

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT WELL-BEING

Why the study of well-being is crucial for race relations and advancing prosperity

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How did we arrive at well-being?

- Research on the devaluation of housing, businesses and commercial property showed us that assets in Black neighborhoods are much more valuable than are priced and how structural racism extracts wealth and opportunity
- The Black Progress Index and our social determinants of health research showed us life expectancy is often much higher (or lower) in cities than is predicted.
- We want to learn from the places that are thriving.

How did we arrive at well-being?

- Where is the happiest place on earth?

How did we arrive at well-being?

- Where is the happiest place on earth?
- What city makes you the happiest? Why?

“Well-being can be understood as how people feel and how they function, both on a personal and a social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole.”

The New Economics Foundation

Why well-being matters

Well-being provides a more holistic measure of happiness, and despair, than income or wealth



Well-being encompasses the material and immaterial factors relevant to how people live and thrive

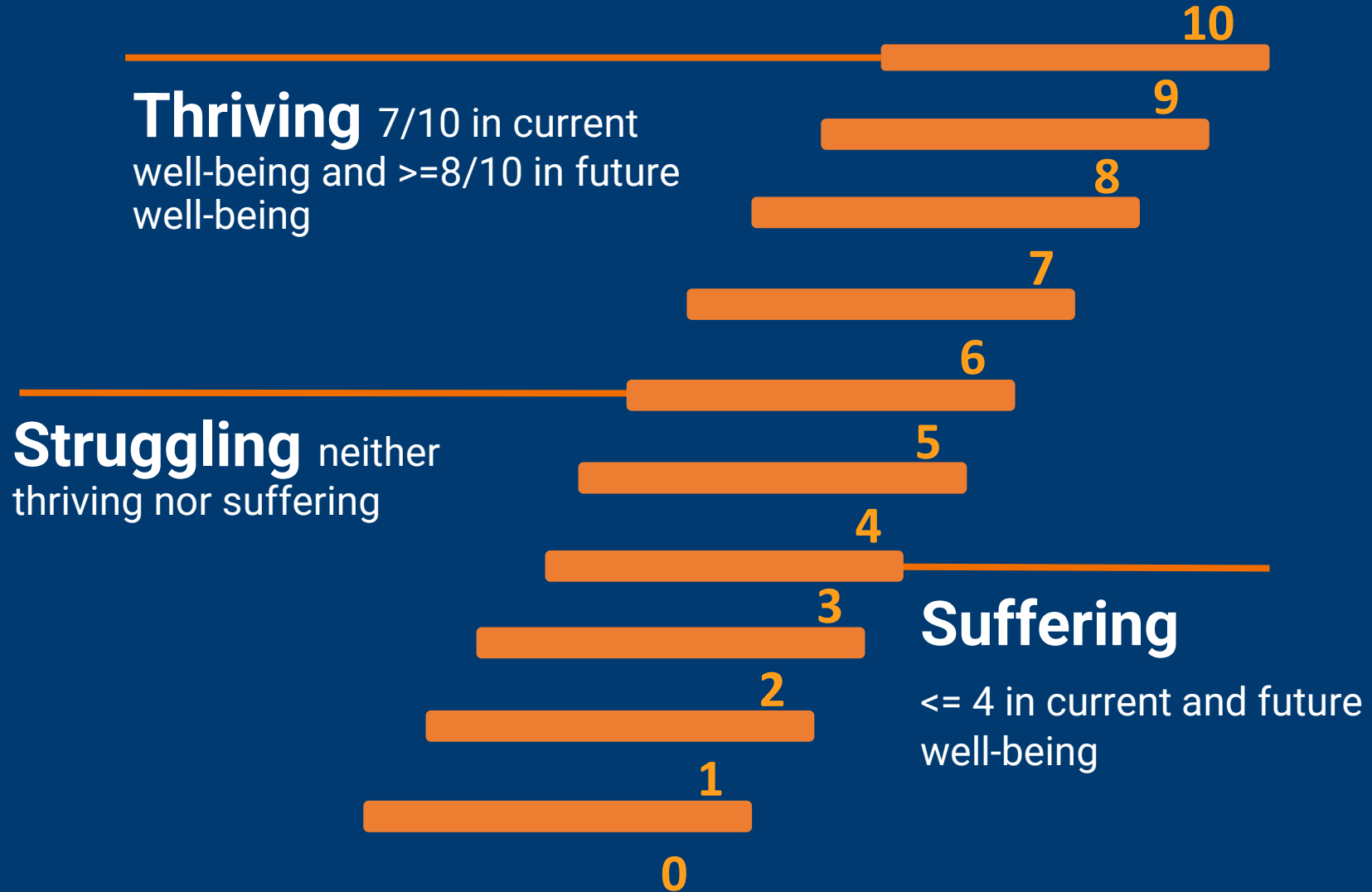


Measure of impact: Social security and stability are correlated with high well-being



Well-being offers evidence of racial cooperation and community cohesion

How we measure well-being



How we measure well-being

- By combining Gallup's well-being index data from 2008 to 2019 with Gallup Center on Black Voices data from 2020 to April 2023, we have constructed the longest continuous time series of life evaluation data by race and ethnicity ever published.

Major Findings – International Ranking

- The United States falls in the top 20 countries on well-being scores.
- 48% of respondents reported they were thriving in 2022 – the lowest level since reporting began in 2006.

The U.S. has high rates of well-being internationally

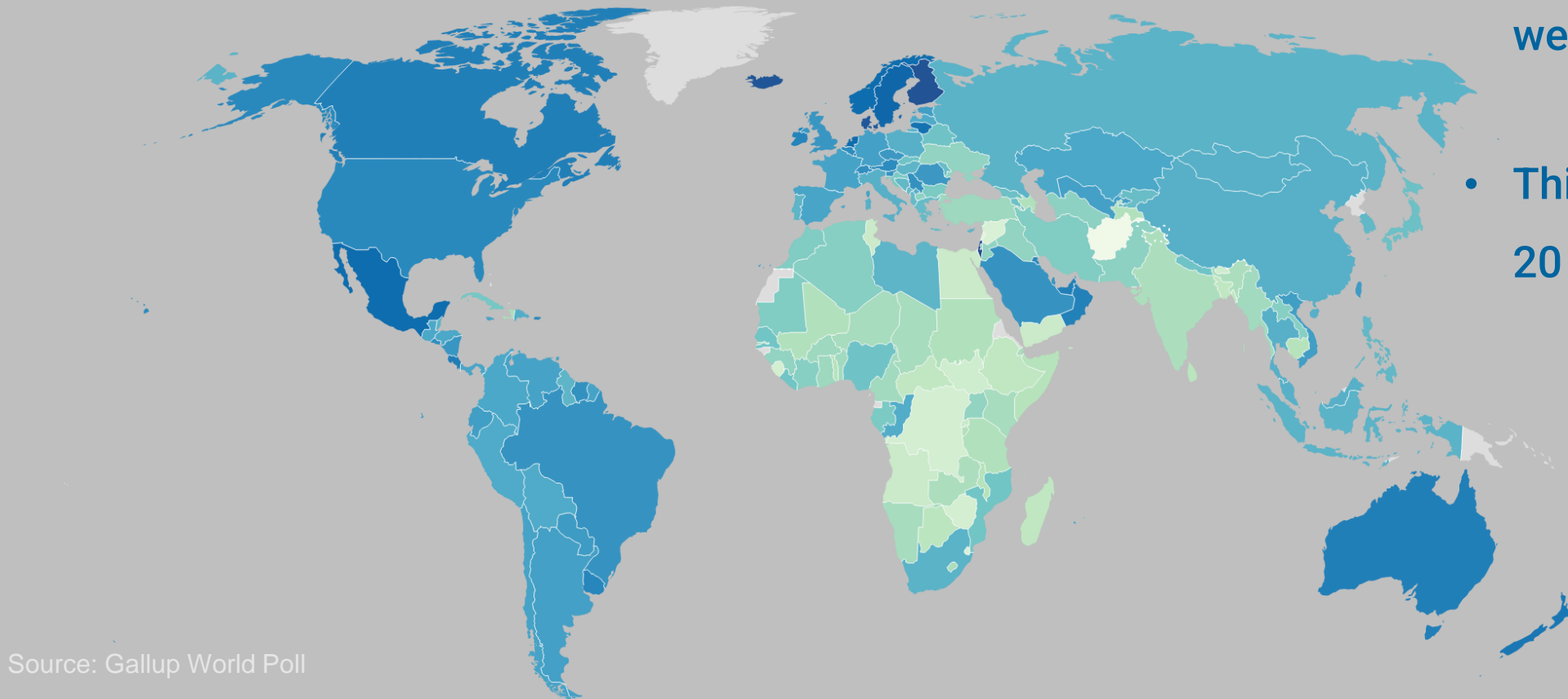
Percentage thriving by county, 2017 - 2022

Share of adults thriving in well-being

Thriving (%)



- 48% of American's were thriving in 2022
- This is within the top 20 globally



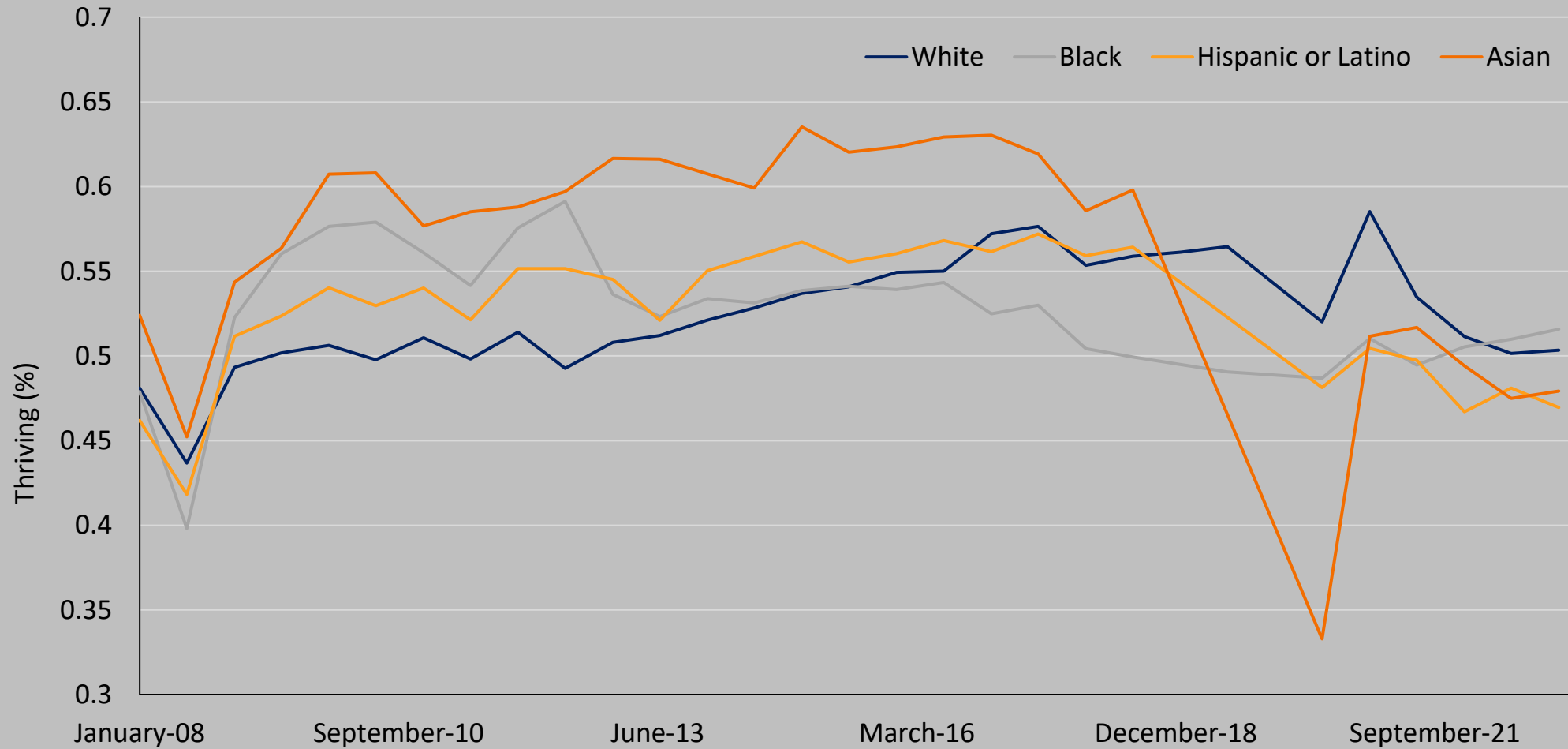
Source: Gallup World Poll

Major Findings – Well-being across racial groups

- Between 2008 and 2023, well-being fluctuated for all racial and ethnicity groups, with noticeable declines for all in the aftermath of the Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Since 2020, all racial and ethnic groups experienced a sharp drop in well-being, with Asian Americans seeing the largest decline, which aligns with the rise in anti-Asian hate.

Recent trends in well-being in the U.S. show fluctuations and declines

Percentage thriving by race and ethnicity, 6-month average, 2008 to 2023

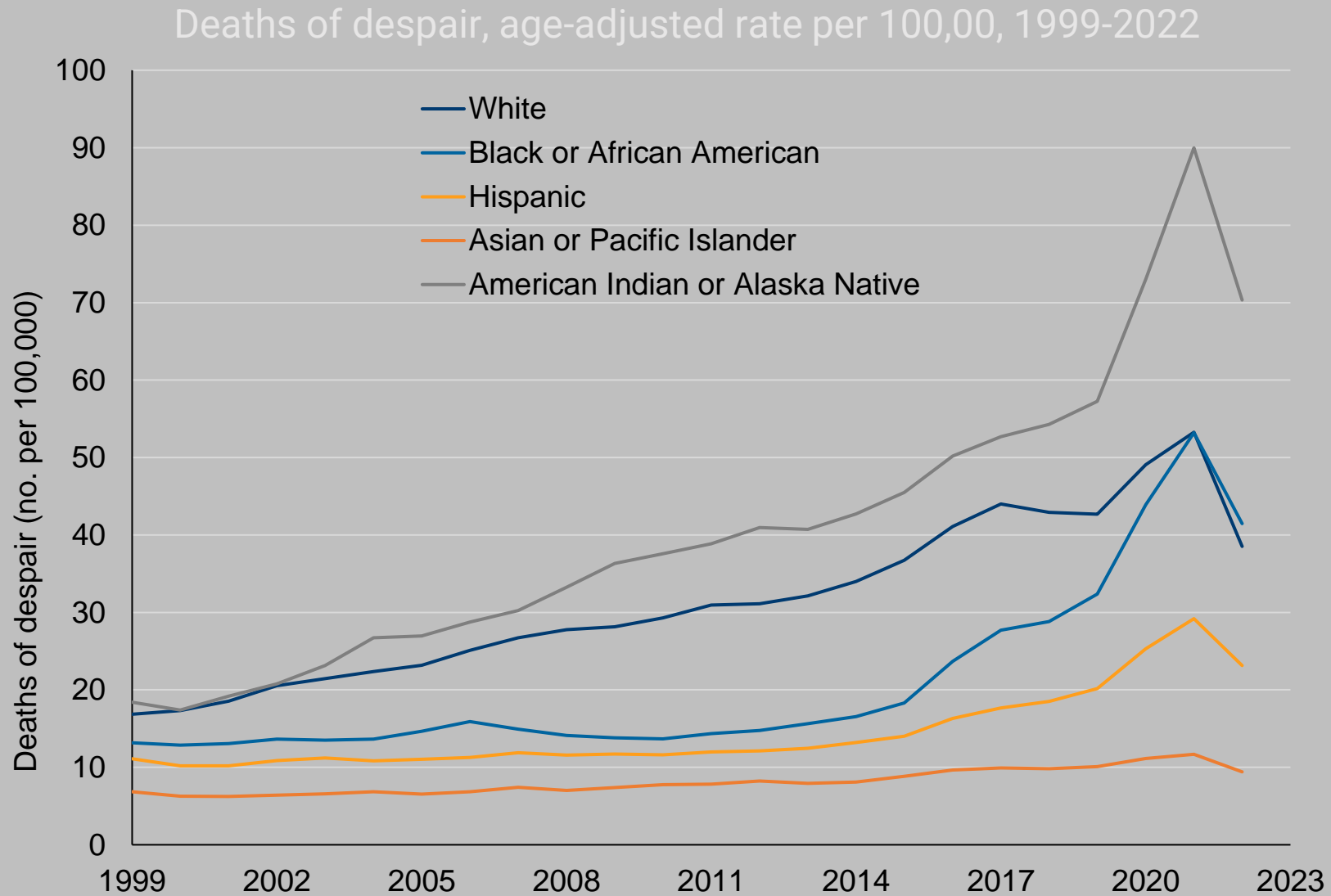


Source: Gallup

Major Findings – Deaths from alcohol, drugs and suicide – “deaths of despair”

- The sharp fall in well-being since 2016 and again after the pandemic has resulted in Black Americans dying from suicide and despair-related deaths at equal rates as white Americans.
- American Indians and other lower populated racial groups continue to exhibit the highest rates of deaths of despair and the lowest rates of well-being.

Deaths related to alcohol, drugs and suicide – “Deaths of Despair” – have increased since 1999



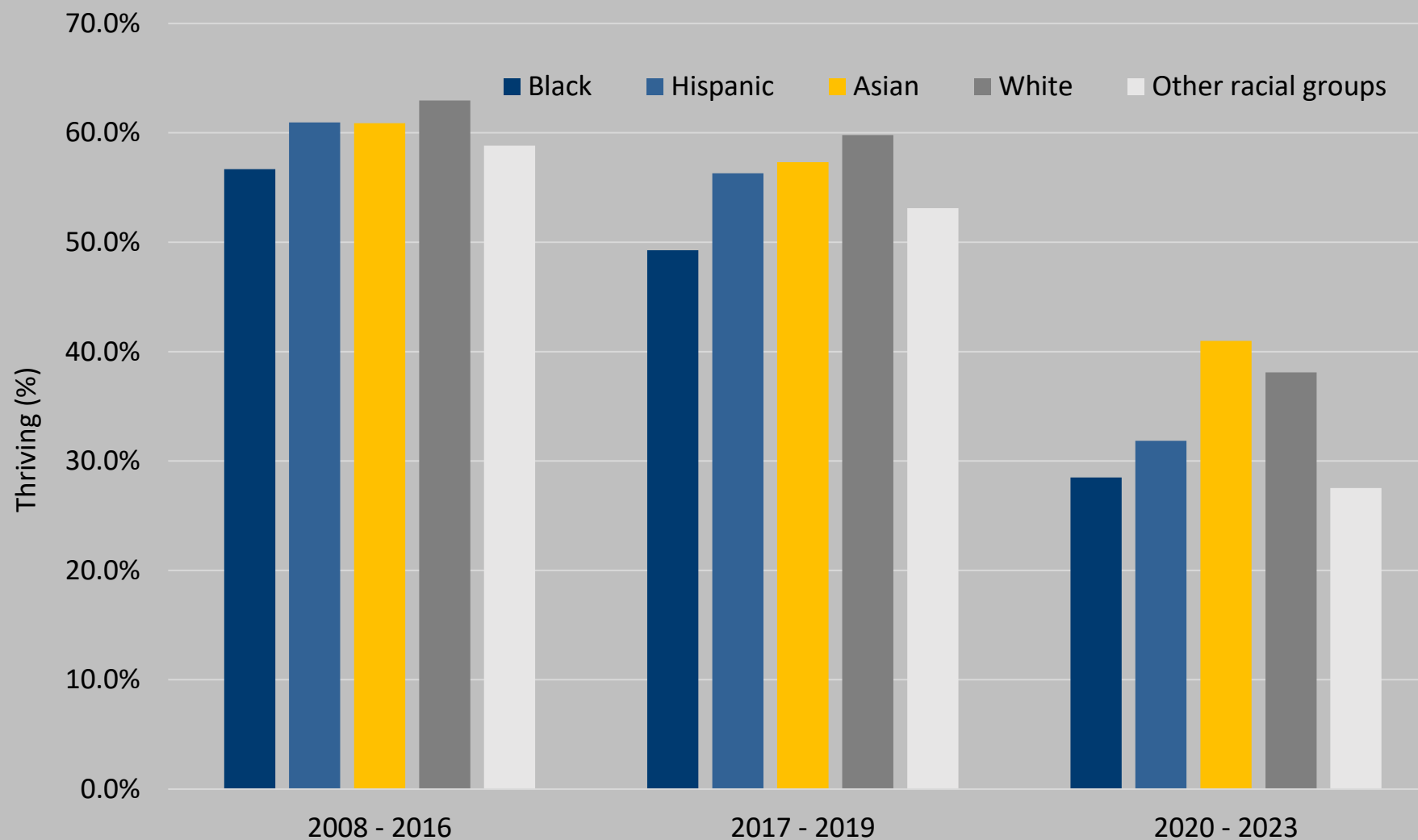
Source: Gallup and CDC

Major Findings – Well-being and age

- Declines in well-being have been especially pronounced in young adults ages 18 to 24. Between 2008 and 2023, young adults in each racial and ethnic group experienced 20 percentage point or larger reductions in well-being.

For younger adults (18-24), well-being has dropped and become uneven

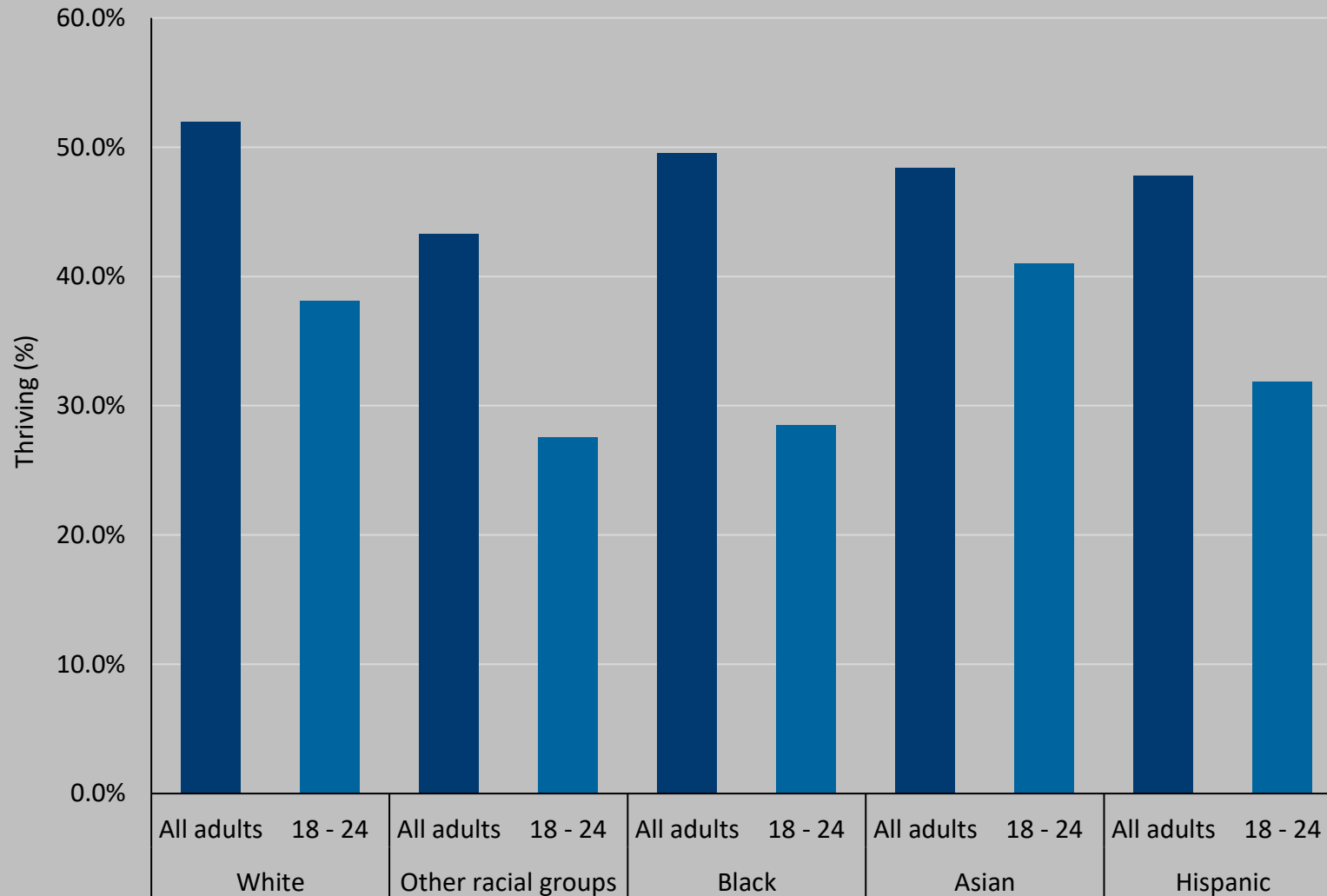
Percentage thriving in well-being for young adults by race and ethnicity, 2008-2016 to 2020-2023



Source: Gallup

Well-being is lower for younger adults (18-24), across race and ethnicity

Percentage thriving in well-being by age group and race and ethnicity, 2020-2023



Source: Gallup

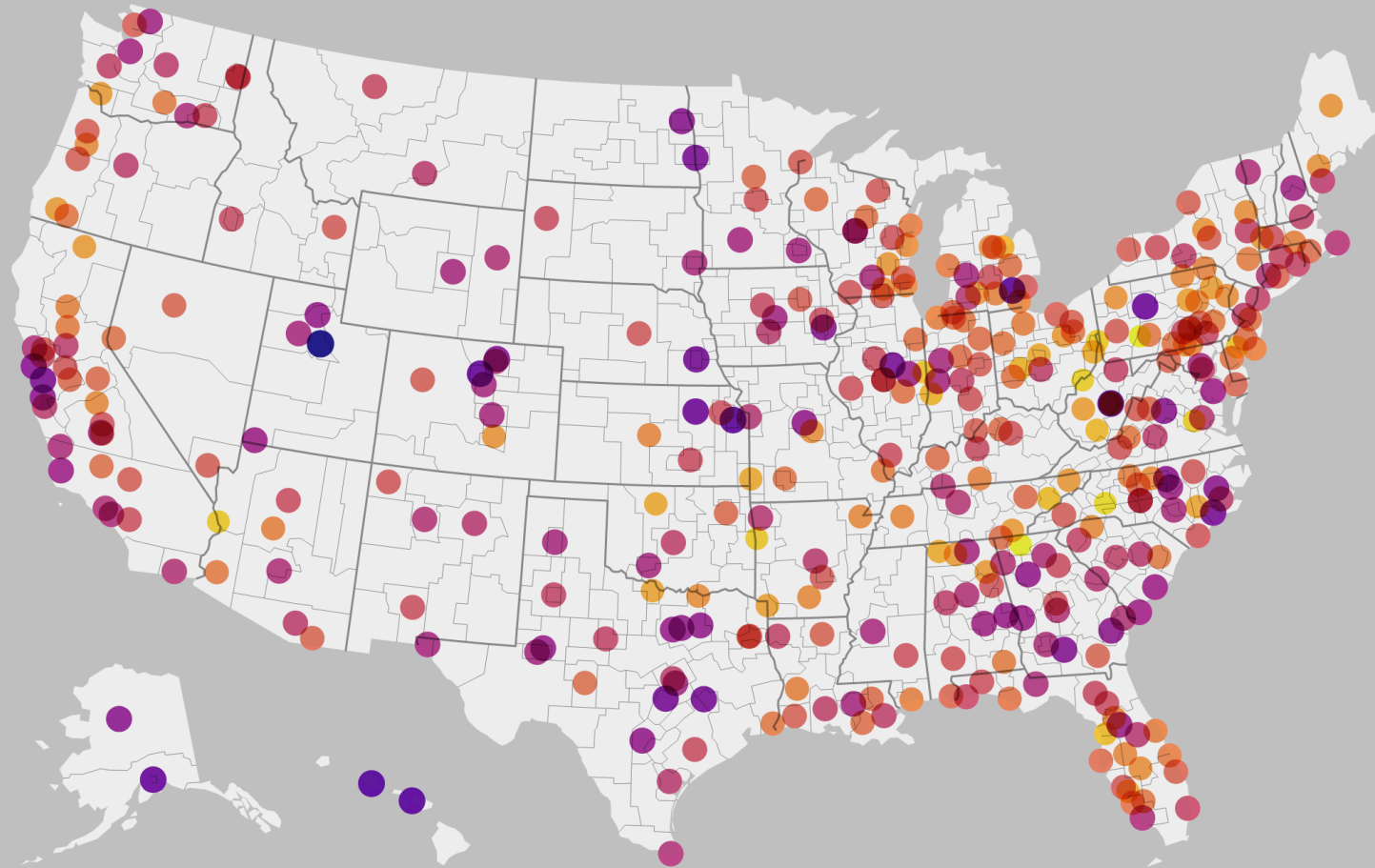
Major Findings – Where happiness resides

- Areas with the highest scores in well-being are overrepresented in the Southern and Western United States. Coastal California, North Carolina and Georgia tend to score highly.
- Areas with the lowest scores are clustered around the Great Lakes, the Appalachians, and Northeast.

Place matters: Well-being can vary substantially by metro area

Percentage thriving by metropolitan area, 2006 - 2020

Thriving (%); Source: Gallup, 2006 - 2020

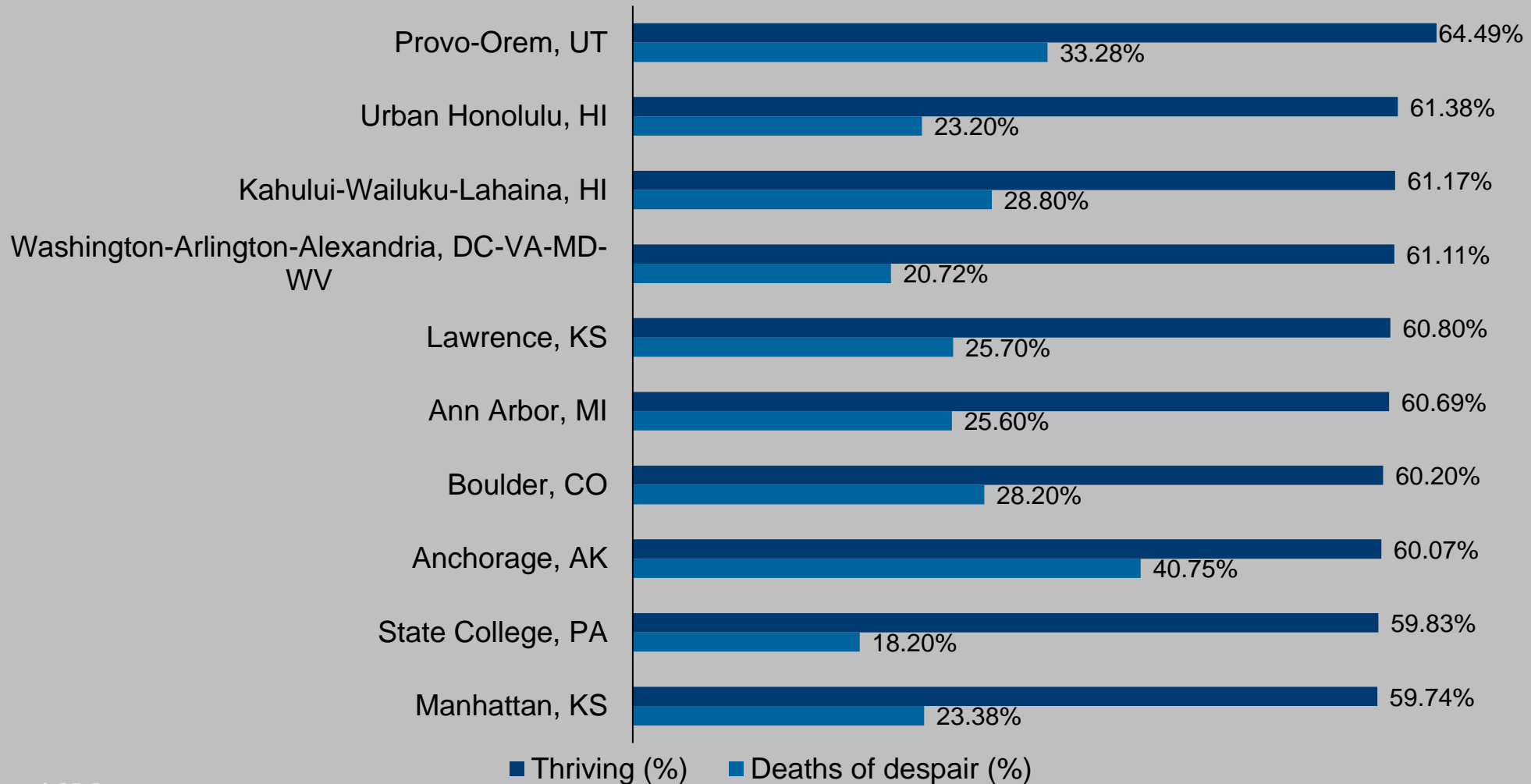


- Highest well-being overrepresented in Southern and Western U.S.
- Lowest well-being in Great Lakes, Appalachian mountains, and Northeast
- Coastal California, North Carolina, and Georgia score high

Created with Datawrapper Source: Gallup

Top 10 metropolitan areas by well-being

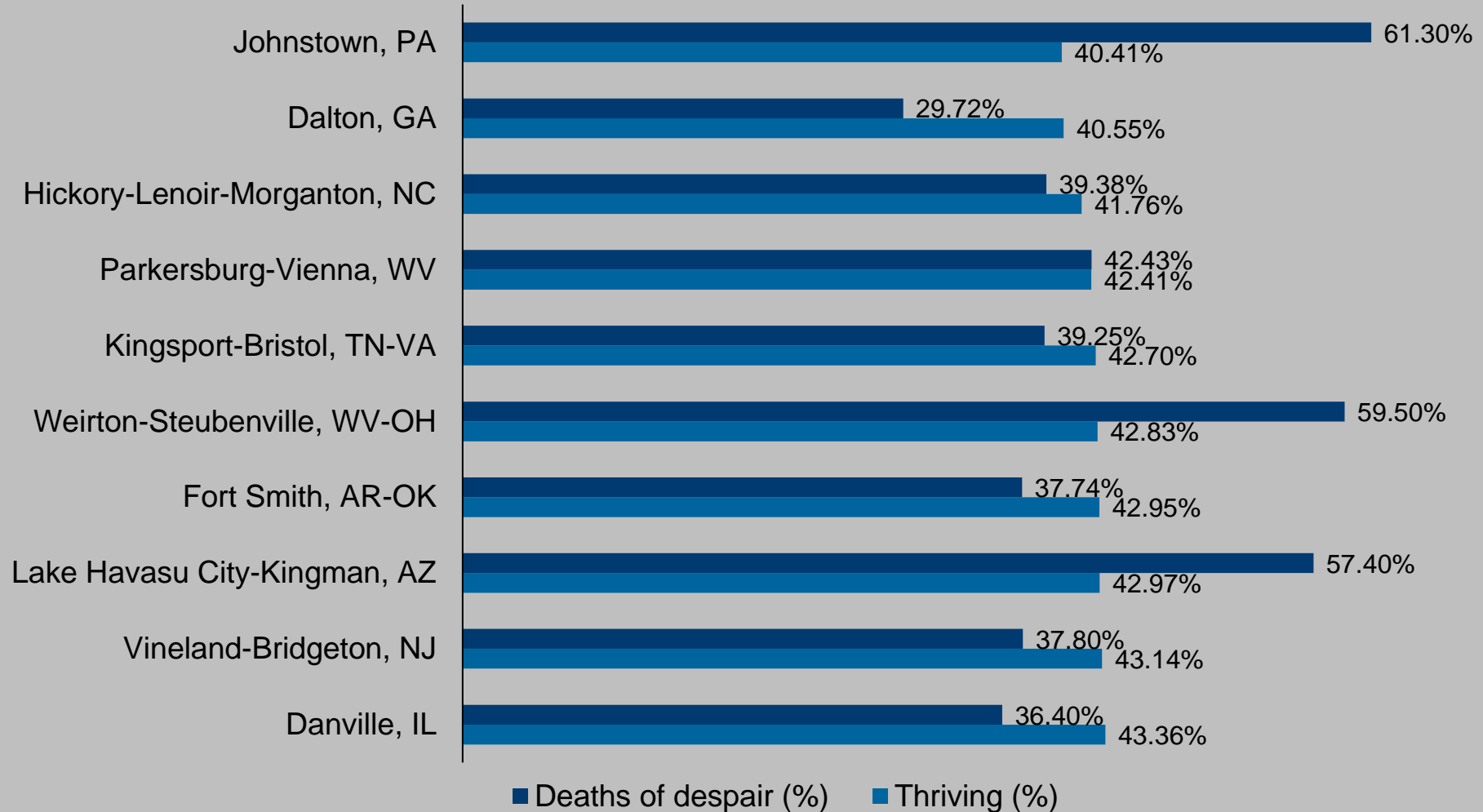
Percentage thriving in well-being and age-adjusted mortality rate from deaths of despair per 100,000, 2008-2022



Source: Gallup and CDC

Bottom 10 metropolitan areas by well-being

Percentage thriving in well-being and age-adjusted mortality rate from deaths of despair per 100,000, 2008-2022



Source: Gallup and CDC

Top ten metro areas by percentage thriving for each large racial and ethnic group

Asian	Black	Hispanic	Other racial groups	White
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	Huntsville, AL	Provo-Orem, UT	Albuquerque, NM	Kahului-Wailuku-Lahaina, HI
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ	Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	College Station-Bryan, TX	Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown, TX	Urban Honolulu, HI
Columbus, OH	Killeen-Temple, TX	Jacksonville, FL	Anchorage, AK	Provo-Orem, UT
Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown, TX	Sumter, SC	Odessa, TX	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV
Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	Greenville, NC	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, GA	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	Lawrence, KS
Hartford-East Hartford-Middletown, CT	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	Amarillo, TX	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	Ann Arbor, MI
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown, TX
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	Montgomery, AL	Cleveland-Elyria, OH	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	Boulder, CO
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent, FL	Urban Honolulu, HI	Urban Honolulu, HI	College Station-Bryan, TX
Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, GA	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley, CA	Anchorage, AK

Source: Gallup

Washington is in each top ten, except for Hispanic or Latinos

Asian	Black	Hispanic	Other racial groups	White
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	Huntsville, AL	Provo-Orem, UT	Albuquerque, NM	Kahului-Wailuku-Lahaina, HI
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ	Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	College Station-Bryan, TX	Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown, TX	Urban Honolulu, HI
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Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, GA	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley, CA	Anchorage, AK

Source: Gallup

Atlanta is a top metro area for both Black and Hispanic-Latino populations

Asian	Black	Hispanic	Other racial groups	White
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	Huntsville, AL	Provo-Orem, UT	Albuquerque, NM	Kahului-Wailuku-Lahaina, HI
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Source: Gallup

White Americans are thriving in diverse Hawaiian cities

Asian	Black	Hispanic	Other racial groups	White
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	Huntsville, AL	Provo-Orem, UT	Albuquerque, NM	Kahului-Wailuku-Lahaina, HI
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Source: Gallup

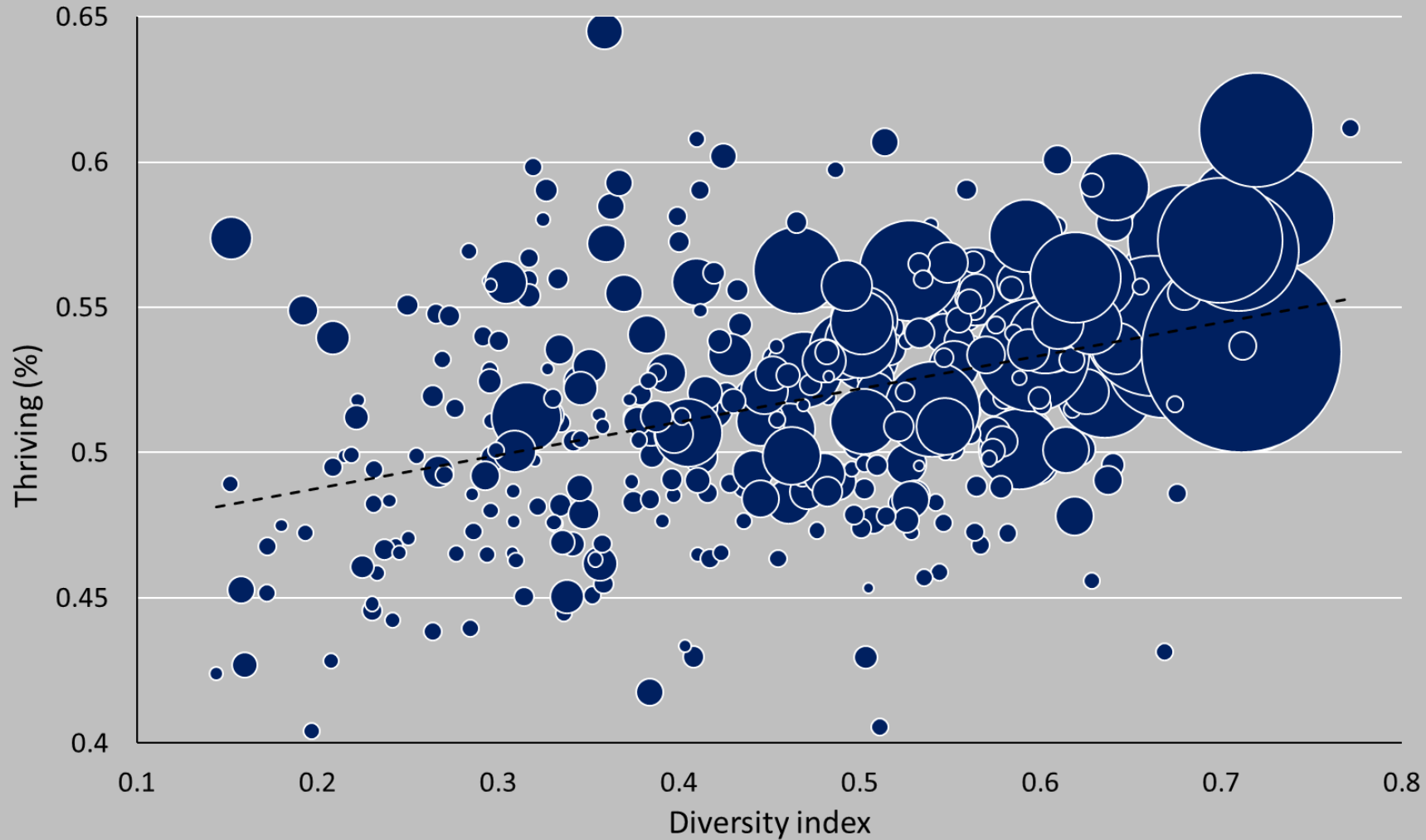
Black Americans are thriving in small and mid sized southern cities

Asian	Black	Hispanic	Other racial groups	White
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Source: Gallup

High well-being is correlated with racial diversity

Percentage thriving in well-being and diversity index, by metro area



Source: Gallup and Simpson diversity index. Size of circles scaled to MSA population

Future research



Future research

- Continue measuring the value of assets in communities, including housing and commercial property, business development and civic infrastructure.
- Further our scholarship around the social determinants of health to include climate/environment, social networks, education, criminal justice and family.
- Incorporate well-being research to analyze the role of civic action, racial cooperation and inclusive policymaking.

BROOKINGS