

Maternal Mental Health:

An International Comparison of Family Structure Transitions and Depression

KIRSTEN RASMUSSEN • ELIZABETH SIGLER • SADIE SLIGHTING | MIKAELA DUFUR, PhD | DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

INTRO + QUESTION

- Depression affects about 16 million Americans each year
- Family structure transitions are a possible source of instability
- **To what extent is experiencing family transitions associated with maternal depression?**

DATA + METHODS

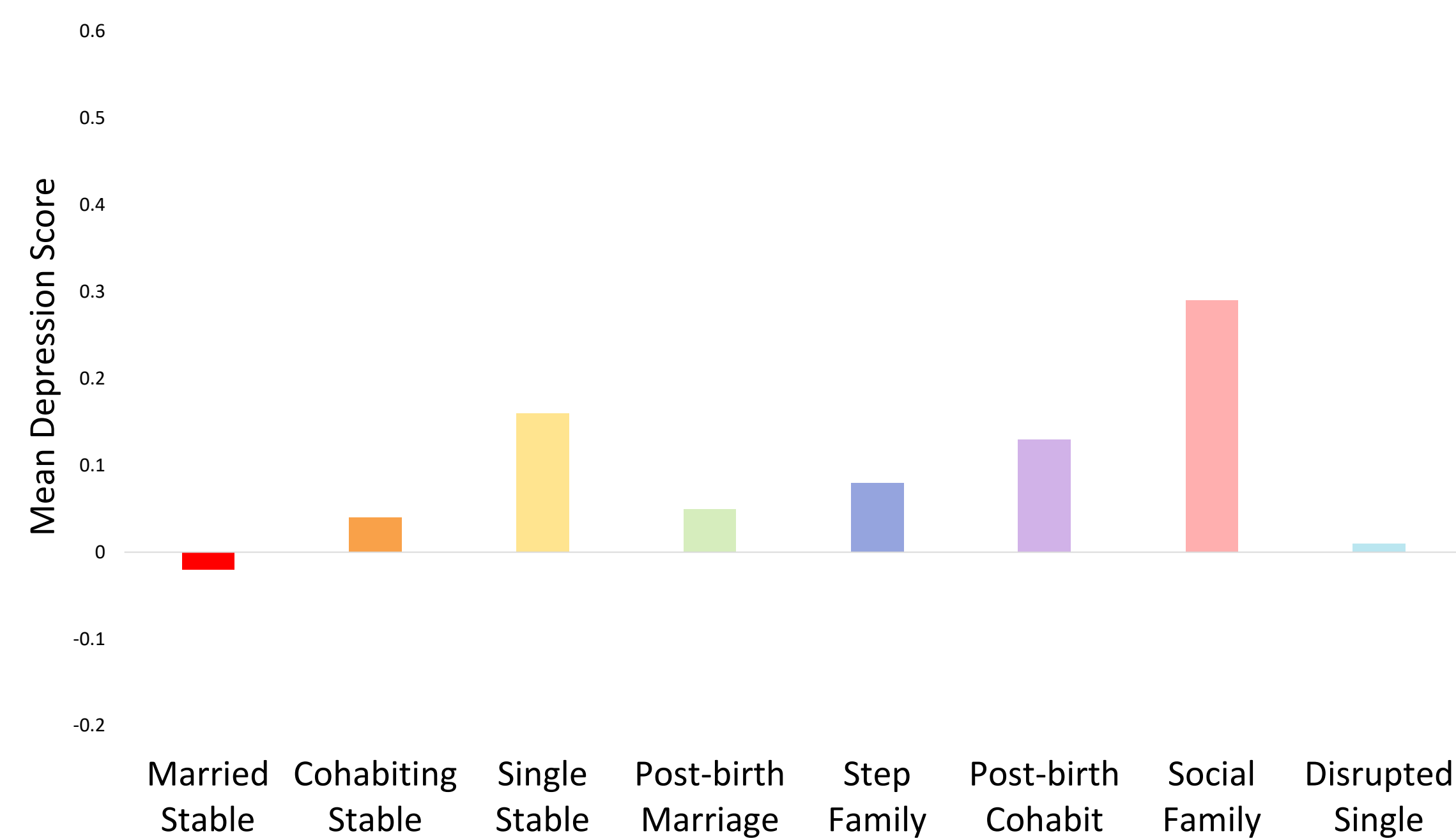
- US: ECLS Kindergarten Cohort of 1998
- UK: Millennium Cohort Study
- AU: Longitudinal Study of Australian Children
- Multiple Imputation
- Linear Regression Analysis

CONCLUSION

- Across all three countries higher stress levels are associated with higher depression
- Family structure plays a different role in each country
- In the US and the UK financial stability plays the largest role, while in AUS immigrant status is the most influential factor in depression scores

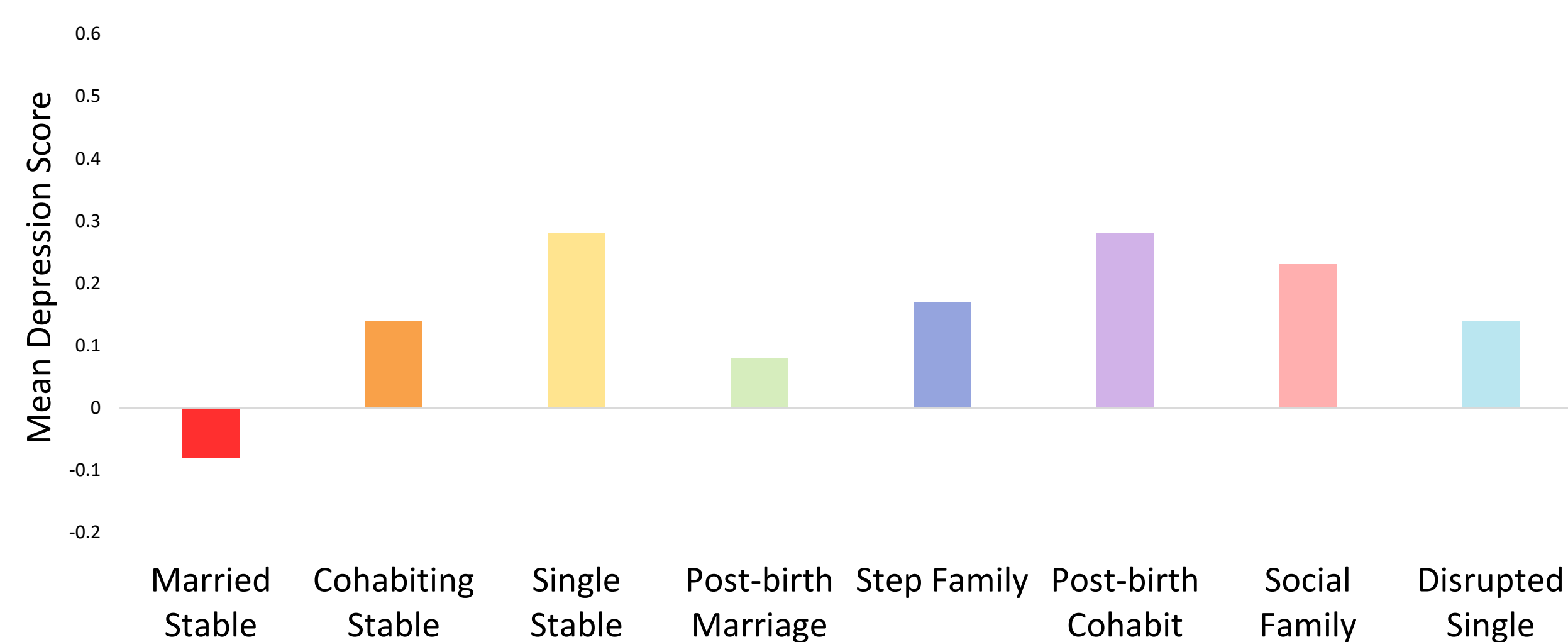
UNITED STATES

Predicted Depression Score by Family Structure



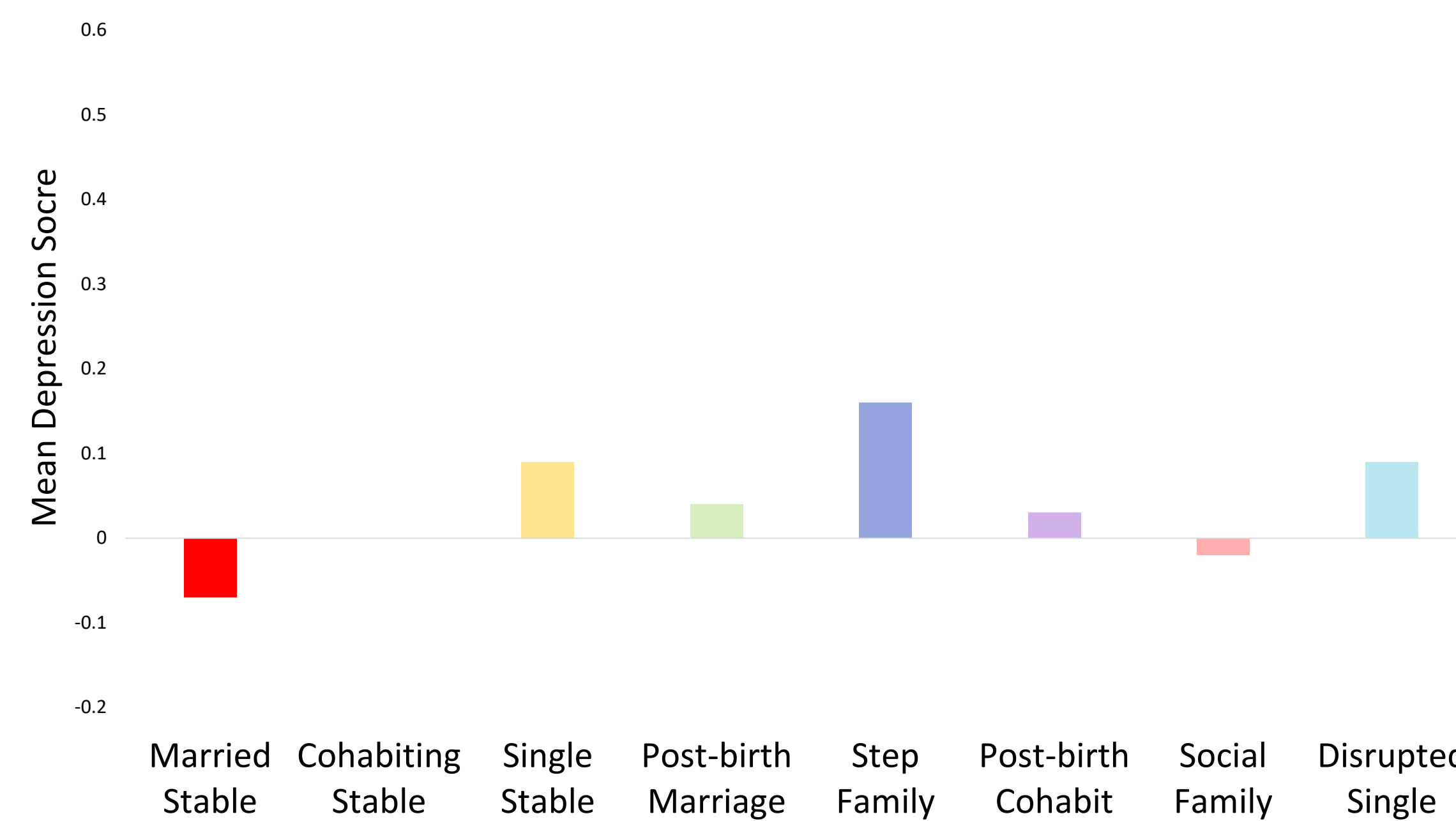
- Married stable families experience **lower** levels of depression compared to all other family structures within the US, **unlike the UK and AUS**
- Accounting for controls explains family structure effects for all, **except stably single mothers**

US Mean Depression by Family Structure



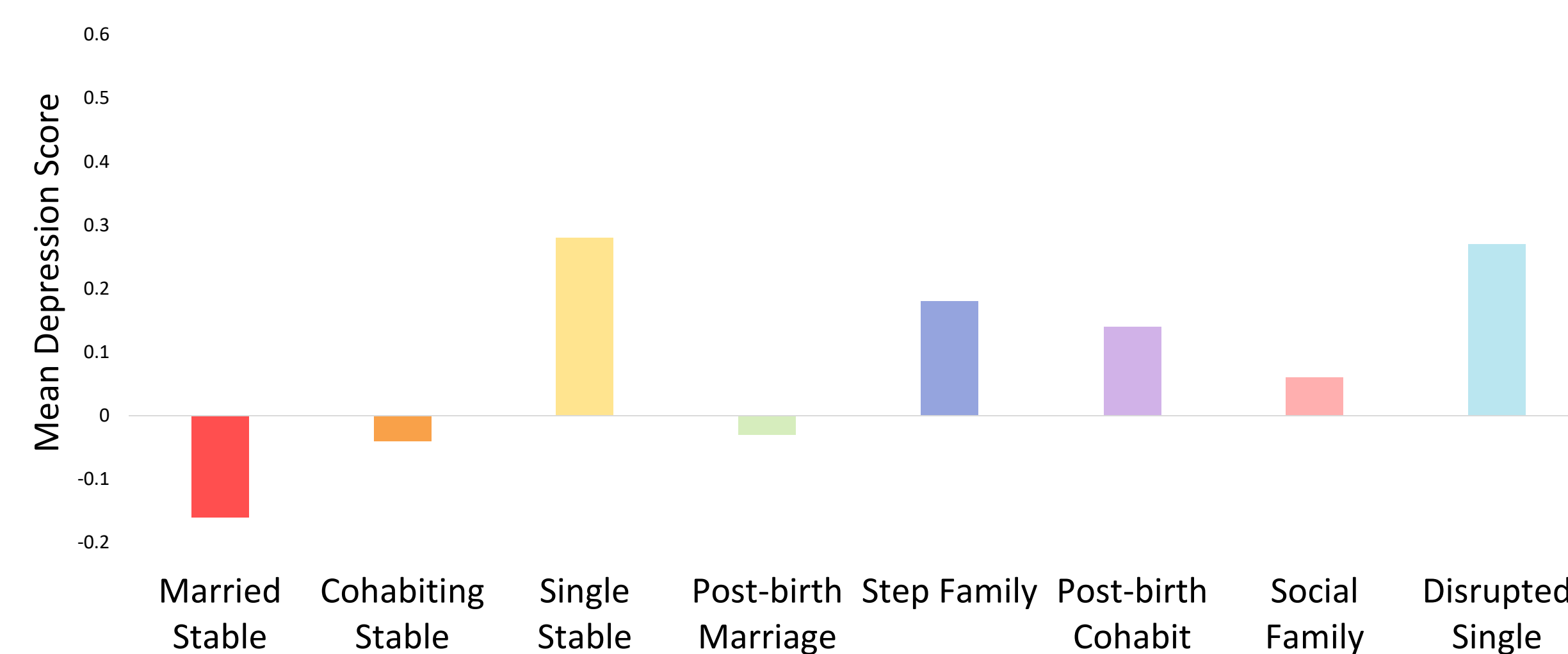
UNITED KINGDOM

Predicted Depression Score by Family Structure



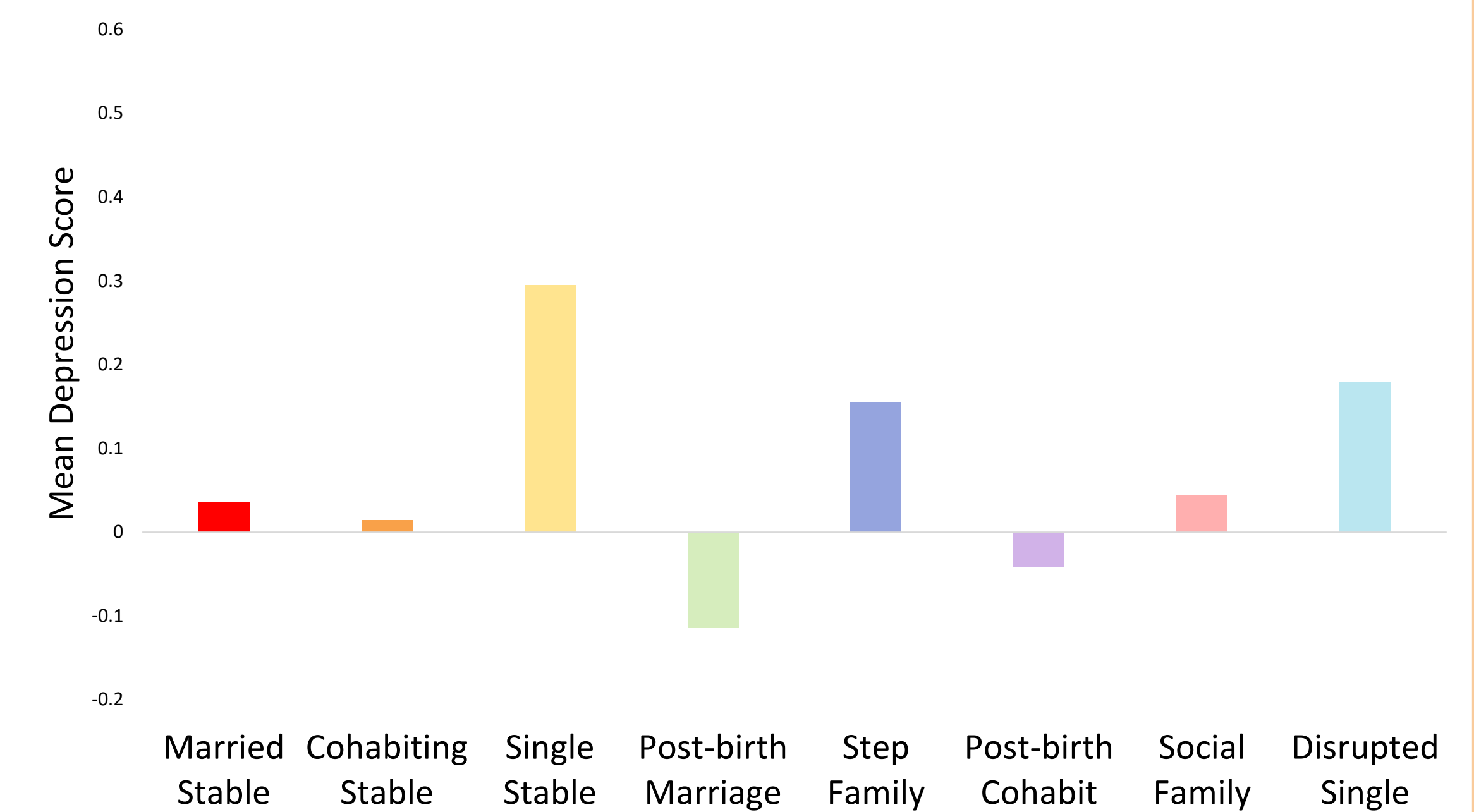
- Mothers in all nontraditional family structures report **higher** depression
- Mothers in relationships with the fathers of their children report **less** depression
- **Unlike the US and AUS**, effects of most nontraditional family structures **remain significant** in the presence of controls

UK Mean Depression by Family Structure



AUSTRALIA

Predicted Depression Score by Family Structure



- Mothers partnered with biological fathers report **lower** depression
- **In contrast to the US and the UK**, after controlling for demographic factors, **no nontraditional family structure** is significantly different from being in a stable married relationship

AUS Mean Depression by Family Structure

