



Ethnicity, Religion, and Mothering



Margaret F. Brinig
Notre Dame Law School

Normally, we think good mothers

- Love their children
- Provide for them
- Sacrifice for them
- Teach them
- Meet their emotional needs
- Train them in a moral or religious tradition

We don't typically think

- of how each of these things we do affects how our children turn out as they reach adolescence and start to move away from us.
- We may measure all these things together as we say “I must have done something right...” or “She’s/He’s a good kid.”
- This project attempts to measure the impact of each part of mothering, or disaggregate them. We can also think in terms of a series of questions.

There are many kinds of mothers

- Mothers differ along racial and ethnic lines (but does that change the way they mother or what helps their children)?
- They differ across socioeconomic lines (but does that change the way they mother or what helps their children?)
- They differ across religious lines (but does that change the way they mother or what helps their children)?

What this study does

- It looks at a national, randomized, longitudinal study of nearly 9000 children ages 12-18 in 1997, matched to, and living with, their mothers. That study is the NLS97, sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- The sample is large enough that we can select out groups by race and ethnicity (four groups), and also by religious preference (or lack thereof, four groups).
- We can test the effect of various indirect factors (income, mother's education, family situation, religiosity) and direct inputs (parenting style) on child outcomes.

What we find: an overview

Controlling for other things, we can see that different **parenting styles** are preferred by different groups, and that they seem to work in discouraging negative behavior (but for most aren't as successful in fostering optimism in a child). The only parenting style that doesn't work well is "uninvolved"—low warmth and low control.

Religious differences matter

While the numbers of Muslim children (N=52) and Jewish children (N=72) in the sample are small, we can still make some general statements about the various groups. The Catholic children in the sample (N=2234) had the highest average income. The Baptist (N=1854) and Muslim children were the most likely to say that it was rare that good things happened to them. The Jewish children were the most likely to have substance abuse issues and to be optimistic about their long term futures. The children of nonreligious (atheist, agnostic, moralists, N=582) were most likely to be delinquents and to have behavioral and/or emotional problems. But these are raw numbers: they don't control for important things.

Example of regression syntax

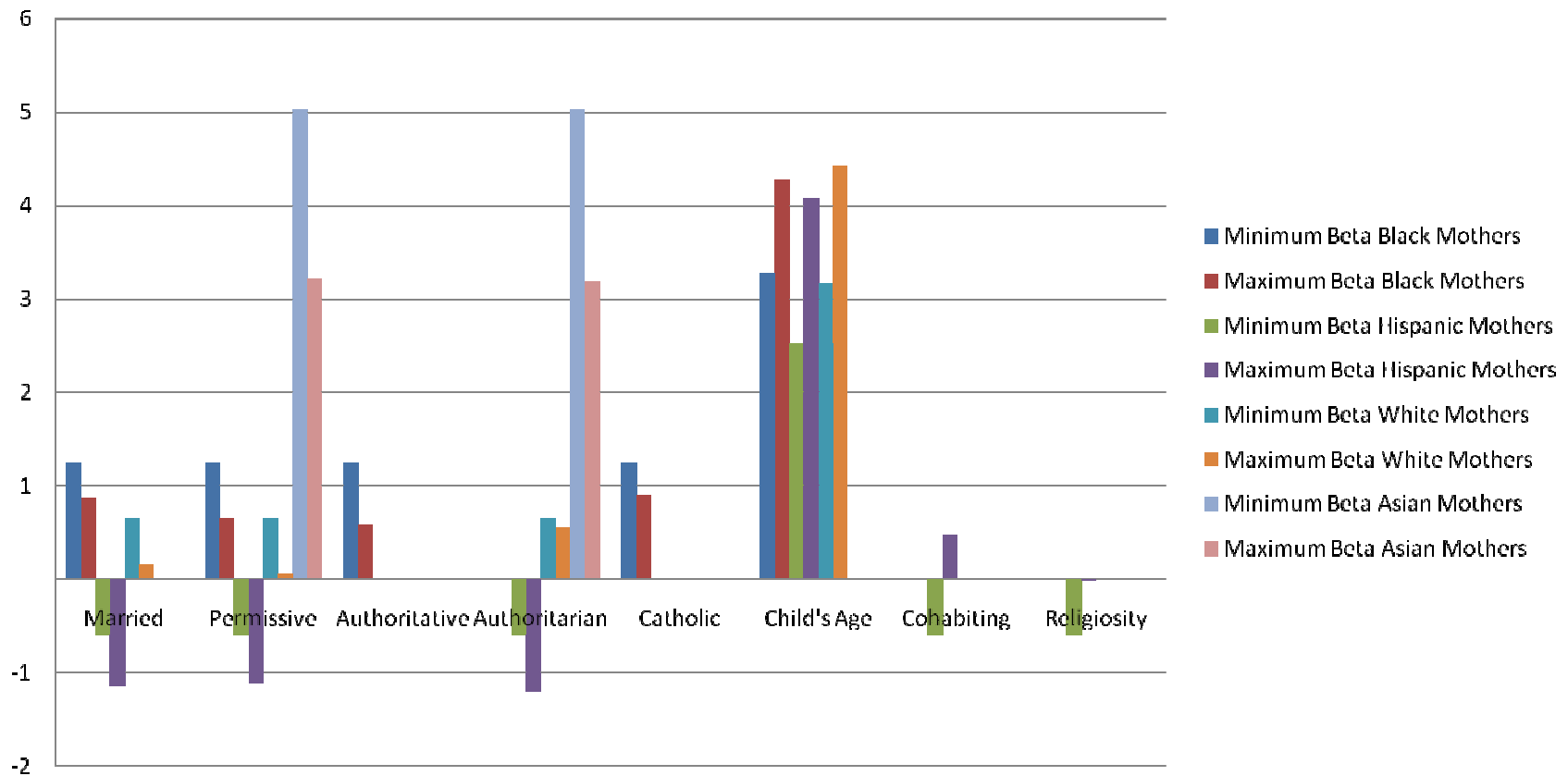
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REGRESSION  
/MISSING LISTWISE  
/STATISTICS COEFF OUTS R ANOVA  
/CRITERIA=PIN(.05) POUT(.10)  
/NOORIGIN  
/DEPENDENT DELINQ  
/METHOD=ENTER POVRATIO  
/METHOD=ENTER TWOPBMMA TWOPBMCO ONEPBMCO  
/METHOD=ENTER TWOBMAR  
/METHOD=ENTER KIDAGE EDBIOMOM MOMAGE  
/METHOD=ENTER PERMISS AUTHTIAN  
/METHOD=ENTER PARRELTY  
/METHOD=ENTER CATHOLIC.
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Outcome measures and factors

- The statistical analysis I'll show you is for five outcome measures. These are DELINQUENCY (running away, carrying weapons, vandalism, theft, arrests, etc.); BEHAVIORAL OR EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS (concentration, getting along, lying or cheating, depression); SUBSTANCE ABUSE (tobacco, alcohol, marijuana use); OPTIMISM ("I'm always optimistic about my future"); and PESSIMISM ("I rarely count on good things happening to me"). The colored columns are in pairs that illustrate what happens if we move from the minimum to the maximum possible number (sometimes no to yes, 12 to 18 for the child's age, etc.). I will only show you what is statistically significant (highly unlikely to occur by chance). You get some idea of the comparative size of the factors and their real effects.

Regression analysis, relative effect of significant coefficients

Effect of Factors on Delinquency: All Moms



Text version of Delinquency chart

Decreasing delinquency

marriage (all except Asians)

permissive and authoritarian parenting style (all)

authoritative parenting style (Blacks only, reduces by half)

Catholic religion (Black mothers only)

Increasing delinquency

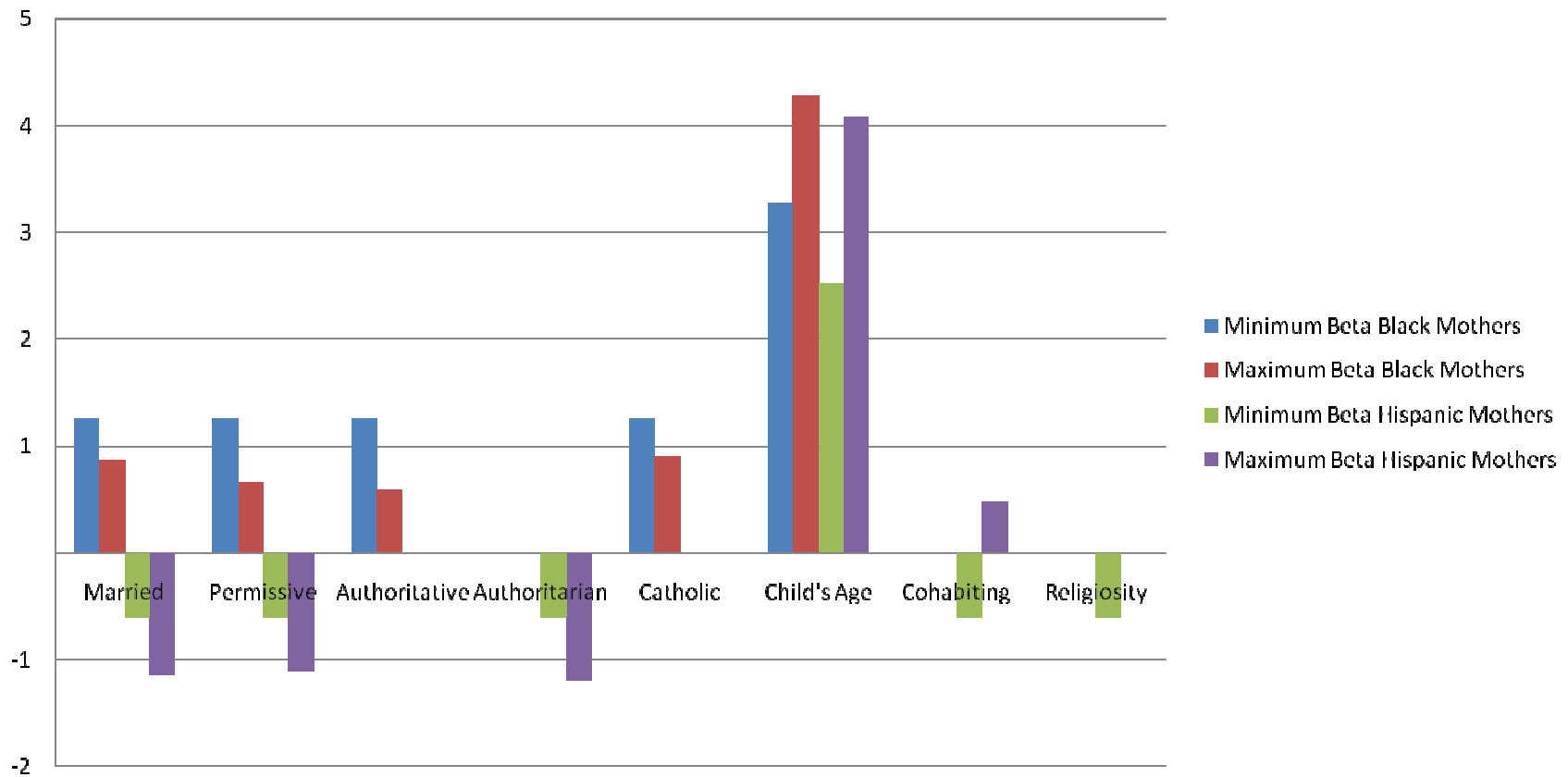
age of child (all except Asians)

religiosity (Hispanic children only—cause or consequence?)

cohabiting mothers (Hispanic children only)

Larger Ethnic Minorities Only

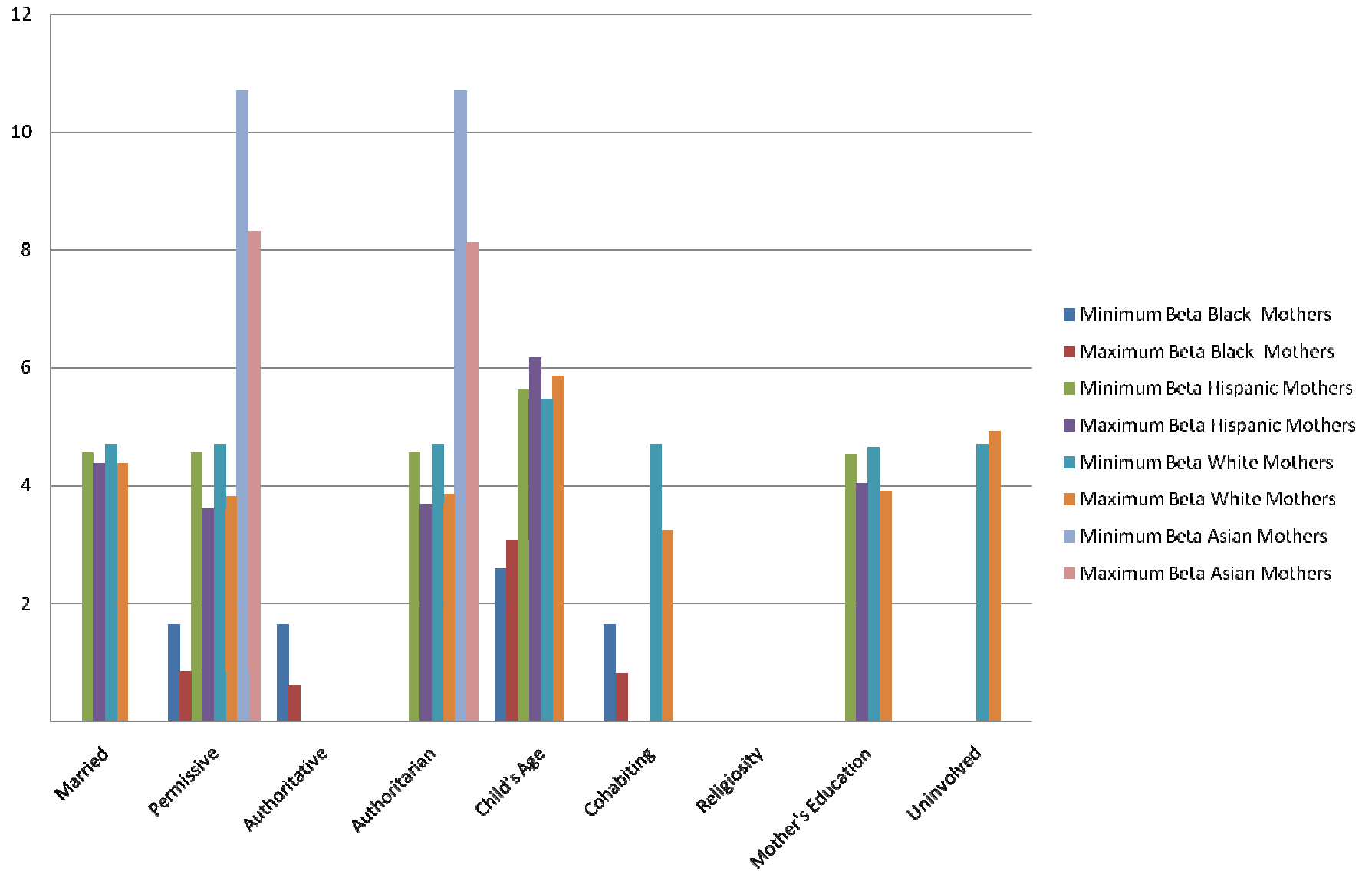
Effect of Factors on Delinquency



Text version: Hispanics and Blacks

- Higher levels for Black children than for Hispanics
- Reduces delinquency
 - authoritative parenting for Black mothers
 - authoritarian parenting for Hispanics.
 - Married parents (both)
- Increases delinquency
 - cohabiting mother (only for Hispanics).

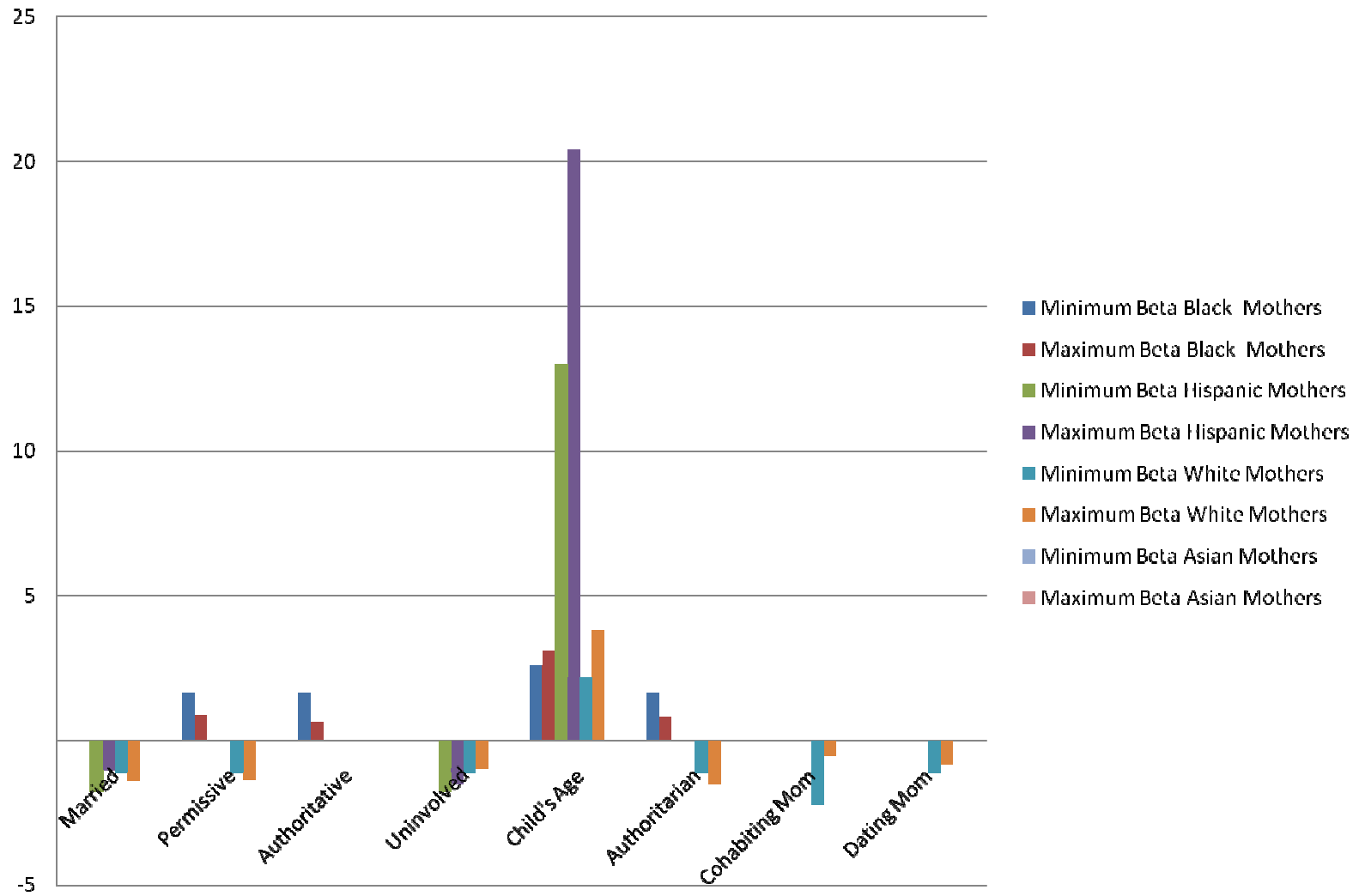
Relationship of Factors to Average Behavioral/Emotional Problems



Text version of Behavioral and Emotional Problems chart

- Mom's religiosity doesn't matter
- Fewer behavioral and emotional problems
 - Married mothers (White and Hispanic mothers)
 - Cohabiting mothers (Black and White mothers)
 - permissive or authoritarian parenting style (high warmth, low control, or low warmth, high control).
 - Authoritative parenting style (children of Black mothers; high warmth and high control)
- More behavioral and emotional problems
 - uninvolved parents (children of White mothers; low warmth, low control).

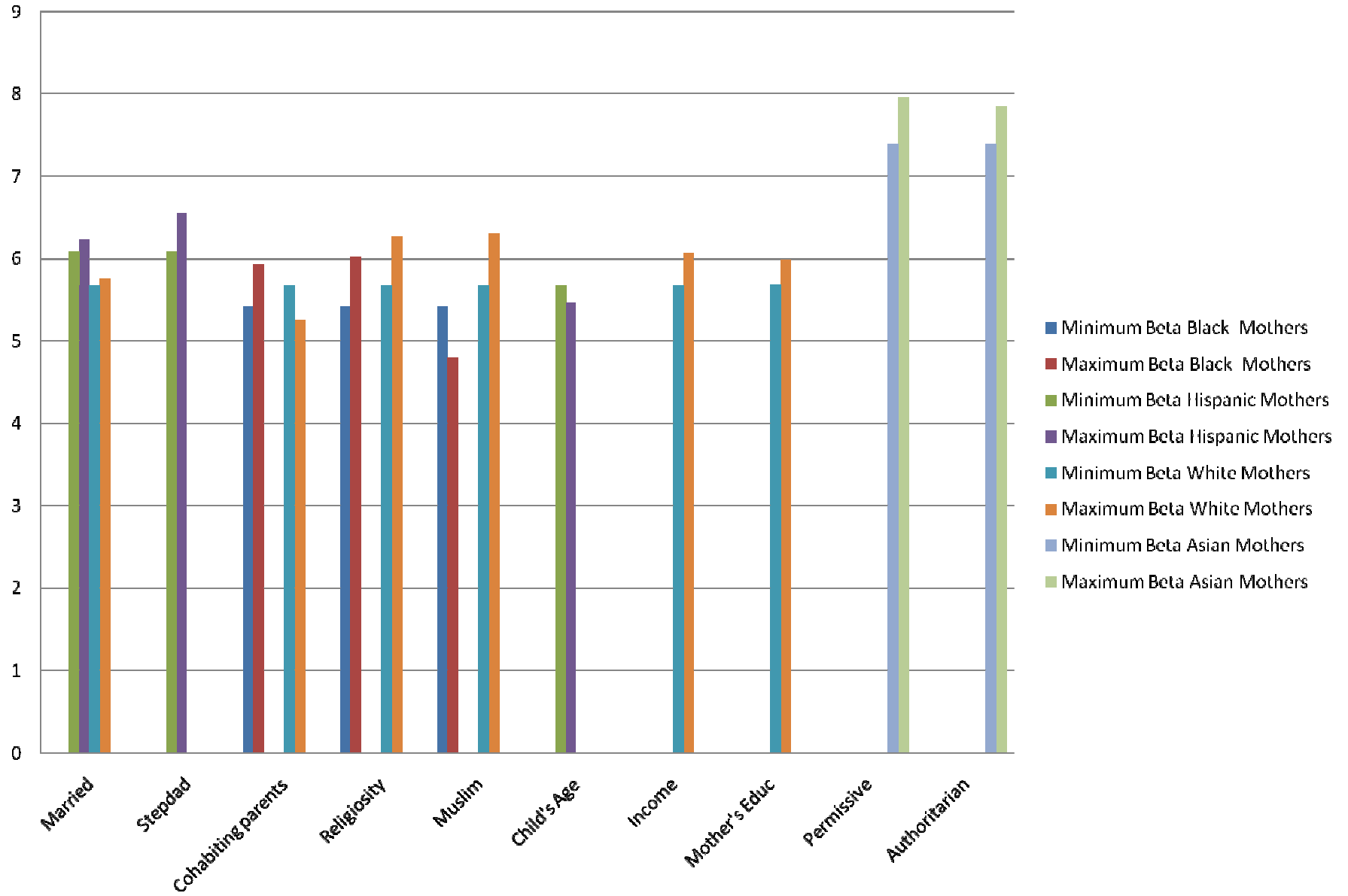
Relationship of Factors to Average Substance Abuse



Text version of Substance Abuse chart

- Children of Asian mothers had no statistically significant results.
- Decreases substance abuse
 - Married mothers (children of White mothers)
 - Permissive parenting
 - Authoritative parenting (children of Black mothers)
- Increases substance abuse
 - Age of child (all)
 - cohabiting or dating mothers (children of White mothers).

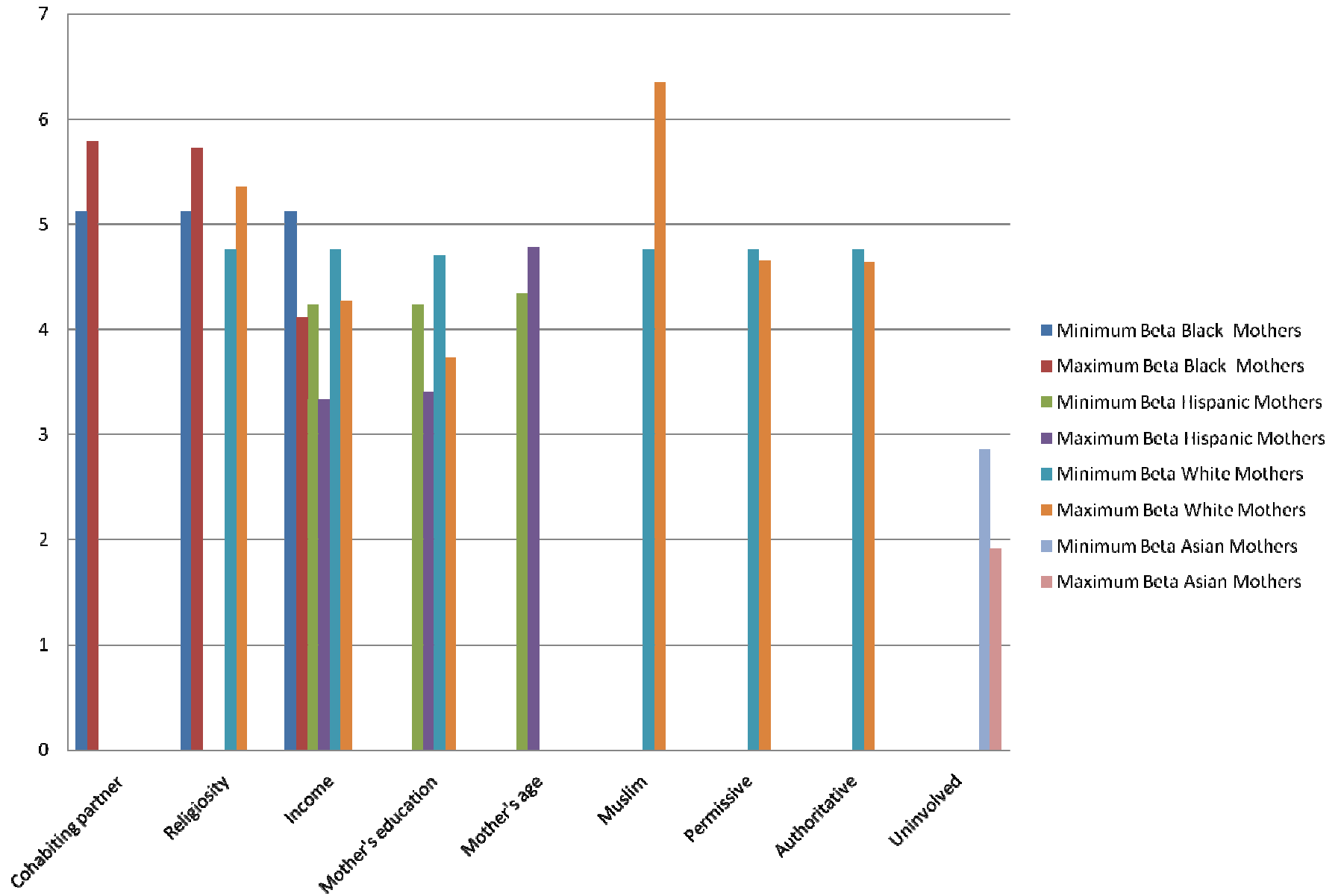
Relationship of Factors to Average Optimism of Mother



Text Version of Optimism chart

- All results are small differences.
- Increased optimism
 - Married mothers (children of Hispanic and White mothers)
 - Religiosity (children of Black and White mothers)
 - Muslim mothers (children of White mothers only)
 - Mother's education (children of White mothers only)
 - Income (children of White mothers only)
 - Parenting style (permissive and authoritarian) (children of Asian mothers only)
- Decreased optimism
 - Muslim mothers (children of Black mothers only)

Relationships of Factors to "Good Things Unlikely to Happen to Me"



Text Version of “Good Things Rarely Happen to Me” chart

- Again, changes are very small.
- Less pessimistic:
 - Income (all but Asians)
 - Mother’s education (all but children of Asian parents)
 - Older children
 - Parenting style (permissive and authoritarian (All but children of Asian parents))
- More pessimistic
 - Uninvolved parenting style (children of Asian mothers)
 - Children of White Muslim mothers

Comments on religious affiliation charts

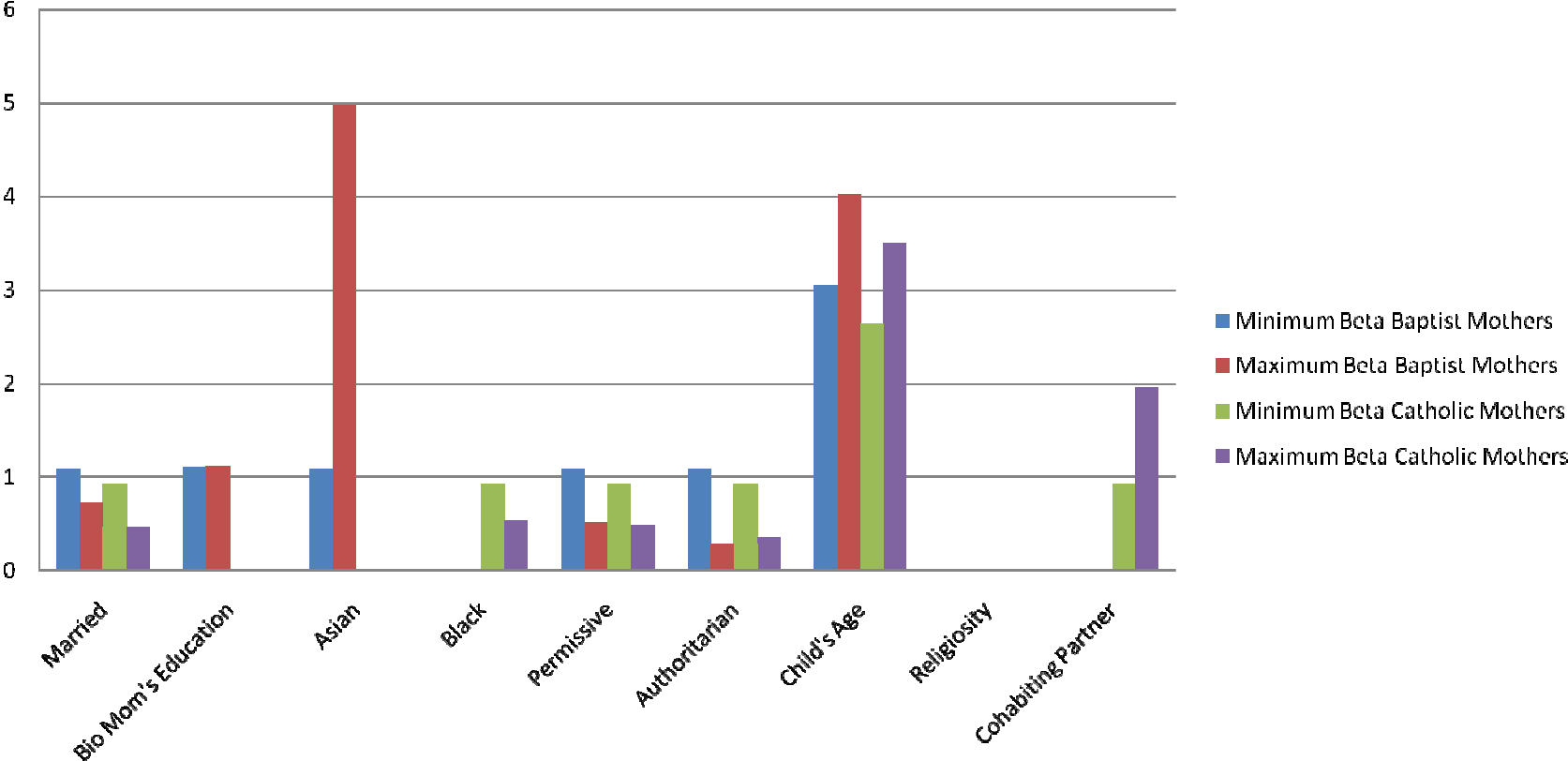
I first looked at the different patterns among the two most common American Christian denominations, Catholics (about 28% of the sample) and Baptists (about 23%). While the charts are much clearer with only those two, we can learn much by surveying three other groups: Jewish mothers (.6%), Muslim mothers (.7%), and those who answered “none,” whether atheist, agnostic or personal philosophy (a total of 7.4%).

Religious affiliations and delinquency

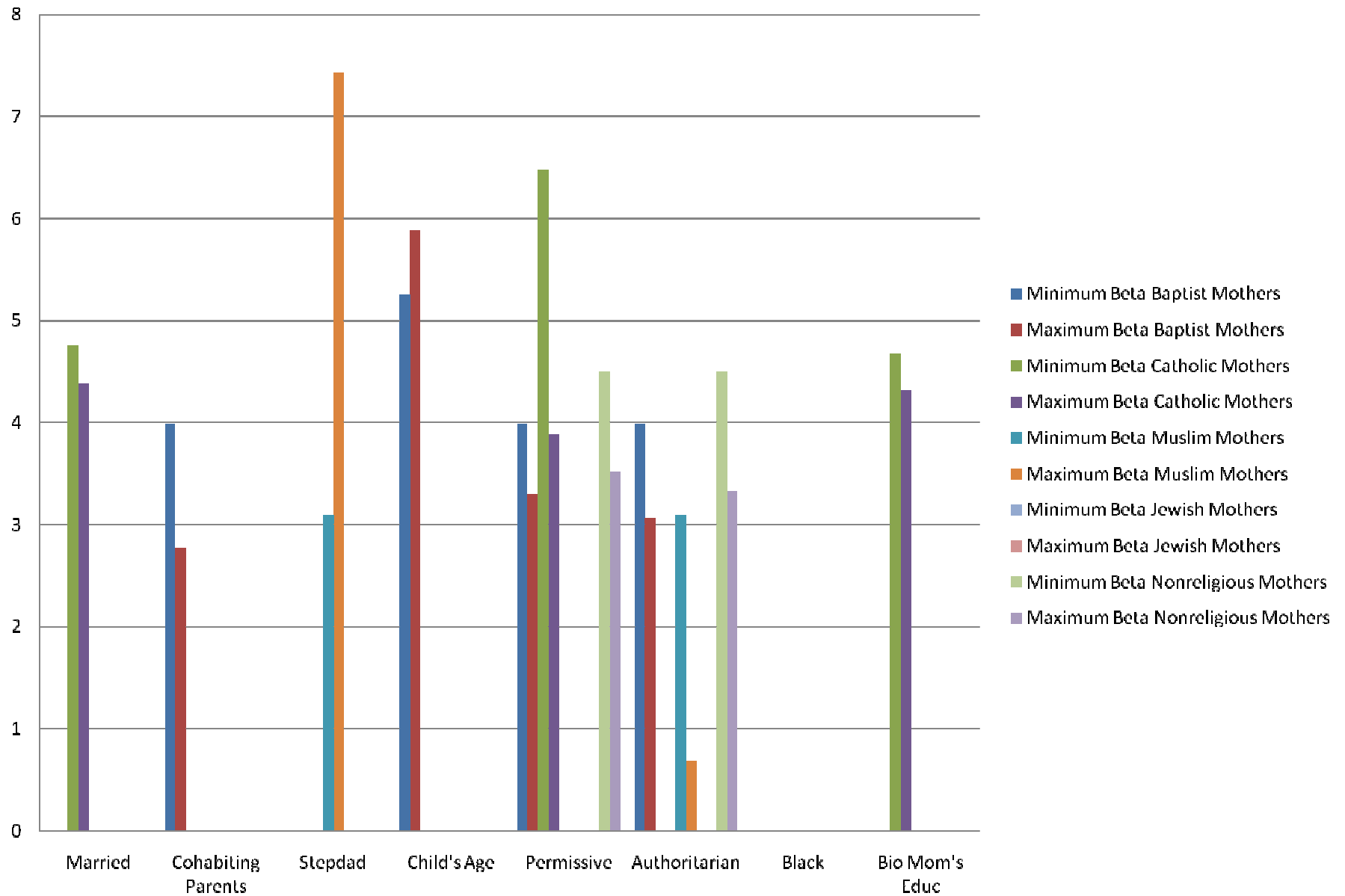
- Reduces delinquency:
 - Married mothers (Children of Baptist, Catholic and Jewish mothers (who had lowest level overall))
 - Permissive parenting style (children of Baptist, Catholic and non-religious mothers)
 - Authoritarian parenting style (children of Baptist, Catholic and Muslim mothers)
 - Religiosity (Jewish children)
 - Cohabiting mothers (children of Muslim mothers)
- Increases delinquency:
 - Age of child.
 - Children of Asian Baptist mothers.
 - Cohabiting mother (Catholics and those without a religion)
 - Income (children of non-religious mothers).

Baptist and Catholic Mothers only

Delinquency Average, Religion and Factors



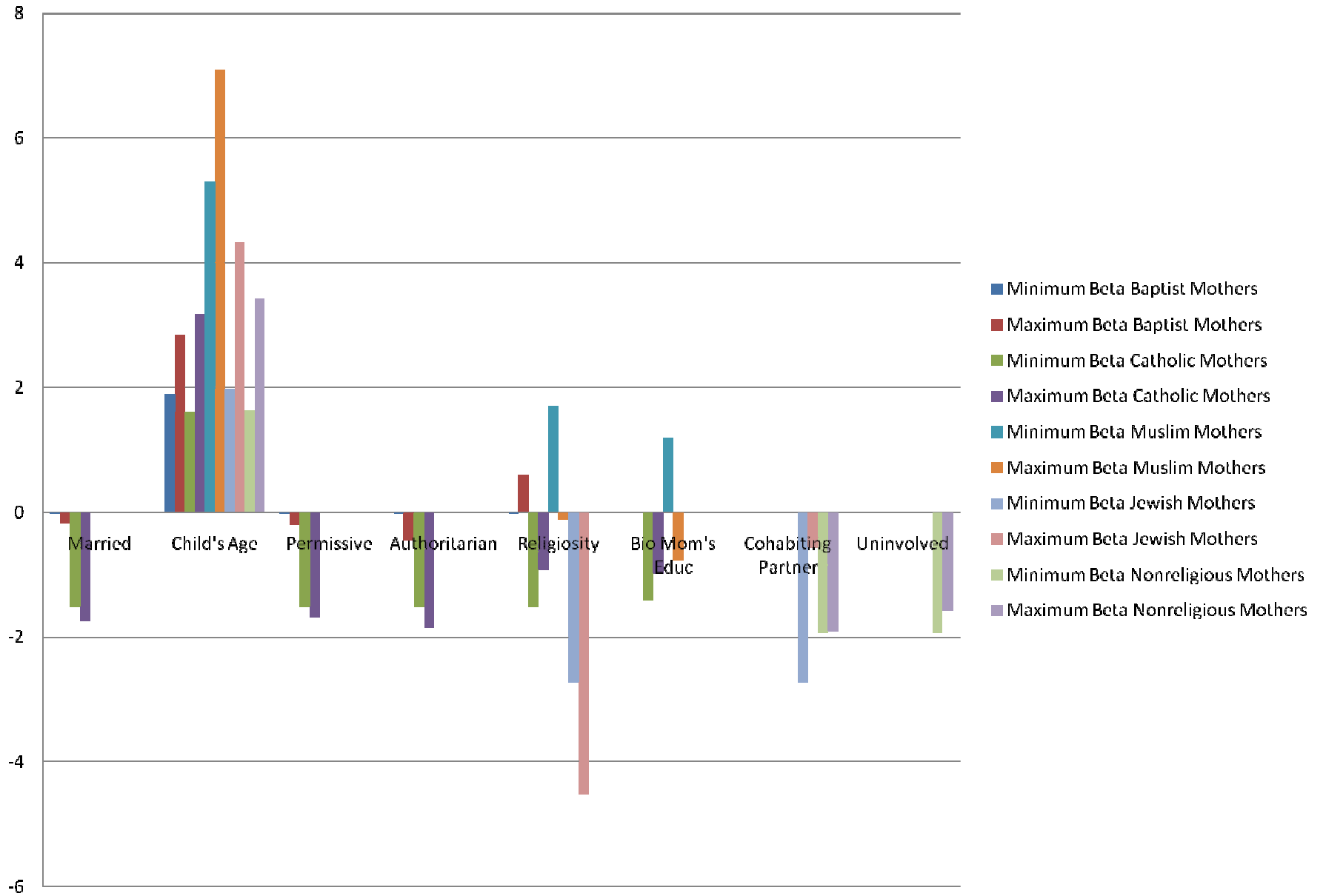
Religion, Emotional/Behavioral Problems



Religious Denomination and Behavioral/Emotional Problems

- Fewer emotional and behavioral problems:
 - Married mothers (children of Catholic mothers)
 - Cohabiting biological parents (children of Baptist mothers)
 - Permissive parenting (Baptist, Catholic and non-religious mothers)
 - Authoritarian parenting (Baptist, Muslim and non-religious mothers)
 - Mother's education (Catholic children)
- More emotional and behavioral problems
 - Remarried mothers (children of Muslim mothers, twofold)

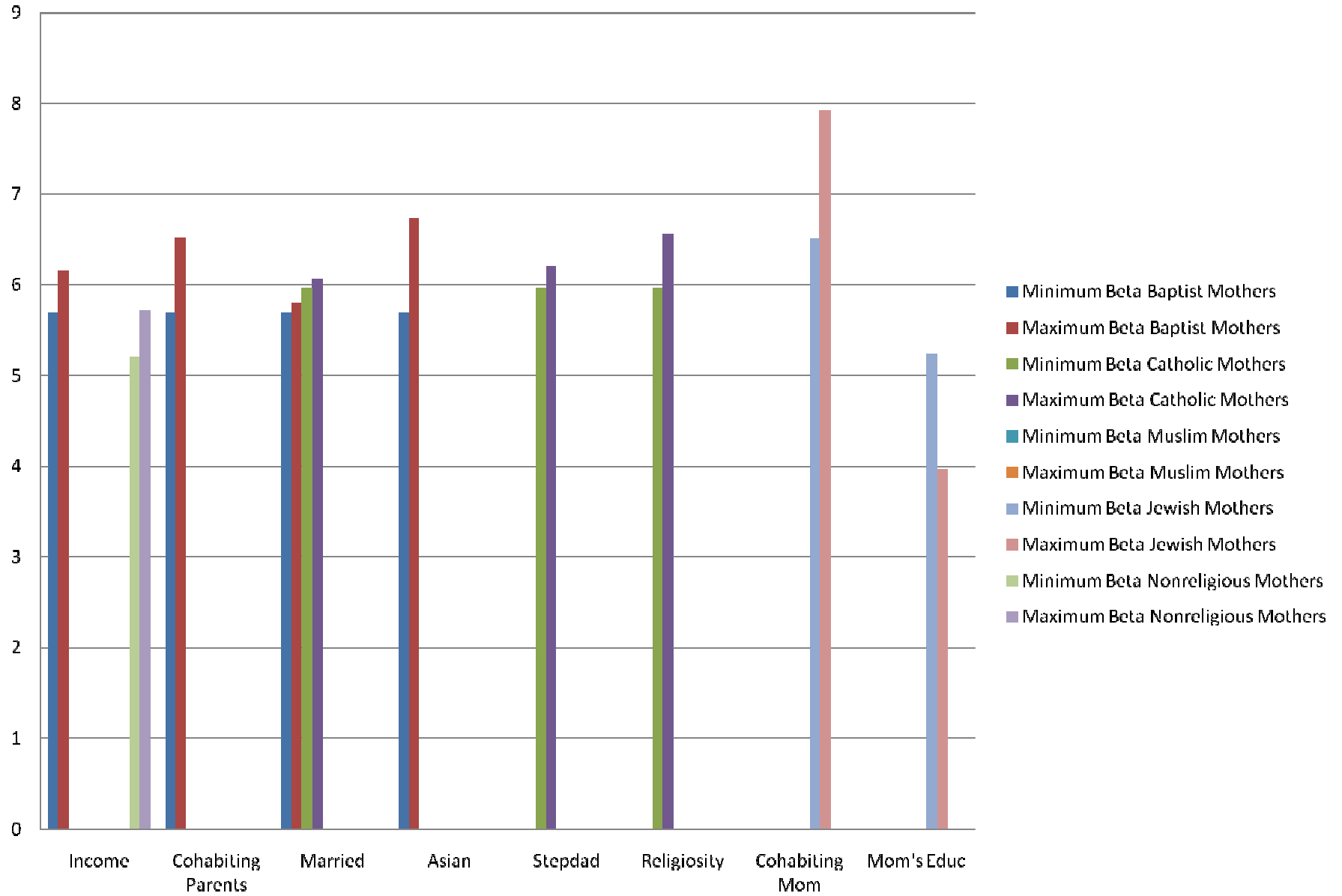
Religion, Substance Abuse and Factors



Religious denomination and substance abuse

- Reduced substance abuse
 - Marriage (children of Baptist and Catholic mothers)
 - Permissive or authoritarian parenting style (Baptist and Catholic Children)
 - Religiosity (Muslim and Jewish children)
- Increased substance abuse
 - Age of children
 - Uninvolved parenting style (children of non-religious)
 - Mothers with cohabiting partners (children of Jewish and nonreligious mothers)
 - Religiosity (children of Baptist and Catholic mothers).

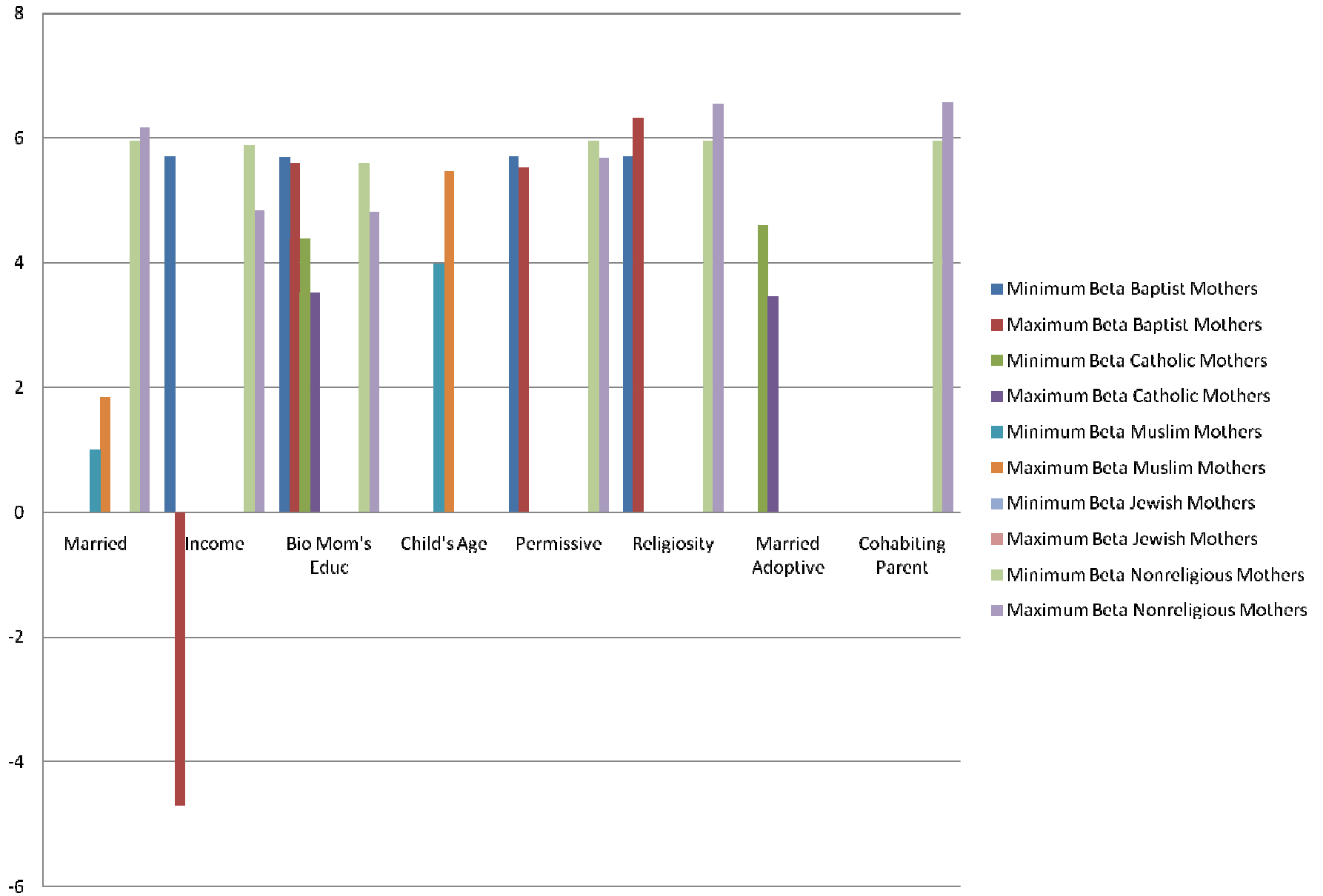
Religion, Optimism, and Factors



Religious denomination and optimism

- Increased optimism
 - Income (children of Baptist mothers)
 - Cohabiting mothers (children of non-religious, Jewish or Baptist mothers)
 - Married (children of Catholic or Baptist mothers)
 - Religiosity (children of Catholic mothers)
 - Remarried mothers (Catholic mothers) Children of Catholic mothers and those who had remarried were more optimistic.
- Less optimistic
 - Maternal education (children of Jewish mothers).

Religion, Factors, and "Good Things Rarely Happen to Me"



Denomination and “Good Things Seldom Happen”

- Less pessimism:
 - Income (Baptist and nonreligious mothers)
 - Maternal education (Catholic and Baptist mothers)
 - Adopted children (children of Catholic mothers)
 - Permissive parenting (Baptist and non-religious mother)
- More pessimism
 - Marriage (children of Muslim and non-religious mothers)
 - Religiosity (children of Baptist and non-religious mothers)
 - Cohabitation (children of nonreligious mothers).

Cautions

- As I said before, the numbers of Jewish and Muslim children are small enough so that many equations did not have significant coefficients. There was also a small sample (N=160) of Asians.
- I can't show causation with this study, just association.
- I am never explaining all, or even the majority, of the results in the children: many other things matter as well.
- Some might quarrel with my lumping together atheists, agnostics and those who answered "personal philosophy" as "non-religious."

Descriptive Statistics (Black Mothers)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
HOUSEHOLD INCOME TO POVERTY RATIO PERCENTAGE	1644	.00	16.27	1.8573	1.89153
RESIDENT MOMS YEARS OF SCHOOLING	2036	4.00	20.00	12.4199	2.10463
LOW WARMTH LOW CONTROL	2278	.00	1.00	.0913	.28811
HI WARMTH, LOW CONTROL	2278	.00	1.00	.3042	.46017
HI WARMTH, HI CONTROL	2278	.00	1.00	.4614	.49861
LOW WARMTH, HI CONTROL	2278	.00	1.00	.4614	.49861
DELINQUENCY SCORE INDEX 1997	2381	.00	10.00	1.3251	1.78396
SUBSTANCE USE INDEX	2379	.00	3.00	.8403	1.04348
BEHAVIOR/EMOTONAL SCALE KID REPORTS COMBINED BOYS AND GIRLS	1408	.00	8.00	2.1619	1.57834
RARELY GOOD THINGS HAPPEN TO PR 1997	1558	1	4	2.19	1.007
OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PR FUTURE 1997	1552	1	4	2.99	.832

Descriptive Statistics- Black Mothers- Continued

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ARE RESPONDING PARENT AND PARTNER MARRIED?	2388	.00	1.00	.3480	.47643
ARE RESPONDING PARENT AND PARTNER COHABITING?	2388	.00	1.00	.0322	.17669
CHILD LIVES WITH TWO BIOLOGICAL MARRIED PARENTS	2388	.00	1.00	.2211	.41508
CHILD LIVES WITH TWO BIOLOGICAL COHABITING PARENTS	2388	.00	1.00	.0050	.07072
CHILD LIVES WITH TWO PARENTS, BIO MOM, MARRIED PARTNER	2388	.00	1.00	.0804	.27197
CHILD LIVES WITH TWO PARENTS, BIO MOM, COHABITING PARTNER	2388	.00	1.00	.0105	.10180
CHILD LIVES WITH TWO PARENTS, BIO DAD, MARRIED PARTNER	2388	.00	1.00	.0163	.12677
CHILD LIVES WITH TWO PARENTS, BIO DAD, COHABITING PARTNER	2388	.00	1.00	.0008	.02893
CHILD LIVES WITH ONE PARENT, BIO MOM, COHAB PARTNER	2388	.00	1.00	.0109	.10380
CHILD LIVES WITH ONE PARENT, BIO DAD, COHAB PARTNER	2388	.00	1.00	.0025	.05007

Descriptive Statistics- Black Mothers- Continued

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CHILD LIVES WITH MARRIED ADOPTIVE PARENTS	2388	.00	1.00	.0046	.06773
CHILD LIVES WITH ADOPTIVE PARENT NOT MARRIED	2388	.00	1.00	.0042	.06459
CHILDS AGE IN YEARS IN 1997	2388	12.00	18.00	14.3559	1.49141
Catholic	2388	.00	1.00	.0523	.22277
Baptist	2388	.00	1.00	.4753	.49949
Muslim	2388	.00	1.00	.0092	.09556
Jewish	2388	.00	.00	.0000	.00000
PARENT LEVEL OF RELIGIOSITY HI= MORE	1558	.00	600.00	433.3601	136.31772
Valid N (listwise)	842				