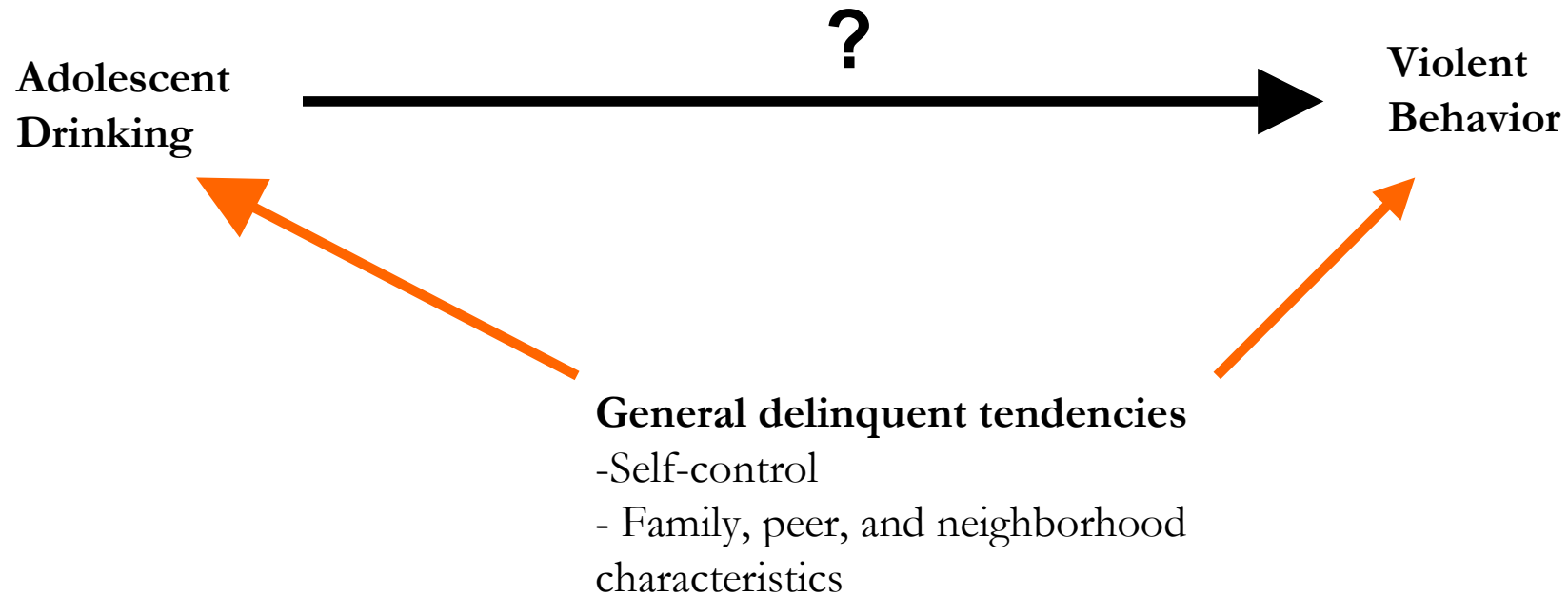


# When Does Alcohol Affect Violent Crime, Nonviolent Crime, and Victimization?

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# Spurious relationship?



## Why should alcohol have a causal effect on aggression?

- Cognitive impairment
- Conflict and victimization
- Expectations and excuses
  
- But why not everywhere (some tribal societies)?

# Does drinking affect aggression or deviance?

- Intentional harm doing vs. rule breaking
- Overlapping domains
- Violent and nonviolent crime
- Shouldn't alcohol affect both?

# A Method to Eliminate Spuriousness

- Joint occurrences
- Relationship between frequency of drinking and sober violence is completely spurious
- Relationship between frequency of drinking and total violence (sober or drunk) is partly spurious and partly causal
- Causal effect = Total effect – Spurious effect

# Effects on Finnish youth

- Spuriousness for all types of offenses
  - substantial relationship between drinking and sober delinquency
- Completely spurious for crimes of petty theft (shoplifting and stealing from home)
  - relationship between drinking and sober delinquency is just as strong as the total relationship
- Causal effect for violence, vandalism, car theft, and graffiti writing
  - the alcohol–sober delinquency relationship is weaker

# Drunkenness among inmates

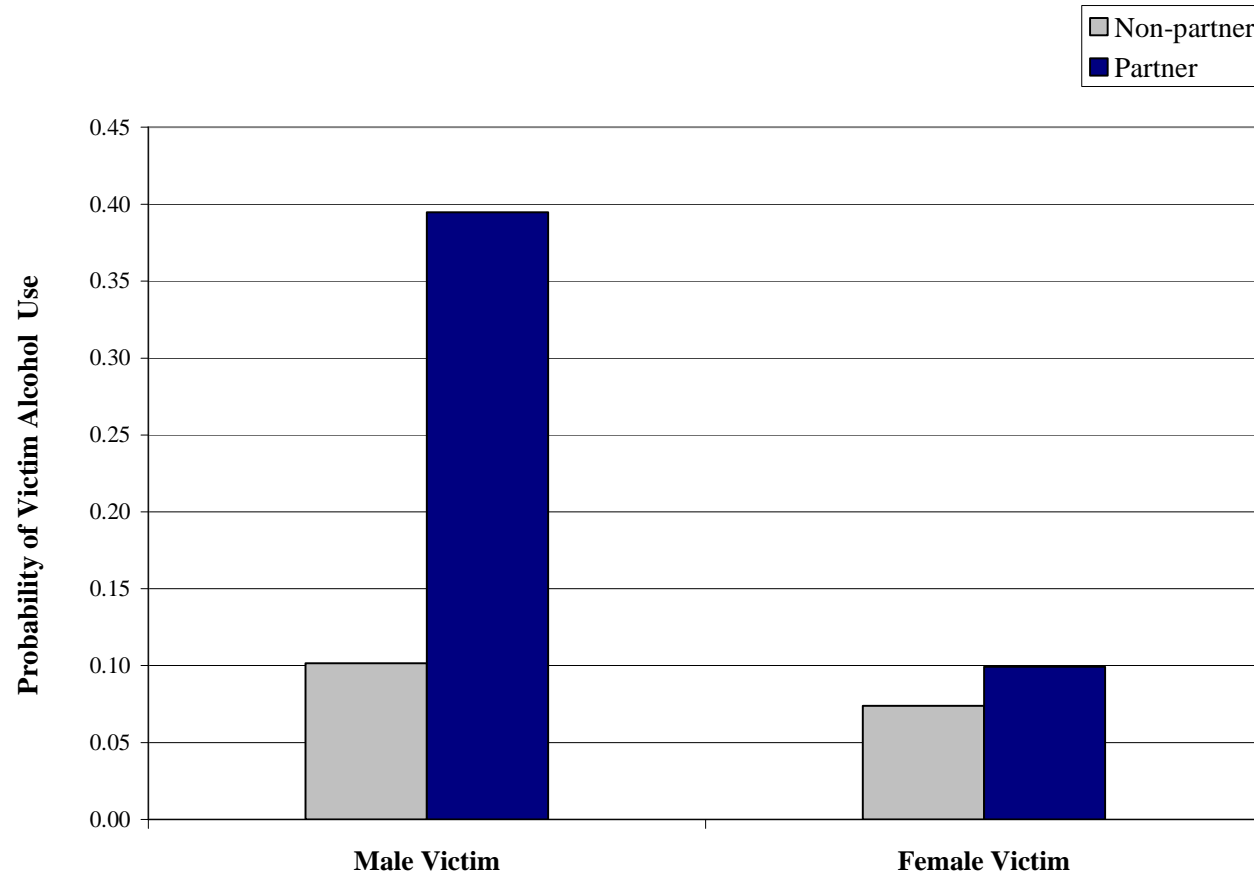
- Most often drunk
  - Homicide, physical assault, sexual assault
- Often drunk
  - Robbery, burglary
- Least often drunk
  - Theft, drug crimes
- Crimes of personal confrontation?

# Alcohol use by victims

- National Violence Against Women and Men Survey
- Frequency of drinking predicts victimization while drinking but not while sober.
  - Motivates offender not just association with motivated offenders
- Effect is particularly strong for
  - Young adults
  - Victims of sexual assaults (vs. physical assault)
  - Men, particularly men assaulted by their female partners



# Alcohol use during assault by victim's gender and relationship to offender

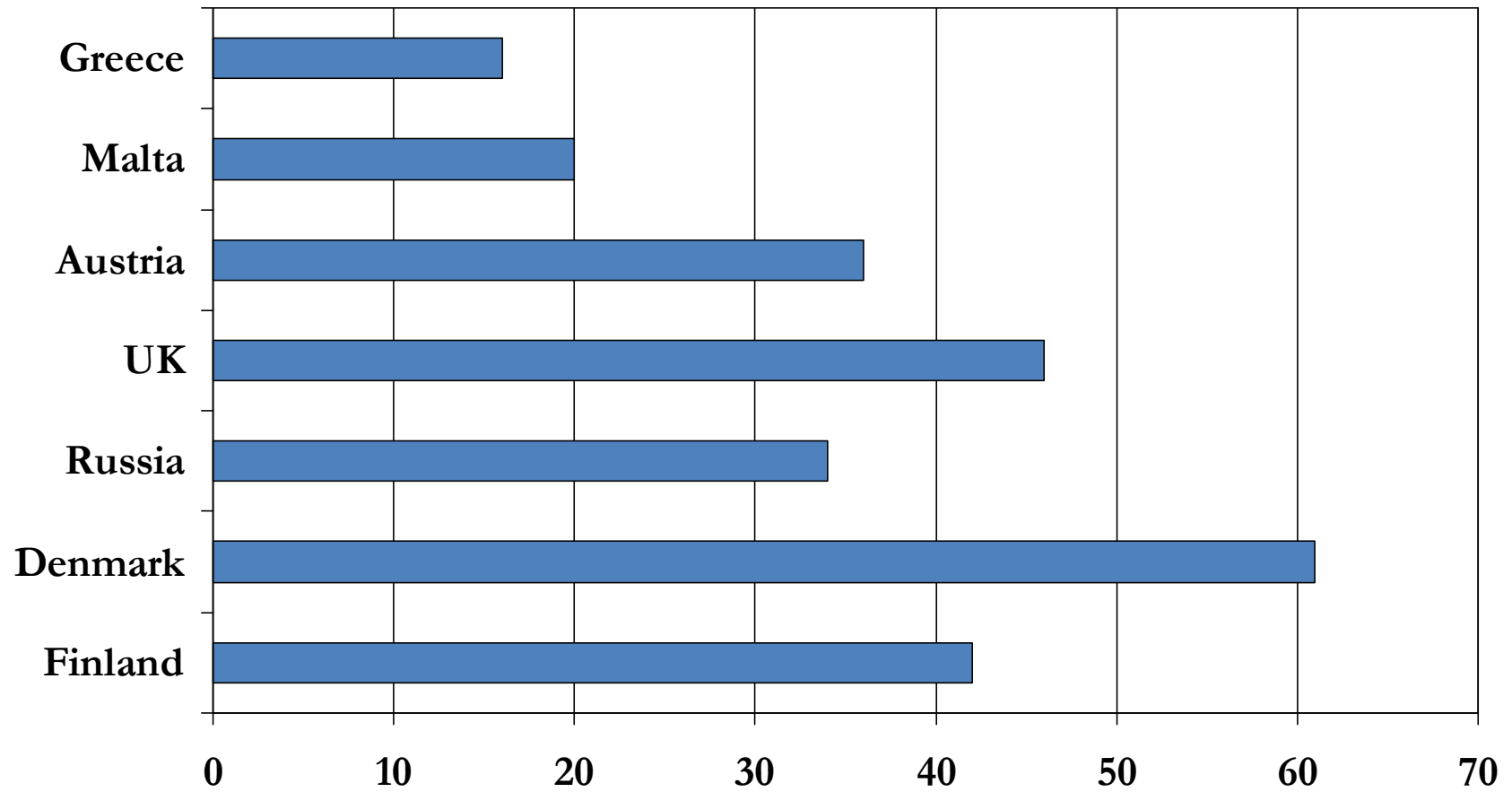


<sup>1</sup> Because all variables were grand-mean centered, probabilities were computed by fixing the values of all control variables at zero.

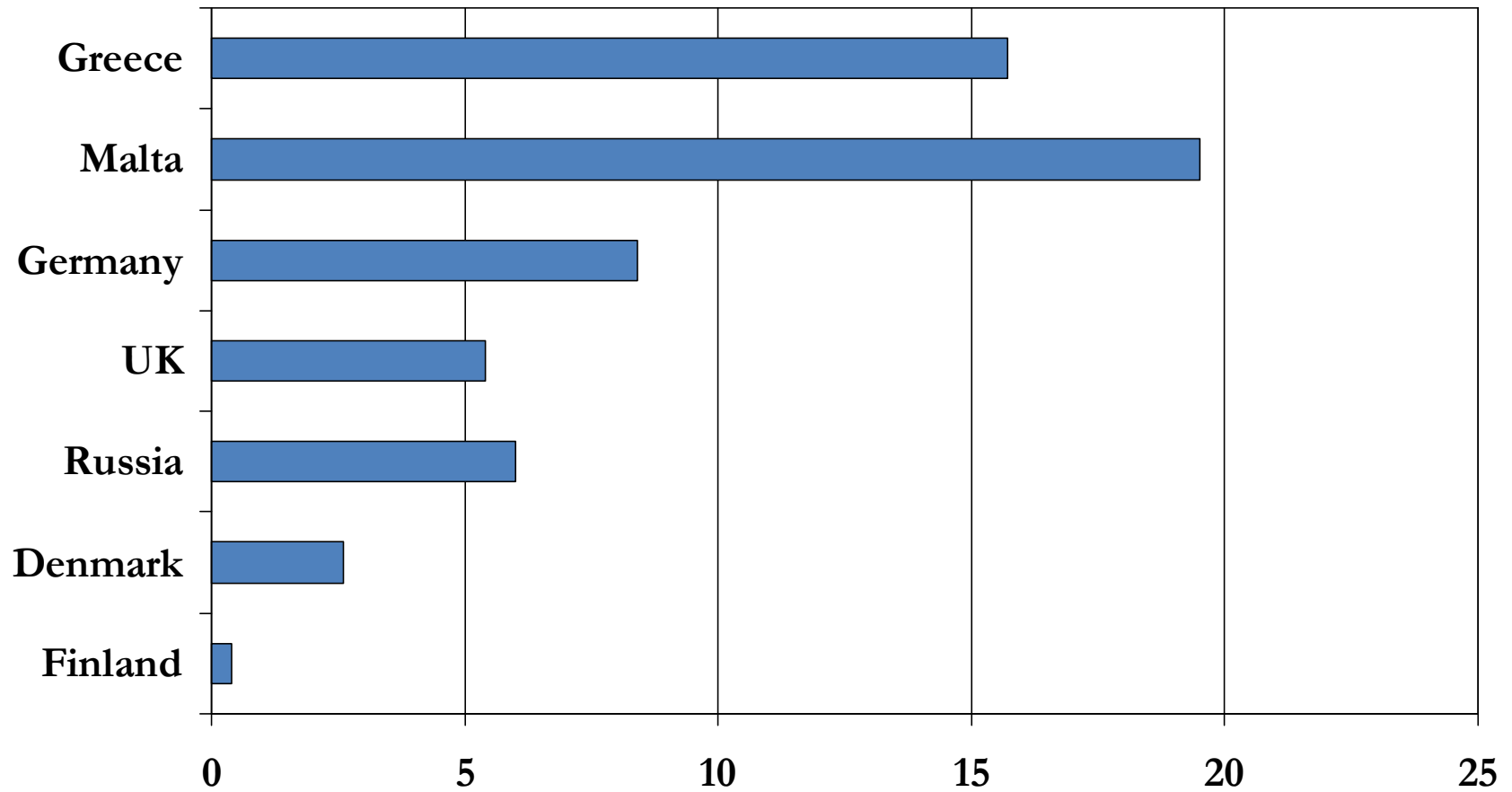
## European drinking cultures

- “Dry” North
  - e.g., Nordic countries
  - Sporadic heavy drinking
  - Vodka or large quantities of beer
  - Low guardianship
- “Wet” South
  - Mediterranean countries
  - Moderate drinking
  - Integrated into conventional activities
  - Wine
- Alcohol effects higher in Northern Europe?

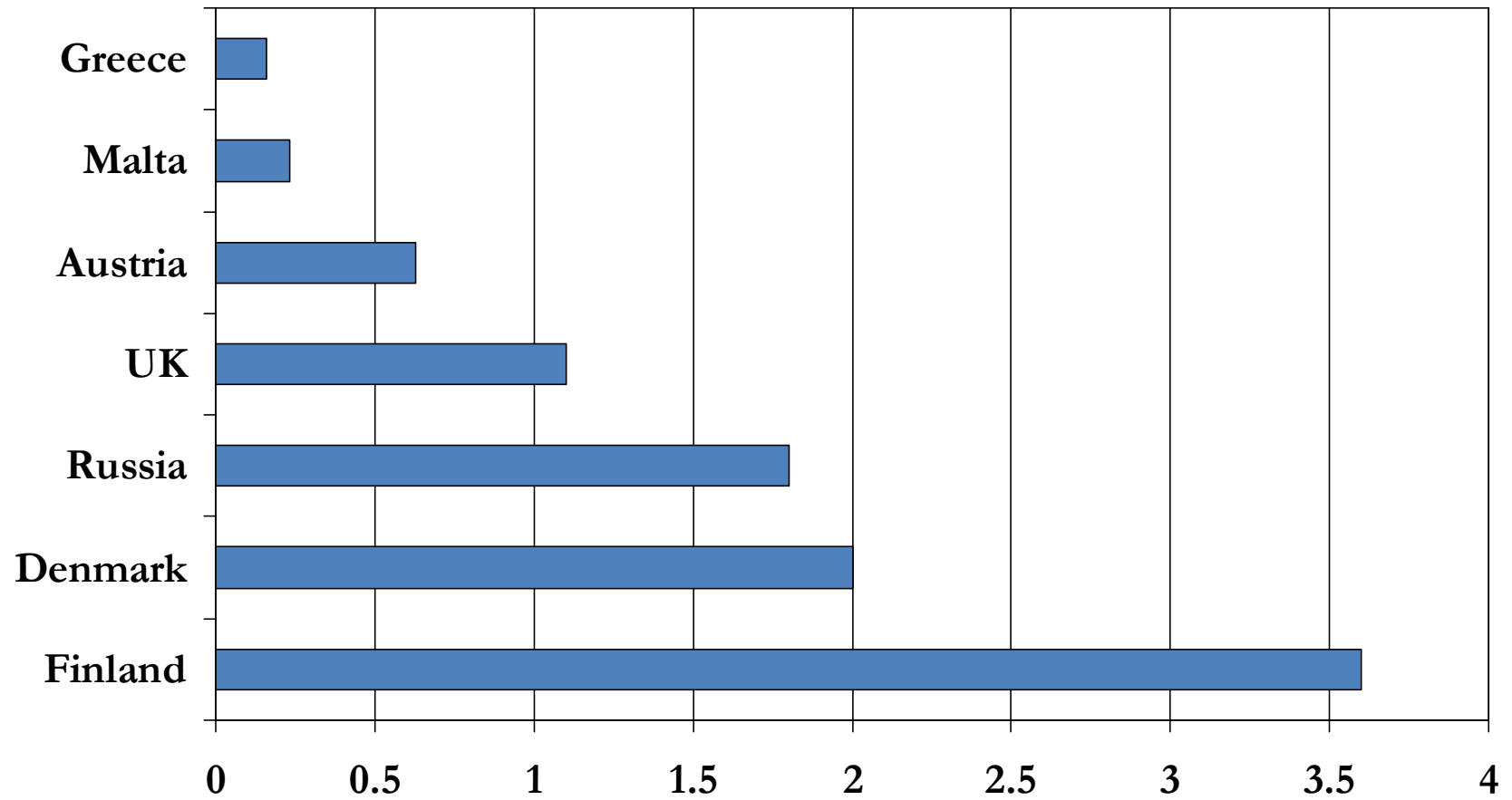
# % Intoxicated



# % Drinking in moderation



Dependent variable:  
Size of the non-spurious association



## Effects of drinking on adolescent violence

- Statistical interaction between drinking and drinking context
- Strong effect in Nordic and Eastern European countries
- Little or no effect of alcohol or intoxication in the Mediterranean countries. Alcohol-violence relationship almost entirely spurious.

## What accounts for the regional differences?

- Due partly to regional differences in the tendency to drink to intoxication
- Also due to tendency to become intoxicated in settings where adult guardianship is absent.
  - Nordics: 69.5% in other's homes, 21.7% in commercial establishments
  - Mediterraneans: 19.0% in other's homes, 75.3% in commercial establishments
- Also due to presence of intoxicated peers
- Not due to regional differences in expectations

# Conclusions

- Alcohol has a causal effect on violent crime and some other crime
- Particularly crimes involving personal confrontation (?)
- Spurious relationship –in some countries completely spurious.
- Social context important
- Effects depend on setting where drinking occurs, degree of intoxication, and intoxication of peers.
- Variation in expectations does not account for regional variation in alcohol effects.
- Alcohol increases risk of victimization, particularly for young men