

In the Eye of the Beholder:
The Role of Peer Group Heterogeneity in
Adolescent Victimization



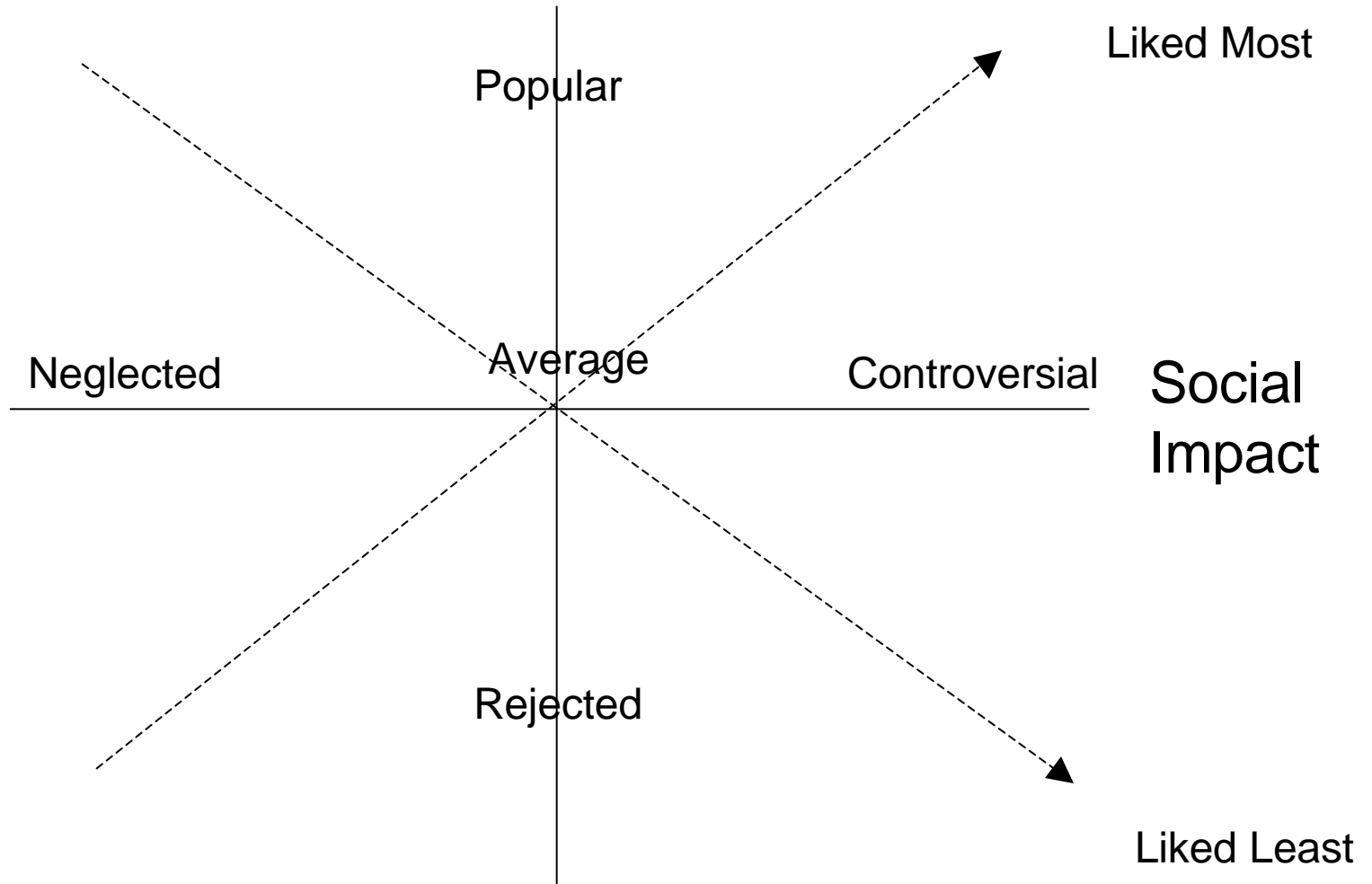
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Various Approaches Used to Study Peers

- Peer Influence
 - Warr, 1996; Akers
- Characteristics of Friendship Networks
 - Eder, 1985; Kandel & Davies, 1991
- Characteristics of Peer Groups
 - Brown et al., 1990; Coie et al., 1982

Sociometric Status

Social Preference



Research Sample

- 6th to 8th graders from two NY middle schools.
(N= 394 Nominators)
- Rochester 68% white
- Dryden 98% white
- Sociometric Status

Popular	168
Rejected	111
Neglected	142
Controversial	72
Average	<u>117</u>
Total Classified	610

Research Questions

- Is there homogeneity among all youth as to the kind of qualities and behaviors that they perceive as valuable in others?
- Could any existing heterogeneity be the result of the status of the peer group from which the *nominator* belongs?

**Chart #1: Percentage of All Students Who Like and Dislike
Fighters, Leaders, and Helpers**

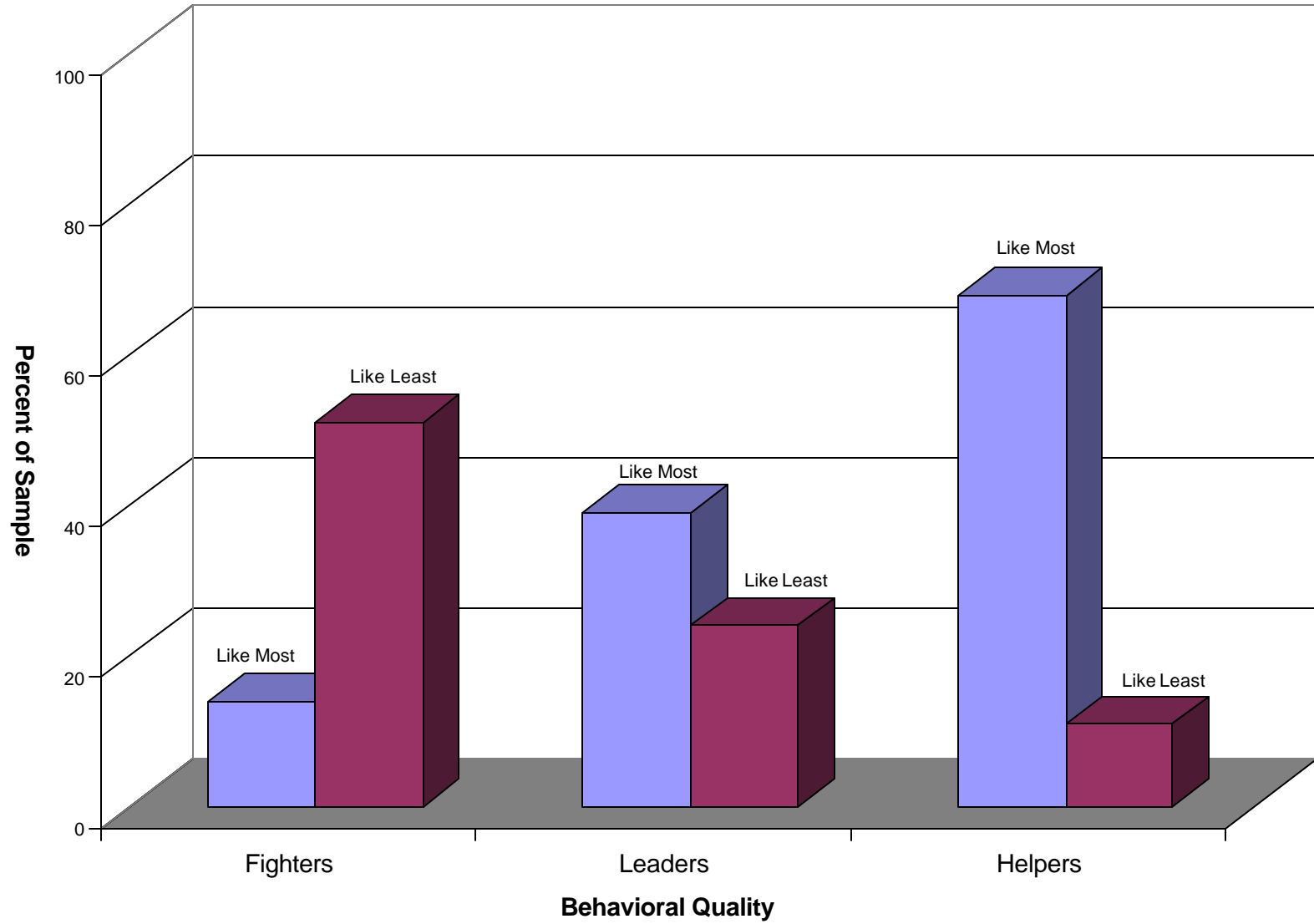


Chart #2: Do Adolescents of Differing Status Vary in their Liking & Disliking of Fighters?

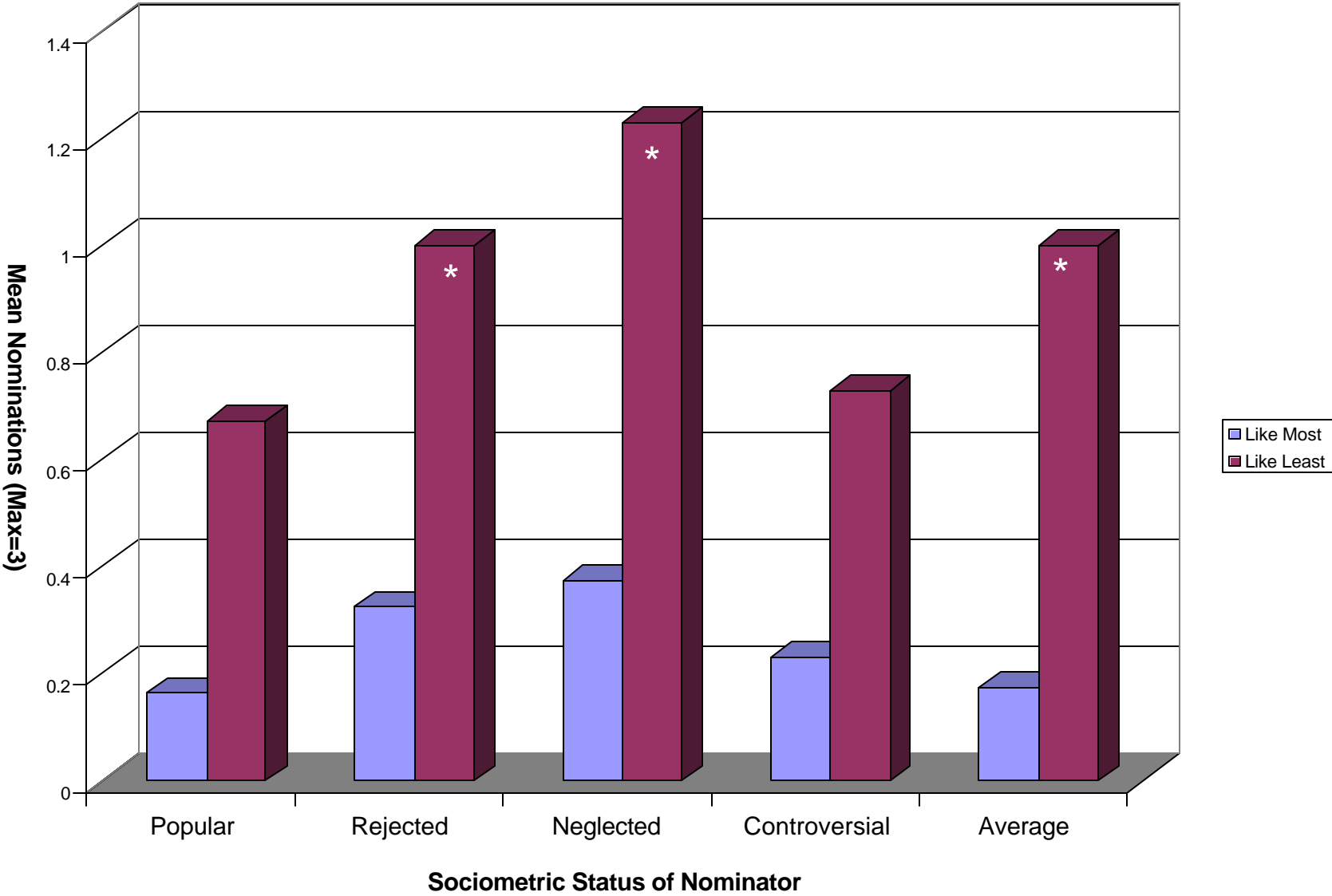


Chart #3: Do Adolescents of Differing Status Vary in their Liking & Disliking of Leaders?

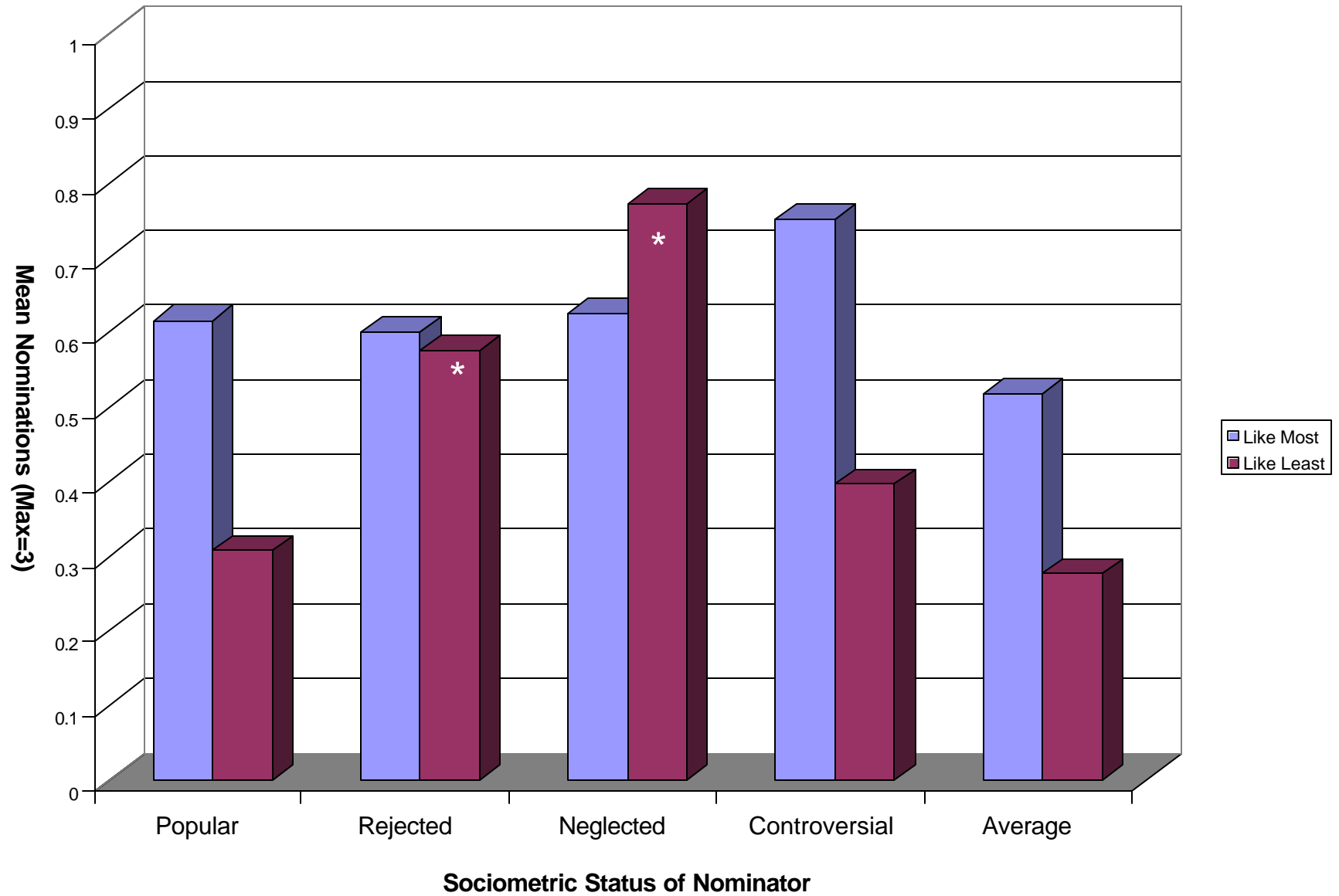
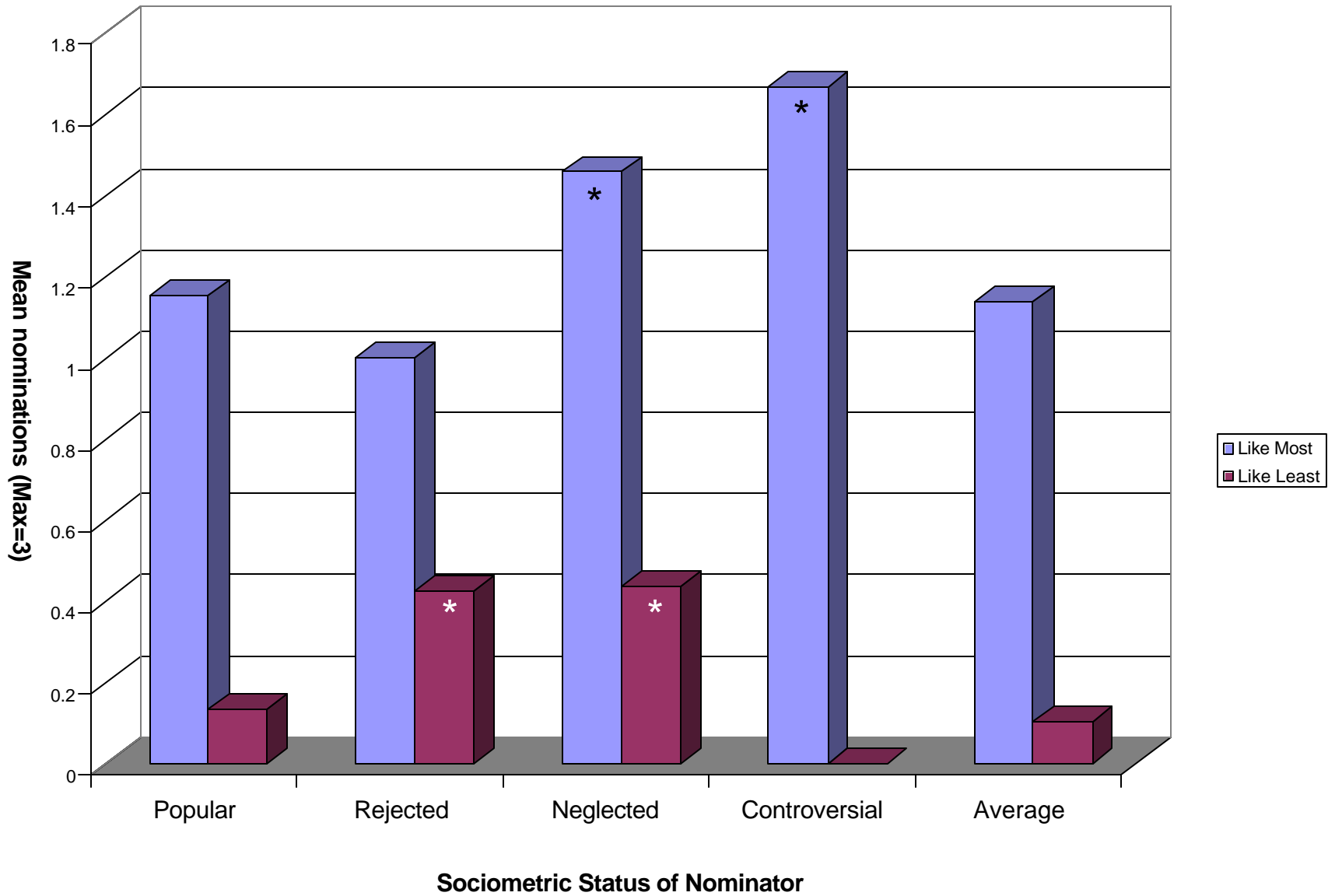


Chart #4: Do Adolescents of Differing Status Vary in their Liking & Disliking of Helpers?



Conclusions

- Youth are not homogeneous in their liking and disliking of the qualities of fighting, leadership, and helping.
- Some of these difference are a result of the Sociometric status of the nominator.
- There is more consensus between groups as to what qualities are liked than what qualities are disliked.
- Need to study victimization beyond the individual level. (i.e. peer group, classroom, school, community)