

Effects of Density on Lifestyle

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1 Introduction

Life is at times full of what are known as "unanalyzed assumptions", the one we'll be looking at the science that shows what are the actual effects of high density living. Studies have shown that high density (urban) living leads to crime, mental health issues, and demographic collapse.

Studies on high density have been done both in animal and human trials. We'll begin with the animal trials and then the human ones. And then we'll cover historical examples, as indeed the same patterns have been occurring for most of recorded history.

2 Animal Studies

3 Universe 25

The Universe 25¹ study was conducted in the 1960's and early 1970's made artificial enclosure to simulate an urban environment a 9ft by 9ft enclosure with 250+ apartment units, unlimited food, water, waste disposal and temperature regulation, in an attempt to make an urban paradise. At first the population increased for a while, then appeared ultra aggressive mice or 'wretch' mice, similar to gangsters they would attack anyone that got in their way, and were very aggressive towards females as well. The females began to hide to avoid rape and abuse. There was an increase in single mothers, who were divorced and so had to guard their own nests, often killing their own offspring due to neglect or violence.

The abused offspring of the single mothers that managed to survive childhood would grow up not learning normal mouse behaviours, and would instead spend their time preening, or making themselves 'beautiful', avoiding other mice and showed no reproductive behaviour, demonstrating what is now called LGBTQIA+ style behaviour.

While the 'beautiful' mice mostly hid and kept to themselves, the aggressive mice formed gangs that would attack and cannibalize each other. Eventually due to the violence and lack of reproduction they all went extinct.

This animal study was repeated 25 times to see if there would be any alteration in events, but it was the same every time.

¹<https://uptownerd.com/2020/09/05/universe-25-experiment-one-of-the-most-terrifying-experiments-in-the-history-of-science/>

4 Rat Park

“Back in the late ’70s, Canadian psychologist Bruce Alexander and some colleagues at British Columbia’s Simon Fraser University conducted a series of drug addiction studies that would come to be known as the Rat Park Addiction Experiment (Rat Park, for short). The studies were based upon a set of experiments where various groups of rats were given a choice between water and morphine. One group was placed in a cage by themselves; another group was set loose in a structure called Rat Park. The first group’s cage was small, very small, and, like we said, they were placed there alone. Rat Park, on the other hand, was 200 times the size of a standard laboratory cage. It also included 16–20 rats of both sexes, food, playthings and enough space for mating.

“As you might suspect, Group 1 obsessively went back to the morphine until they eventually overdosed and died. Group 2, however, rarely if ever touched the morphine, instead opting to frolic with their new rat friends and start new rat families. Alexander concluded that it wasn’t so much the drugs that were causing addiction, but the environment. That a happy rat had no need to get high. And, consequently, neither would a happy human.”²

“Rat Park showed that a rat’s environment, not the availability of drugs, leads to dependence. In a normal setting, a narcotic is an impediment to what rats typically do: fight, play, forage, mate. But a caged rat can’t do those things. It’s no surprise that a distressed animal with access to narcotics would use them to seek relief.”³

5 Human Studies

5.1 Crime

In general it is not considered ethical to run studies on humans, but urban planning and zoning effectively achieves the same ends.

Vancouver has a housing program called Single Room Occupancy (SROs) to house any homeless people with addictions, with space for over a thousand people. Combined with a safe supply of free hard drugs like opiates. The result is that “70% of overdoses happen when people are alone at home, and 50% of suspected deaths from overdose in the city occurred inside SROs”, over 3,000 die annually in Vancouver from overdoses so more than 100% of SRO occupants, which are basically euthanasia rooms.⁴

Similarly, recent Owen Sound Councillor Candidate Jasmine Schnar relates a story saying that there was a shelter/affordable housing in Hanover, where many people with addictions lived. As you may recall from reading the Grey-Bruce This Week, for years Hanover was mentioned for various drug crimes and busts. From Jasmine’s story it seems the residents and people of Hanover were tired of the state of affairs, and one night the affordable housing building

²<https://healingproperties.org/rat-park-addiction/>

³<https://www.brucealexander.com/articles-speeches/rat-park/157-rat-trap-by-robert-hercz>

⁴<https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/vancouver-is-dying-documentary-video>

were lit on fire, the humans managed to evacuate themselves, though the pets were engulfed in the flames, the fire truck waited patiently on the other side of the street for 45 minutes and said the water was off, while the building burned to the ground, mostly only engaging to make sure the fire didn't spread to other buildings.

We can observe history and many articles have been written based on analysis of existing human communities. In general one can say that "urban density" or "urban sprawl" is any location which exceeds the carrying capacity of the land. In Grey-Bruce that is roughly 1.2 hectares (3 acres) per person. So as long as each person has at least 1.2 hectares to call their own, they can be considered rural. Though studies on crime have found that even suburban density has lower crime than urban density. Rural crime rates are 2-26 times lower than in urban areas.

Crime is acknowledged to be a "Diseconomy of Scale"⁵ as population density increases, so to does crime, and need for policing. In an analysis of rural crime it was found crime was lowest in communities where populations density was sufficiently low that everyone knew each other ⁶ Additionally that much of the rural crime increase was from urban gangs targeting agricultural operations ⁷, travelling criminals historically known as roving bandits ⁸, and urban criminals relocating and settling in rural communities. The prototypical rural criminal was a landless itinerant labourer. ⁹ Of those criminals originating in rural areas, they were considered relatively harmless, with the few cases of repeat offenders suffering from low intelligence mental health issues. ¹⁰ The small percentage of female criminals had been women that were marginalized, desperate single and unsupported by the community resorting to crime ¹¹.

So helping make sure that everyone has land enough to meet their needs, with small tight knit communities and employing mostly locals can go a long way to crime prevention in rural areas. Hedges or some kind of visual screen to hide valuable farm equipment and buildings from the street view could also be beneficial to reduce risk of crime caused by urban criminals traveling through the area.

5.2 Mental Health

The higher the population density the more mental health issues occur, with suburban people experiencing a middle amount of mental health issues between urban and rural ¹².

Psychotic disorders were significantly higher in urban areas, ¹³ though suicide was found to be higher in rural areas, in particular amongst men who

⁵<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/003467671000000035?journalCode=rrse20>

⁶<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0743016722001036#bib340>

⁷<https://doi.org/10.1350/ijps.2010.12.3.171>

⁸<https://doi.org/10.1108/13639511011044920>

⁹Clinard, M. B. (1944). Rural criminal offenders. *American Journal of Sociology*, 50, 38 – 45

¹⁰<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2005.04.002>

¹¹<https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085107308456>

¹²<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/psychological-medicine/article/abs/urbanrural-mental-health-differences-in-great-britain-findings-from-the-national-morbidity-survey/B5BC39E3E56DE08DD6A14013F5C496A6>

¹³https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-981-10-2327-9_7

did not have social support and lived in a culture where they were unable to get help. Attending church or religious services has been found to reduce risk of suicide ¹⁴ possibly as it also provides a place where one can safely ask for help.

6 History

Historically most pre-collapse civilizations we have records of all showed the signs exemplified in the Universe 25 mouse trials. For example recorded in the bible after a few generations living in a City the Jews/Hebrews would reliably experience an increase in crime or "sin" as they called it, with increase in prostitution and broken families, including high infant mortality due to child sacrifices/abortion, as well as LGBTQ style behaviour typically characterized as "sodomy" in the bible. Amongst the Mesopotamian, Greek and Roman civilizations pre-collapse they were known for massive wealth disparity, ritual prostitution, gender fluidity, and collapse of the family unit. Typically in all of these examples there was also centuries of deforestation which led to desertifications and droughts, which combined with the general internal disorder made it easy for them to either implode or fall to incursions by foreigners.

In no way of course am I passing judgement on anyone and their lifestyle, rather saying that the lifestyles are a natural outcome of high population density, helping to keep the population in balance with ecological limits. Those people who wish to have what are known as "traditional families" and modes of being, would be advised to live in a rural setting, where there is enough land to grow enough food and firewood for each member of the family.

Certainly it is best to allow all people to make their own decision about what kind of lifestyle and family they wish to have. Which would include giving each person the opportunity to live either an urban or a rural lifestyle. That said, we know from pre-industrial examples, that to maintain an urban population without fossil fuels generally requires about ten times as many living in nearby rural areas to supply them with food and firewood, hopefully in exchange for useful services by the urbanites, such as manufacturing of essential tools and products.

¹⁴<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7310534/>