Questions

- Are regional differences in well-being just a reflection of regional differences in Neuroticism?
- To what extent does personality and wealth account for regional differences in well-being?
- What are the key determinants of regional well-being?

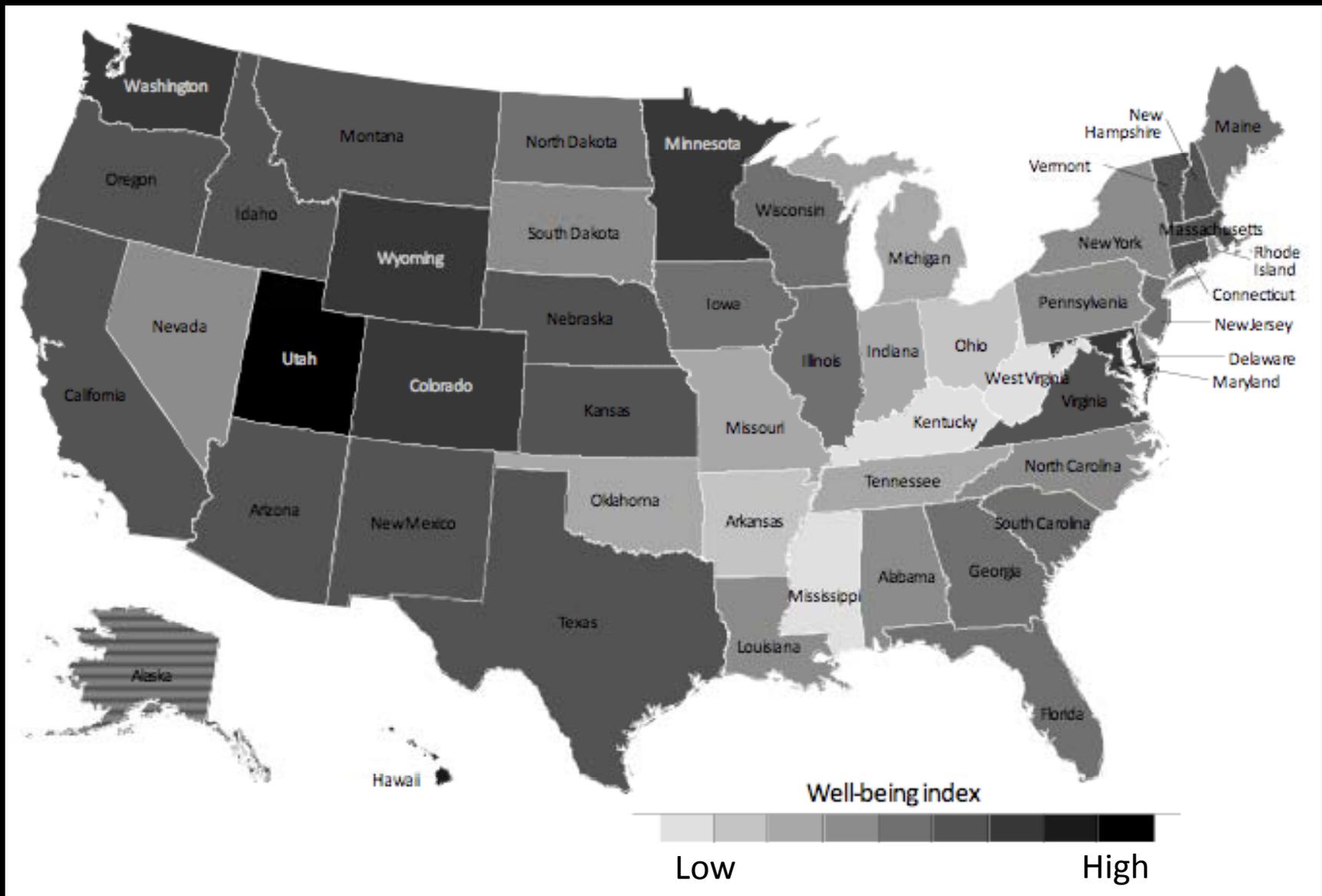
# Two Studies

- Study 1: Well-being in the US
- Study 2: Well-being in the UK

# Mapping well-being across the US

- State-level analysis
- Psychological well-being:
  - Gallup Organization's Well-Being Index (2008)
  - Neuroticism, *Big Five Inventory*
- Median income
- Human capital
- Social capital
- Life expectancy
- Crime

# Statewide differences in well-being



# State-Level Correlates of Well-Being, Neuroticism & Income

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	Well-Being	Neuroticism	Income
<i>Neuroticism</i>	-.61	--	.06
<i>Median Income</i>	.45	.06	--
<i>Education</i>	.79	-.38	.62
<i>Unemployment</i>	-.47	.26	-.27
<i>Divorce</i>	-.26	.10	-.18
<i>Life Expectancy</i>	.70	-.36	.44
<i>Violent Crime</i>	-.12	.04	.07

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# Predicting state-level well-being

	Equation 1	Equation 2	Equation 3	Equation 4	Equation 5	Equation 6
<i>Neuroticism</i>	-.42*	-.59*	-.64*	-.48*	-.64*	-.32*
<i>Median Income</i>	.13	.41*	.44*	.30*	.47*	.02
<i>Education</i>	.53*					.50*
<i>Unemployment</i>		-.20*				-.15
<i>Divorce</i>			-.18			.08
<i>Life Expectancy</i>				.36*		.20
<i>Violent Crime</i>					-.10	.16
<i>Adj. R<sup>2</sup></i>	.70	.61	.60	.66	.58	.71

\*  $P < .05$

Do the patterns of results in the US  
generalize to the UK?

# Mapping well-being across the UK

- County-level analysis (counties, unitary authorities, council areas)
- Psychological Well-Being:
  - Satisfaction with Life Scale
  - Neuroticism, *Big Five Inventory*
- Median income
- Human capital
- Social capital
- Life expectancy
- Crime

# County-Level Correlates of Well-Being, Neuroticism & Income

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	Well-Being	Neuroticism	Income
<i>Neuroticism</i>	-.57	--	-.31
<i>Median Income</i>	.30	-.31	--
<i>Education</i>	.52	-.43	.66
<i>Unemployment</i>	-.49	.50	-.74
<i>Divorce</i>	-.23	.20	-.69
<i>Life Expectancy</i>	.70	-.61	.47
<i>Violent Crime</i>	-.51	.27	-.03

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# Predicting county-level well-being

	Equation 1	Equation 2	Equation 3	Equation 4	Equation 5	Equation 6
<i>Neuroticism</i>	-.46*	-.46*	-.51*	-.23*	-.41*	-.18*
<i>Median Income</i>	-.11	.08	.01	.08	.16*	-.24*
<i>Education</i>	.39*					.20*
<i>Unemployment</i>		-.31*				-.09
<i>Divorce</i>			-.26*			-.12
<i>Life Expectancy</i>				.62*		.40*
<i>Violent Crime</i>					-.40*	-.27*
<i>Adj. R<sup>2</sup></i>	.39	.35	.36	.53	.46	.61

\*  $P < .05$

# Conclusion

- Regional differences in well-being are associated with important life outcomes
- The associations between well-being and life outcomes are not solely the result of personality or income
- The pattern of associations generalize across the US and UK
- Education and health are significant factors that contribute to regional well-being

# Questions to Consider

- Selective migration
  - Do people move to certain places in order to satisfy their psychological needs?
- Person X environment fit
  - Are people happier in places where the environment in which they live meets their needs?
- Movers and stayers
  - To what extent are regional differences in well-being the result of social mobility?
- Emotional contagion
  - To what degree are regional differences in well-being the result of social influence?

Thank You