

The Starting Gate: The Effects of Birth Weight and Family Wealth

Dalton Conley

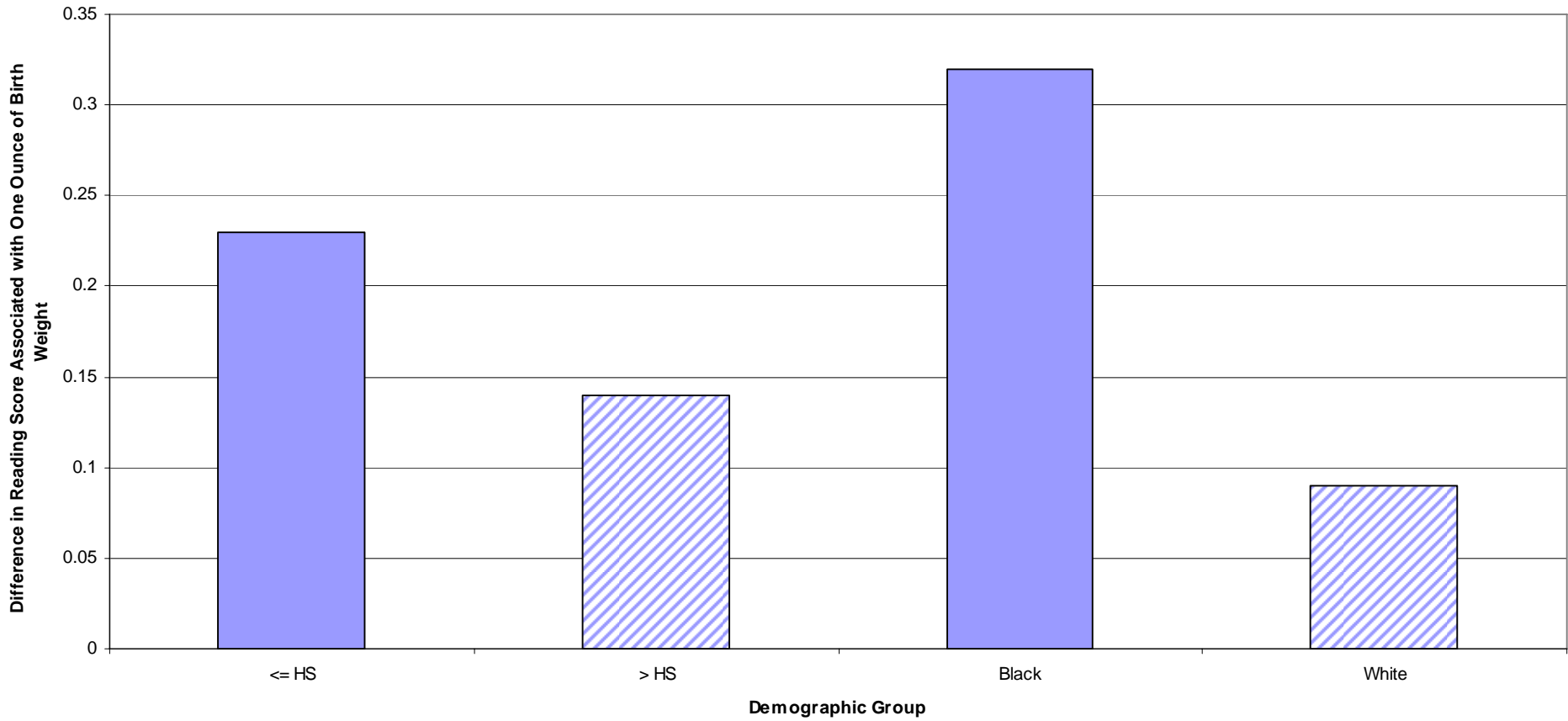
New York University

National Bureau of Economic Research

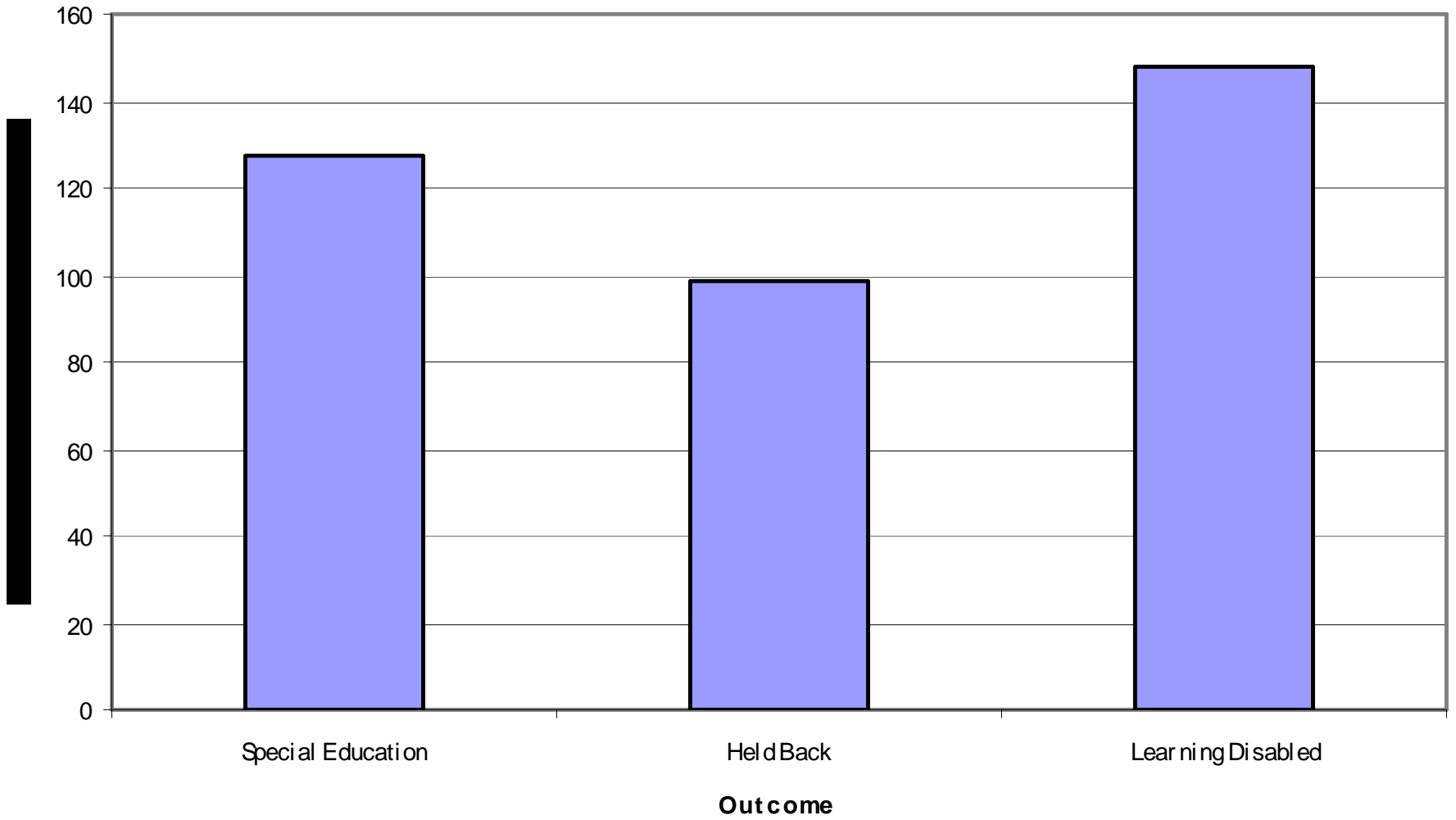
Mt. Sinai School of Medicine

Part I: Birth Weight

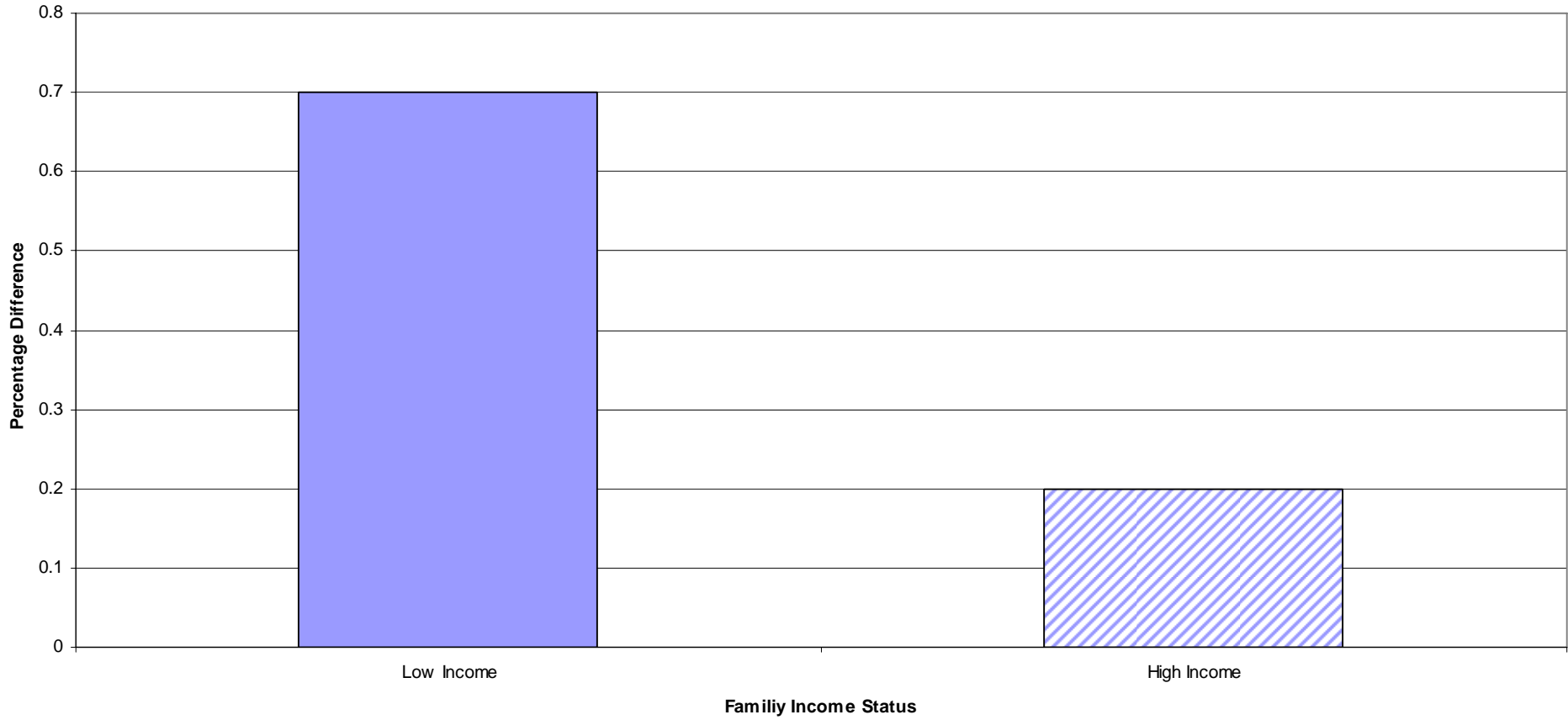
Impact of Birth Weight on Reading Score



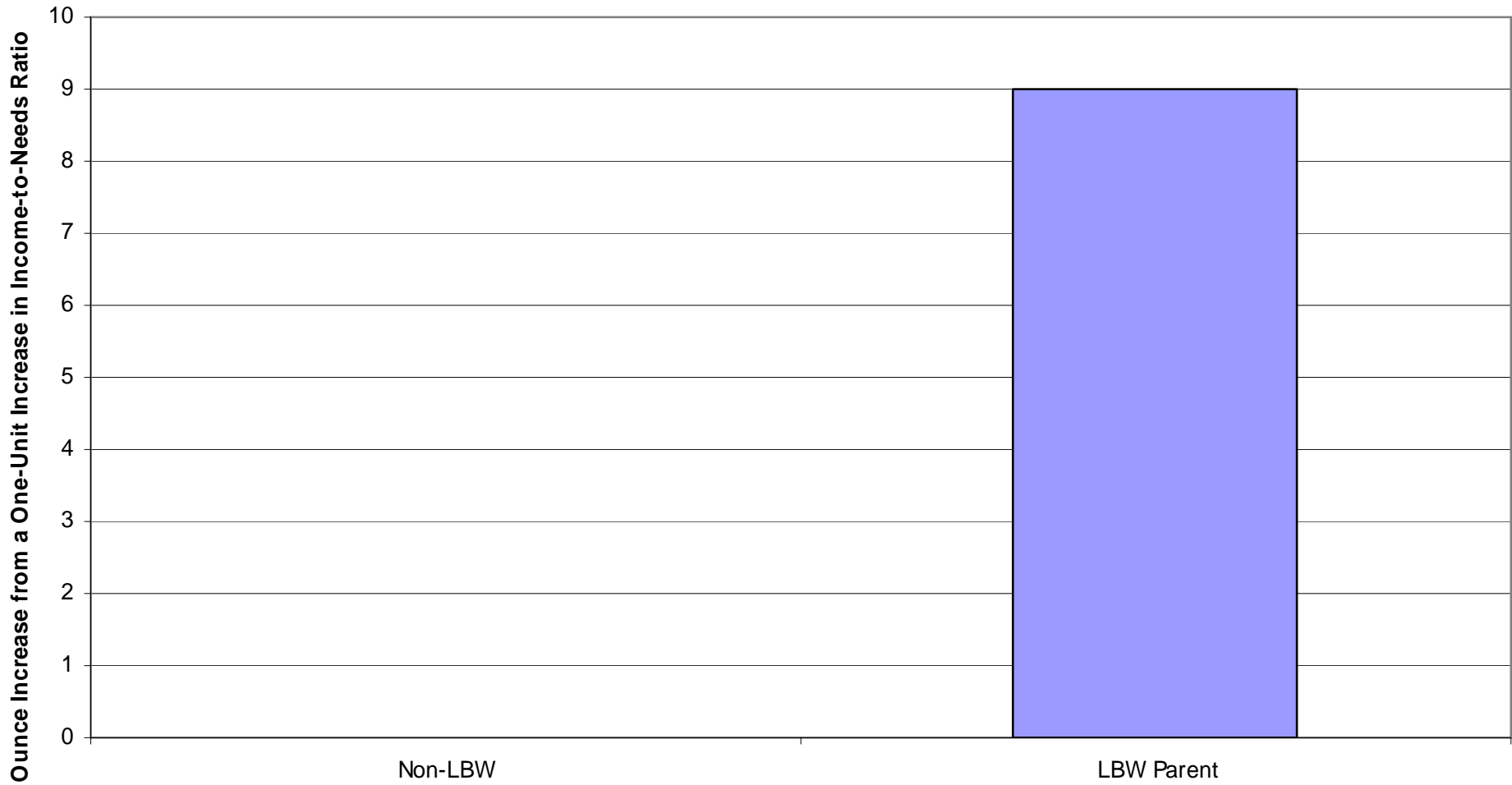
Impact of Low Birth Weight on Educational Achievement



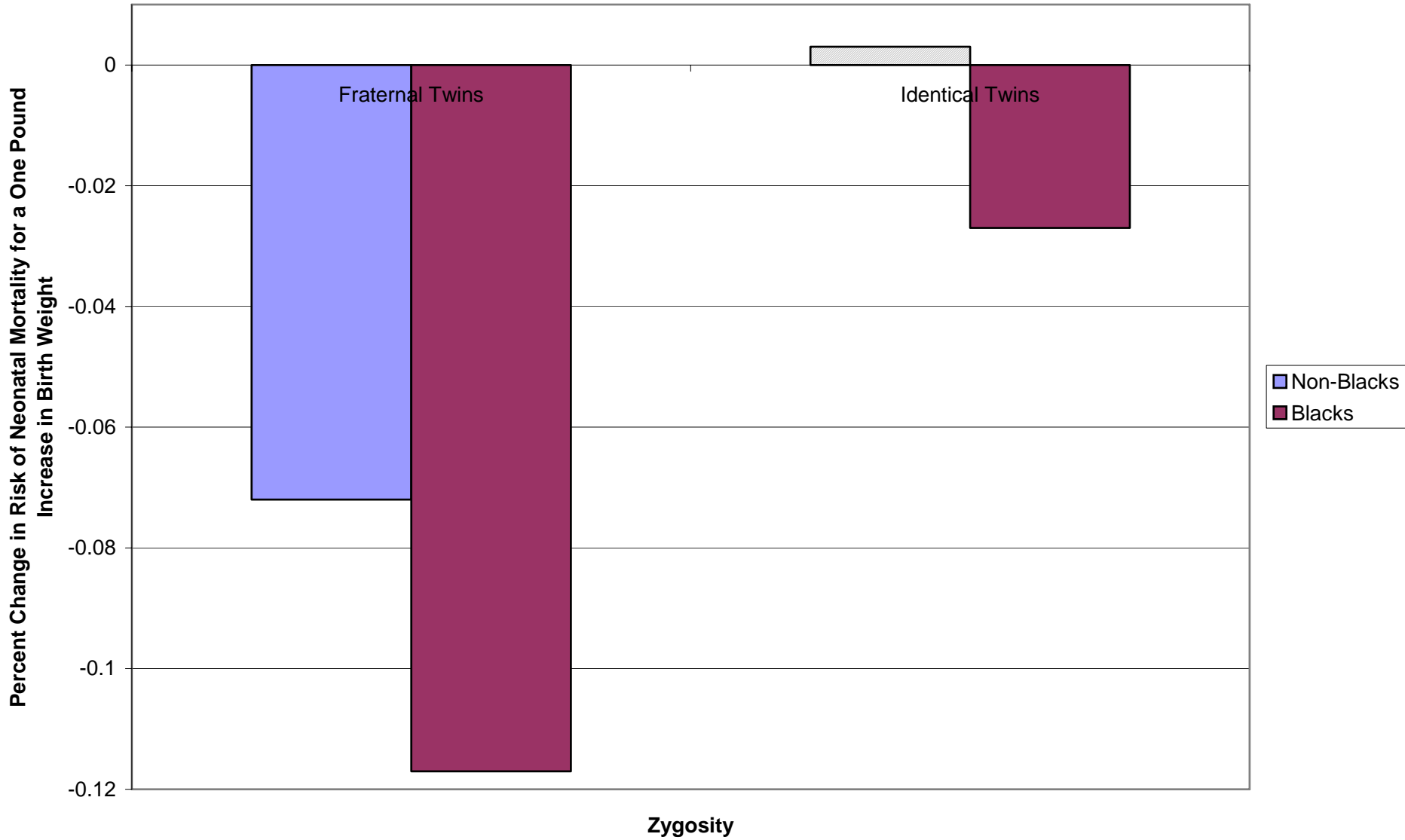
Timely HS Graduation Rates of LBW Children Relative to their Normal BW Siblings



Effect of a One-Unit Increase in Income-to-Needs Ratio on Filial Birth Weight for Medically at-Risk Parents

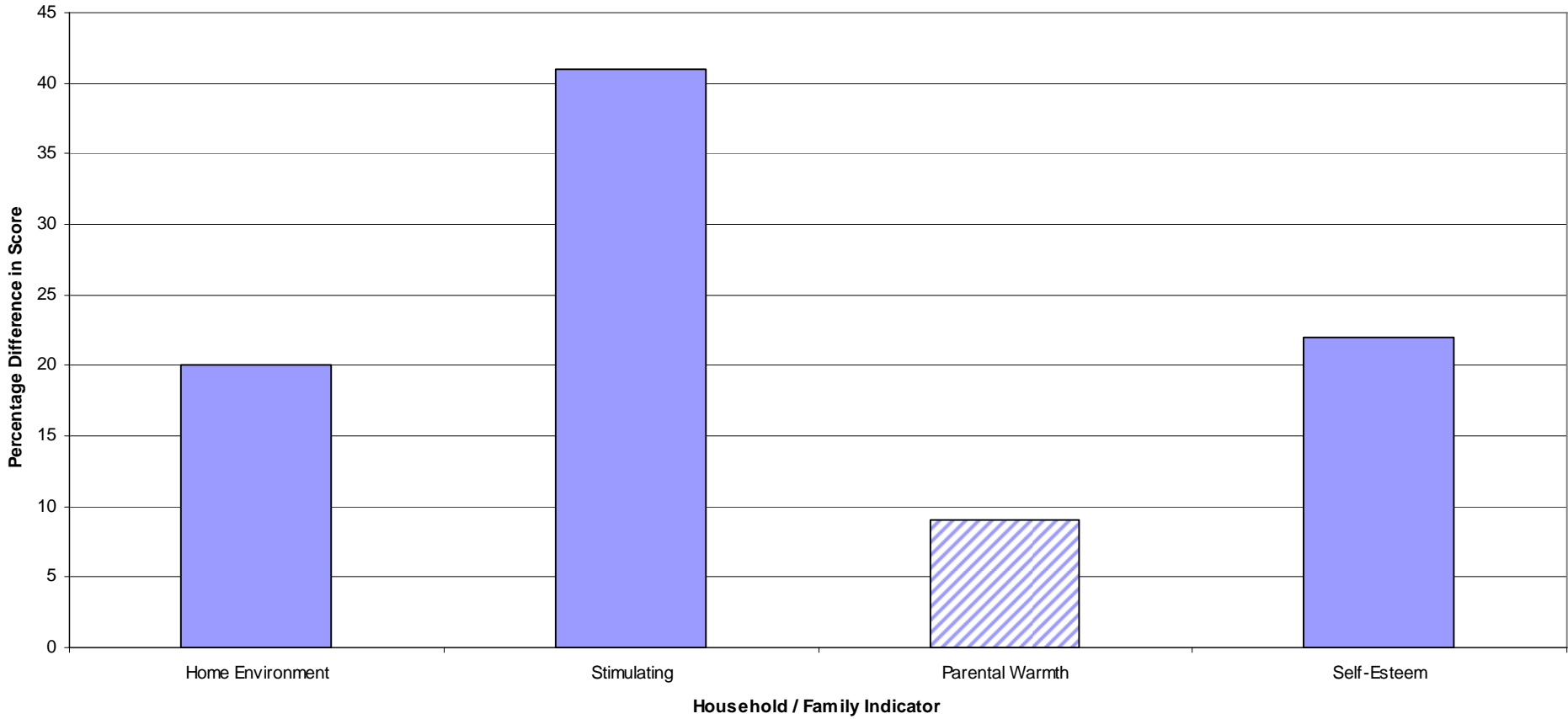


Mortality Elasticity of Birth Weight by Race

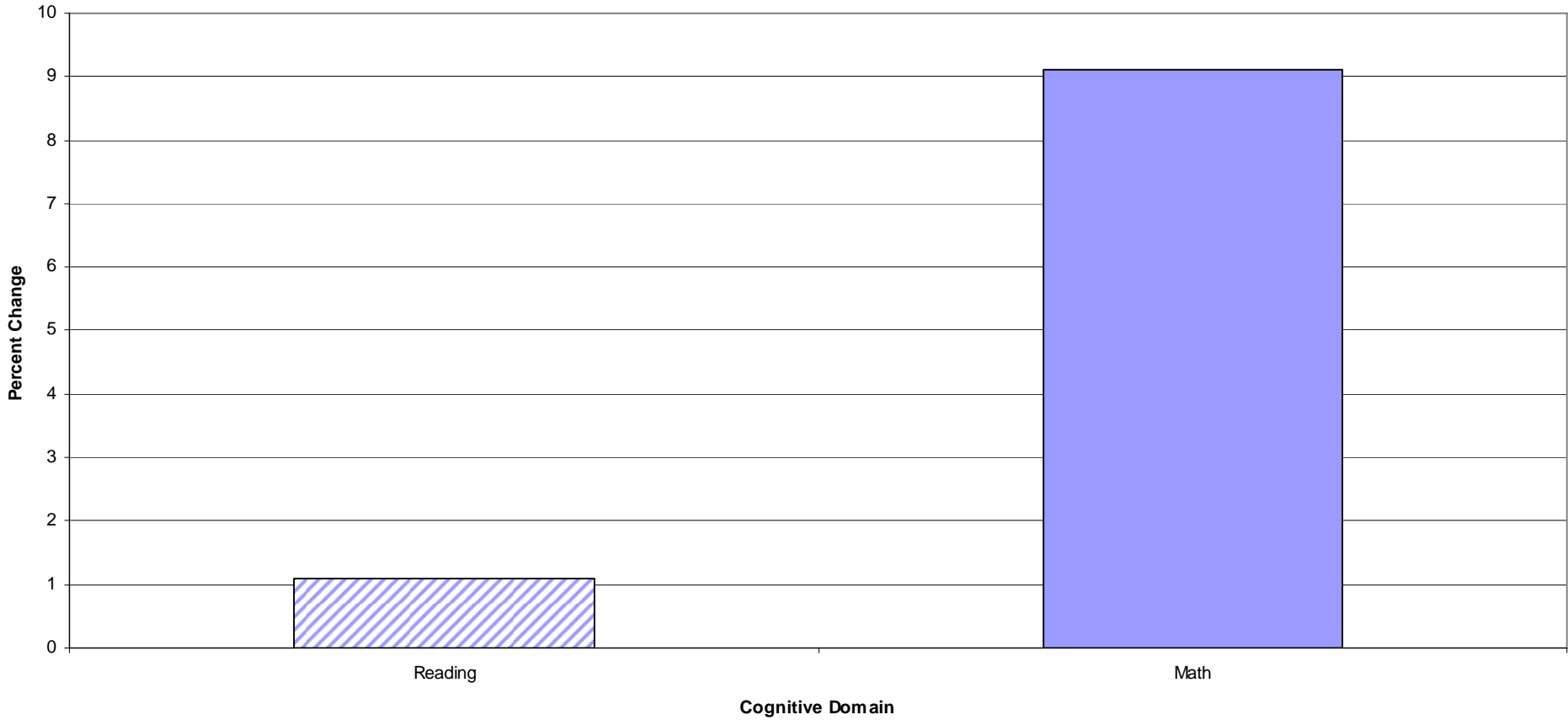


Part II: Family Net-Worth

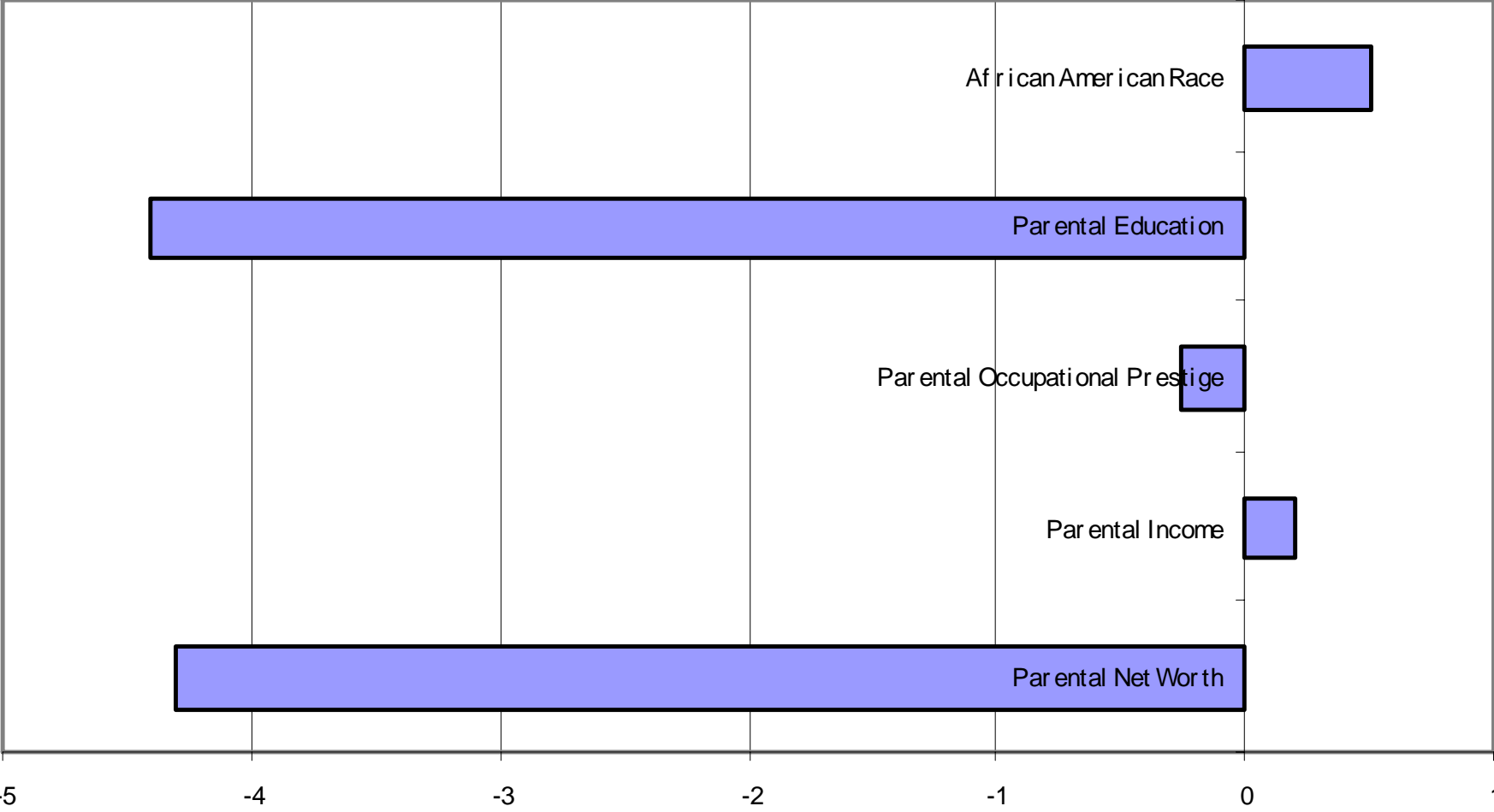
Comparison of Home / Family Indicators of Highest Wealth Quartile with Lowest Quartile



Effect of A Doubling of Net-Worth on Reading & Math Scores, Children Ages 6-12

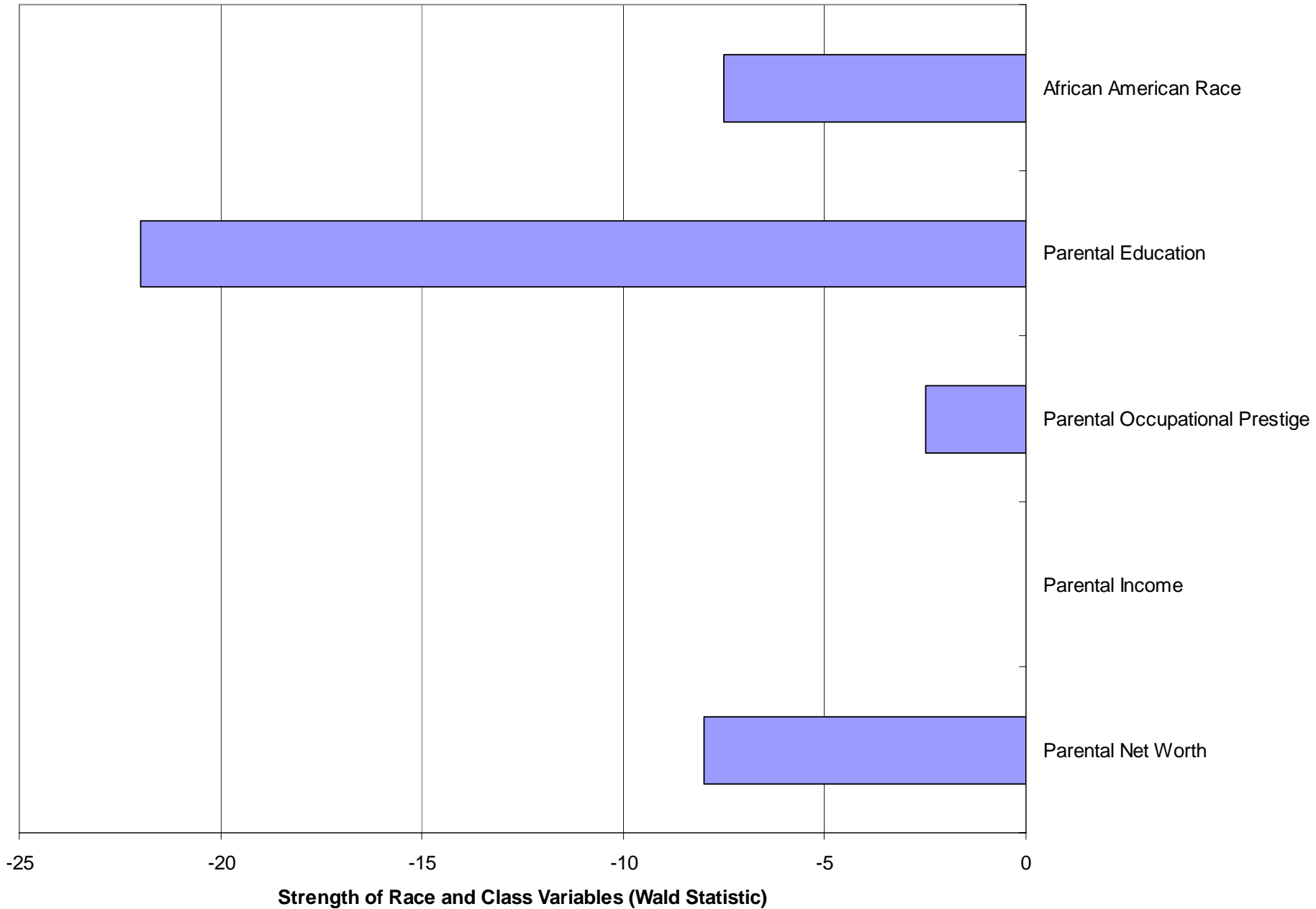


Relative Effects of Race and Class on Risk of Expulsion or Suspension

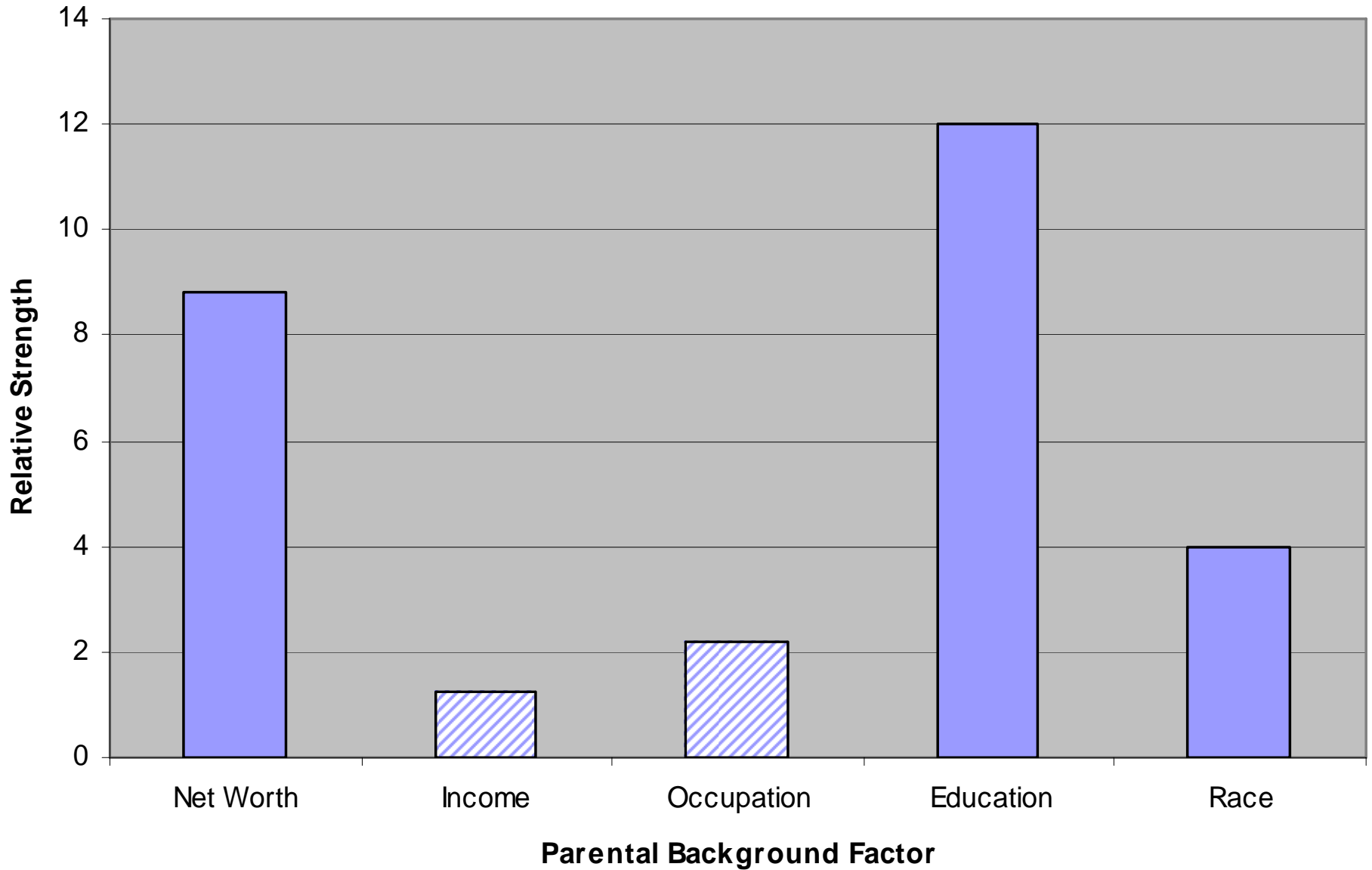


Strength of Race and Class Variables (Wald Statistic)

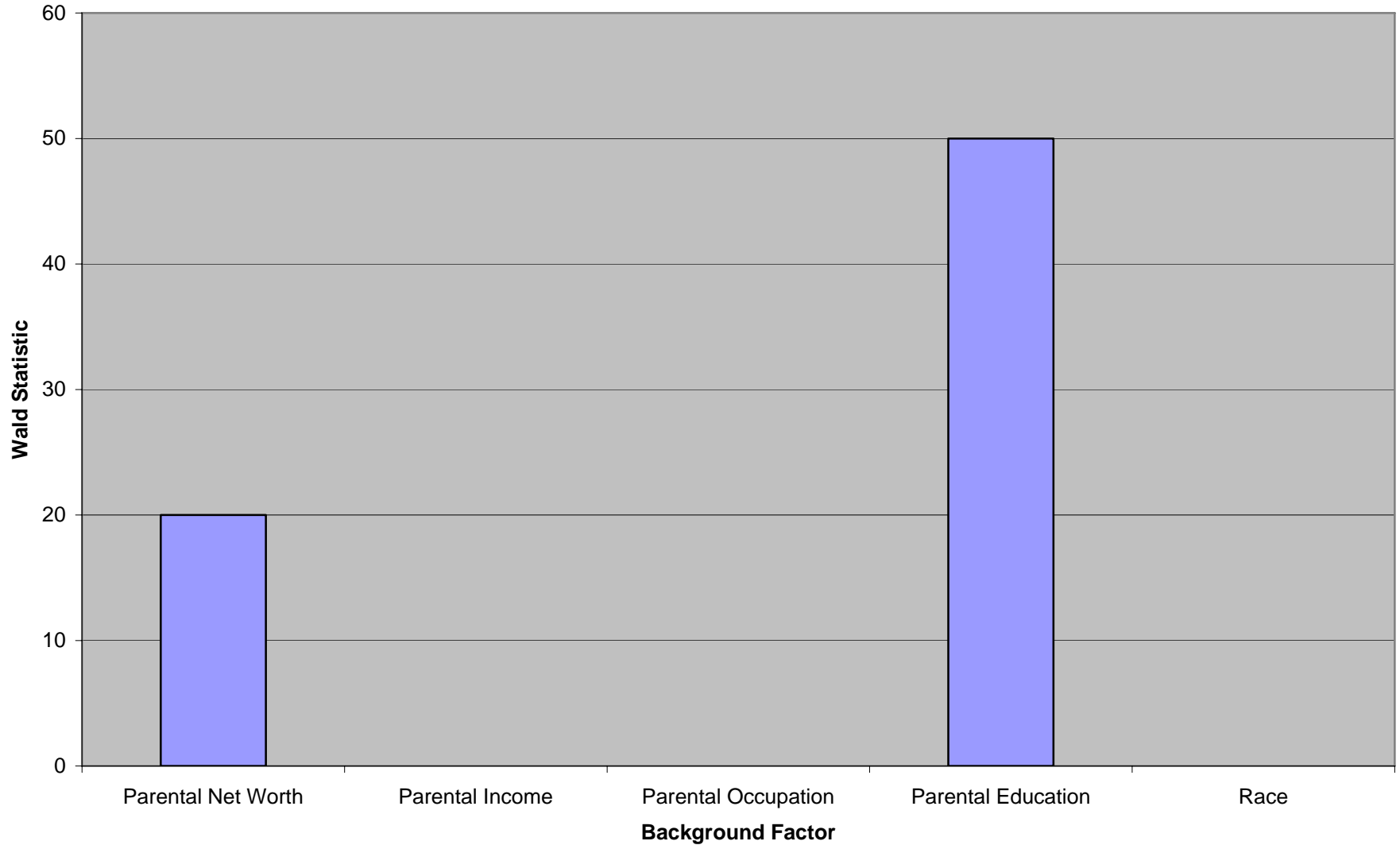
Relative Effects of Race and Class on Risk of Being Held Back a Grade



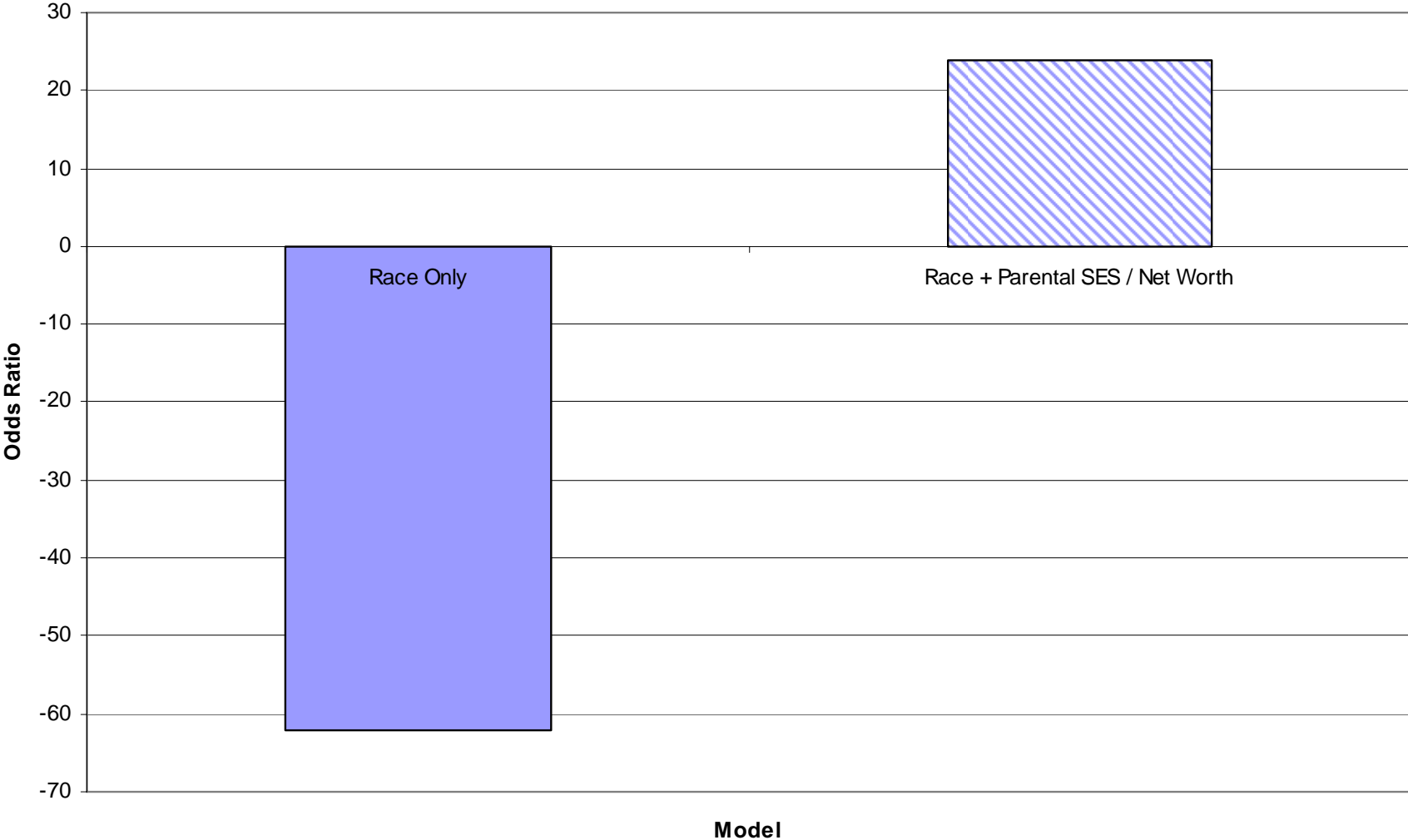
Effect of Background Characteristics on Teenage Premarital Childbearing



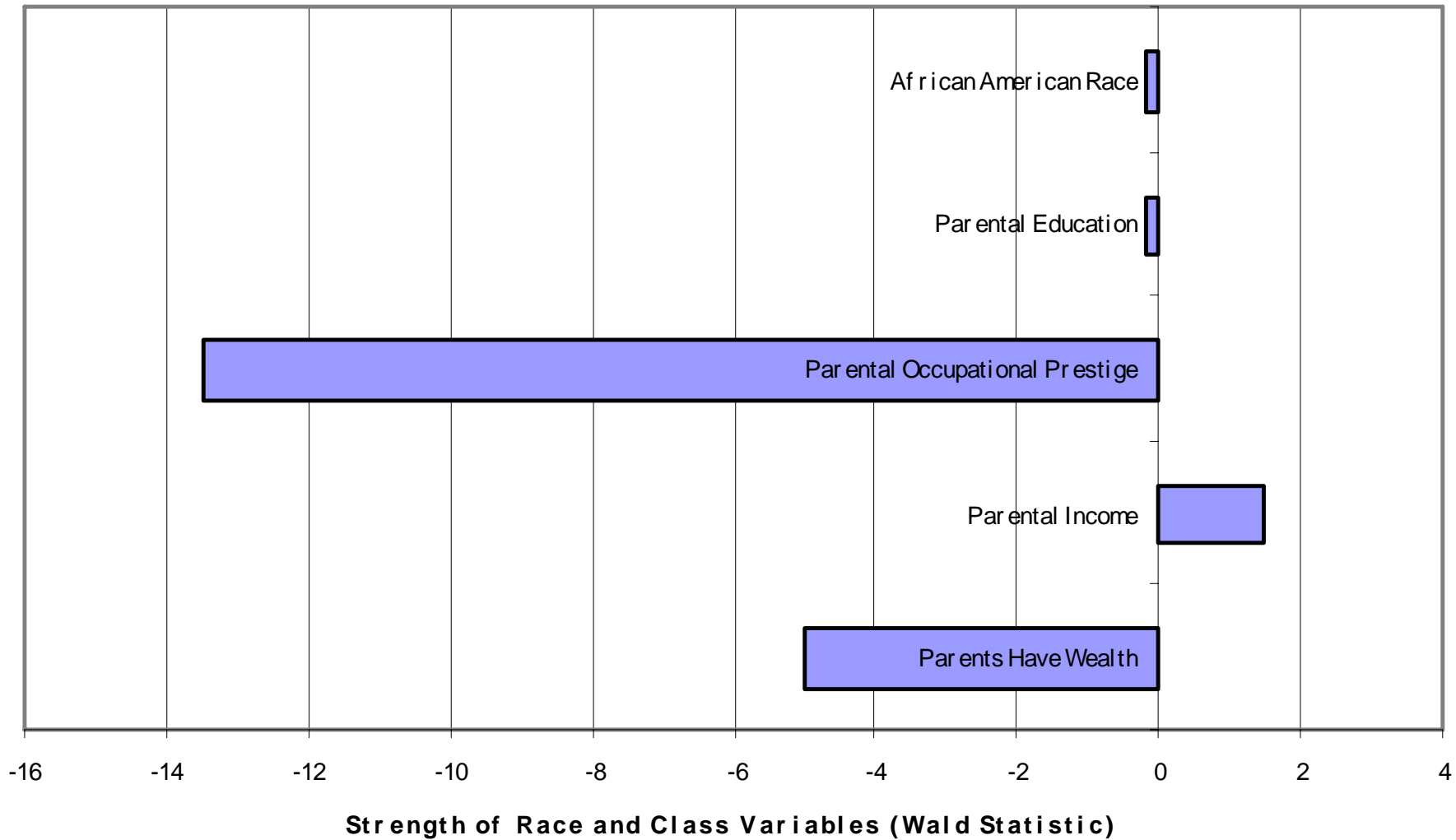
Effect of Background on Chances of College Graduation



Chances of Completing a Bachelor Degree of Blacks Relative to Whites, Conditional on Finishing High School



Relative Effects of Race and Class on the Odds of Welfare Receipt



Policy Solutions: LBW

- Socio-economic factors matter for those at medical (genetic) risk
 - Standardized questions about family history of LBW / Prematurity
 - Target prenatal care efforts, outreach and education programs and social programs to this group
 - “PWHIP”, WIC, Medicaid, EITC, etc.

Policy Solutions: LBW

- Focus on NICU care in low SES, racially segregated hospitals
- Paradox:
 - Saving more babies may mean more problems down the line
- Track and monitor LBW babies as they work their way through the education & health systems
 - Special Education Eligibility
 - Focus efforts on infants / children at double risk (socio-demographic and medical)

Infant Health and Development Program (IHDP)

- Weekly home visits during first year of life
- Biweekly visits during second year of life
- Five day a week day care from age 1 to 3
- Parents' group, each two months

Lasting effects through age 8 for heavier LBW babies; effects dwindled for VLBW kids

Policy Solutions: Family Assets

- Underwrite mortgages (e.g., Self Help)
- Give residents of public housing an equity stake
- Aspire Act – Universal Savings Accounts
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
 - Any policy that targets asset poverty will inevitably be a policy that aids the cause of racial equality – even if it is officially color-blind
 - IDAs can become the new affirmative action in the wake of challenges to color conscious policies