A Diverse Well-Being for a Diversifing World: The Relationship between Community-level Racial Diversity and Psycholoigcal Richness

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Abstract

Iin light of both the increasing diversification in the modern wolrd and the often mixed responses to it, it is especially valuable to understand how living within a diverse community impacts individual well-being. However, the relationship between diversity and psychological richness, a vital component of human well-being, has largely gone unexplored up to this point. Therefore, this paper will seek to address this question of how living within a racially diverse community affects individual levels of psychological richness through a series of studies in this area.

Keywords: Diversity, Well-Being, Happiness, Psychological Richness, Socio-ecological Psychology

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1 Introduction

1.1 A Diversifying World

Increasing levels of diversity have become hallmarks of the modern, globalizing world. With greater global inter-connectivity, the expanded communication tools, technological development, and the increased global migration, many people now have greater opportunities to interact with people different from themselves racially, religious, or culturally than perhaps at any other point in history. This increasing diversification presents both profound possibilities and potential challenges as people grapple with the changing social and communal dynamics. Therefore, in light of both this increasing diversification and the often mixed responses to it, it is especially valuable now to understand how living within a diverse community impacts individual well-being. However, the relationship between diversity and psychological richness, a vital component of human well-being, has largely gone unexplored up to this point. Therefore, this paper will seek to address this question of how living within a racially diverse community affects individual levels of psychological richness through a series of studies in this area. In order to address this question, this paper proposes a two primary hypotheses regarding the relationship between the degree of diversity in one's community and the prevalence of psychological richness:

> *H1: Living within an ethnically diverse or heterogeneous community leads people to have greater degrees of psychological richness.*
>
> *H2: This change in psychological richness is at least partially explained by a more racially diverse social networks exposing individuals to different perspectives and experiences.*

In order to address this central question regarding diversity and psychological richness along with these corresponding hypotheses, however, one must first examine the current relevant literature regarding diversity, well-being, and psychological richness so that a clear link between these concepts can be established.

1.2 Constrict Theory: A Direct Challenge to Well-being

First, understanding the impact of diversity on the different members within a community is vital for understanding how it might impact individual well-being. In his landmark research findings on diversity, Putnam (2007) finally addressed the on-going debate between the contact and conflict theories of diversity by presenting extensive data supporting a new model, known as the "constrict theory" of social capital (p. 144). Rather than either decreasing racial animosity (Allport, 1954; Brown et al., 2021; Du Bois, 1899; Sigelman & Welch, 1993; Stouffer et al., 1949) or increasing a sense of outgroup threat (Enos, 2014, 2016; Giles & Evans, 1986; Herbert Blumer, 1958), Putnam found that diversity actually has this "constricting" effect where increasing diversity actually lowers trust for both in-group and out-group communities which leads to greater social isolation and overall weaker social capital (Putnam, 2007, pp. 144, 149–150). Based on Putnam's research regarding the constrict theory, therefore, one could reasonably assume that greater diversity may lead to lower overall well-being since happiness and meaning, two of the primary factors in well-being, are both connected to social support and connecting to something greater than one's self (Oishi & Westgate, 2022, pp. 791–792). In fact, Seder and Oishi (2009) actually found this type of diversity effect when conducting research that demonstrated university students with more homogenous friendship networks on Facebook actually scored higher on life satisfaction and positive feelings than those with more heterogenous networks (p. 443). Similar results were also found both by Florez et al. (2019) who demonstrated that higher levels of meaning are associated with higher degrees of prejudice and by Elnakouri et al. (2022, p. 5) who demonstrated that collective hate

towards a group, as opposed to individual hate towards a specific person often produced higher meaning in life. Therefore, based on the preponderance of the current research on diversity and its impact on well-being, one might reasonably assume that living within a diverse community would reduce overall well-being.

1.3 A Potential Answer: Psychological Richness

While portions of the current literature may appear to present a negative view of diversity at first glance, however, there are also substantive reasons to believe that this may not be the full picture. The current literature on diversity does convincingly demonstrate that increased diversity likely reduces happiness and meaning in certain circumstances, but these are not the only two factors that contribute to well-being. Oishi and Westgate provide compelling evidence that the current framework of human well-being should be expanded beyond happiness and meaning, to also include psychological richness, a third vital and distinct element of living a good life (Oishi & Westgate, 2022, p. 790). While happiness is associated with stability and satisfaction, and meaning with a greater purpose, psychological richness on the other hand is defined by a sense of experiencing perspective-changing exploration that contributes to living a good life (Oishi & Westgate, 2022, p. 790). In this manner, psychological richness is often associated with an openness to new experiences, an awareness that one's perspective is not definitive or universal, a higher penchant for creativity and narrative complexity, and also a willingness to consider challenging experiences rewarding even if difficult (Oishi & Westgate, 2022, pp. 790, 794, 797–798, 804). Because of these different causes and features, it is possible that psychological richness may have a different relationship with diversity than either happiness or meaning. Therefore, since past studies have only focused on the relationship between diversity and these first two components of well-being, it also remains possible that the current literature on diversity has unintentionally presented an overly negative portrayal of diversity by not considering how it may impact psychological richness as well.

Additionally, there are reasons to believe that psychological richness, unlike happiness and meaning, is positively correlated with diversity based on the current literature. First, political liberalism, a factor commonly associated with racial openness, is instead highly related to psychological richness (Oishi et al., 2021, p. 755). Second, psychological richness has proven to be more resistant to challenges and traumatic events than either happiness or meaning, so it is possible that the different challenges inherent in increasing diversity may not affect psychological richness in the same way as its counterparts (Oishi & Westgate, 2022, pp. 804–804). Finally, while a link between diversity and psychological richness has yet to be definitively proven, the current research has demonstrated that certain experiences which involve increased exposure to diversity, such as studying abroad, do in fact increase rates of psychological richness while not having a similar impact on happiness or meaning (Oishi & Westgate, 2022, p. 797). Based on the substantive evidence of the current literature on psychological richness, therefore, there are substantial reasons to believe that psychological richness, unlike happiness and meaning, may actually have a positive causal relationship with increased racial diversity.

1.4 Research Approach

Overall, the existing literature on racial diversity, human well-being, and psychological richness indicates a current need to conduct further research on the question of whether living within a diverse or ethnically heterogeneous community leads to a higher degree of psychological richness. In order to achieve this goal, this paper is proposing three studies where community-level rates of diversity will serve as the independent variable and individual levels of psychological richness will serve as the dependent variable. Additionally, these three studies will address different scale and types of communities to explore how this diversity effect might manifest both in large scale communities and in smaller social networks. The first two studies will address H1 by examining adult participants and the diversity levels in their ZIP Codes (*Study 1*) and then by attempting to confirm these

findings using a proxy measure for psychological richness with a larger sample size of adults (*Study 2*). Then, the final study (*Study 3*) will aim to address H2 by conducting a survey study where psychological richness will be evaluated based on the racial diversity of one's friendship network and on the types of activities one participates in with one's friends.

2 Methods

First, *Study* 1 will focus on determining whether living within US ZIP Code areas with higher levels of racial diversity is correlated with higher rates of individual psychological richness. In this manner, this study will examine whether simply living within a community or geographic area with increased racial diversity has a potential impact on psychological richness. In order to measure community-level diversity, *Study 1* will specifically utilize ZIP Code demographic data as ZIP Codes are large enough geographic areas to measure for a community effect that extends beyond one's immediate social network and yet are so large to include communal dynamics unlikely to affect the individual. Additionally, several similar studies have demonstrated that ZIP Code level demographics are far more likely to have an effect on individual personality traits and measures than large geographic areas, such as city or state level demographics (Elleman et al., 2020).

We report how we determined our sample size, all data exclusions (if any), all manipulations, and all measures in the study.

2.1 Participants

To measure this potential ZIP Code effect, a large sample of roughly 3114 adults from 104 different cities and s have been recruited from MTurk,with at least 30 participants from each city. Additionally,within this pool of participants, roughly 1469 different ZIP Codes are represented.

2.2 Material

2.3 Procedure

2.4 Data analysis

We used a variety of `R` packages[1] to organize our data and run our analyses.

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[1] R (Version 4.3.1; R Core Team, 2023) and the R-packages *broom* (Version 1.0.5; Robinson et al., 2023), *dplyr* (Version 1.1.4; Wickham, François, et al., 2023), *forcats* (Version 1.0.0; Wickham, 2023a), *ggplot2* (Version 3.4.3; Wickham, 2016), *jtools* (Version 2.2.2; Long, 2022), *lme4* (Version 1.1.35.1; Bates et al., 2015), *lubridate* (Version 1.9.3; Grolemund & Wickham, 2011), *Matrix* (Version 1.6.1.1; Bates et al., 2023), *papaja* (Version 0.1.1.9001; Aust & Barth, 2023), *psych* (Version 2.4.1; William Revelle, 2024), *purrr* (Version 1.0.2; Wickham & Henry, 2023), *readr* (Version 2.1.4; Wickham, Hester, et al., 2023), *Require* (Version 0.3.1; McIntire, 2023), *scales* (Version 1.3.0; Wickham, Pedersen, et al., 2023), *shiny* (Version 1.8.0; Chang et al., 2023), *stargazer* (Version 5.2.3; Hlavac, 2022), *stringr* (Version 1.5.1; Wickham, 2023b), *tibble* (Version 3.2.1; Müller & Wickham, 2023), *tidyr* (Version 1.3.1; Wickham, Vaughan, et al., 2023), *tidyverse* (Version 2.0.0; Wickham et al., 2019), *tinylabels* (Version 0.2.4; Barth, 2023), and *tinytex* (Version 0.49; Xie, 2019)

3 Results

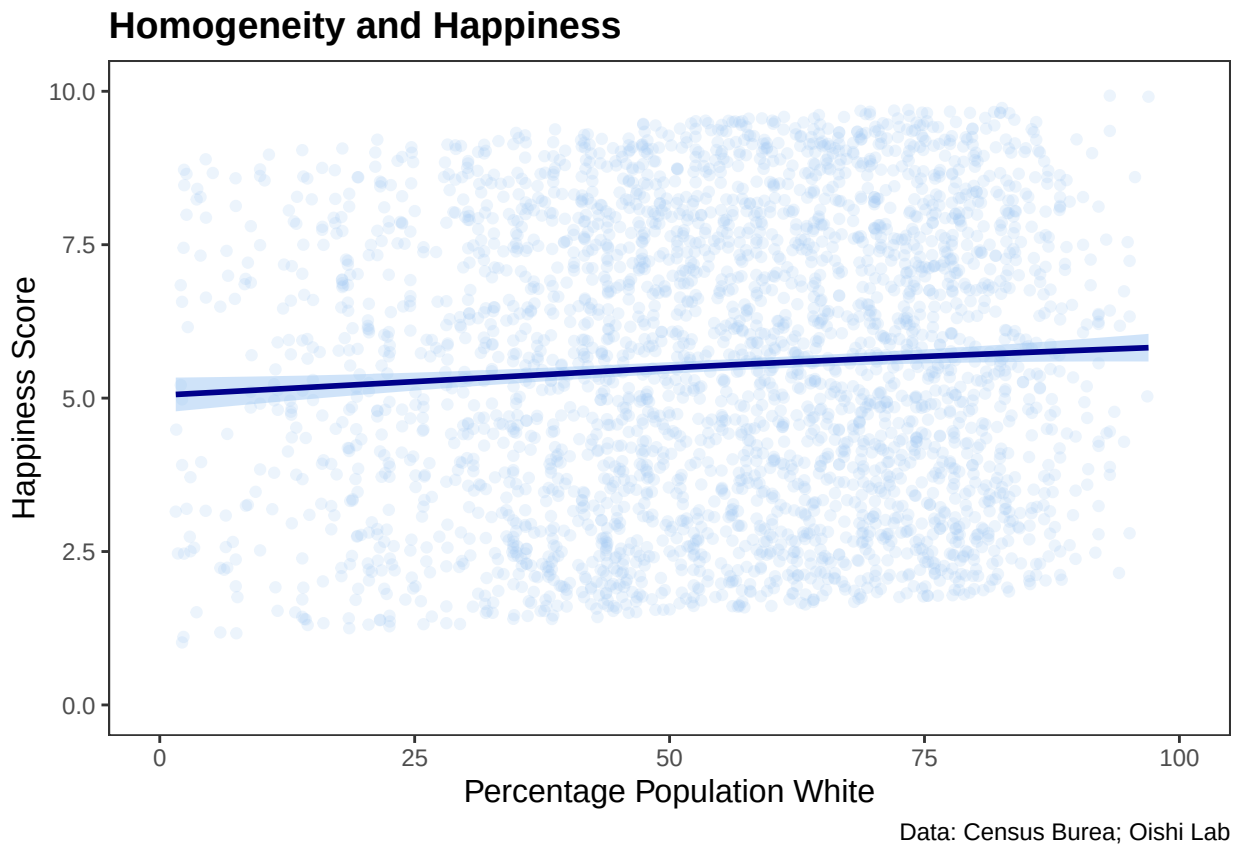

Figure 1

Scatterplot demonstrating relationship the relationship between racial homogeneity in a Participant's ZIP Code and the participant's meaning in life scores.

Figure 1 demonstrates ($r = 0.08$)

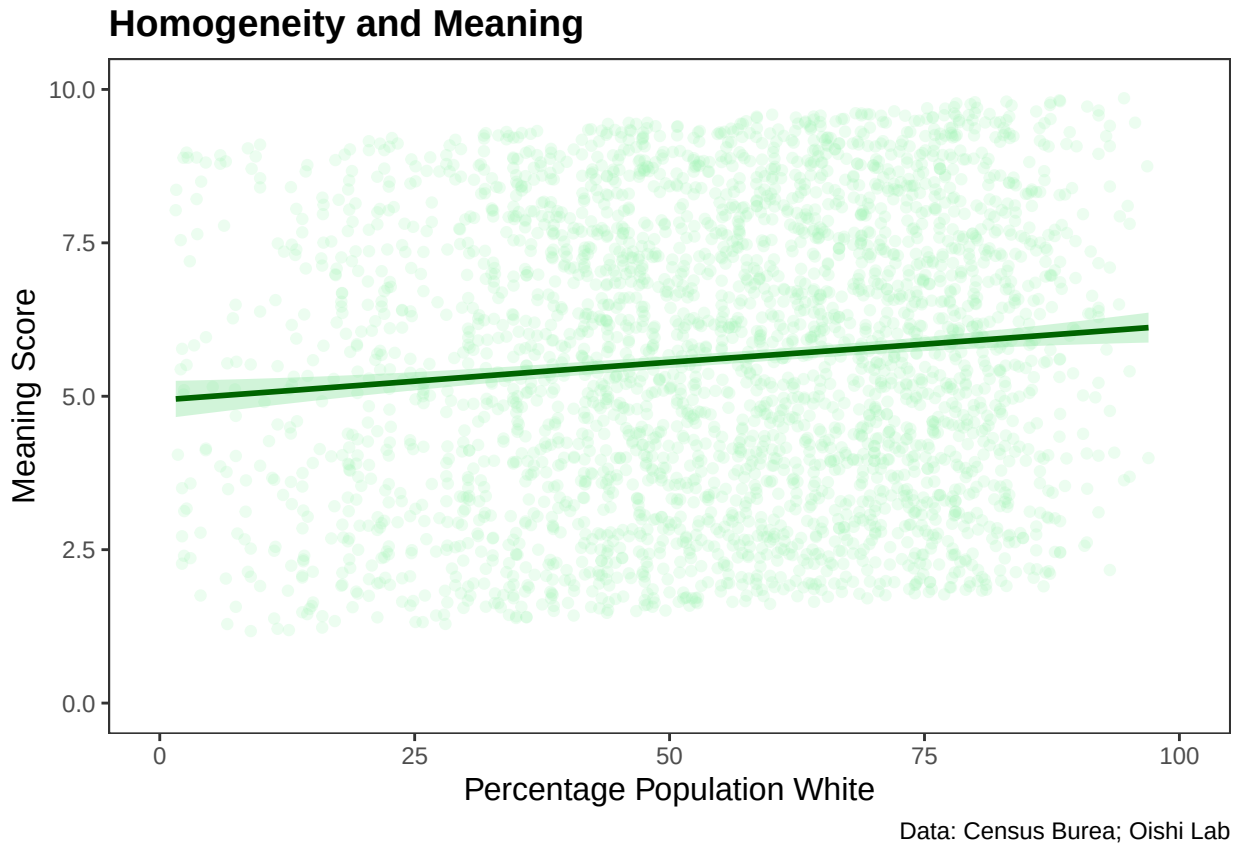

Figure 2

Scatterplot demonstrating the relationship between the racial homogeneity in a Participant's ZIP Code and the participant's meaning in life scores.

Figure 2 demonstrates ($r = 0.11$)

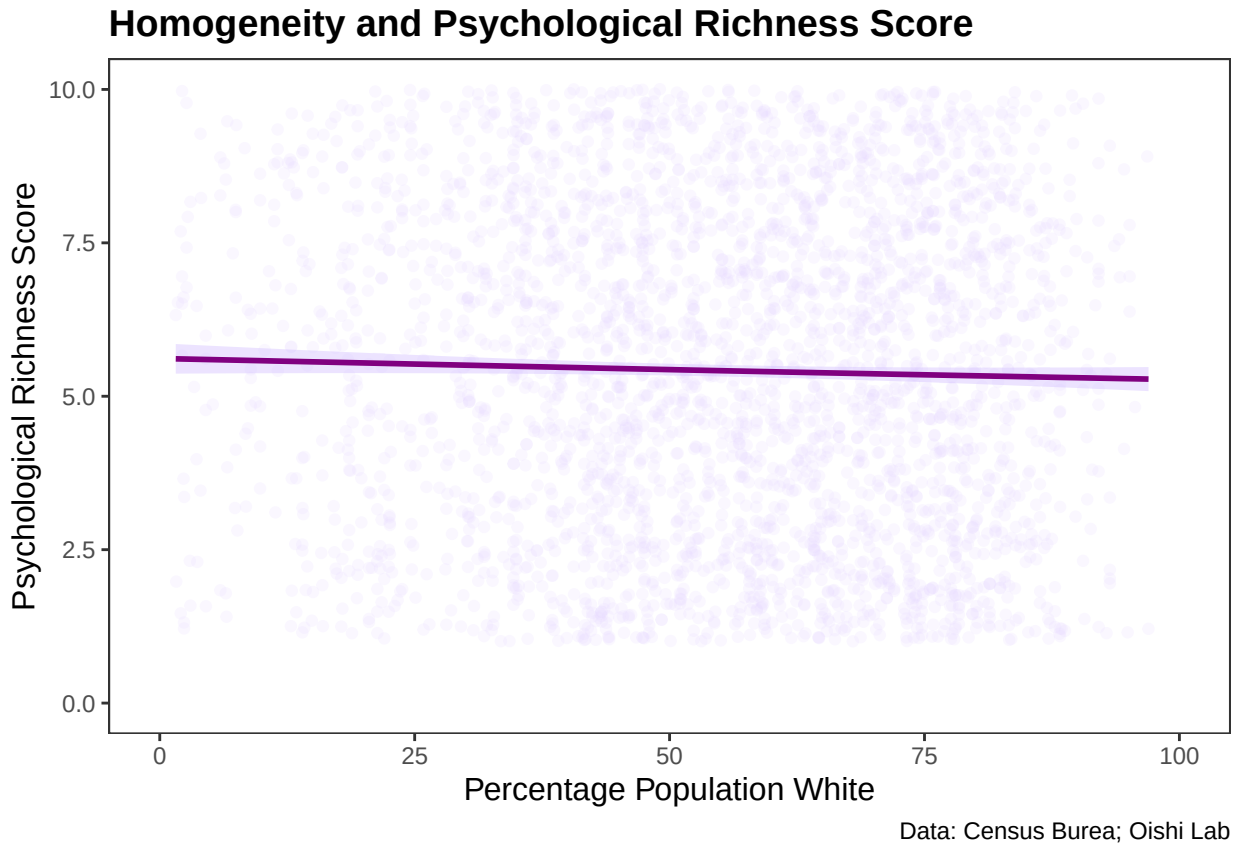

Figure 3

Scatterplot demonstrating the relationship between the racial homogeneity in a Participant's ZIP Code and the participant's psychological richness scores.

Figure 3 demonstrates (r = -0.04)

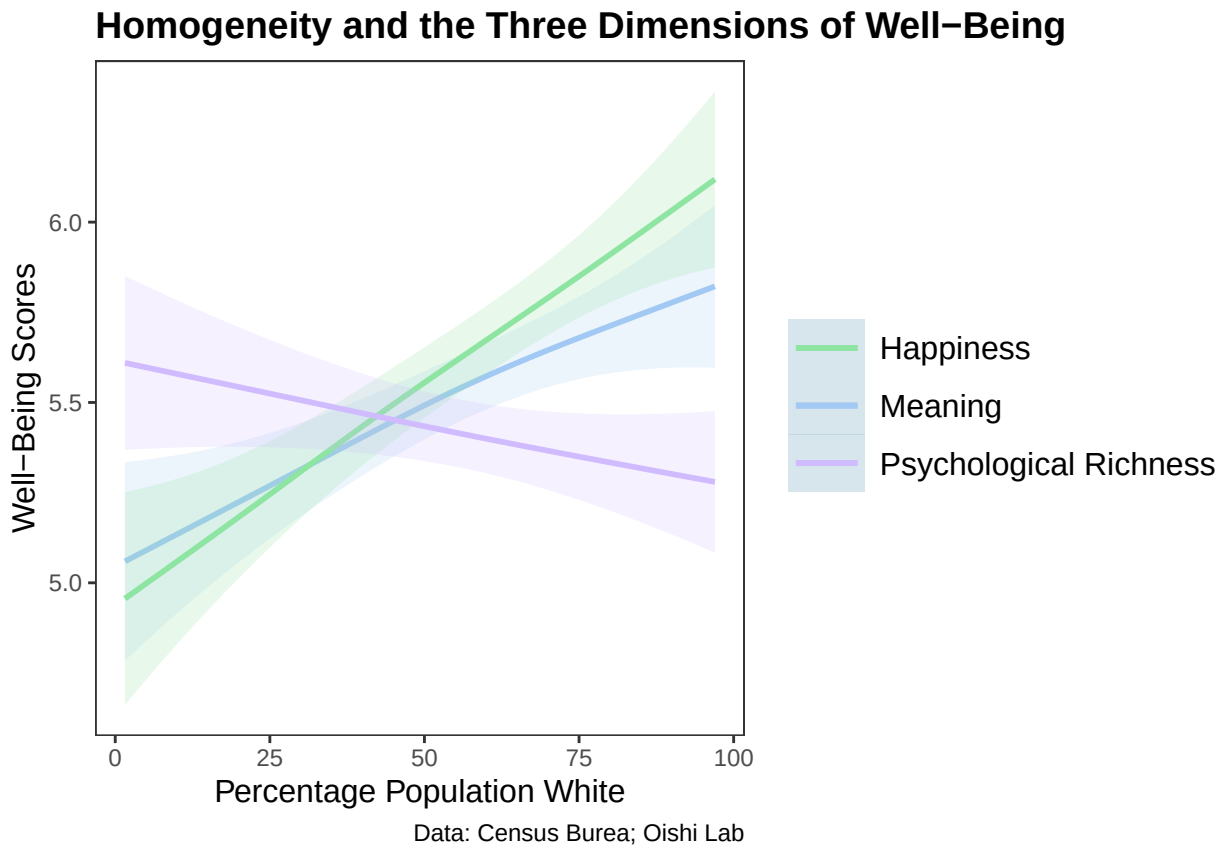

Figure 4

Smooth plot comparing the relationships between the percentage of a participant's ZIP Code that is white and each of the three well-being measures.

Figure 4 demonstrates

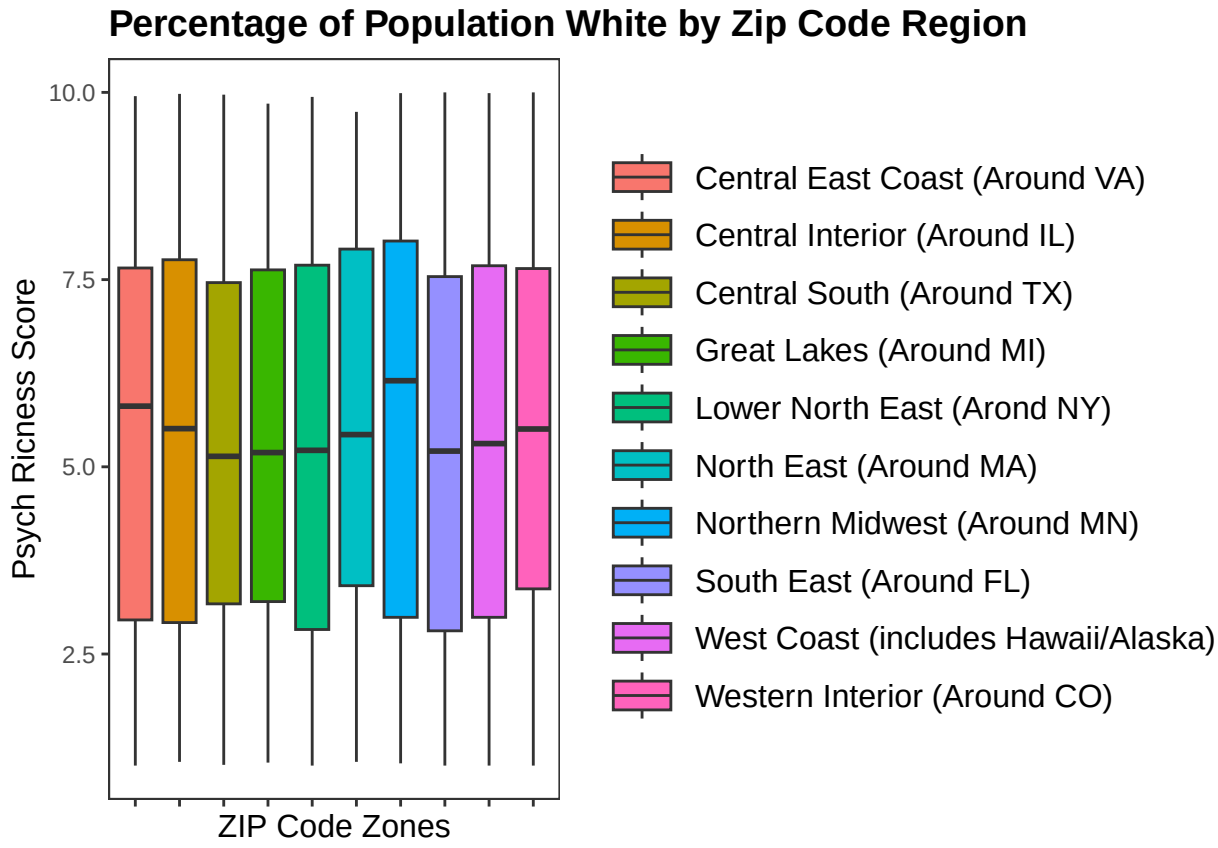

Figure 5

Box plot comparing the relationships between the region particpants were from and their psychological richness scores.

Figure 5 demonstrates

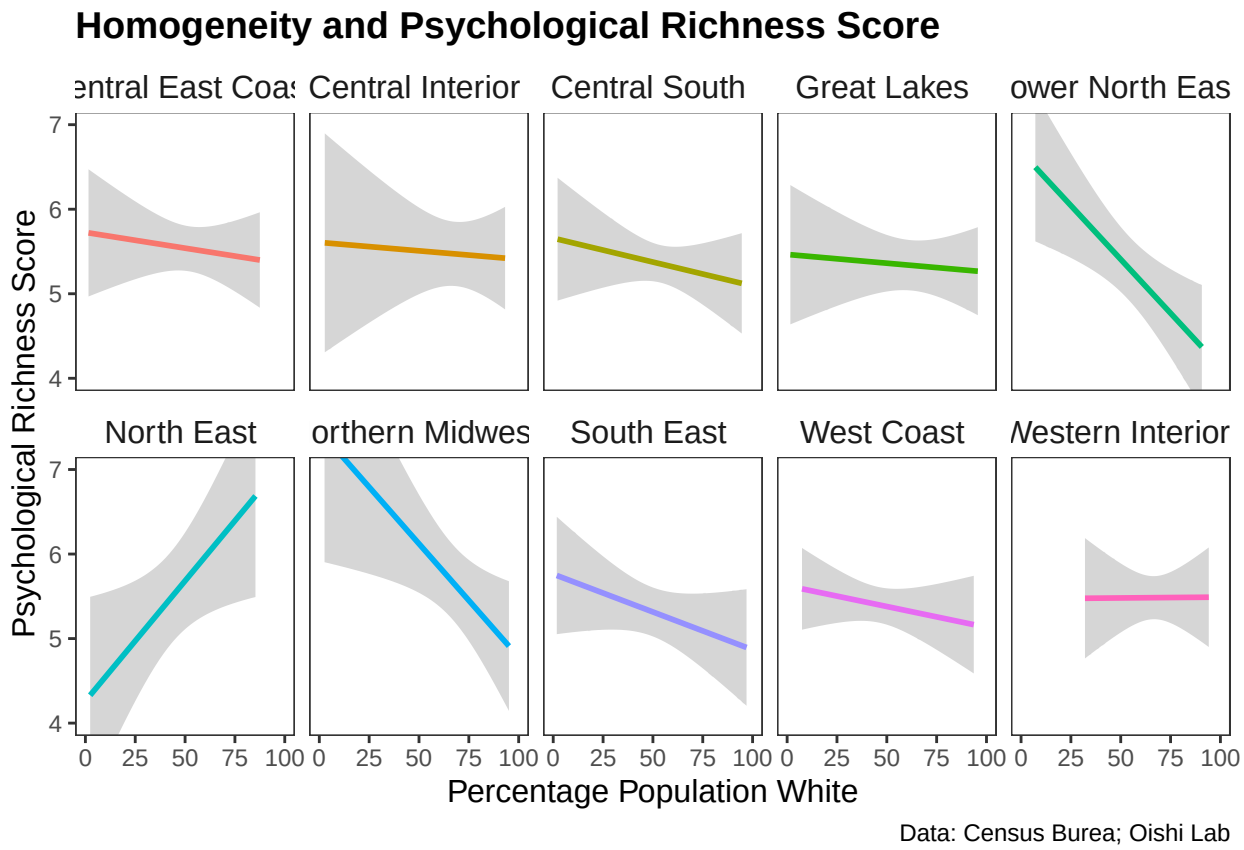

Figure 6

Smooth plot comparing the relationships between community whiteness and individual psychological richness based on the region particpants were from.

Figure 6 demonstrates

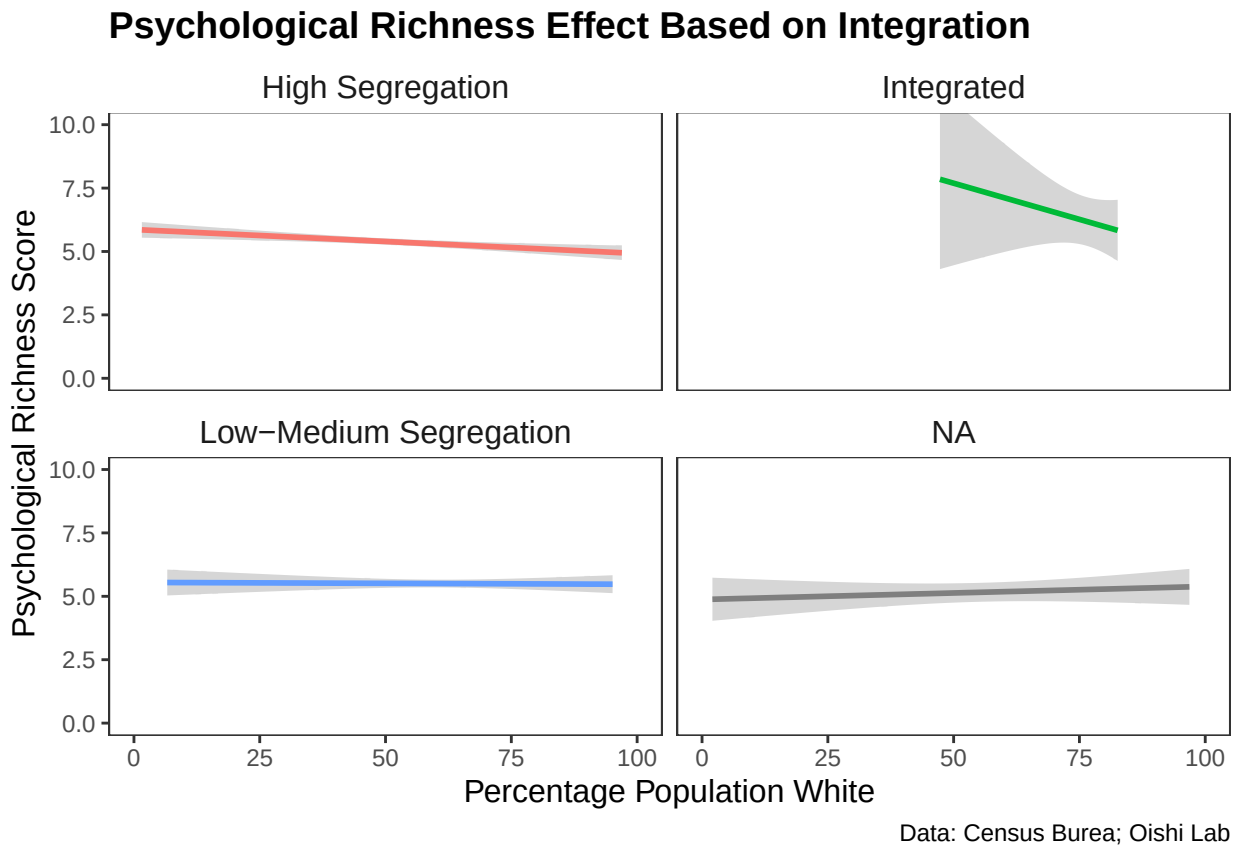

Figure 7

Smooth plot comparing the relationships between community whiteness and individual psychological richness based on the degree of racial segregation in one's community.

Figure 7 demonstrates

4 Discussion

Table 1

Well-being Measures Regression

	Dependent variable:		
	Psych Richness	Happiness	Meaning
	(1)	(2)	(3)
ZIP Code Percent White	-0.006^{**}	0.009^{***}	0.013^{***}
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Constant	5.742^{***}	5.048^{***}	4.921^{***}
	(0.140)	(0.125)	(0.124)
Observations	2,889	2,889	2,889
R^2	0.002	0.006	0.012
Adjusted R^2	0.002	0.005	0.012
Residual Std. Error (df = 2887)	2.611	2.332	2.315
F Statistic (df = 1; 2887)	5.400^{**}	16.024^{***}	35.134^{***}

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 2

Psych Richness Region Controls Regression

	Dependent variable:	
	Psych Richness	
	(1)	(2)
ZIP Code Percent White	−0.006**	−0.007***
	(0.002)	(0.003)
Central Interior		0.002
		(0.240)
Central South		−0.214
		(0.184)
Great Lakes		−0.218
		(0.233)
Lower North East		−0.269
		(0.240)
North East		−0.161
		(0.319)
Northern Midwest		0.220
		(0.261)
South East		−0.329
		(0.217)
West Coast		−0.173
		(0.178)
West Interior		0.001
		(0.198)
Constant	5.742***	5.960***
	(0.140)	(0.196)
Observations	2,889	2,889
R^2	0.002	0.004
Adjusted R^2	0.002	0.001
Residual Std. Error	2.611 (df = 2887)	2.611 (df = 2878)
F Statistic	5.400** (df = 1; 2887)	1.275 (df = 10; 2878)
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3

Psych Richness ZIP Controls Regression

	Dependent variable:		
	Psych Richness		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
ZIP Code Percent White	−0.006**	−0.005**	−0.007**
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Percent Female		0.038**	0.041**
		(0.018)	(0.018)
Median Household Income			0.00000
			(0.00000)
Population Density			0.00000
			(0.00000)
Total Population			−0.00000
			(0.00000)
Mobility Score			2.842
			(2.234)
Constant	5.742***	3.810***	3.279***
	(0.140)	(0.930)	(1.008)
Observations	2,889	2,889	2,889
R^2	0.002	0.003	0.004
Adjusted R^2	0.002	0.003	0.002
Residual Std. Error	2.611 (df = 2887)	2.609 (df = 2886)	2.610 (df = 2882)
F Statistic	5.400** (df = 1; 2887)	4.909*** (df = 2; 2886)	2.087* (df = 6; 2882)
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

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Table 4

Psych Richness Interaction Regression

	Dependent variable:	
	Richness-Walkability Interaction	
	(1)	(2)
ZIP Code Percent White	−0.002	−0.008*
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Walkscore	0.563	
	(0.488)	
Whiteness:Walkscore	−0.007	
	(0.008)	
Segregation		−0.669
		(0.773)
Segregation:Walkscore		0.006
		(0.014)
Mobility Score	5.464***	5.965***
	(0.280)	(0.275)
Observations	2,889	2,889
R^2	0.002	0.002
Adjusted R^2	0.001	0.001
Residual Std. Error (df = 2885)	2.611	2.611
F Statistic (df = 3; 2885)	2.357*	2.254*
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

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