

CONCOURS DE CONTROLEUR DE L'INSTITUT NATIONAL DE LA STATISTIQUE ET DES ETUDES ECONOMIQUES

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(durée 1 heure 30 - coefficient 1)
Le sujet comporte 4 pages*

Répondez aux questions en utilisant vos propres mots autant que possible.

Évitez de citer le texte de manière répétitive et assurez-vous de démontrer une compréhension personnelle des idées présentées.

Questions (10 points):

1. **(2 points)** Briefly describe the life of Turkana pastoralists in Kenya as presented in the text.
2. **(2 points)** How has the seasonal life of the Turkana people been affected in recent decades, according to the text?
3. **(2 points)** What are the impacts of loneliness on the Turkana communities, especially on women and men, as mentioned in the article?
4. **(2 points)** How is the definition of loneliness being expanded in the social sciences, and why is this important?
5. **(2 points)** What are the implications of loneliness for public health, as indicated by U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy?

Discussion (10 points):

(10 points) In light of the information presented in the article, provide your perspective on the importance of understanding loneliness in diverse cultural contexts. How can society address this challenge, and what might be the implications for public health?

Why scientists are expanding the definition of loneliness

A more holistic view could offer new ways to manage the feeling



Social isolation can result in loneliness. Other types of separation can too.

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For centuries, the Turkana pastoralists of northern Kenya have followed the water. Families once moved about 15 times a year in search of watering holes for their cows, donkeys, camels, goats and sheep.

But the Turkana people's seasonal way of life has become precarious in recent decades. With drought and ongoing fighting across the region, many women and children stay put while men roam the landscape — often at their own peril. Violence has forced many families to flee for their lives at a moment's notice. Separated from their livestock, these families eke out a living along the edges of cities or bide their time in displacement camps ringed by tightly woven fencing.

Friendships built on the exchange of livestock also disintegrate. "When no one has any animals, how can we help one another?" a Turkana woman asked anthropologist Ivy Pike, who has worked in the region for 25 years, during an interview.

The suffering within these communities is profound, says Pike, of the University of Arizona in Tucson. Unable to safely comb the landscape for medicinal plants, such as herbs to stem postpartum bleeding or curb fevers in children, women find it hard to fulfill their role as nurturers. Men's identities, meanwhile, are often so bound up in owning livestock that the Turkana language has a word to describe a man without animals — *ekebotonit*.

"The loneliness of having no animals holds a particular place of distress that transcends the food and livelihood that livestock offer," Pike and a colleague wrote in 2020 in *Transcultural Psychiatry*. "An *ekebotonit* ... not only loses his sense of purpose and the companionship herds offer, but according to the Turkana, becomes erased — a man with no say in society."

These experiences of loneliness among many Turkana people demonstrate how the feeling defies simple characterization — it's more than social disconnection. That complexity is seen in cultures worldwide. In a study done in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, for instance, many respondents attributed their loneliness to several factors that

left them feeling disconnected. One woman missed going to the grocery store, anthropologist Michelle Parsons of Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff reported in 2022 in *SSM-Mental Health*. Another woman longed to browse the stacks at the library, a typically solitary activity. Efforts to broaden the definition of loneliness to include a feeling of disconnect from animals, places, habits, rituals and even the weather have been gaining momentum across the social sciences. In October 2020, for instance, Parsons coauthored the introduction to a special issue on the anthropology of loneliness in *Transcultural Psychiatry*.

Getting a handle on the constituents of loneliness — and its flip side, belonging — is not just an academic pursuit; it's a matter of public health, research suggests. In a May advisory, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy declared loneliness a public health epidemic, citing findings from numerous studies: Loneliness appears to increase a person's risk of heart disease by 29 percent and risk of stroke by 32 percent. In older adults, chronic loneliness is associated with a 50 percent increase in the risk of developing dementia. Social isolation can increase the risk for premature death by 29 percent.

Broadening concepts of loneliness can help expand the toolkit of possible interventions, Parsons says.

Tethering people to the wider world could even help people recognize and address climate change, suggests geographer Sarah Wright of the University of Newcastle in Callaghan, Australia. This process begins, she says, by “building intentional relationships with more than human beings.”

By Sujata Gupta, NOVEMBER 7, 2023

<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/expanding-definition-loneliness-belonging>