

# Explaining Variation in Attitudes to Immigration in Europe

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# What we're going to do

- Hello!
- Attempt to answer some of the key questions about attitudes to immigration
- Consider the main trends in and theories about attitudes to immigration
- Incorporate some useful methodological techniques to make sense of complex information

# How are we going to do it?

- Consider relevant questions in turn
- Look at a range of data sources related to those questions in groups
- Report back
- First country level
  - Then some theoretical and methodological considerations
  - Then individual level
  - Then consider how this relates to policy messaging

# What do we mean by attitudes to immigration

- Not so simple!
  - Abstract favorability
  - Willingness to admit immigrants
  - Perceived effects of immigration
    - Egocentric or sociotropic
  - Which immigrants should be accepted
  - Perceived importance of immigration

# What do we mean by 'variation'?

- Again, not so simple

	Between	Within
Aggregate	Country X v Country Y	Country X at time T v Country X at time T+1
Individual	Person X v Person Y	Person X at time T v Person X at time T+1

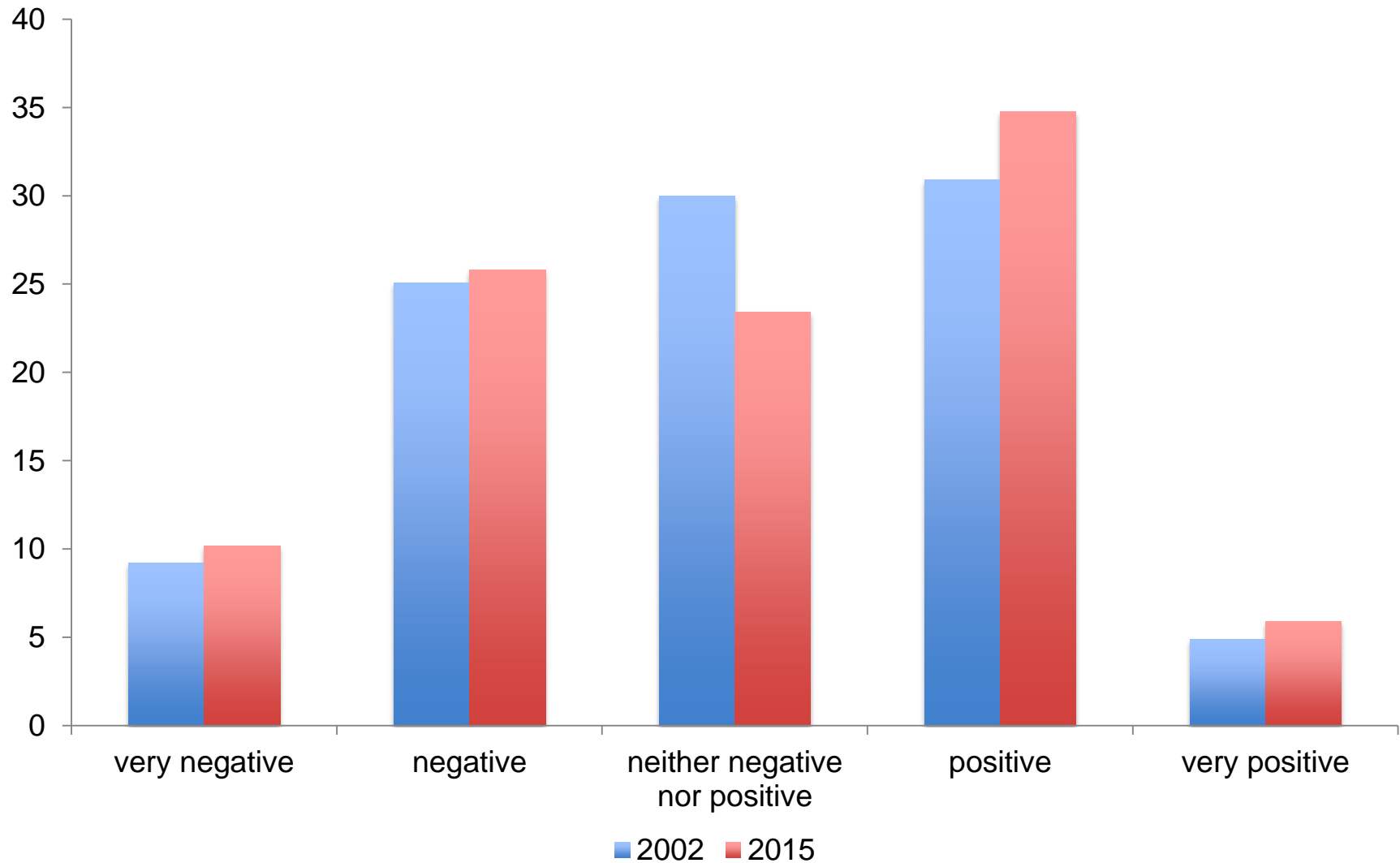
# Key country-level questions

- Are Europeans turning against immigration?
- Would you say immigration to European countries has been similar or different?
- Are attitudes to immigration different or similar between European countries?
- What is the relationship between immigration, attitudes, salience and voting for *anti-immigration parties* over time?

# Key country-level trends

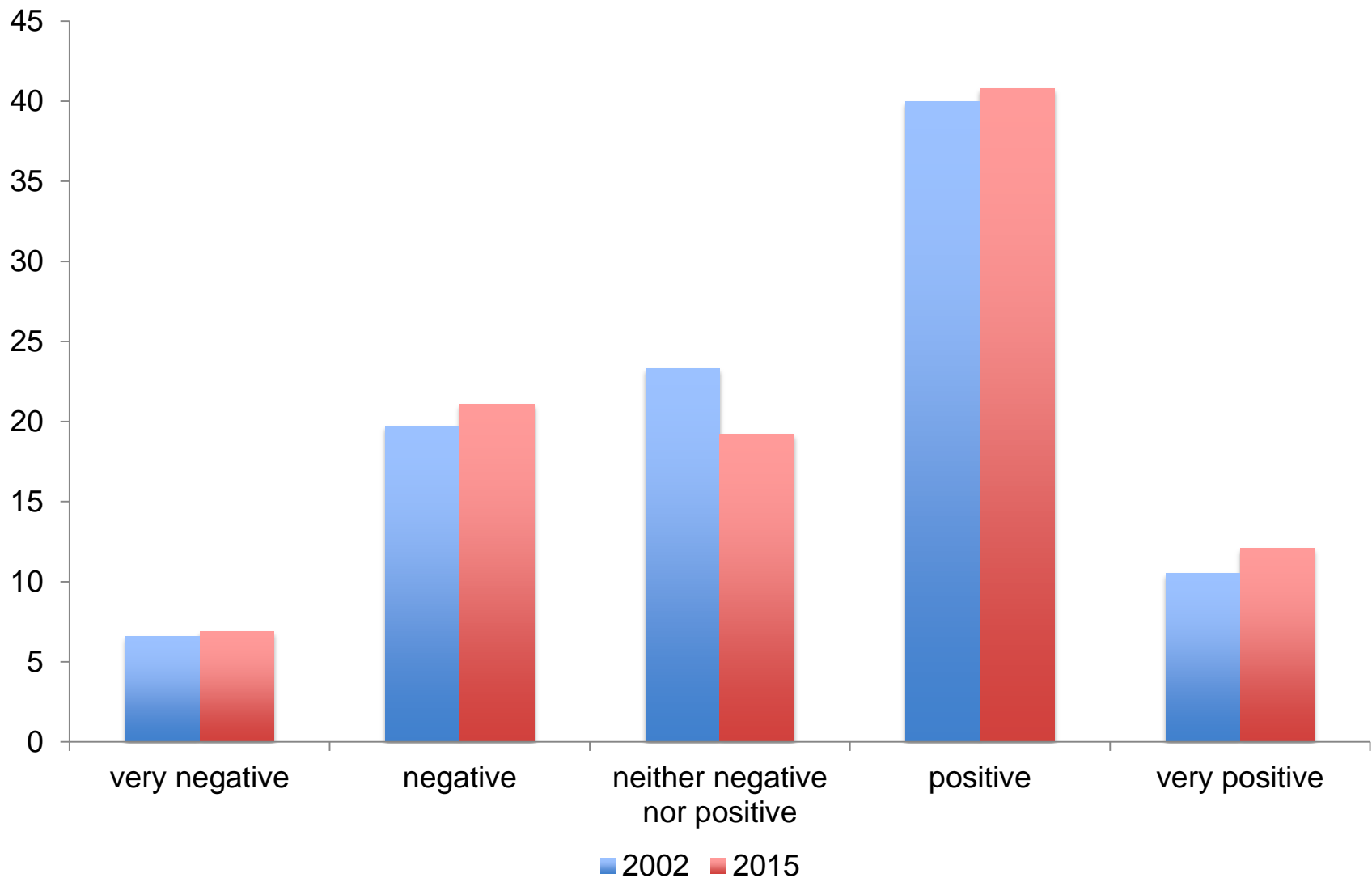
- Attitudes to immigration are stable, becoming slightly more positive!
- Immigration doesn't affect attitudes much. However, it seems to affect saliency (perceived importance) which then positively affects voting for the radical right
  - Latent, stable attitudes being activated

## Perceived effect of immigration on the economy (source: ESS 2014)

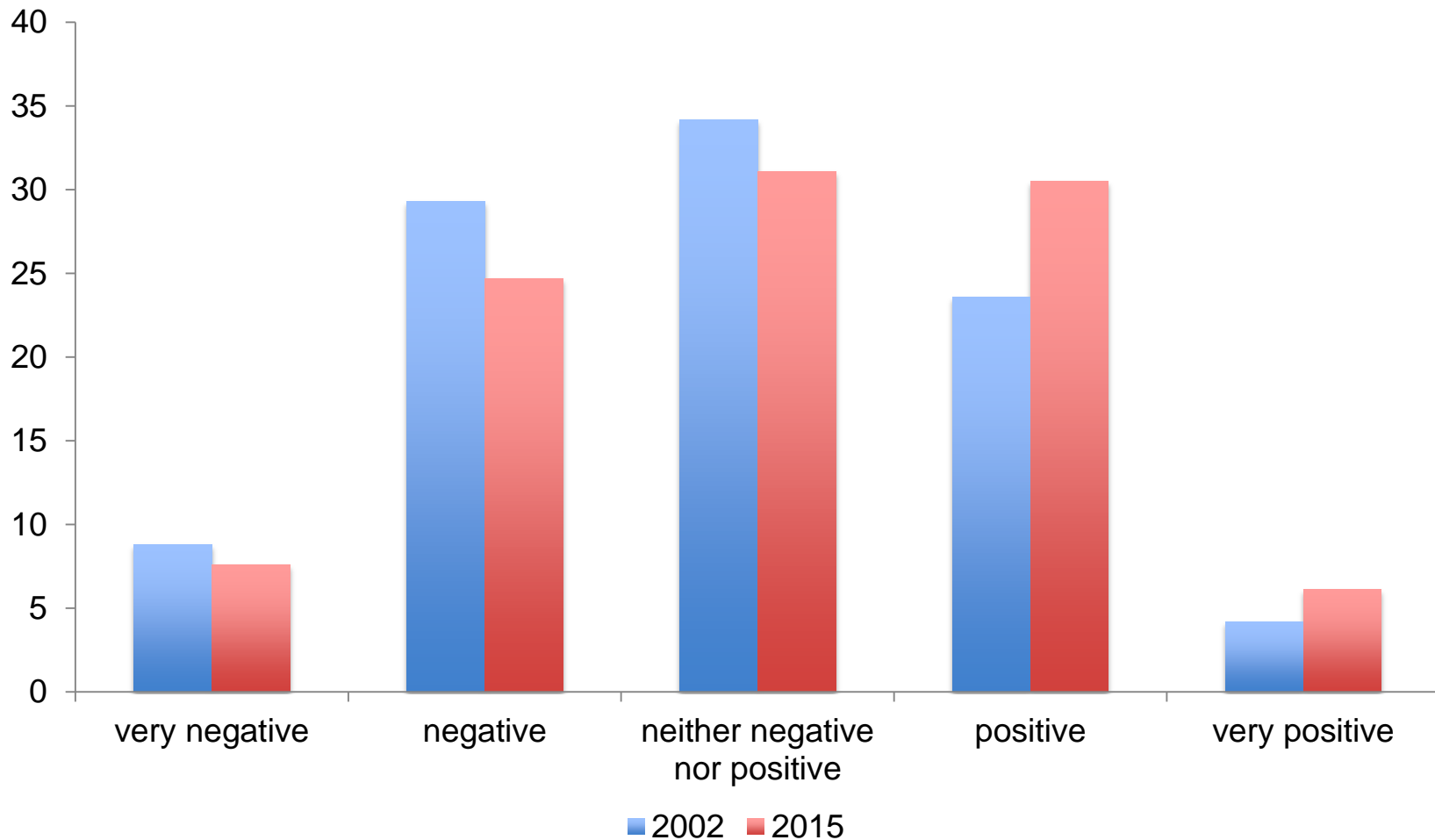




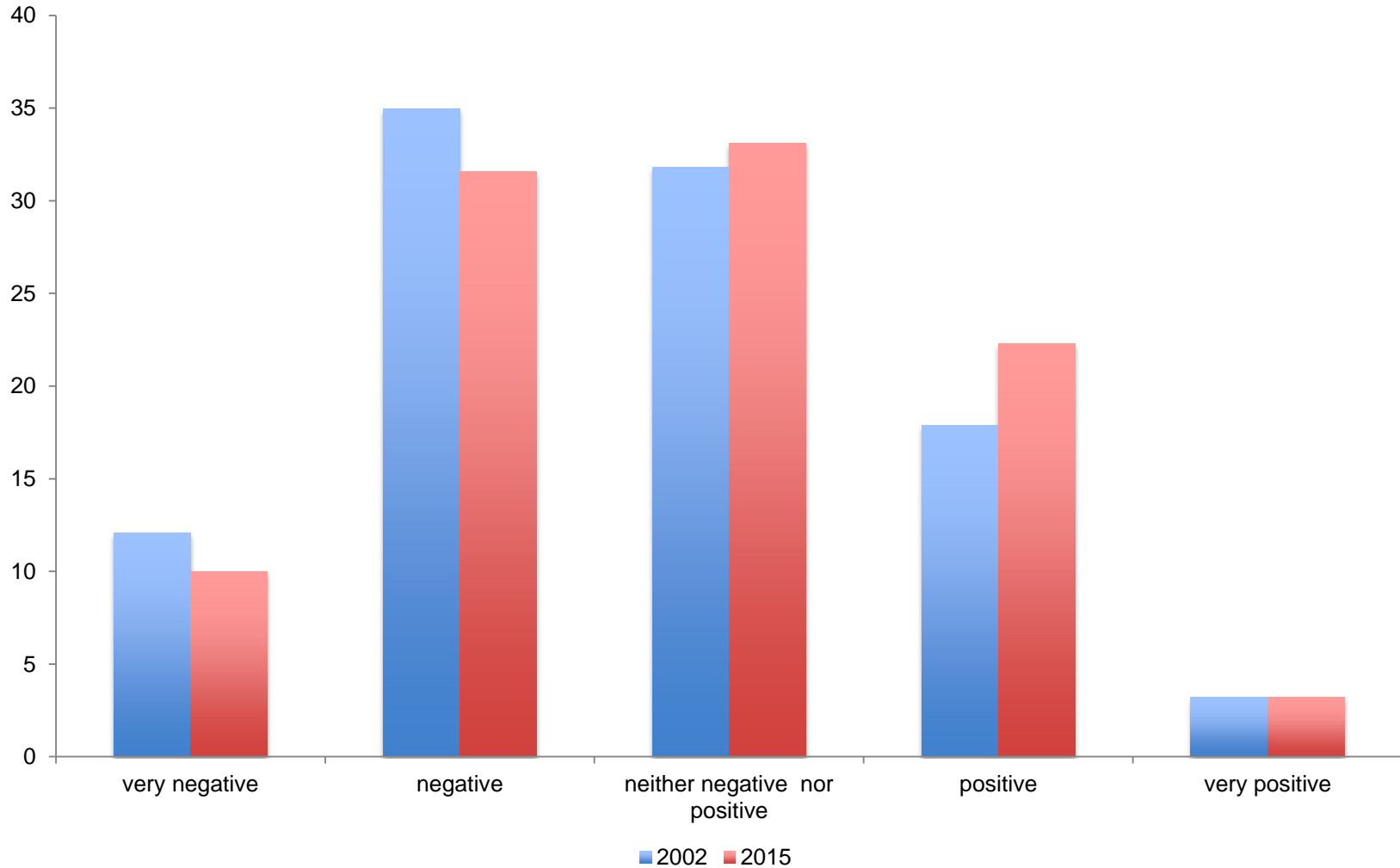
## Perceived effect of immigration on culture (source: ESS 2014)



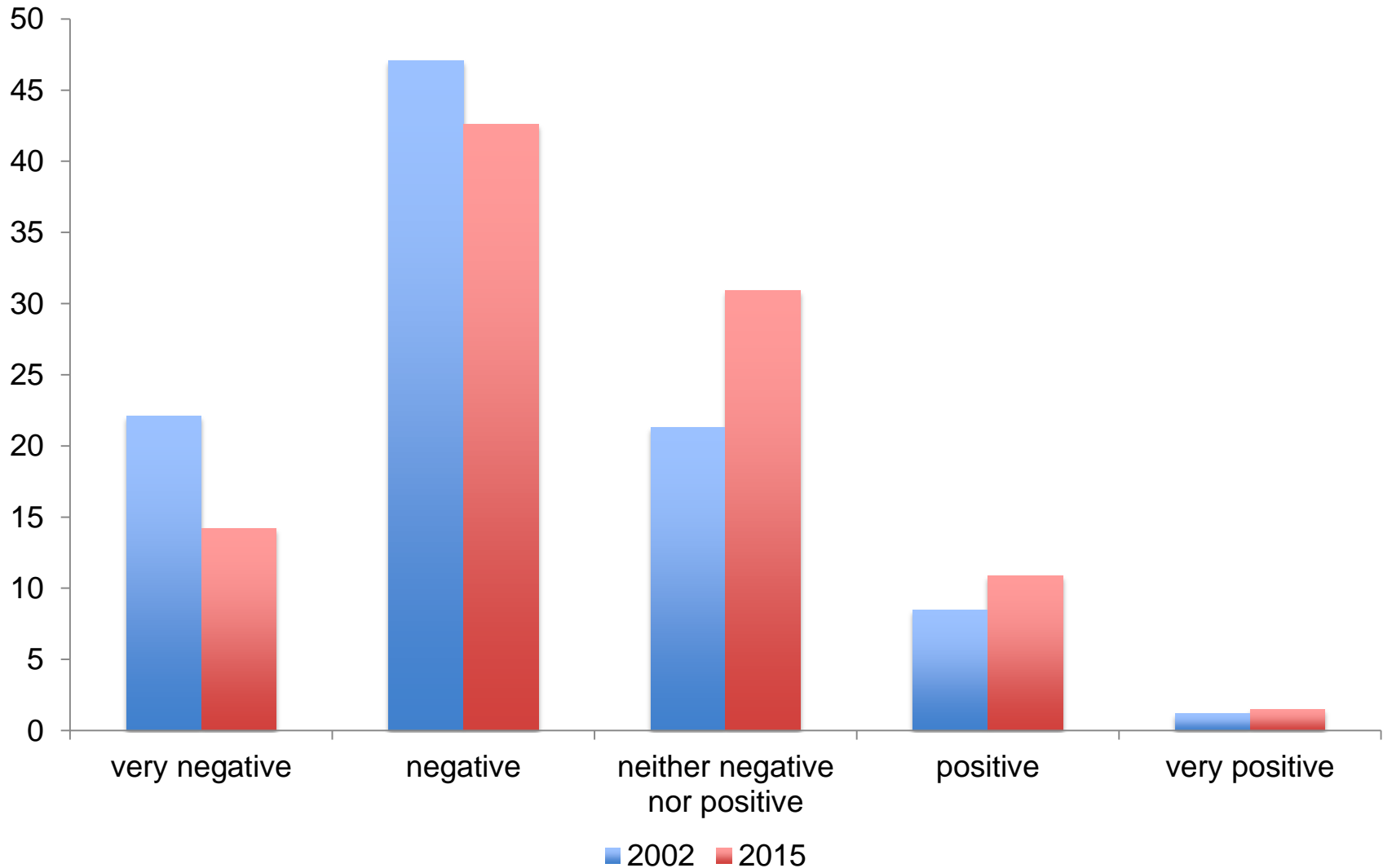
## Perceived effect of immigration on quality of life (source: ESS 2014)



## Perceived effect of immigration on government accounts (source: ESS 2014)



## Perceived effect of immigration on crime (source: ESS 2014)



# Individual-level

- Ok, so attitudes are stable, suggesting context doesn't matter much.
- But there's still significant variation. Then where does that variation come from? Why are some people anti and some pro?
- ... a lot of work has gone into this ...

# First, some basics

- Scientists are interested in causality
  - Why are things as they are?
  - What is the effect of X on Y?
  - Or, more generally: what are *all* the effects of X  $\Leftrightarrow$  what are *all* the causes of Y?
    - What causes variation in attitudes to immigration?
- How do we answer these questions?
  - Scientific method (hypothesis testing)
    - Question-> theory-> hypothesis-> method-> data -> analysis -> answer
  - The combination of theory and data
    - Neither is sufficient! We all know endless spurious correlations
    - Causation can never be proven with finality in any field (*phew!*)
    - Causation can only be postulated (theorised or suggested) and then supported through evidence (data, correlations)

# Suggested theories for attitudes to immigration are vast!

At least four *categories* of theories that explain attitudes to immigration:

Psychological	Socialisation	Attitudinal	Contextual

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Personality types	Parent's views	left-right positioning	Job sector



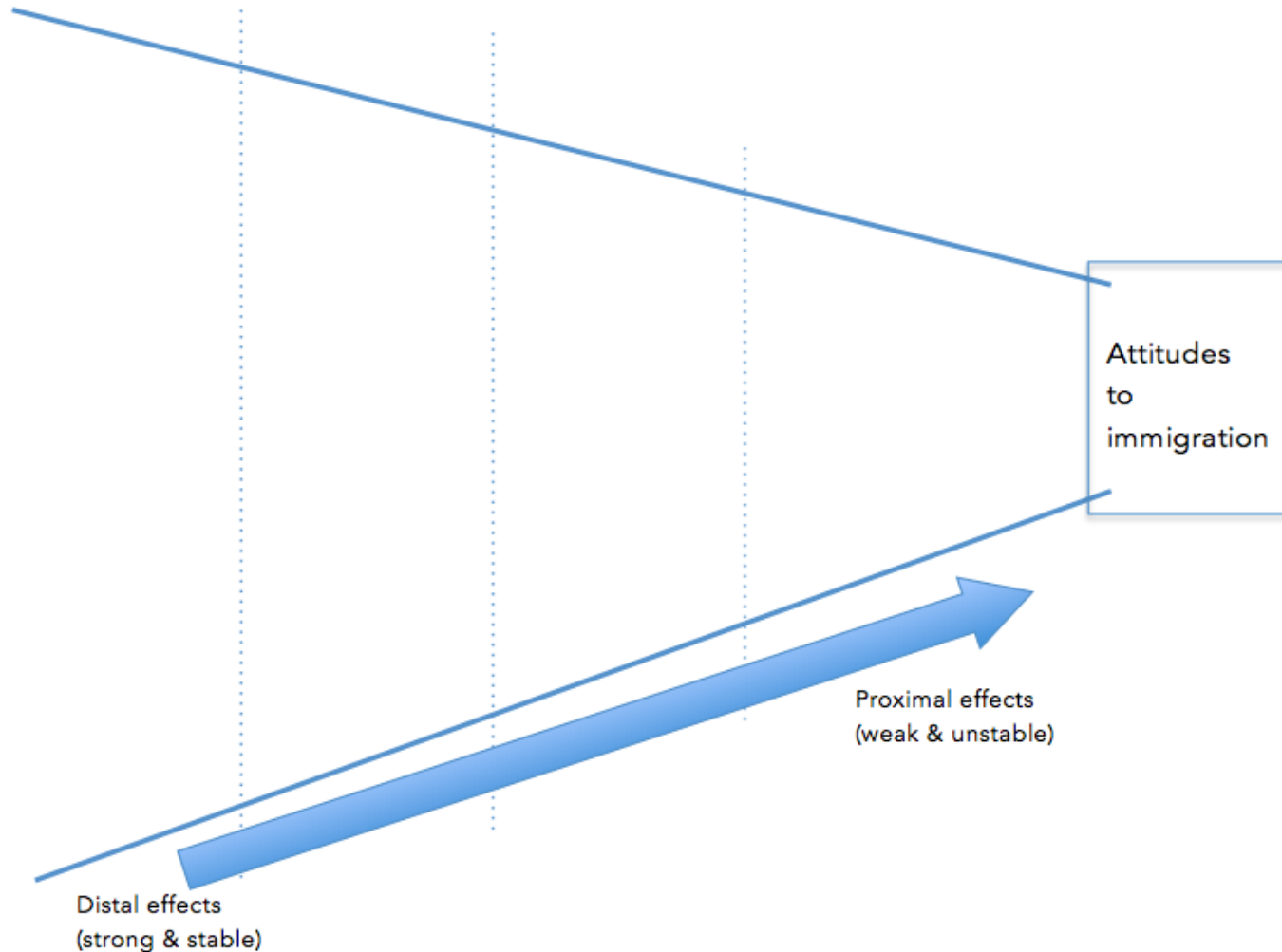
# What are the causes of variation in attitudes to immigration?

Psychological	Socialisation	Attitudinal	Contextual
Personality types	Parent's views	Left-right positioning	Neighborhood safety
Moral foundation	Schooling	Ideology	Contact with immigrants
Values	Early peer group	Libertarian-authoritarian	
	Lived abroad	Anti-establishment sentiment	Local immigration rates
	Mobility		Perceptions of immigration levels
	Urban/rural		
	Job sector		

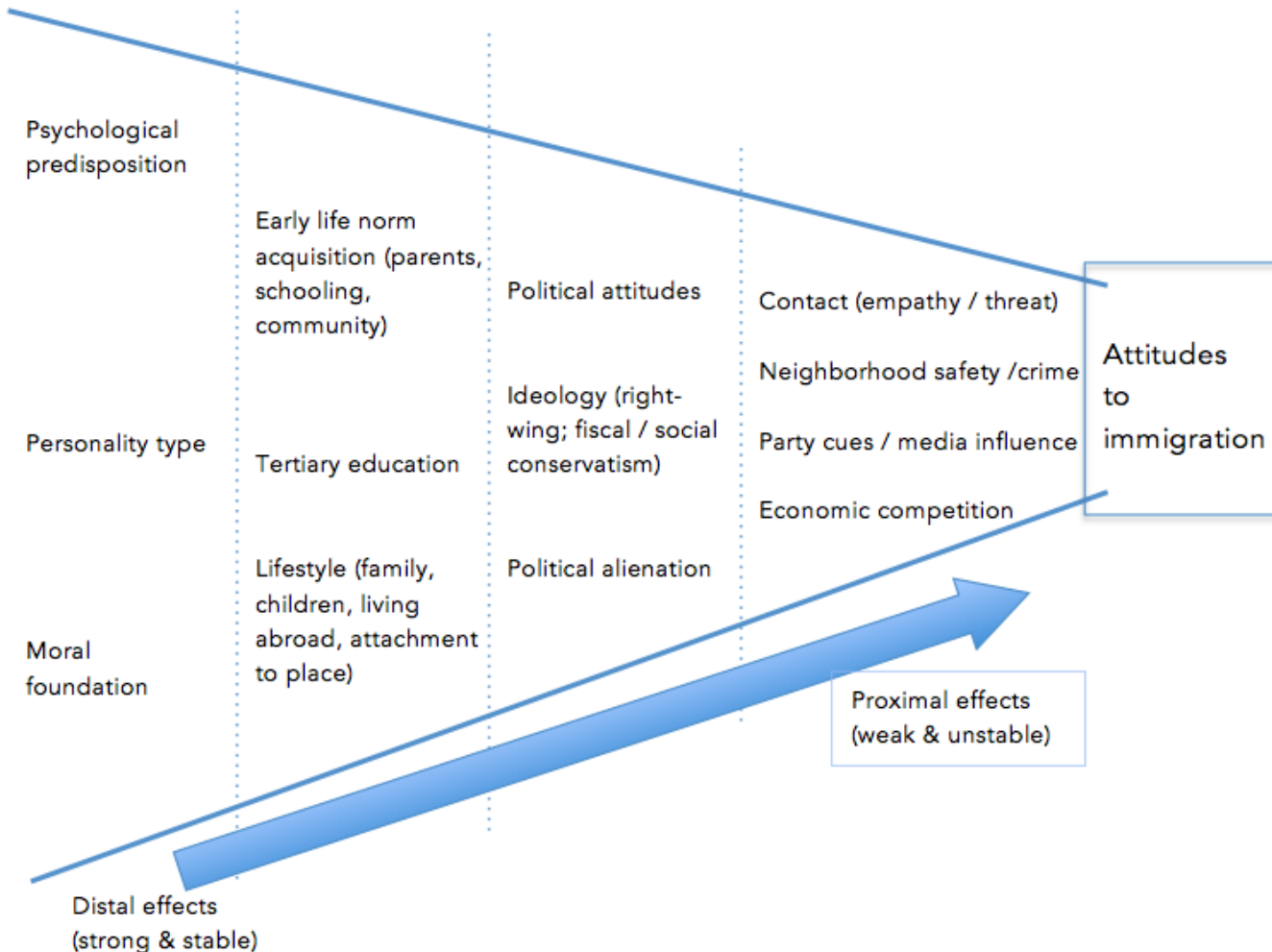
# What to do with so many findings?

- There's no reason to necessarily believe that not all of these are right
- Multiple causal mechanisms are related, and often indeed reliant, upon one another.
- All have direct and indirect effect
- Some are distal (*big effects, hard to change*)
- Some are proximal (*small effects, easier to change*)

# Use 'funnel of causality' method



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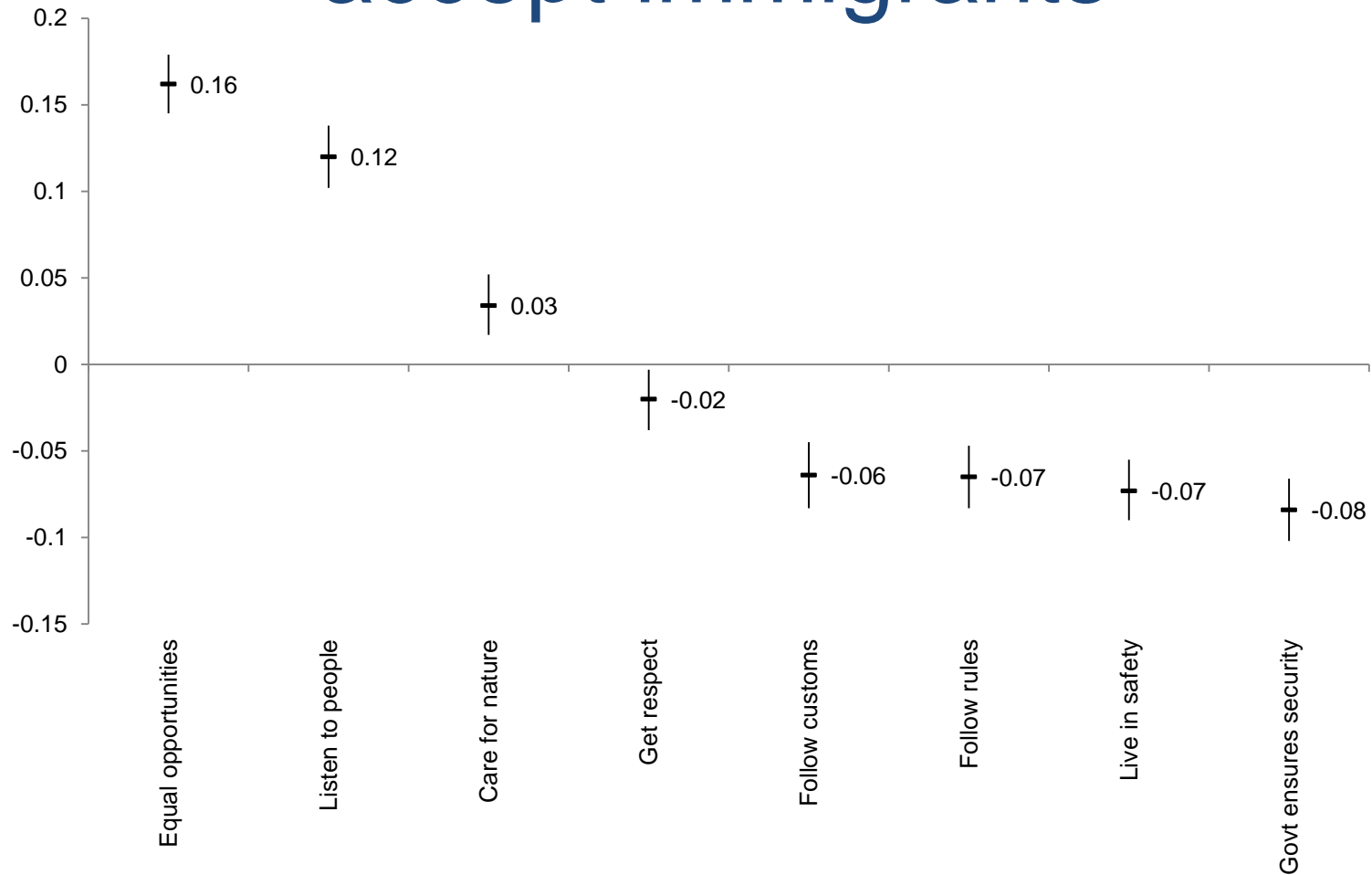
# Let's look at how values affect attitudes

- What are values?
  - Broad motivational goals in life, guiding principles
  - Many ways to measure them. All ways suggest:
    - Values are stable, identifiable, drawn from specific set, vary a lot between individuals
    - Can predict attitudes and behaviours well
    - Rooted in upbringing and genetics

# Correlations between values and willingness to accept immigrants

Bi-dimensional pole (and hypothesised direction of correlation)	Value	Variable (standardised)	Correlation (** p<0.001)
Self-transcendence (+)	Universalism	Equal opportunities	0.216***
		Listen to people	0.187***
		Care for nature	0.055***
	Benevolence	Help people around her	0.093***
		Be loyal to friends	0.074***
Conservation (-)	Tradition	Follow customs	-0.149***
		Be humble	-0.027***
	Conformity	Behave properly	-0.105***
		Follow rules	-0.129***
	Security	Live in secure surroundings	-0.164***
		Government ensures safety	-0.150***
Self-enhancement (-)	Power	Get respect	-0.090***
		Be rich	-0.091***
	Achievement	Be very successful	-0.018***
		Show abilities	-0.024***
Self-enhancement / Openness to change (.)	Hedonism	Spoil oneself	0.061***
		Have fun	0.034***
Openness to change (+)	Stimulation	Looking for new things	0.069***
		Have adventures and risks	0.062***
	Self-Direction	Make own decisions	0.058***
		Being creative	0.113***

# Effects of values and willingness to accept immigrants



# Only four values really matter

- Universalism, security, conformity, tradition
- These can predict 28% of variation in attitudes to immigration
- Values matter ... a lot.
- With that in mind... How can we design a values-conscious policy communication strategy on immigration?



# To conclude

- Attitudes to immigration are stable, becoming slightly more positive!
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# To conclude

- Europeans are divided on immigration.
- Most have an opinion, many are in the middle, few extremists
  - People recognise complexity
- There are swathes of evidence explaining why people vary
- It's rarely put together ... but it can and should be understood as linked

# To conclude

- One strong predictor is values
- Four values matter for attitudes to immigration
- Policy makers would be wise to think about this when communicating!