

# ***Racial and SES Differences in School Behavior***

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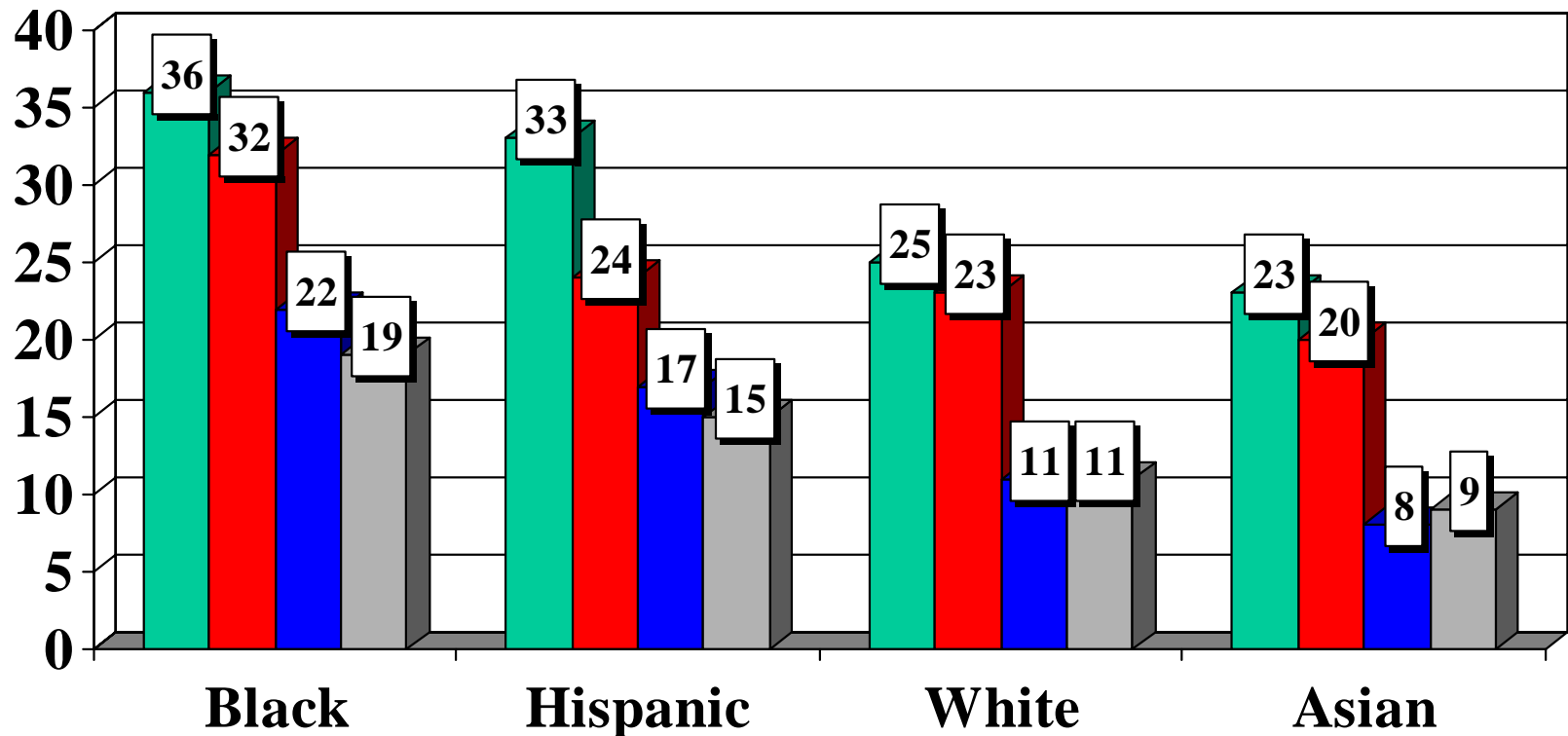
**John F. Kennedy School of Government**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the Achievement Gap Initiative**

**at Harvard University**

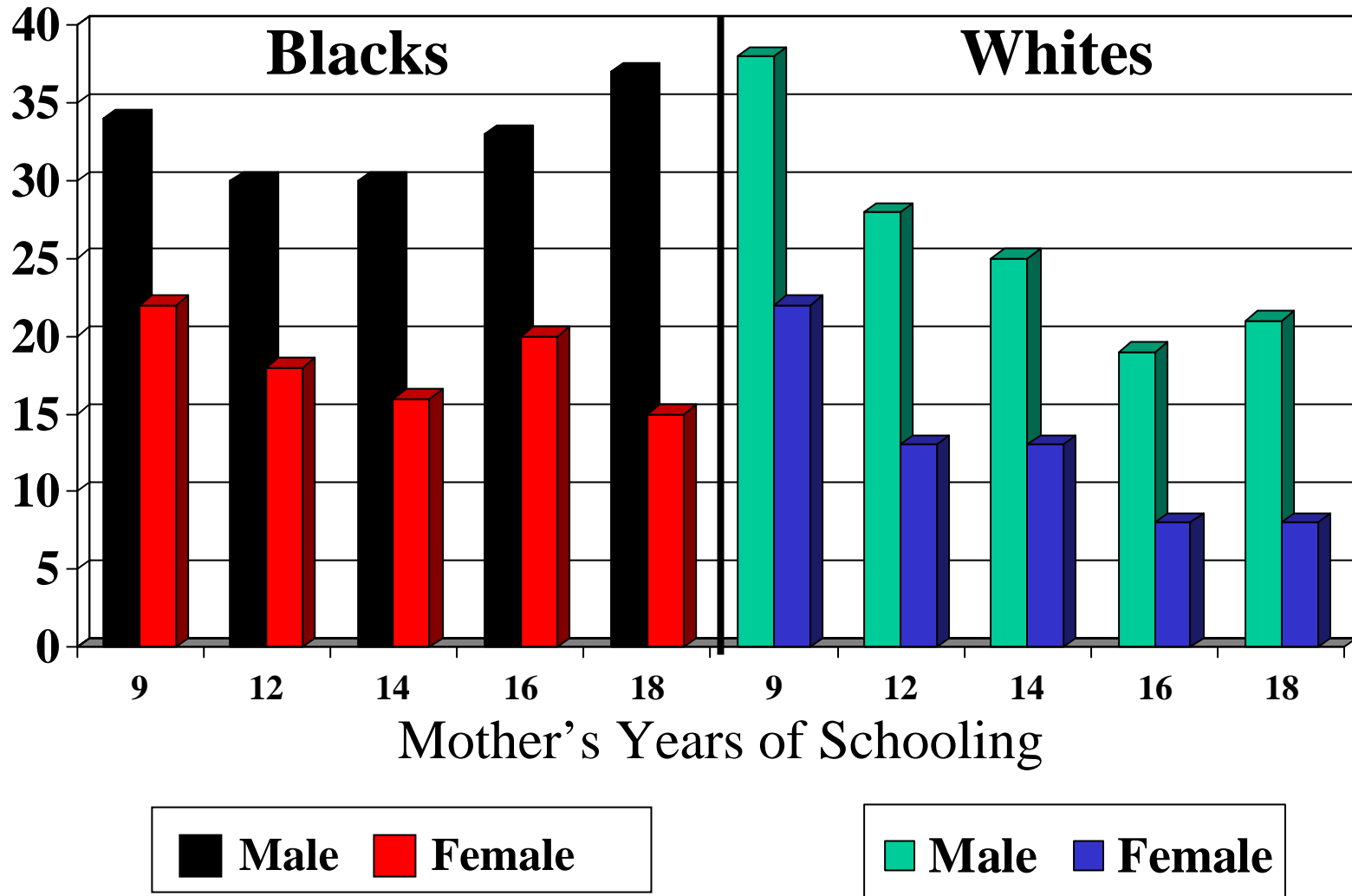
**June 19, 2006**

Percent responding, “somewhat true,” “mostly true,” or “totally true,” that, *“My behavior is a problem for the teacher in this class.”*

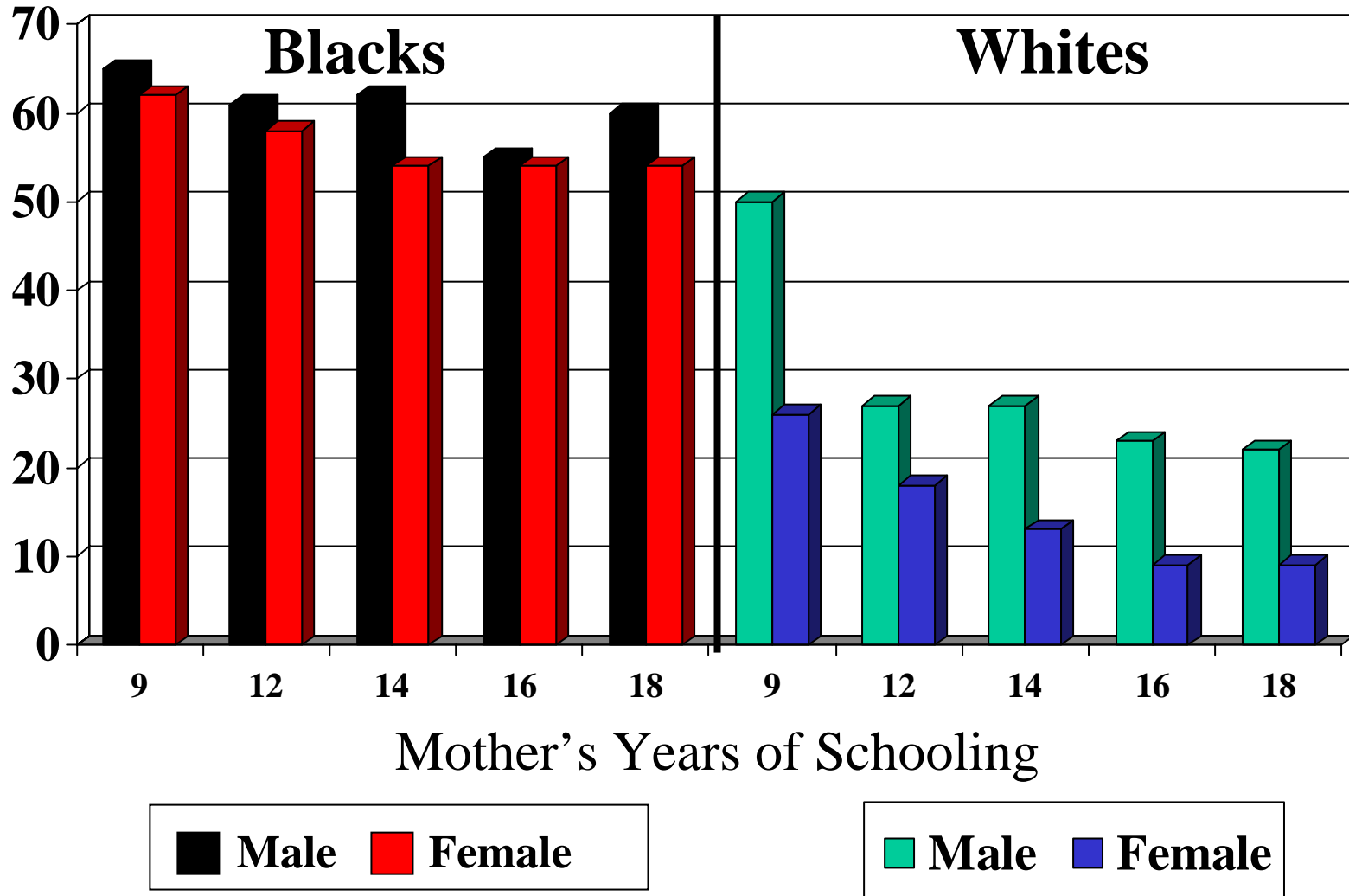


■ Middle School Males    ■ High School Males  
■ Middle School Females    ■ High School Females

Percent responding, “somewhat true,” “mostly true,” or “totally true,” that, *“My behavior is a problem for the teacher in this class.”*



Percent responding that at least sometimes, “People would probably describe my *behavior* style as ‘ghetto’.”



Percent within each race/ethnic group selecting each response to, *“My friends think it’s important to work hard to get high grades.”*

<b><u>MALES</u></b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Usually Not</b>	<b>Some- times</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Row Total</b>
<b>Black (n=1095)</b>	7.6	12.2	36.8	26.2	17.2	100%
<b>White (n=2776)</b>	8.3	13.7	35.8	31.2	11.0	100%
<b>Hispanic (n=562)</b>	6.8	13.4	35.1	30.3	14.6	100%
<b>Asian (n=220)</b>	7.7	7.7	31.8	35.5	18.2	100%

Source: Calculations by Ron Ferguson, using Tripod Project data for 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> graders collected spring 2005 from 17 secondary schools in NJ, CT, OH, NM, MA and CA.

Percent within each race/ethnic group giving each response to, *“My friends think it’s important to work hard to get high grades.”*

<b><u>FEMALES</u></b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Usually Not</b>	<b>Some- times</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Row Total</b>
<b>Black (n=1088)</b>	5.9	10.0	35.3	30.1	18.8	100%
<b>White (n=2732)</b>	3.9	8.1	31.6	37.1	19.4	100%
<b>Hispanic (n=624)</b>	3.7	11.5	38.9	27.4	18.4	100%
<b>Asian (n=184)</b>	2.2	4.4	23.4	41.8	28.3	100%

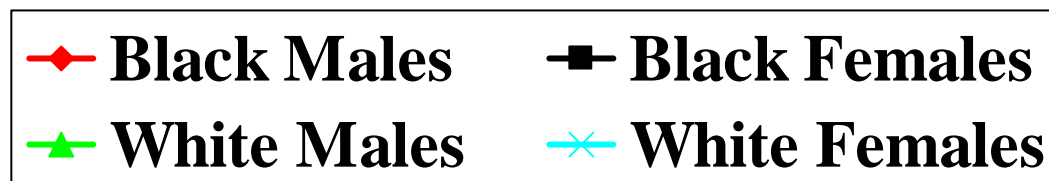
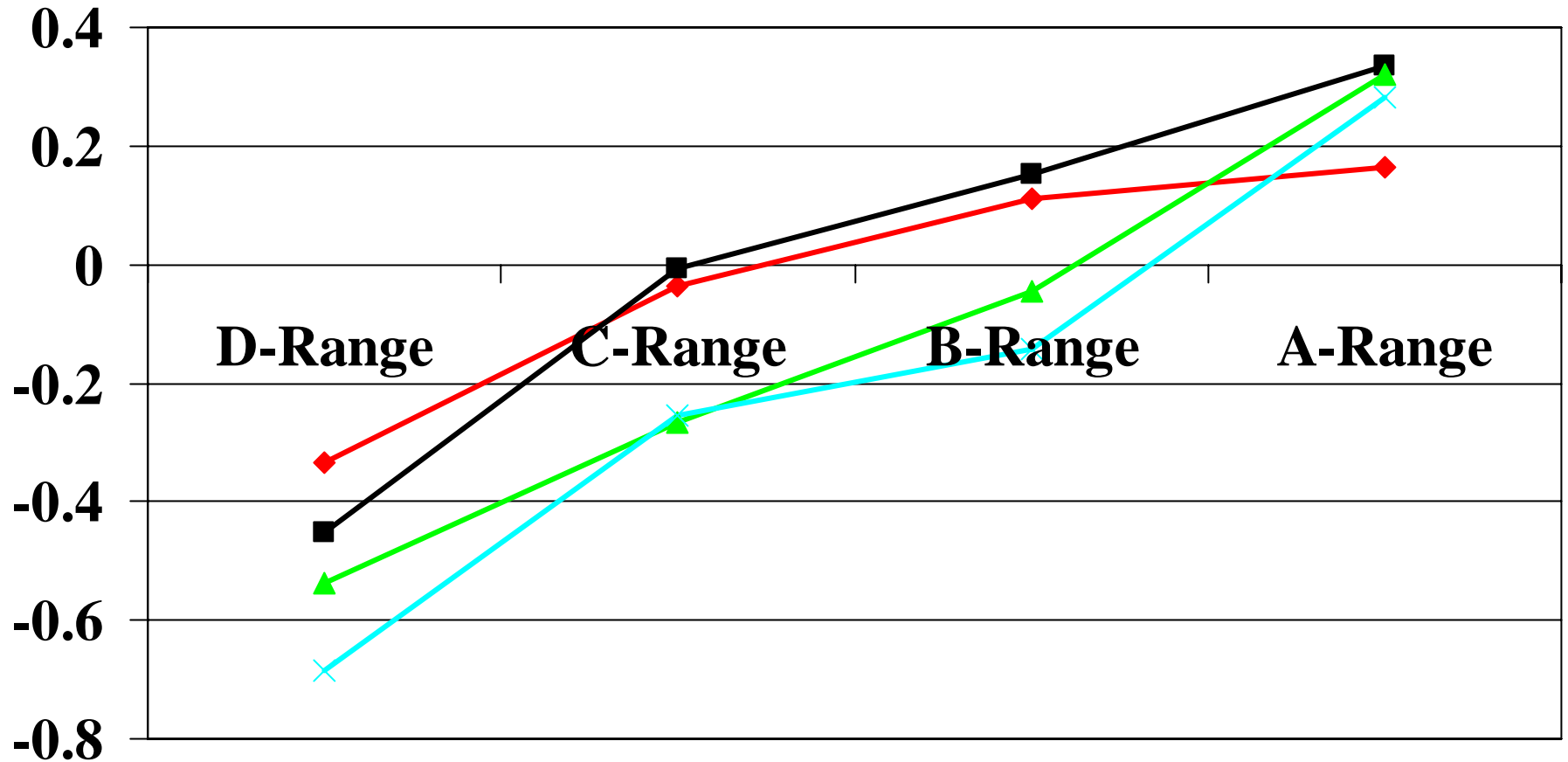
Source: Calculations by Ron Ferguson, using Tripod Project data for 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> graders collected spring 2005 from 17 secondary schools in NJ, CT, OH, NM, MA and CA.

**Who are black youth trying to be?**

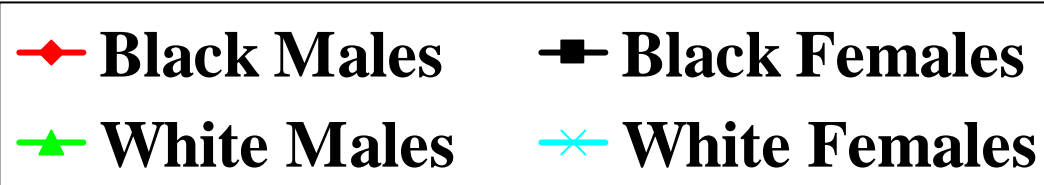
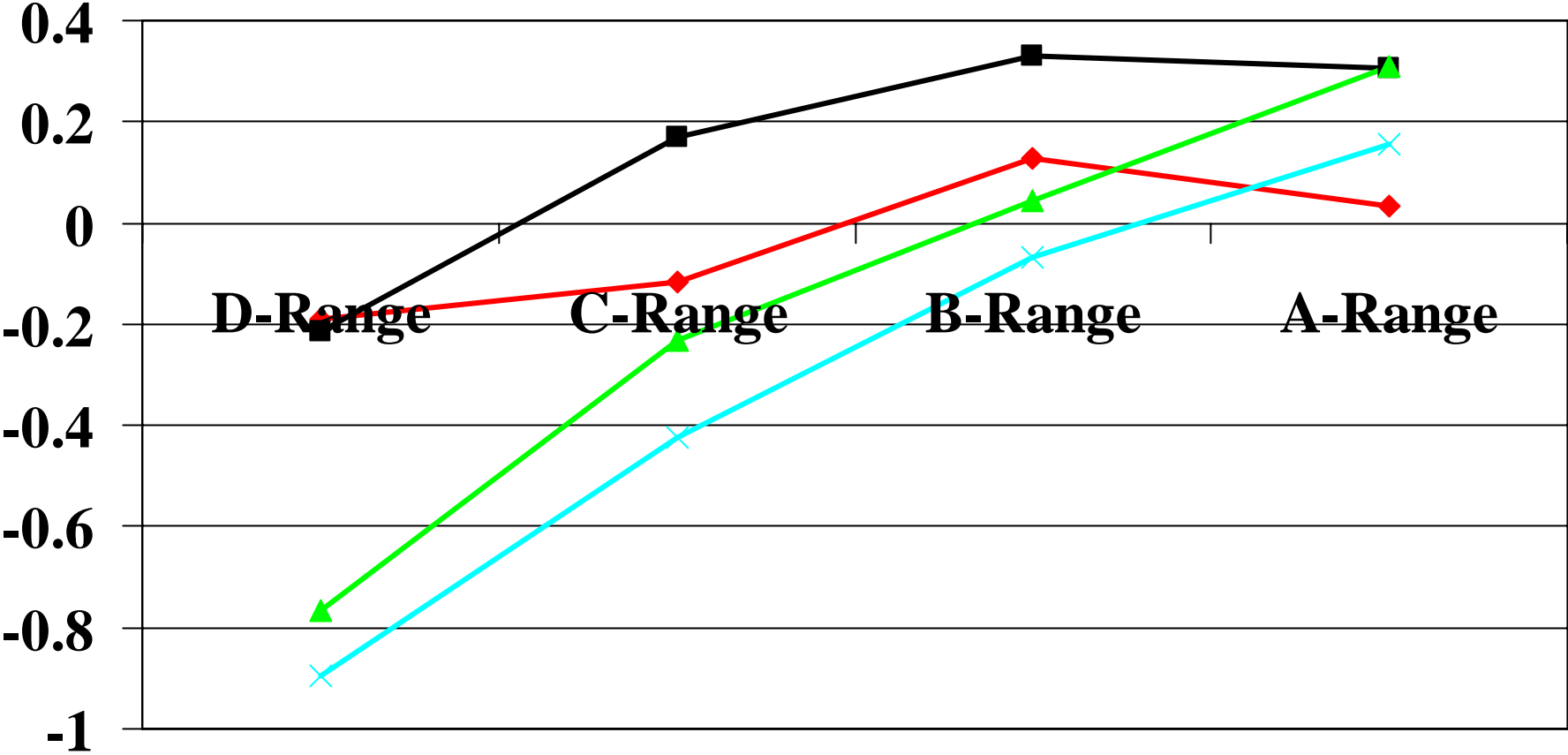
**What gives them self esteem? i.e.,:**

1. *“On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.”*
2. *“I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.”*
3. *“I take a positive attitude toward myself.”*

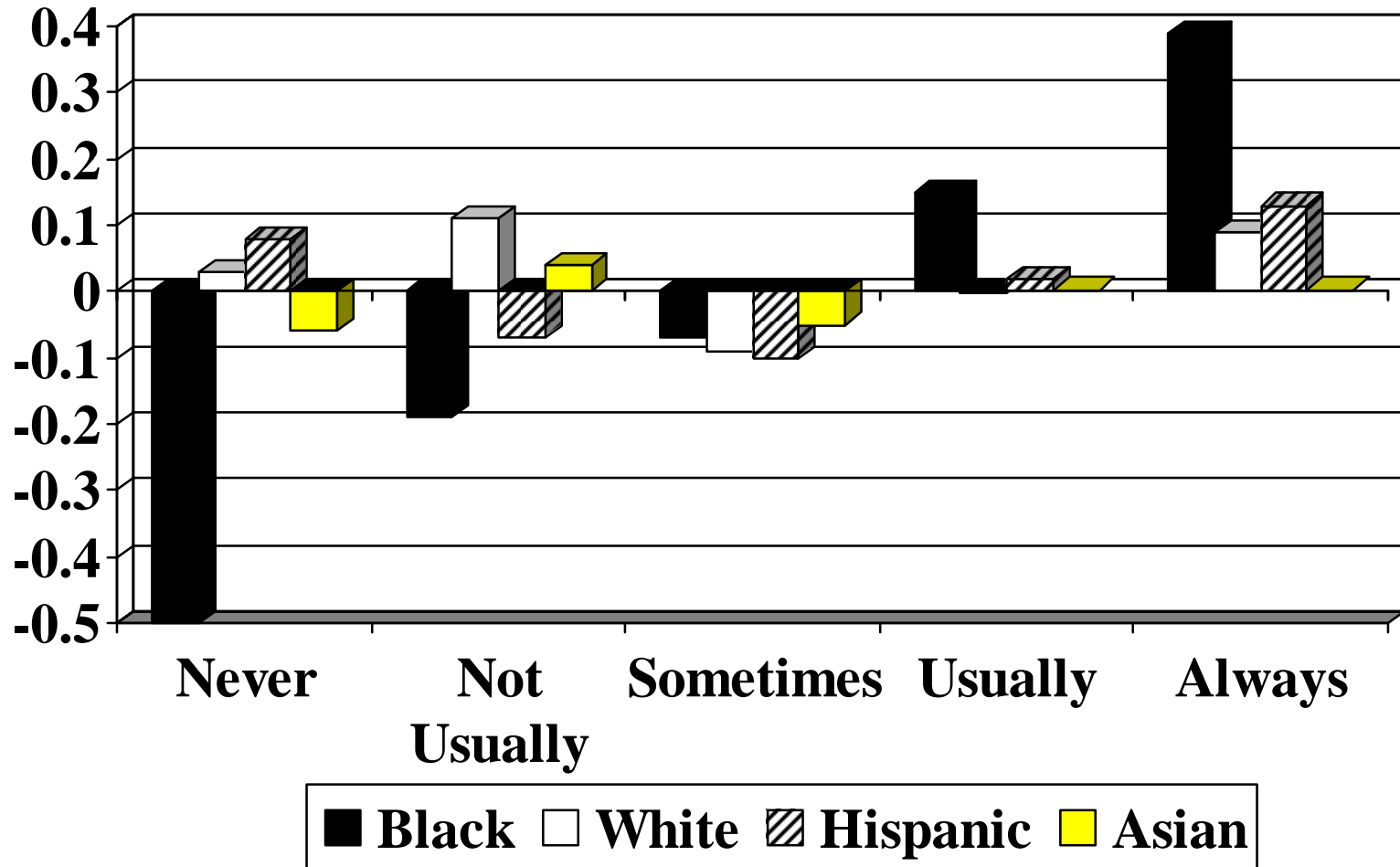
# Self-Esteem, by GPA for black and white Middle School Students



Self-Esteem, by GPA for black and white High School Students

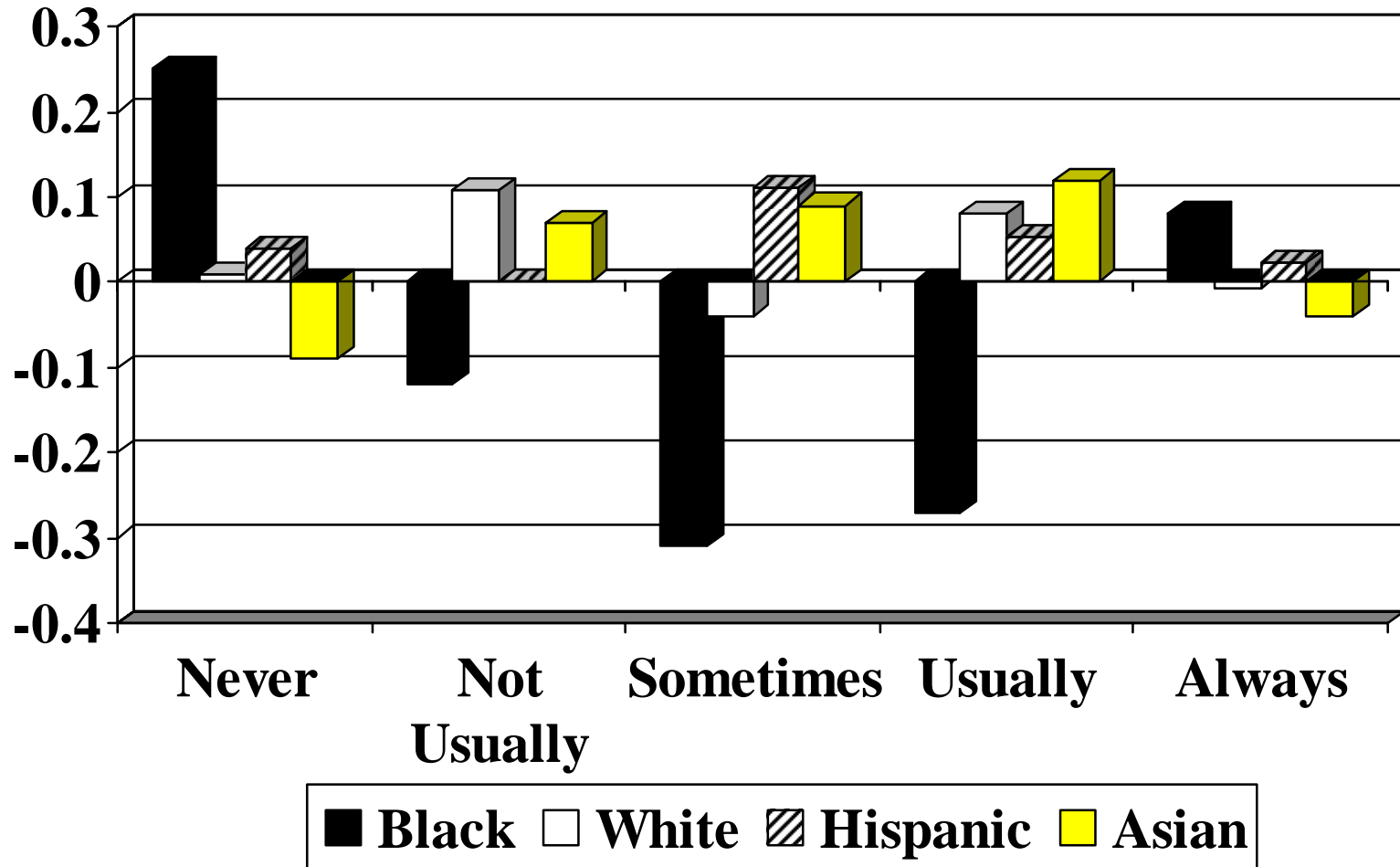


Self-Esteem for male and female teenagers, related to whether rap or hip-hop music is “always” “usually,” “sometimes,” “usually not” or “never” “an important part of my life.”

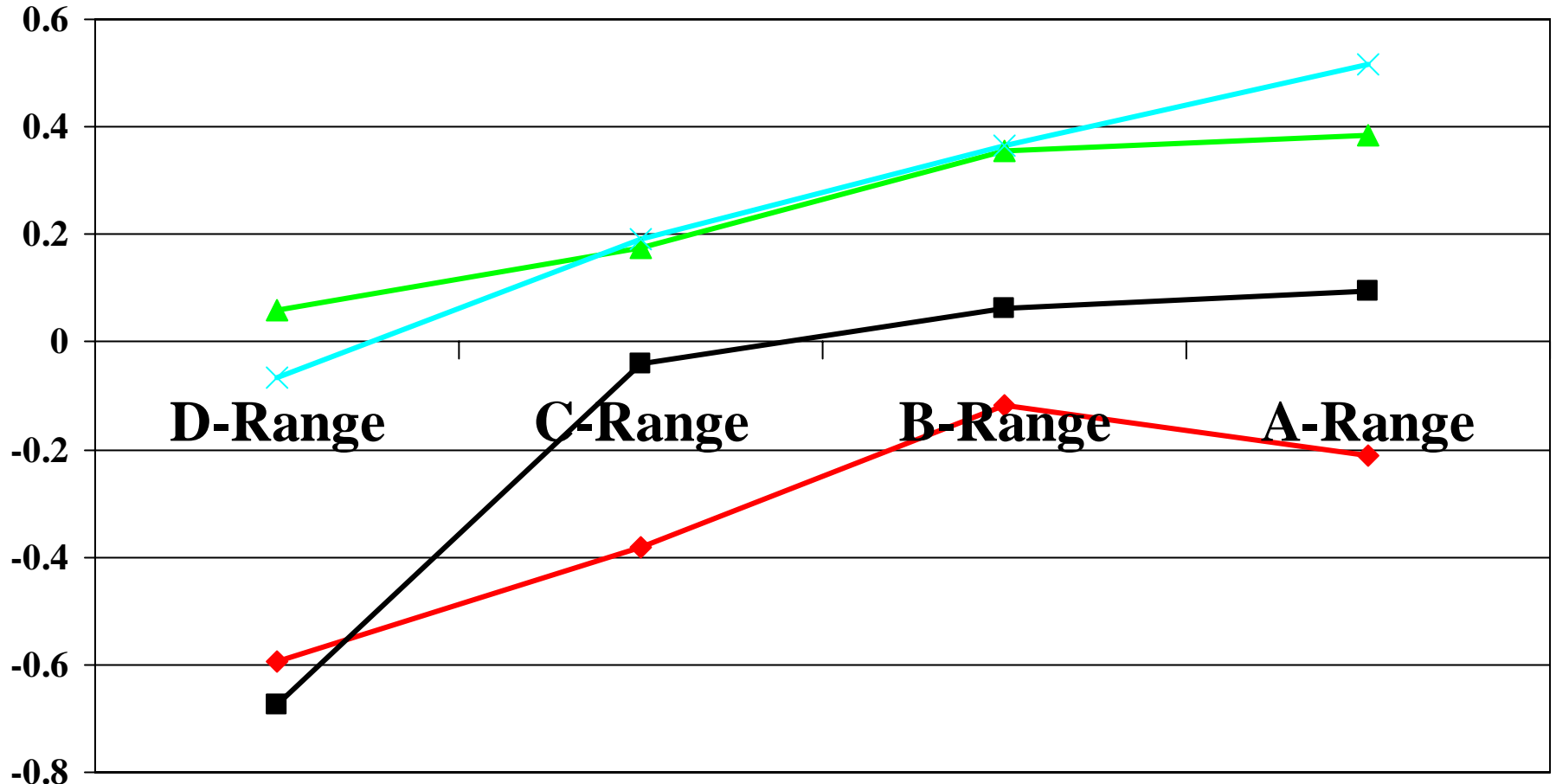


Source: Calculations by Ron Ferguson, using Tripod Project data for 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> graders collected spring 2005 from 17 secondary schools in NJ, CT, OH, NM, MA and CA.

Self-Esteem for male and female teenagers, related to whether rock music is “always” “usually,” “sometimes,” “usually not” or “never” “an important part of my life.”



Self-esteem, by GPA and by whether Hip-Hop music is “usually or always” “an important part of my life,” for black teenagers.



◆ Black Males Low HipHop

■ Black Females Low HipHop

▲ Black Males High HipHop

× Black Females High HipHop

## Bottom line:

There are very few racial differences in the belief that working hard to get high grades in school is important. However, there may be social pressures and lifestyle patterns that differ by race in ways that favor the accumulation of reading and math skills by white and Asian, as compared with black and Hispanic children. The politics of addressing these issues openly in a white supremacist society may be difficult, but they are important to engage, even as we work also to address the more structural forces that remain important impediments to equality.

Why black high school students with “A”-range GPA’s agree somewhat more than black students with “C”-range grades with the statement that, “*At this school, students like me get accused of acting white.*” Percentages of the predicted difference attributable to each listed factor.

