



Loneliness and the society

Key results from the exploratory project

Loneliness in the European Union: Policies at work
Brussels, 6th June 2023

Survey Methods and Analysis Centre
Science for Modelling, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit
European Commission, Joint Research Centre

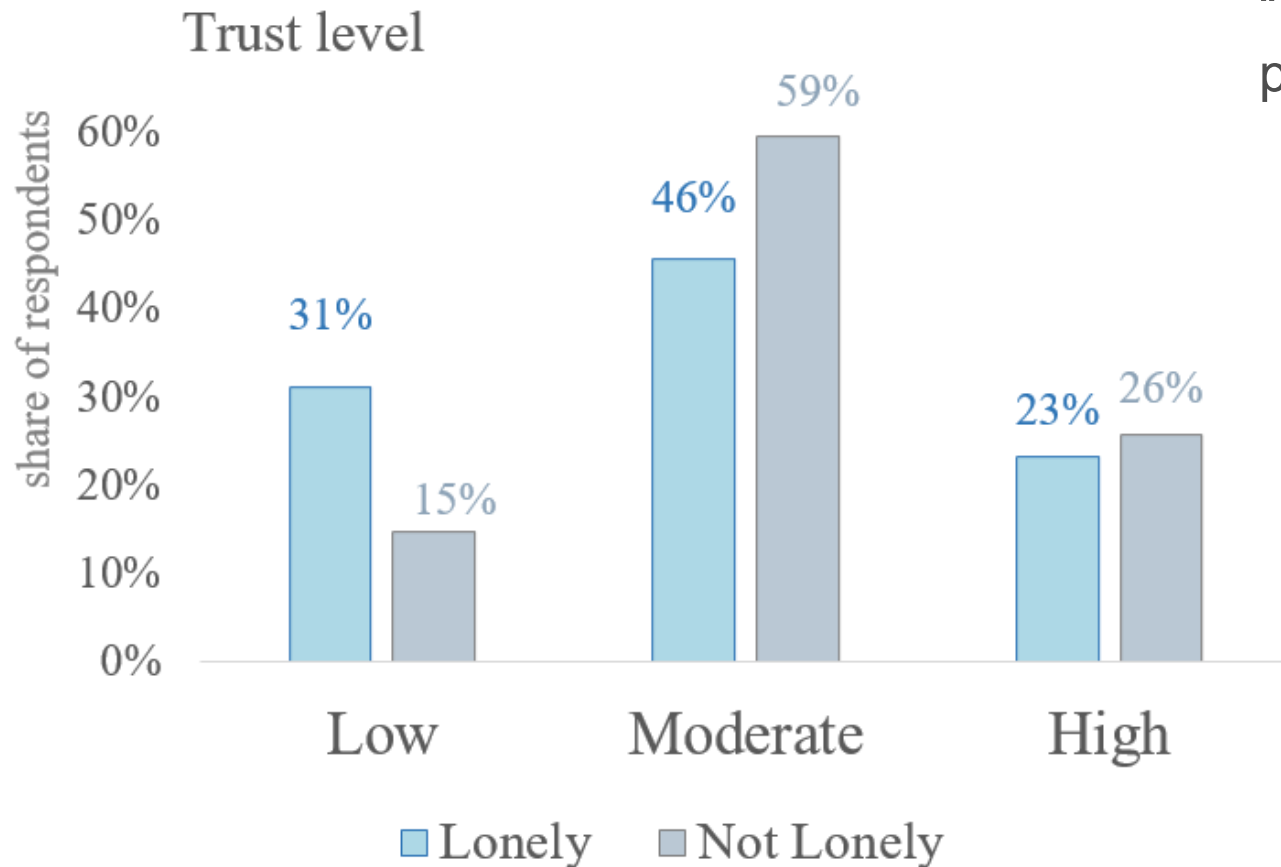


Outline

- Loneliness has consequences for individual well-being and when many are concerned, for the society as a whole
- Loneliness can also directly affect societal cohesion when it leads to:
 - Reduced interpersonal trust
 - Higher risk taking behaviours
 - Political disengagement
- Stigmatization can affect social engagement of the lonely
- The EU Loneliness Survey allows for exploring these relationships



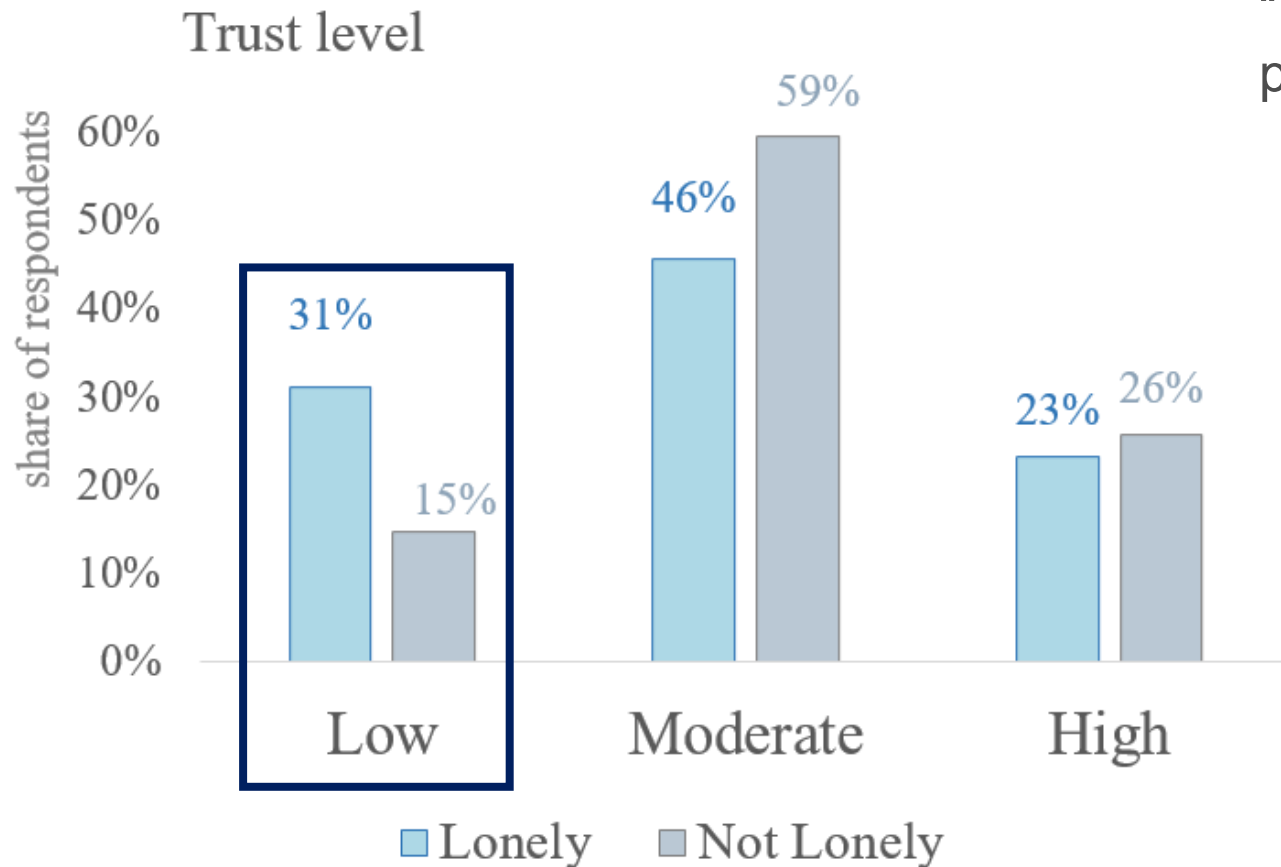
Lonely respondents are on average less likely to trust others



“In general how much do you trust most people?”



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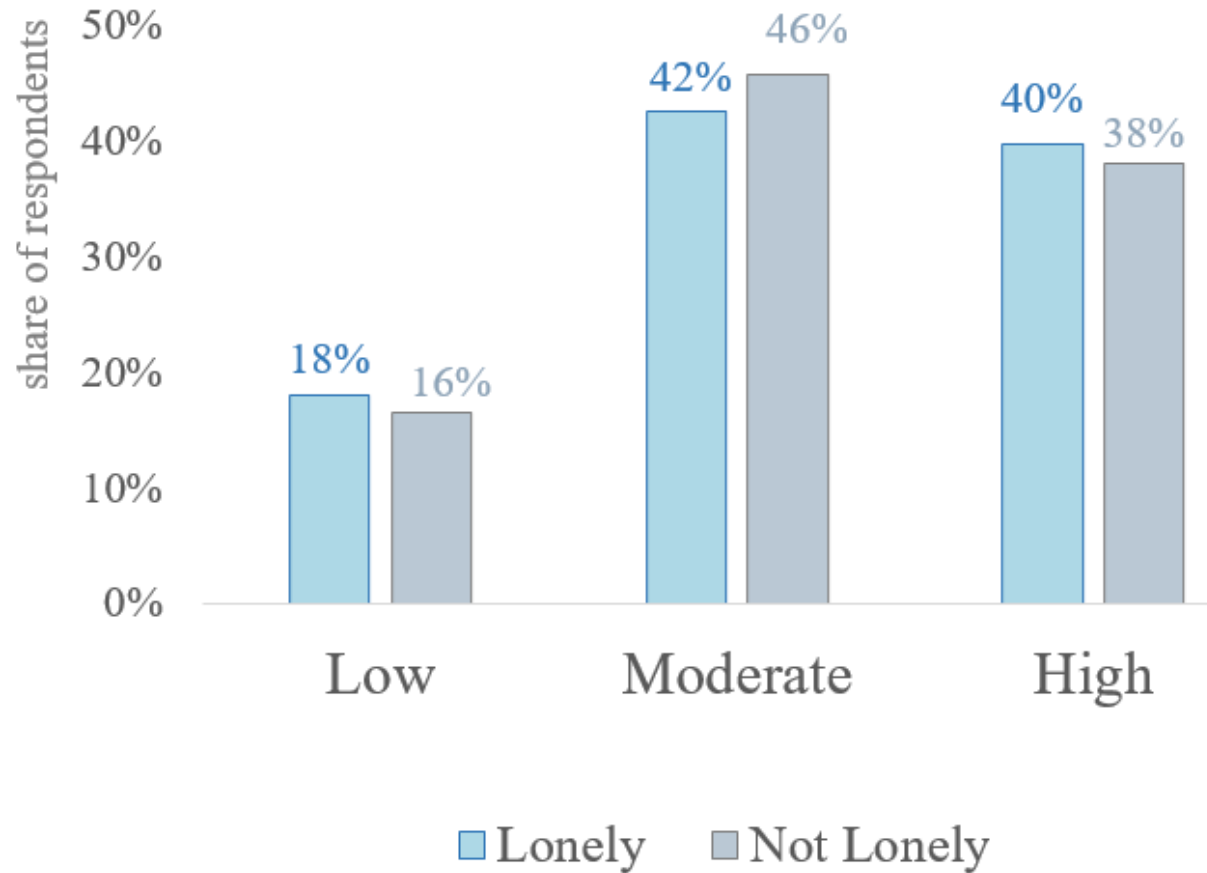


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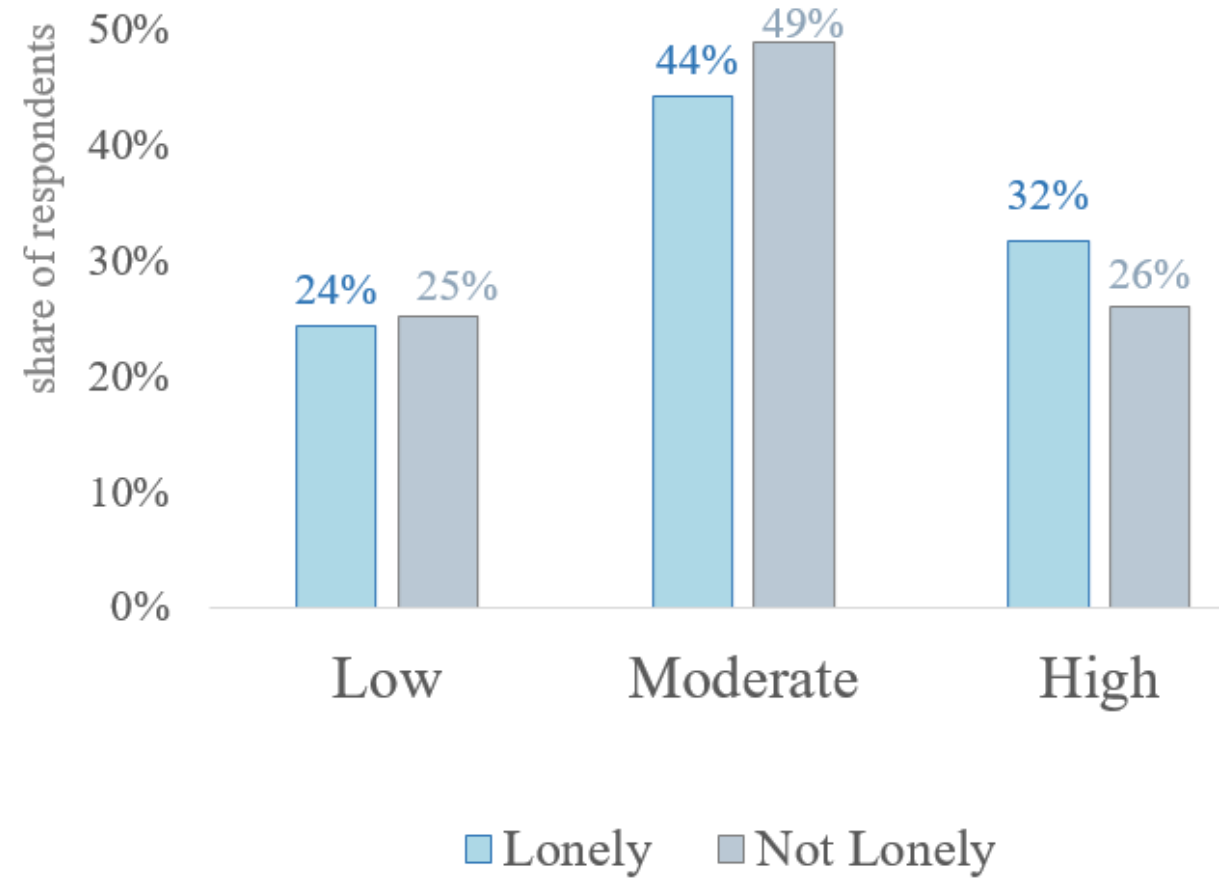


Altruism and volunteering

"I'm willing to give to good causes without expecting anything in return"



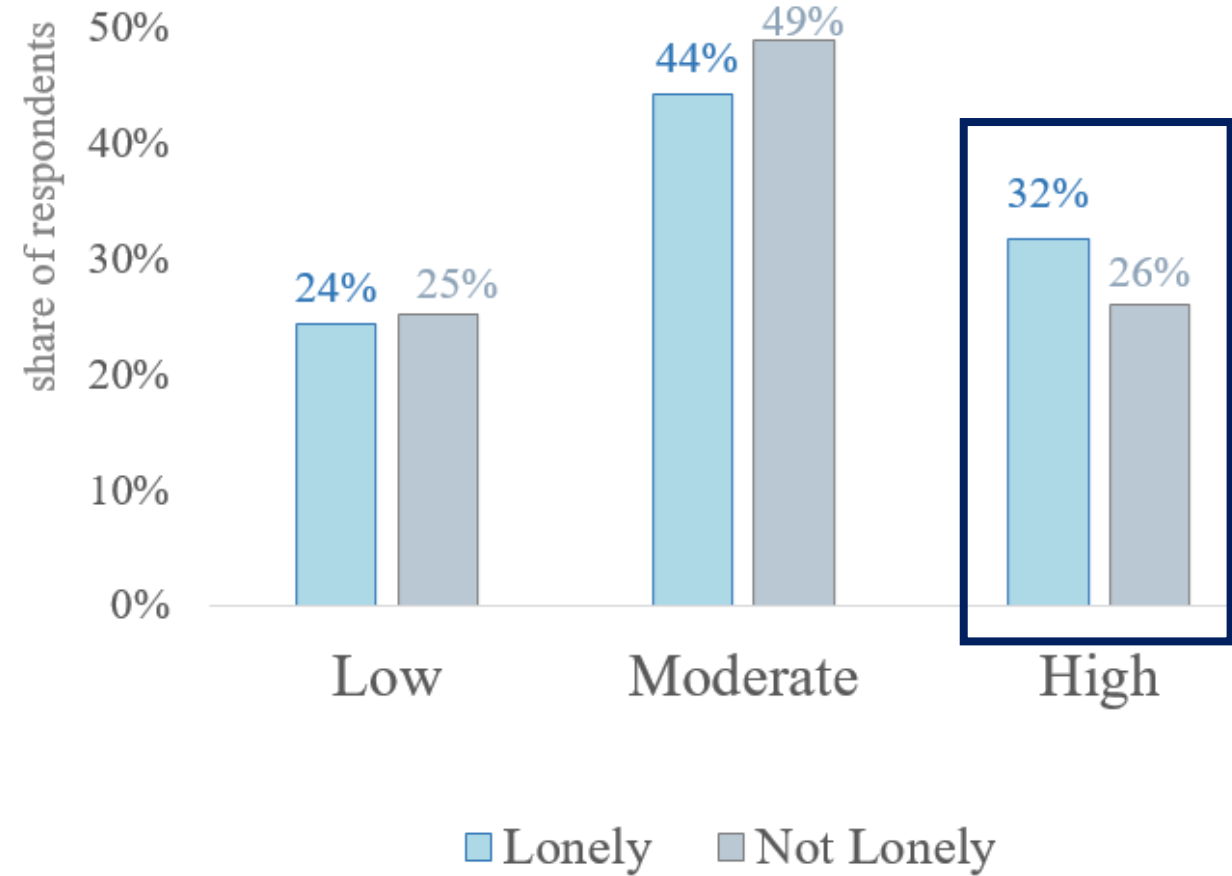
"I'm willing to volunteer my time to a charity or a non-profit"



Volunteering



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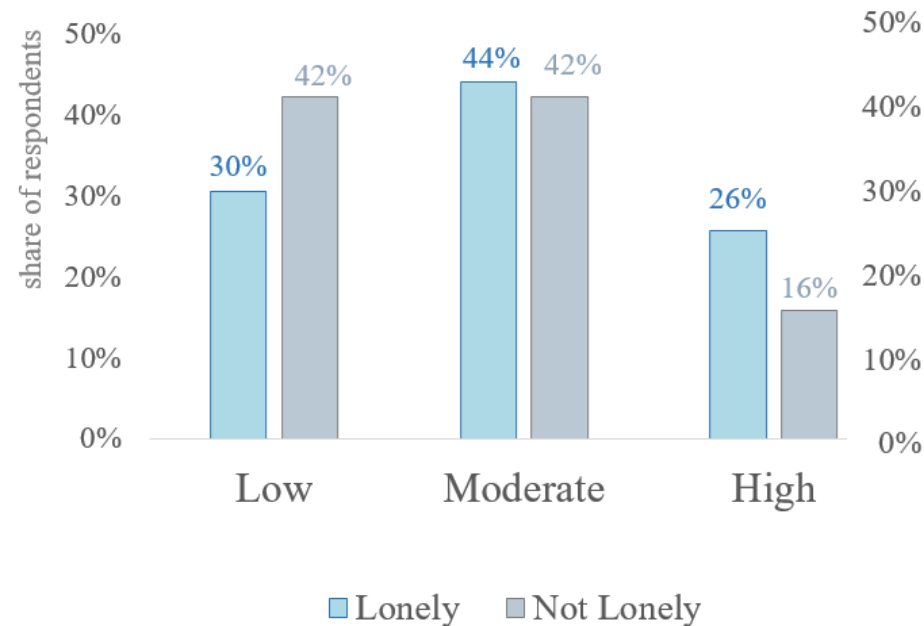
Risk taking behaviour



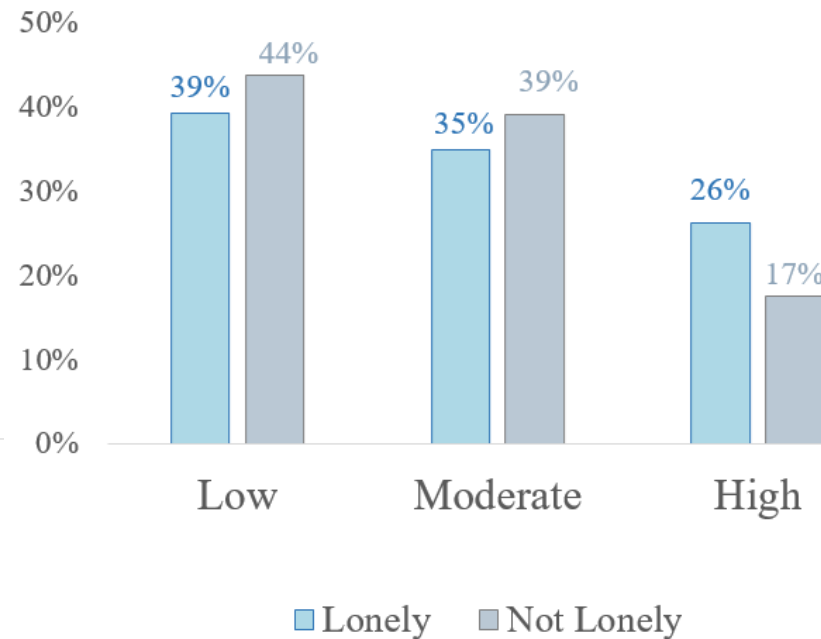
Lonely respondents are more likely to take risks, especially with their health

“Are you more of a risk-taking person or do you try to avoid risks when it concerns each of the following areas”

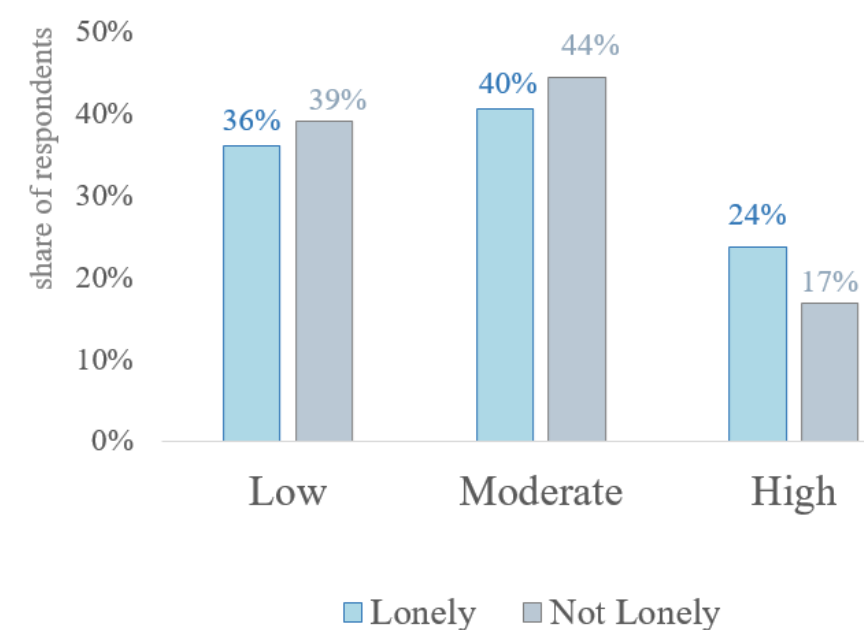
“With your health”



“Driving, riding a bike etc.”



“Taking financial decisions”



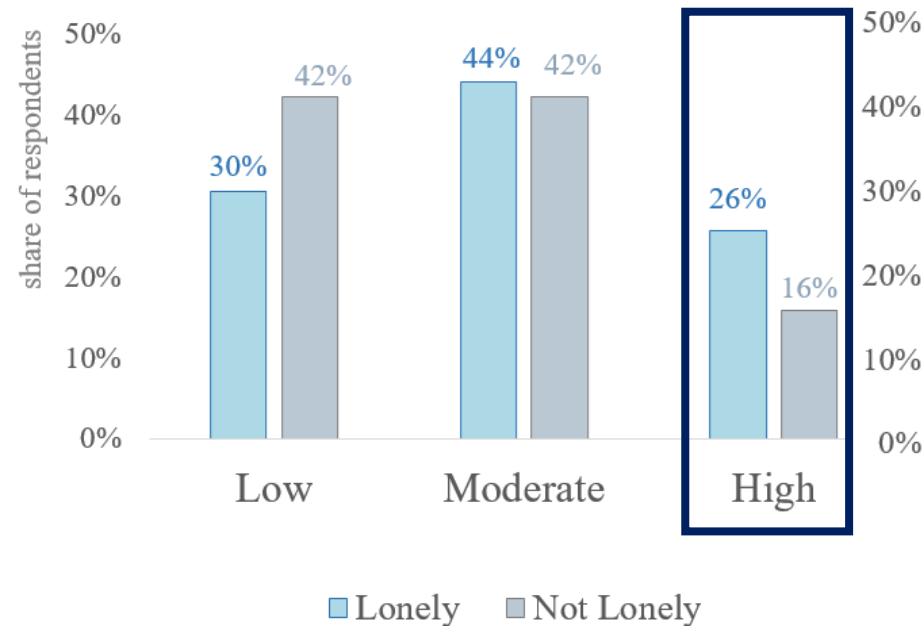
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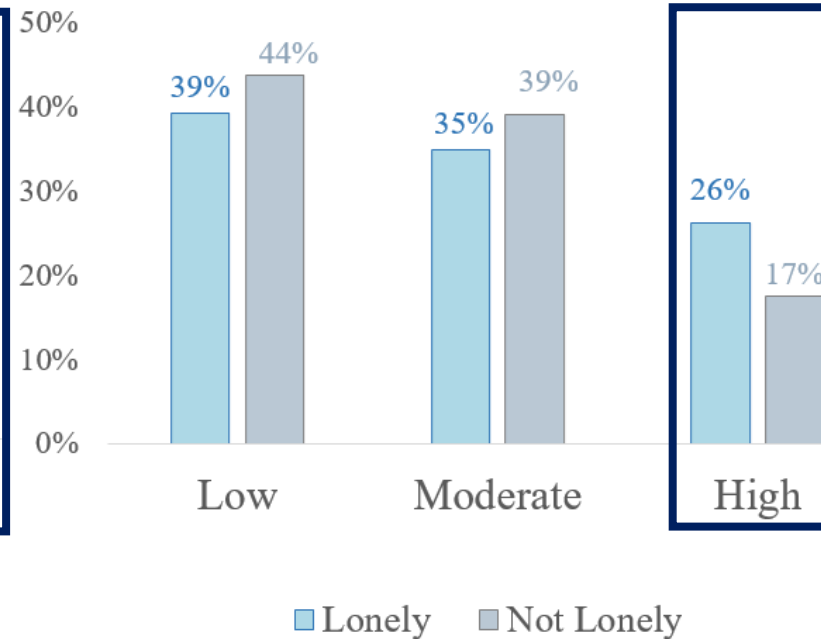
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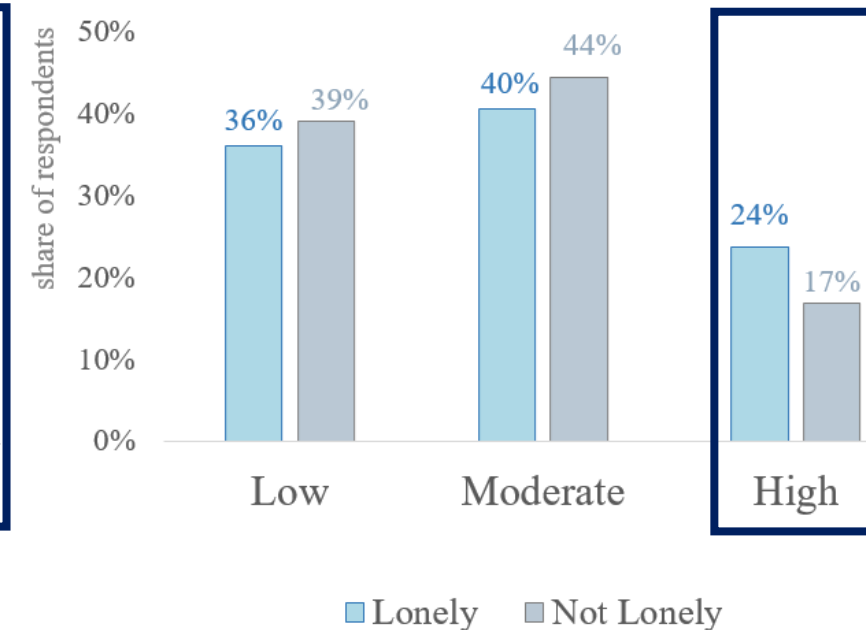
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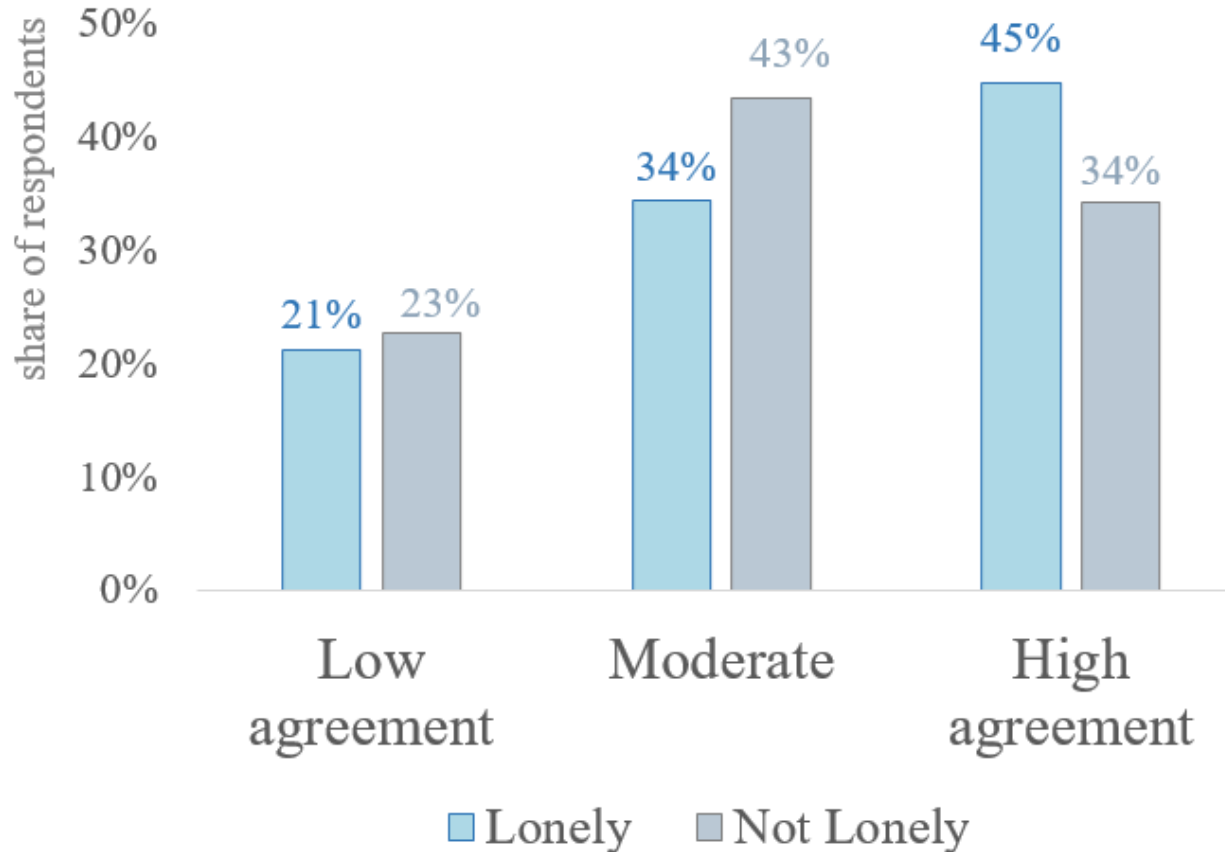


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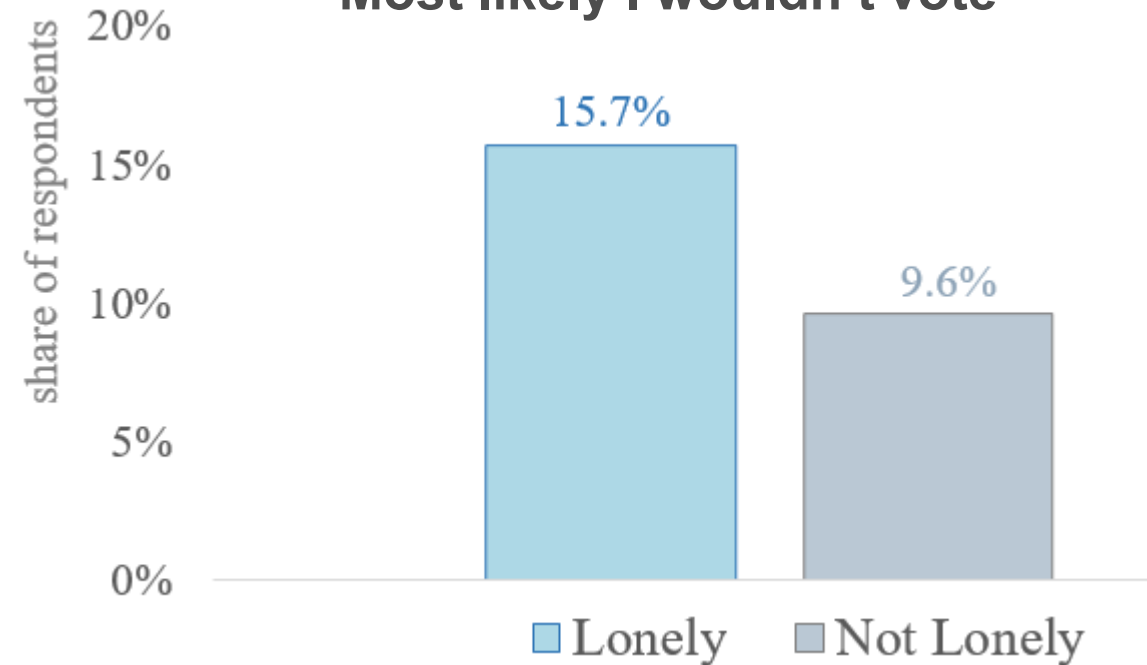
Political disengagement

”To what extent do you agree with the following statement? ‘People like me don’t have any say about what the government



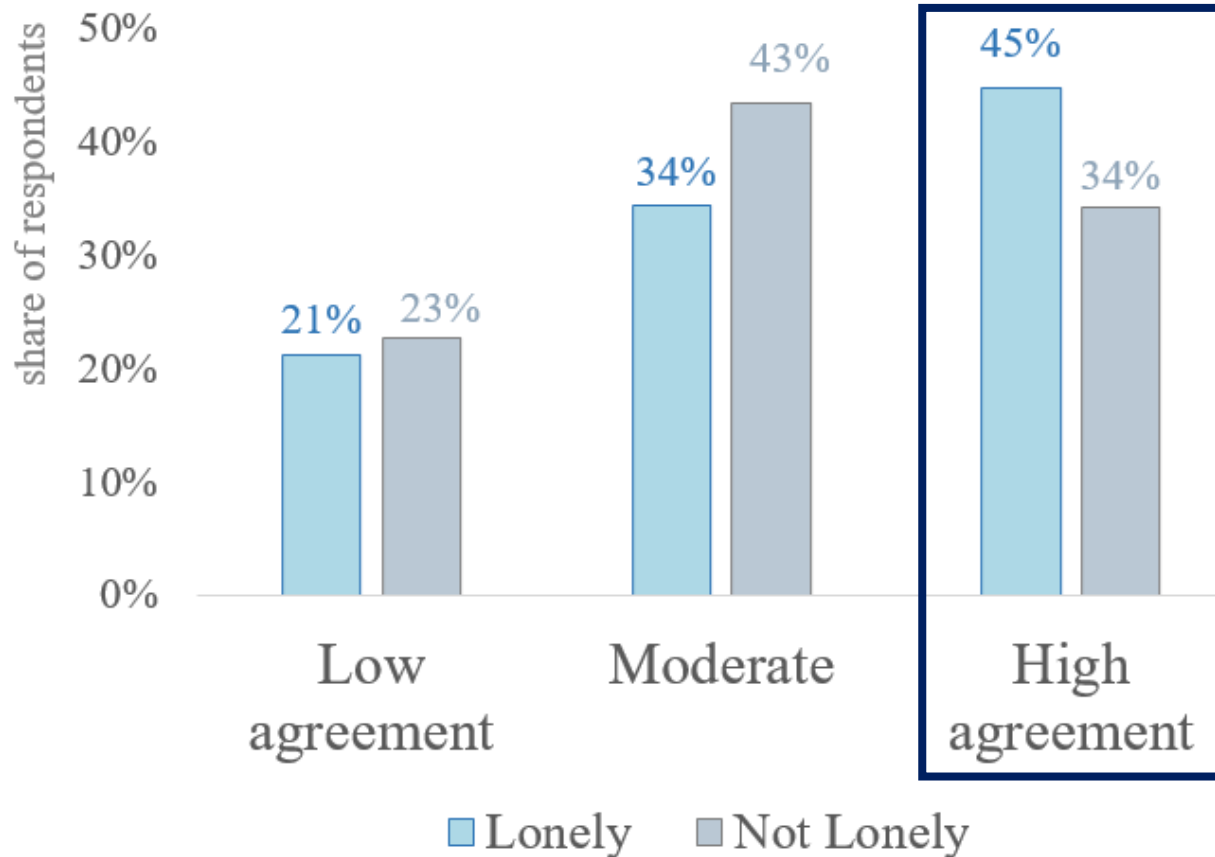
” If there were a general election tomorrow, which party would you support?”

Most likely I wouldn't vote



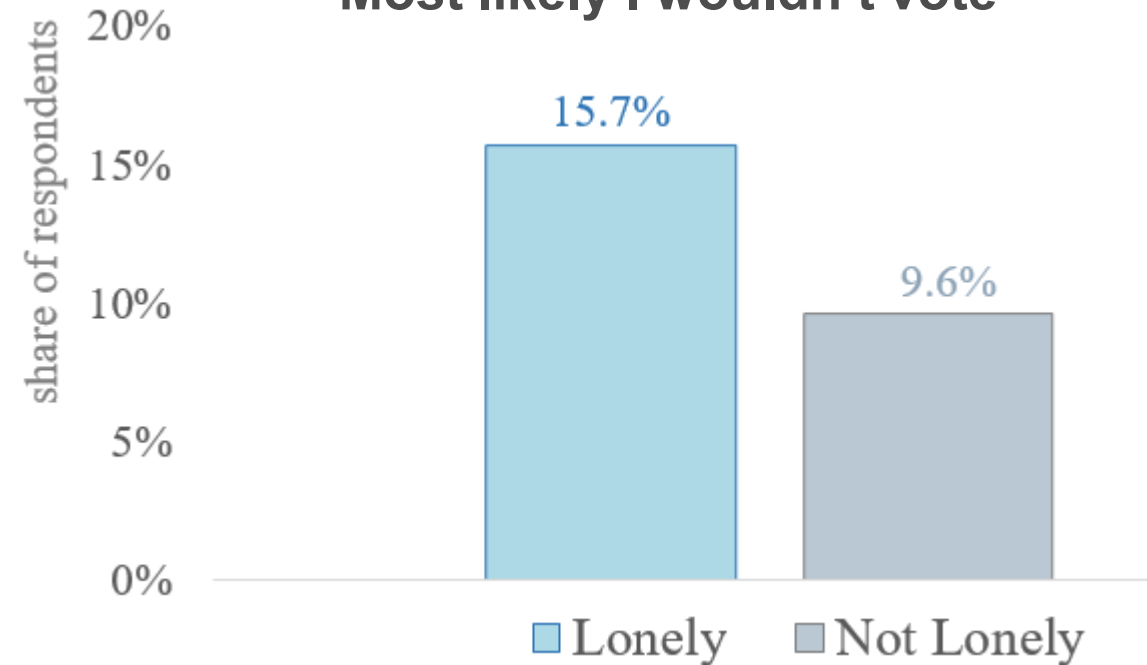
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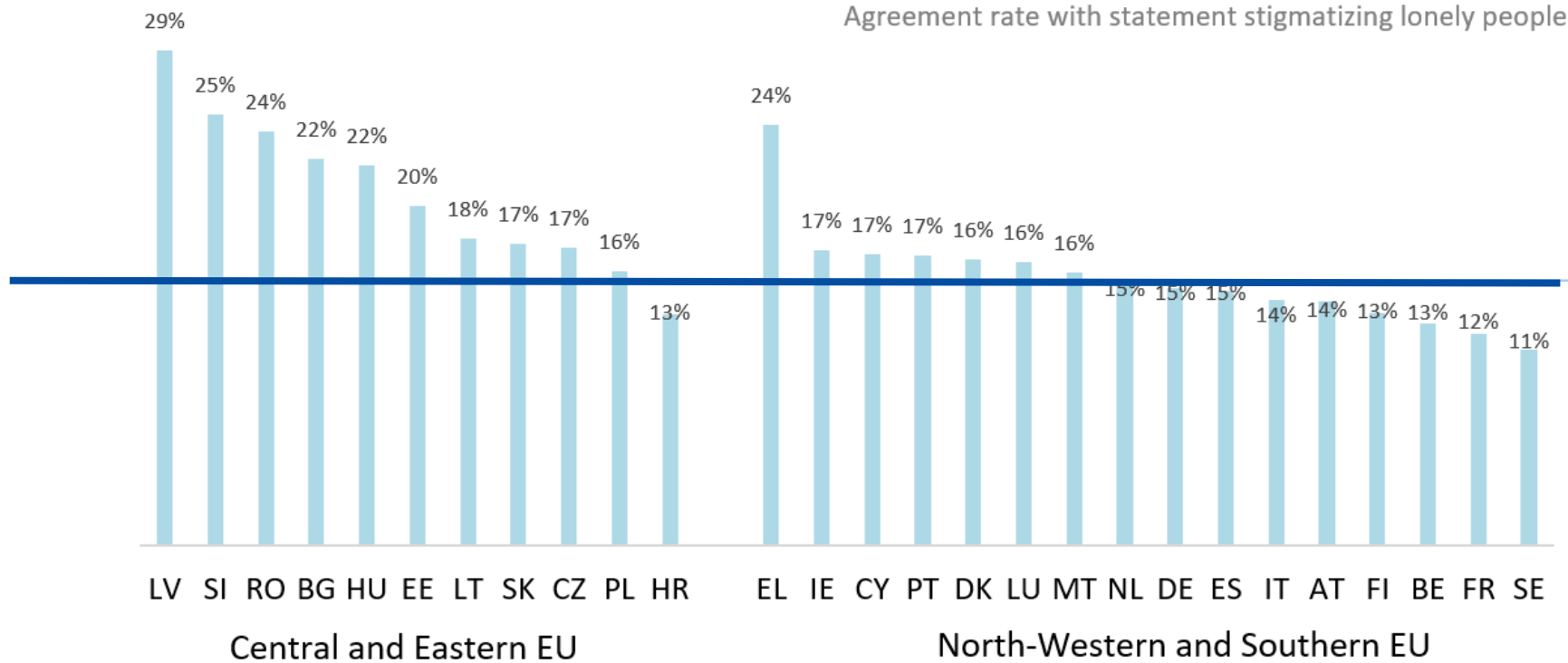


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15% stigmatise lonely people



“In general, do you think that [...]:

- ✓ **People who feel lonely mostly have themselves to blame for their loneliness;**
- ✓ Feeling lonely is mostly due to factors and circumstances beyond a person's control;
- ✓ Both equally;
- ✓ Don't know”

Relevance and future research

- Lonely individuals differ from non lonely ones in their behaviours and attitudes
- They are more likely to engage in risky behaviours, to feel more politically disengaged and to have lower trust
- This could have consequences on societal cohesion – More research is needed
- Social isolation of lonely individuals may be reinforced by **stigma** towards the lonely

Thank you



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Interested in knowing more?

- Visit our [page on loneliness](#) on EU Science HUB
- Get in touch: jrc-smac-loneliness@ec.europa.eu

Slides prepared by Elena Stepanova

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