



HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS  
NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

## ***The Loneliness of Many?:***

### ***Investigating the Roots of Urban Russian***

### ***Loneliness through WVS Data***

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# Why does loneliness matter?

**loneliness:** predicts more 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)

Treated as a medical, or psychological problem. So how can we explain it sociologically?

# Research Questions

- The lonely city, New York and Moscow as “lonely” places
- Theories of relevance: Durkheim, Tönnies, Simmel, Louis Wirth, Individualization
- City relationships as superficial at the same time as chosen, «useful», and liberating

Is loneliness really more prevalent in cities?

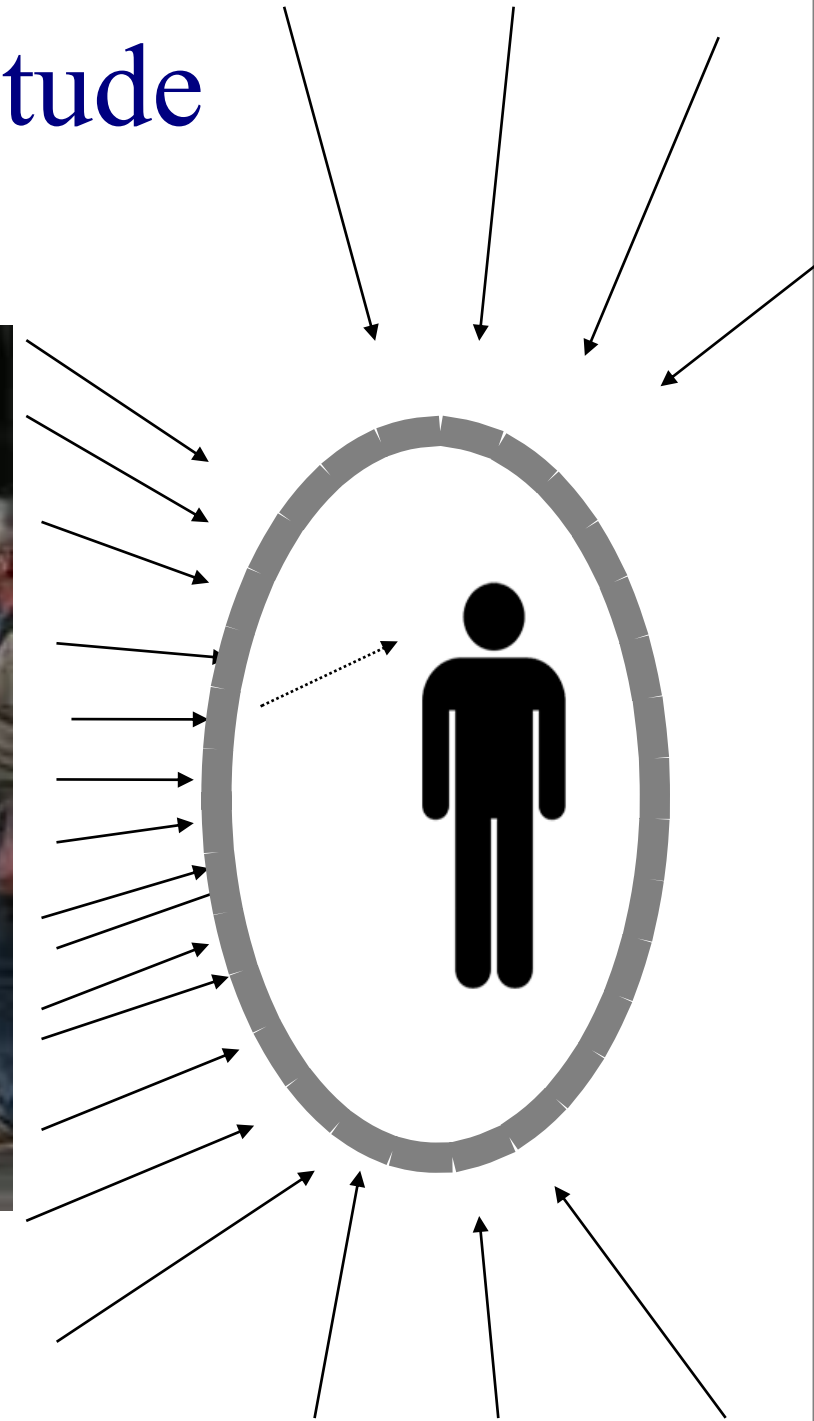
What are its determinants?

Are these different determinants than those in non-city samples?

# Theory

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

# The Blasé Attitude



# Urban Values/Intentions

Urban Values

Individualism vs. Collectivism  
Instrumental-rational vs.  
Intrinsic, intuitive values  
careerist vs. family oriented  
Friendship vs. Family oriented

Less social  
behavior

Objective  
Social Isolation

Family status,  
Friendship types  
Social activities

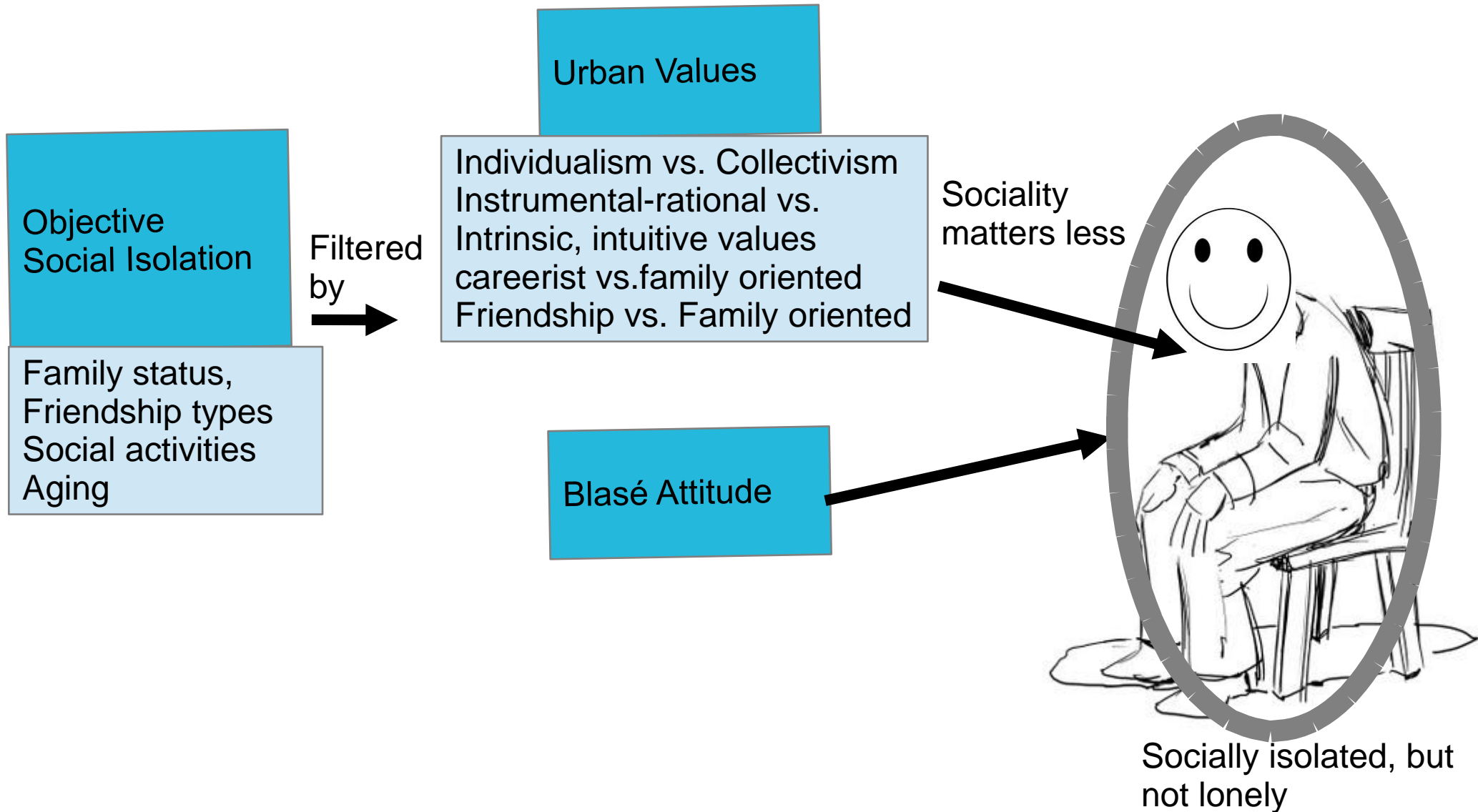
Blasé Attitude

Aging



Lonely :(

# Take 2: Urban Values/Intentions



# Hypotheses

- ◆H1: Values should play a role in determining Urban Loneliness
- ◆H2: Non-urban loneliness should depend more upon objective social isolation
- ◆H3: Individualism should buffer social isolation, so that social isolation does not result in loneliness in cities
- ◆H4: The blase attitude should reduce loneliness in cities
- ◆H5: Greater perception of instrumental ties ('being used') should correlate with greater loneliness in cities
- ◆H6: the small city sample (Tambov) should echo metropolis (Moscow) results on each hypothesis, but to a smaller degree



# Analysis

4 Separate OLS Regressions. WVS 2011.

1. Moscow, N=1000 (pop ~15 million)
2. Tambov, N=1000 (pop. 280,000)
3. non-urban Russia (settlement size less than 100,000), N=1237
4. Tatarstan, N=1000

Dependent Variable: «I often feel lonely». 4 point scale. (completely agree, agree, ... )

# Independent Variables

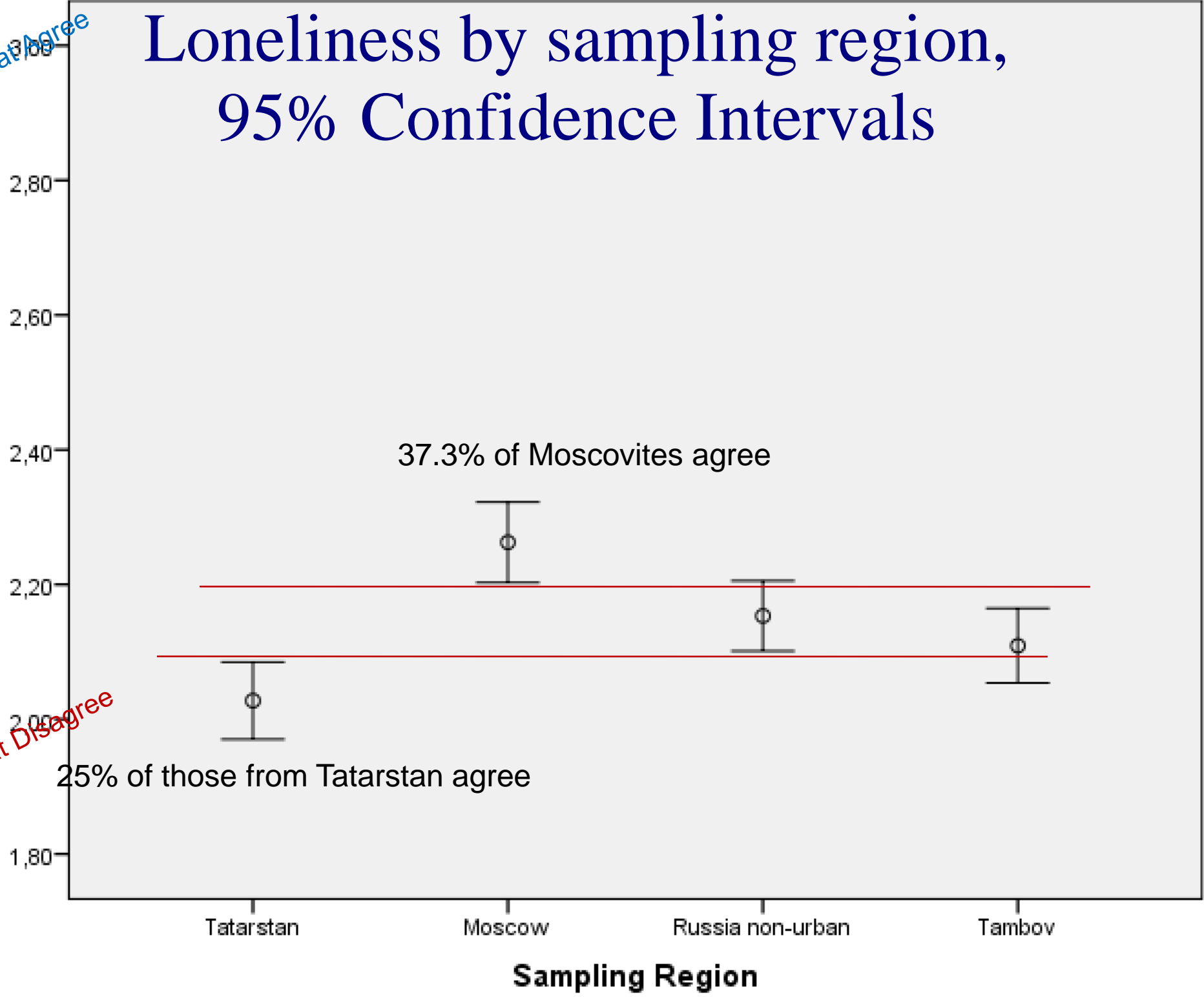
Urban Values	<b>Individualism:</b> Additive scale (0 to 15) of <i>Inverted</i> value of parents, value of friends, making parents proud, living up to friends expectations, and trying to do good for society
	<b>Existential attitude:</b> does not think about the « <b>meaning of life</b> » often. General desensitization to all external stimuli.
	<b>Instrumental facefulness'</b> -> perception of being used → <b>generalized</b> <b>st</b>
Social Isolation	<b>Age</b> (older because of fewer social ties, deaths, isolation), <b>non-married/living together</b> status, fewer <b>children</b> <b>inverted civic engagement:</b> additive scale, involvement in civic organizations: religious, sport/leisure, art/music/education, trade union, political, ecological, professional, humanitarian, consumer protection, self-help, other <b>Immigrant, non-Russian speaking, unemployed</b>
Controls	<b>Sex</b> <b>Income</b> <b>education</b>

# Loneliness by sampling region, 95% Confidence Intervals

Somewhat Agree

Somewhat Disagree

95% confid. interval "I often feel lonely"



37.3% of Moscovites agree

25% of those from Tatarstan agree

Sampling Region

# Loneliness by age, 95% Confidence Intervals

*Somewhat Disagree*

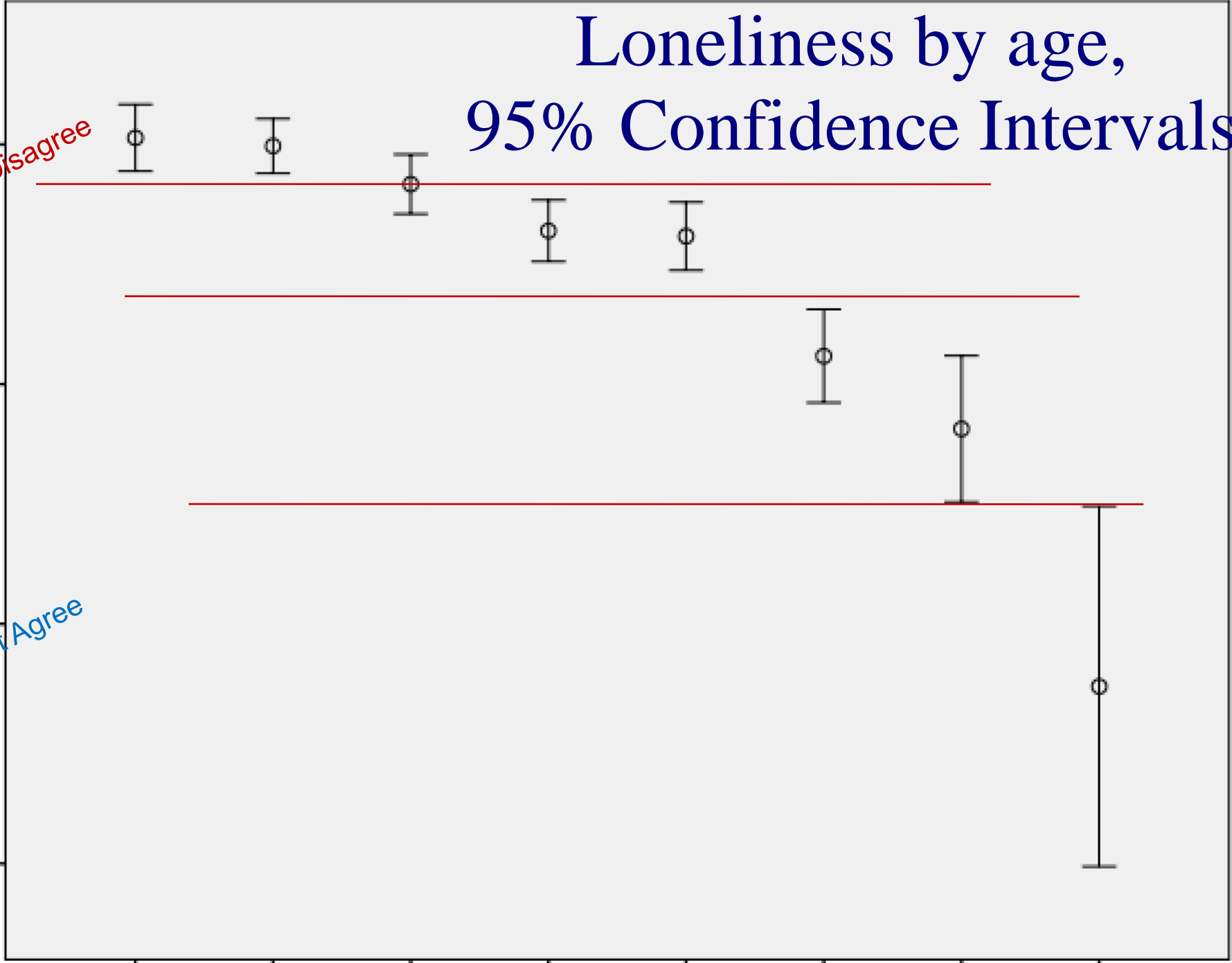
*Somewhat Agree*

**95% confidence interval. "I often feel lonely"**

3,0  
2,5  
2,0  
1,5

18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 66-75 76-85 86-95

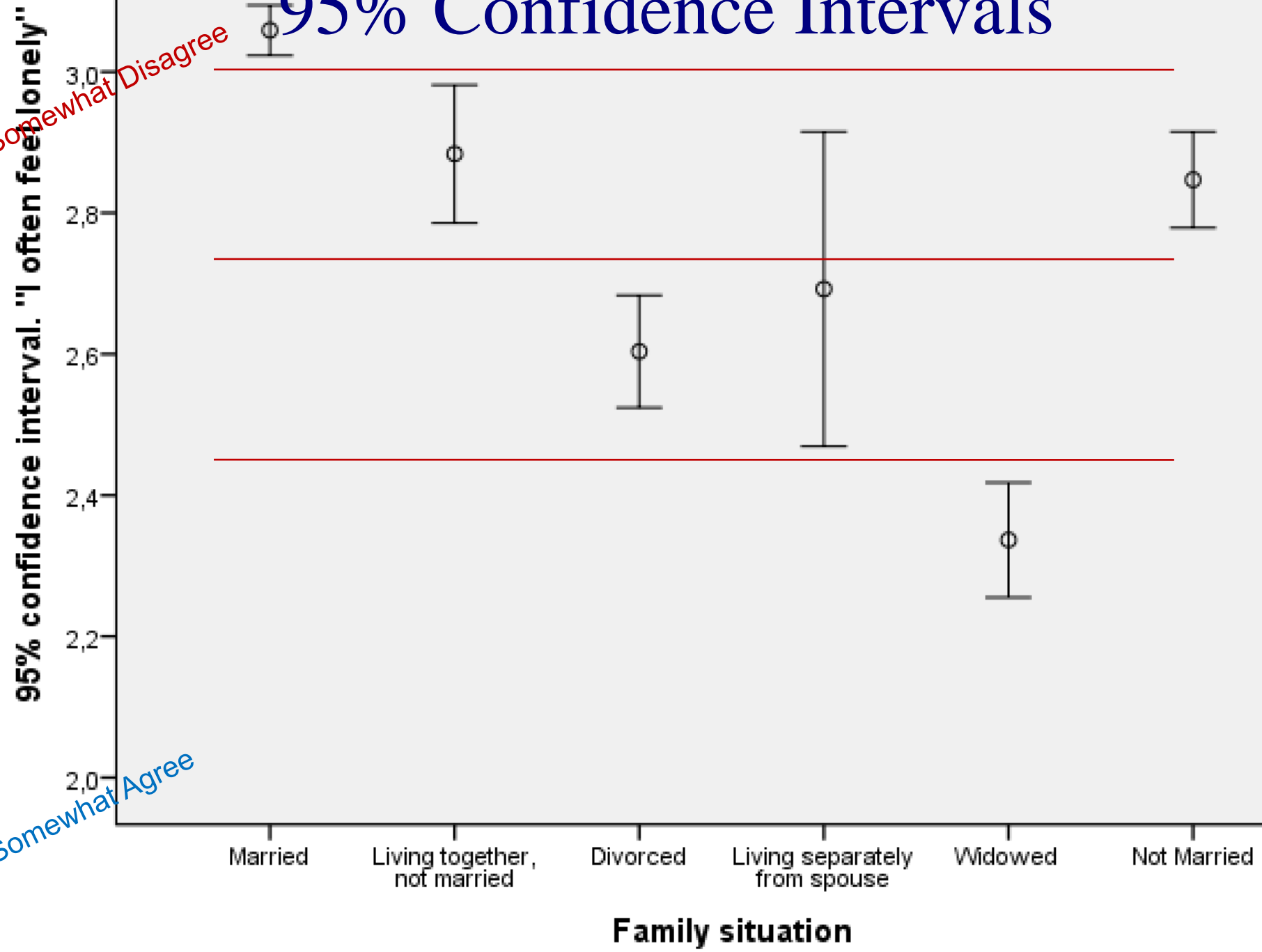
**age groups**



# Loneliness by family situation, 95% Confidence Intervals

Somewhat Disagree

Somewhat Agree



# Loneliness by sex, 95% Confidence Intervals

Somewhat Disagree

95% confidence interval. "I often feel lonely"

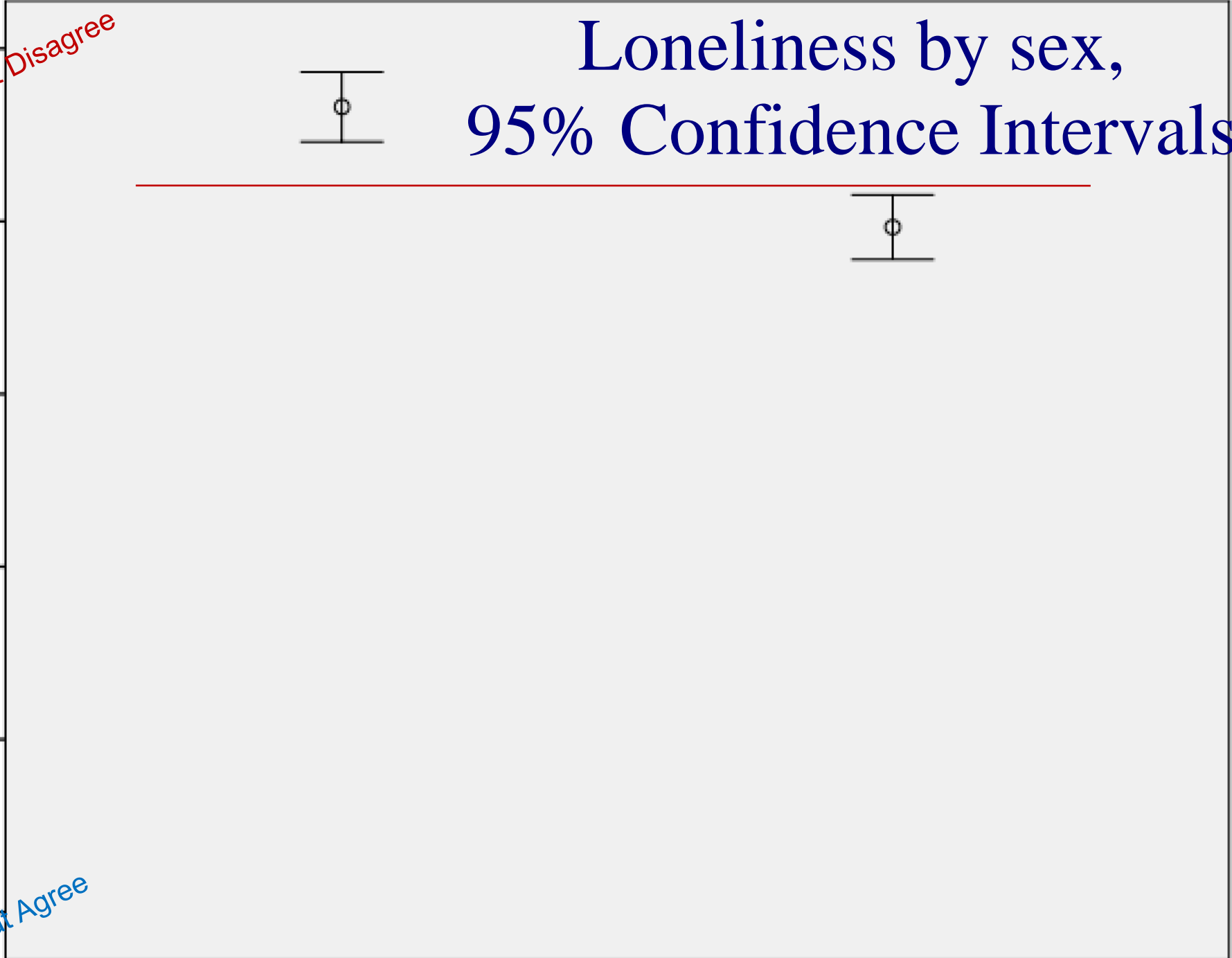
Somewhat Agree

3,0  
2,8  
2,6  
2,4  
2,2  
2,0

Male

Female

Sex



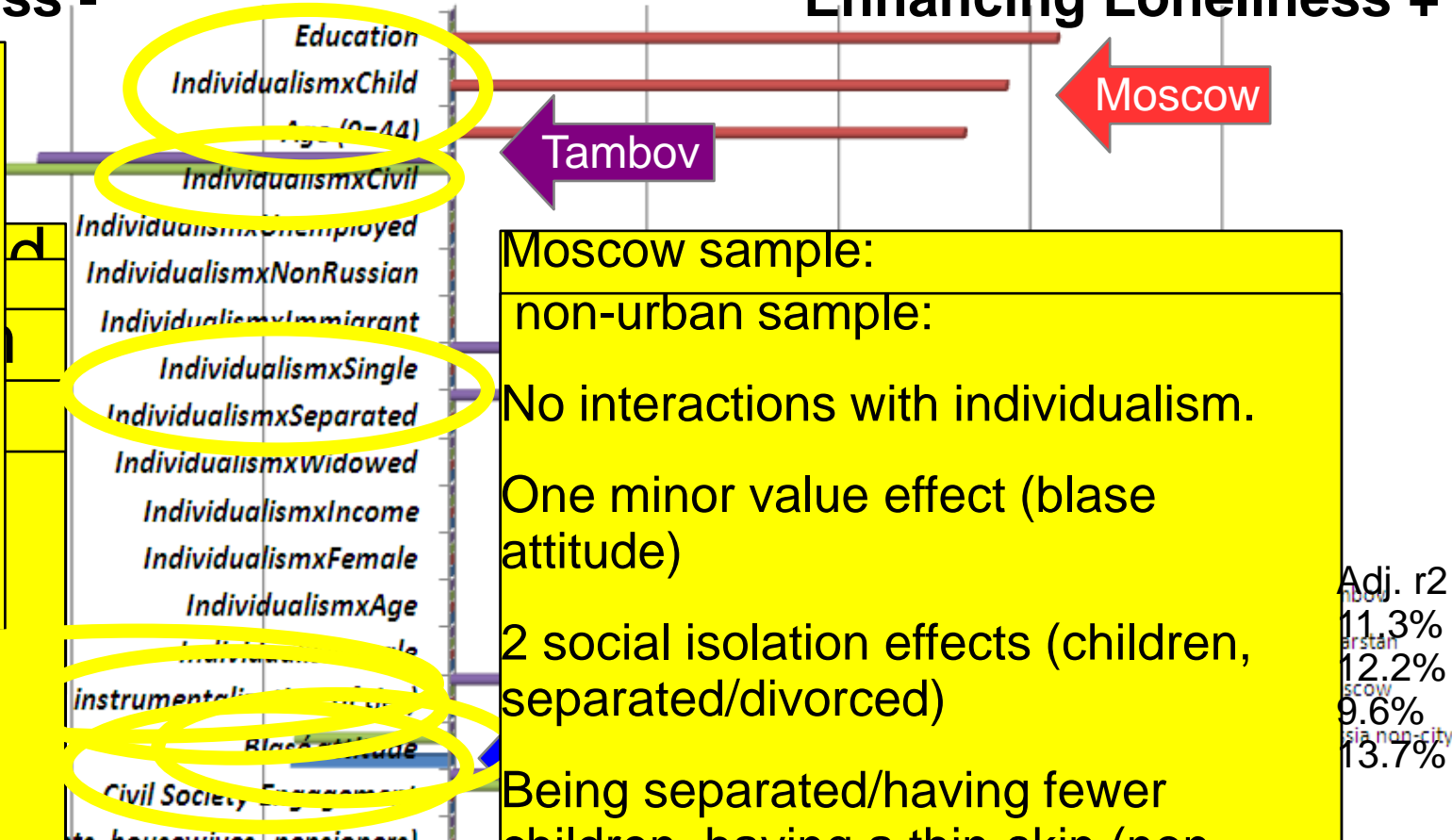
# What Predicts Loneliness? Standardized coefficients (significant)

## Reducing Loneliness -

## Enhancing Loneliness +

◆ H6: the small city sample (Tambov) should echo metropolis (Moscow) results on each hypothesis, but to a smaller degree

Instrumentalization ('being used') should correlate with greater loneliness in



Moscow sample:  
non-urban sample:  
No interactions with individualism.  
One minor value effect (blase attitude)  
2 social isolation effects (children, separated/divorced)  
Being separated/having fewer children, having a blase attitude (see

Adj. r<sup>2</sup>  
11.3%  
12.2%  
9.6%  
13.7%

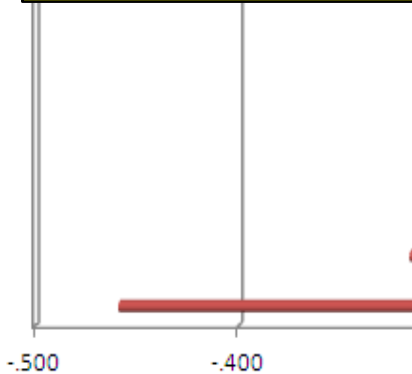
Small city:

H1: Yes. All affects are value related.

H3: For collectivists, more civic engagement means *more* loneliness. This is reversed for individualists (buffer effect). But individualism catalyzes effects of being single and separated on loneliness.

H4: Blase attitude has no effect.

H5: Instrumentalization of relationships matters in Tambov, unlike Moscow



# Conclusions

- ◆H1: Values should play a role in determining Urban Loneliness
- ◆H2: Non-urban loneliness should depend more upon objective social isolation
- ◆H3: Individualism should buffer social isolation, so that social isolation does not result in loneliness in cities
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- ◆H6: the small city sample (Tambov) should echo metropolis (Moscow) results on each hypothesis, but to a smaller degree
- ◆Unemployment, Non-Russian, income, gender have no effect in any sample.



# Next Steps

Why would education enhance loneliness for collectivists? (Educational migration? Delay of family formation?)

Split Tatarstan sample into urban-rural to allow for interpretation (half respondents in city of 100,000 or more)

Thank you