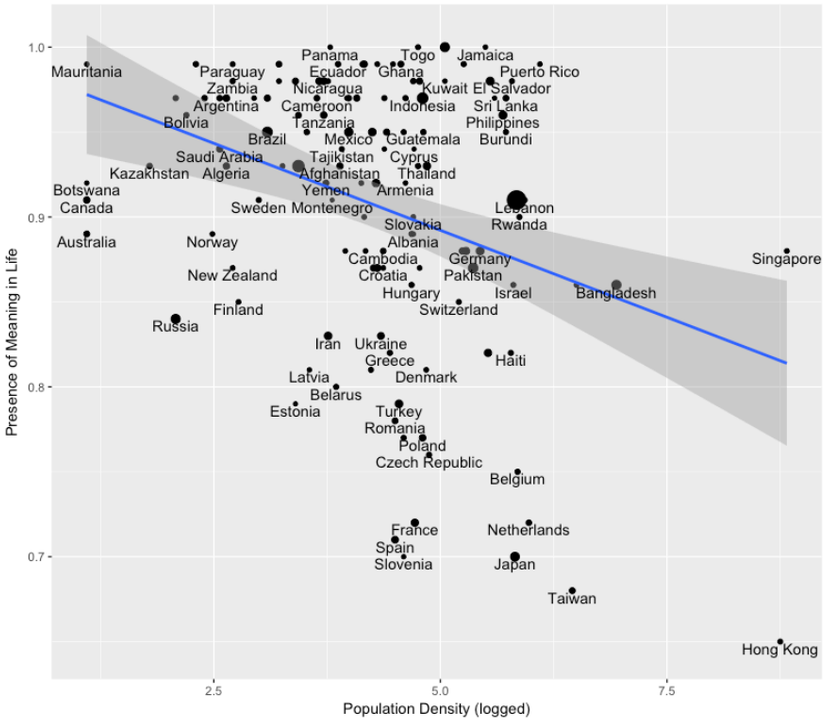
Higher Population Density, Lower Individual Meaning in Life

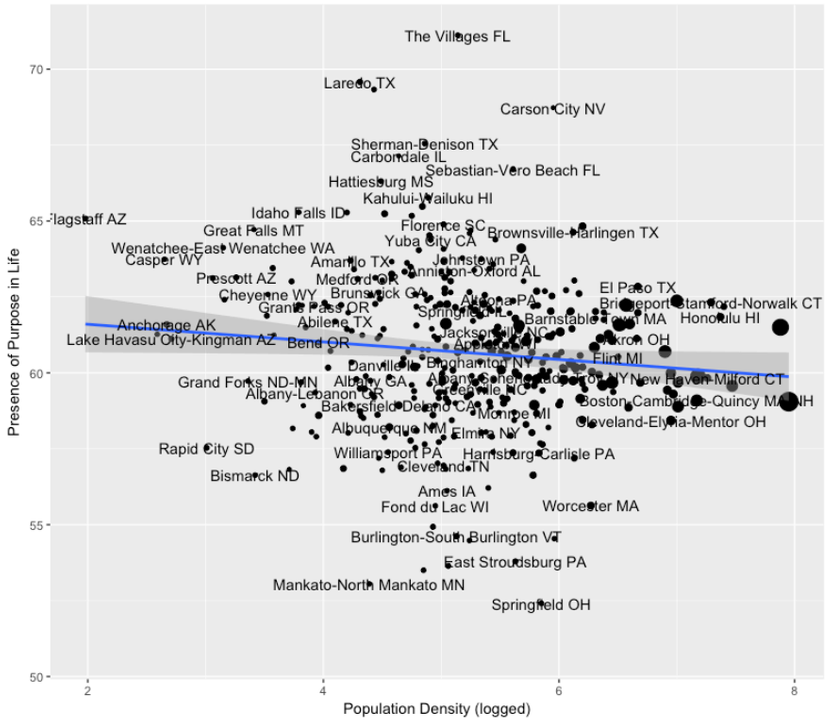
Nick Buttrick, Samantha Heintzelman, Veronica Weser, & Shige Oishi

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
DEPT. OF PSYCHOLOGY

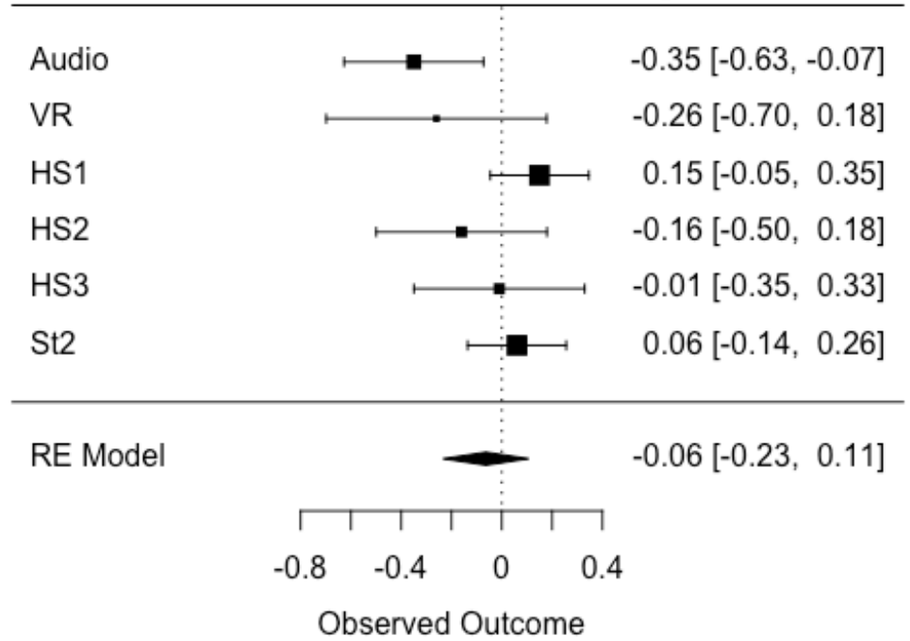
Worldwide



Within the US



Experimentally...



Omnibus test of moderation: QM(2) = 8.26, p = .016

	Worldwide	US
Sample	~140,000 people in 127 countries	~137,000 people in 354 cities
Simple Correlation	r(126) = -.33 [-.48, -17], p< .001	r(372) = -.11 [-.21, -.01], p = .039
With Controls	t(123) = -2.58, p = .012	t(351) = -5.04, p<.001
Data Source	Gallup World Poll	Gallup Daily Tracking Poll

Population density has been natural-log transformed
Controls World: Country GDP per capita. US: city median household income; individual education, income, gender, ethnicity, and marital status

Study	Method	Data Source
Audio	Imagine being in an environment, cued by sounds of a **busy** or **empty** place	In Lab (n = 187)
VR	Walk through a VR environment populated with **many** or **few** avatars	In Lab (n = 83)
HS1	Read an article about increasing **human** or **squirrel** density*	Online (n = 478)
HS2	Read an article about **increasing** human density or read **no article**	Online (n = 148)
HS3	Imagine being in an environment, cued by sounds of a **busy** or **empty** street	Online (n = 148)
St2	Read an article about **increasing** or **decreasing** population density	Online (n = 630)

*The manipulation check for study HS1 failed