Urban Loneliness?: Investigating its Roots and Consequences through ESS Data (New Project)

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Background

Individualization and modernization processes

Economic Change: (December) *The Capitalist Personality: Face-to-Face Sociality and Economic Change in the Post-Communist World*

Anomie: former LCSR Project: "Post-socialist anomie through the lens of economic modernization and the formalization of social control"

Now: urbanity and face-to-face social ties

Research Questions

- The lonely city, New York and Moscow as "lonely" places
- Theories of relevance: Durkheim, Simmel, Louis Wirth, Individualization
- City relationships as liberating, chosen, yet superficial

Is loneliness really more prevalent in cities?

What are its determinants and consequences?

Theory

- Strangers (facelessness)
- Incidental contact (instrumental facefulness)
- Division of labor (diminished likeness)
- Geographical dispersion, commuting
- Segregation
- Density, Overstimulation (blasé attitude)
- Urban intentions (useful for the ambitious, instrumental, thin networks)

Loneliness and social isolation

⚑ „The hermit" and the „loner" are two types which are socially isolated, but are not necessarily lonely

⚑ Individualism values mediate

⚑ I am interested in the negative affect of loneliness because of its direct consequences

Why does loneliness matter?

loneliness: predicts <u>more</u> likelihood of

Having carried a weapon in the past year
Justifiability of using government resources,
of stealing,
of bribery,
of avoiding taxes,
of suicide,
of violence against spouse, children, other persons

Also correlates with lack of generalized trust, and very strongly with unhappiness (.316)

So how can we explain it?

WVS 2011, Russia, Regions
% of persons who „often feel lonely"

Report

lonely often lonely

V286 V286. РЕГИОН	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Дальний Восток	.2667	105	.44434
Приволжский округ	.2924	1498	.45501
Северо-Западный округ	.3860	215	.48798
Сибирь	.2853	326	.45224
Урал	.2786	201	.44943
Центральный округ	.2826	1433	.45043
Южный округ	.3159	383	.46549
Москва	.3732	1195	.48386
Total	.3118	5356	.46327

WVS 2011, Russia, size of settlement % of persons who „often feel lonely"

Report

lonely often lonely, somewhat or completely agree

V283 V283.	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Менее 2 000 человек	.3081	607	.46208
2 001 – 5 000 чел.	.3306	242	.47140
5 001 – 10 000 чел.	.2826	184	.45150
10 001 – 20 000 чел.	.3256	172	.46996
20 001 – 50 000 чел.	.2966	236	.45773
50 001 – 100 000 чел.	.2732	205	.44668
100 001 – 500 000 чел.	.2837	1519	.45096
Свыше 500 001 чел.	.2941	993	.45585
Москва	.3732	1195	.48386
Total	.3120	5353	.46334

Loneliness in the ESS

Dependent Variable:

"In the past week, how often have you felt lonely?": 2006, 2010, 2012 waves, all countries

Independent Variables:
 'subjective domocile': big city, suburb, town/small city, a village, or in the country side
Individualist-collectivist values (Schwartz battery)
Social network size
Country groupings: Esping-Anderson
age, sex, occupation, income, and family status
Time

'Outcome' variables:
SWB, constructed 'don't know' anomie scale, deviance indicators

Loneliness in the ESS, 2006

Domicile, respondent's description Felt lonely, how often past week	A big city	Suburbs or outskirts of big city	Town or small city	Country village	Farm or home in countryside	Total
None or almost none of the time	59.2	69.9	64.1	65.0	76.6	64.9
Some of the time	29.5	23.3	25.8	24.9	18.3	25.5
Most of the time	8.0	4.1	6.7	6.7	3.4	6.4
All or almost all of the time	3.3	2.7	3.3	3.4	1.8	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N=	8,343	5,068	13,285	13,184	2,562	42,442

Loneliness in the ESS, 2010

Domicil, respondent's description / How much time during past week you felt lonely	A big city	Suburbs or outskirts of big city	Town or small city	Country village	Farm or home in countryside	Total
None or almost none of the time	60.9	67.8	64.0	64.7	75.6	64.5
Some of the time	29.2	24.8	26.2	25.1	19.7	26.1
Most of the time	7.2	5.0	7.1	6.9	3.5	6.6
All or almost all of the time	2.8	2.4	2.8	3.3	1.3	2.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N=	11,870	5,639	14,737	15,095	2,828	50,169

Future Steps

Cluster analysis; different groups in relation to loneliness and individualism values

Multi-level regression, attempt to diminish „city-effect" on loneliness

Operationalize more of the 'urbanity' hypotheses at the beginning

Much Later: qualitative studies

Thank you