

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



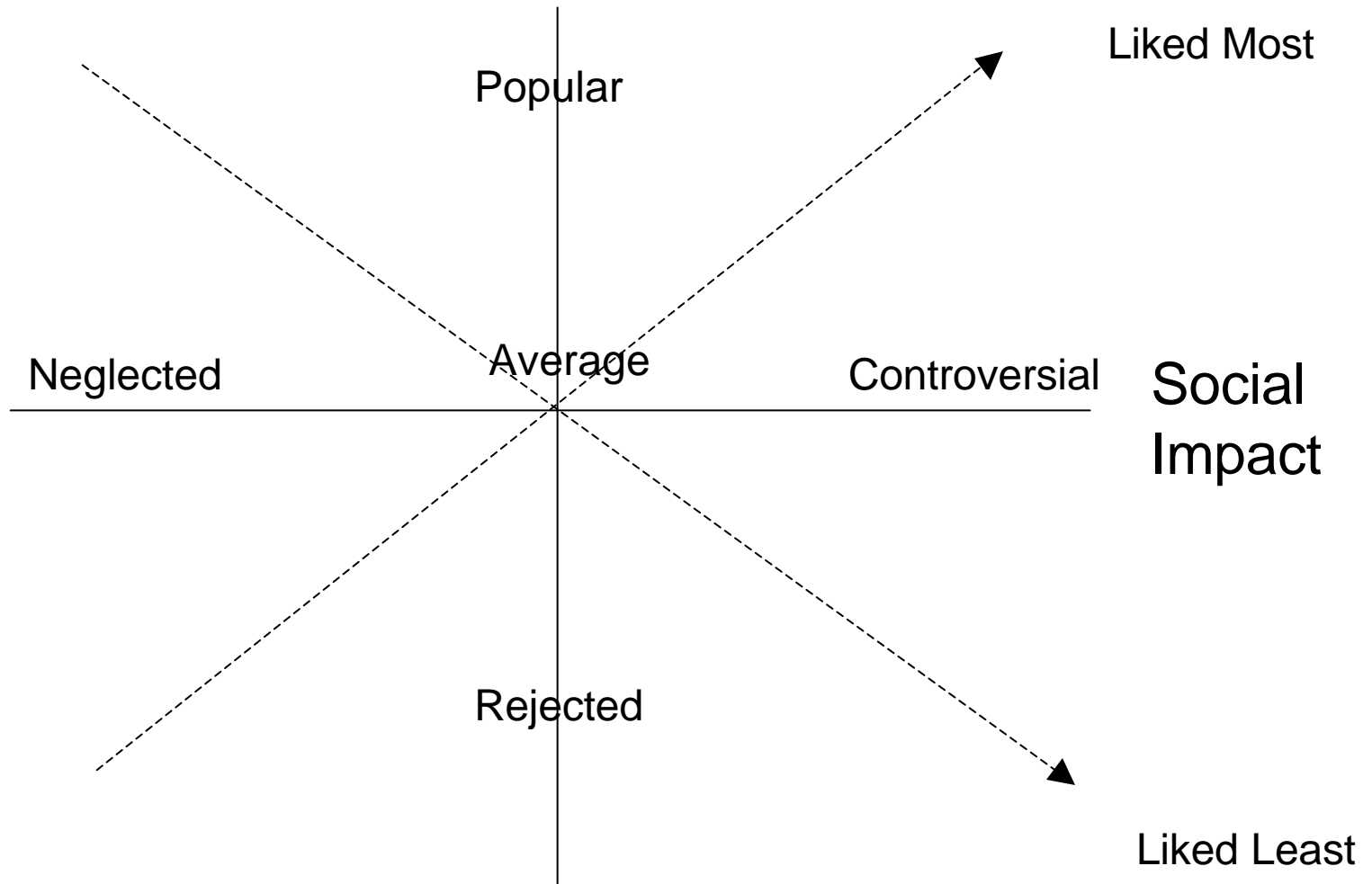
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# Various Approaches Used to Study Peers

- 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

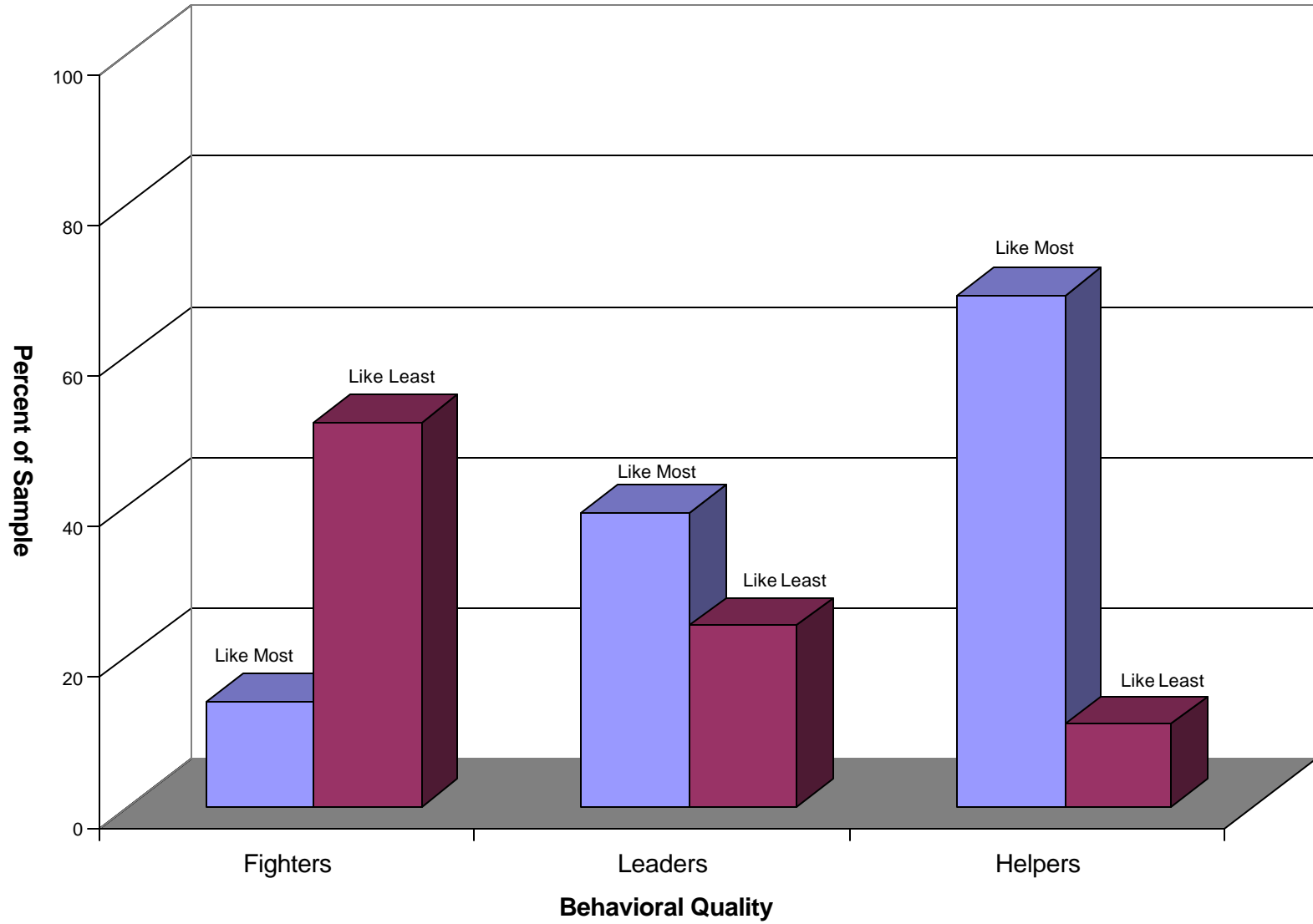
- 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> graders from two NY middle schools.  
(N= 394 Nominators)
- Rochester 68% white
- Dryden 98% white
- Sociometric Status

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

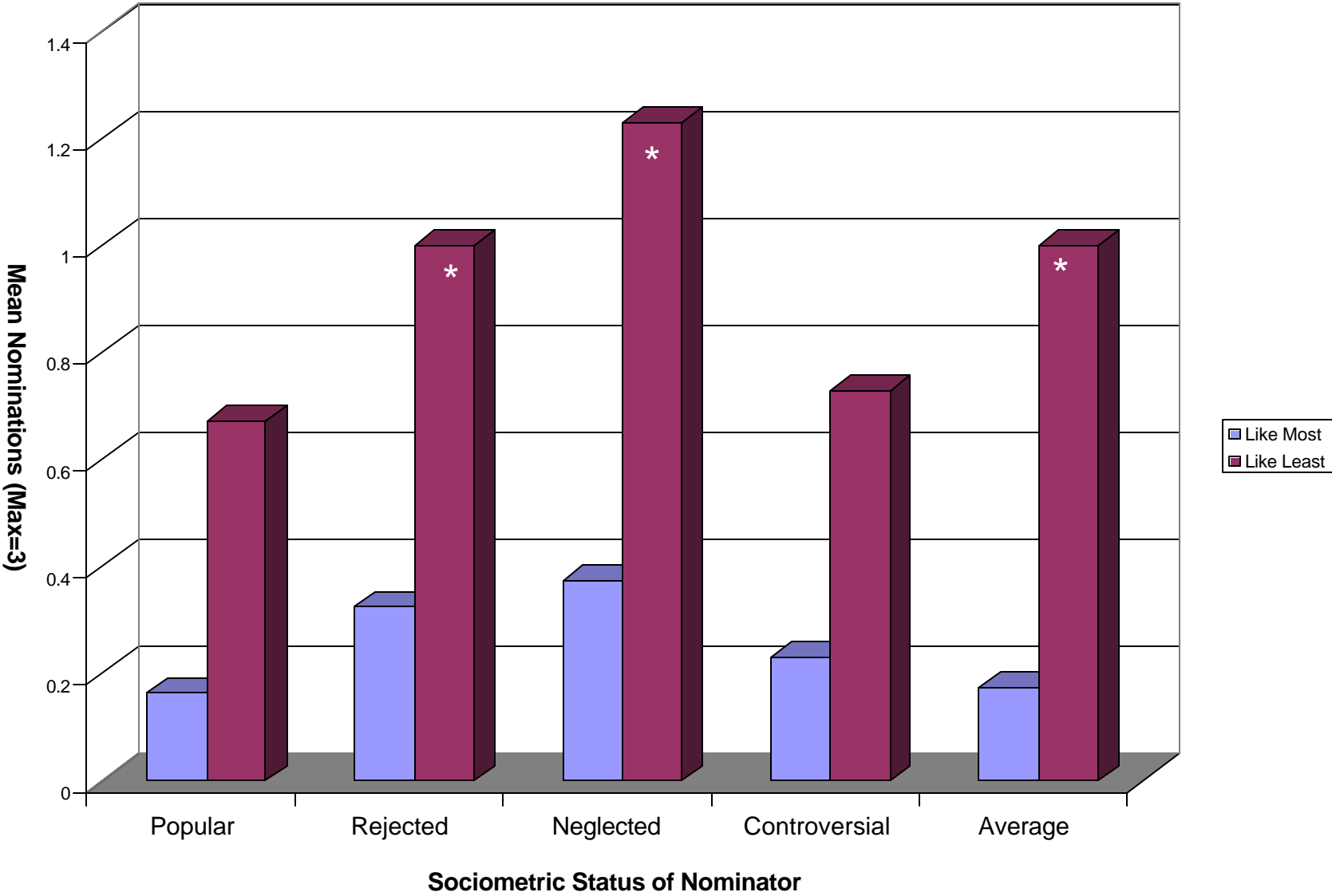
# Research Questions

- 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?

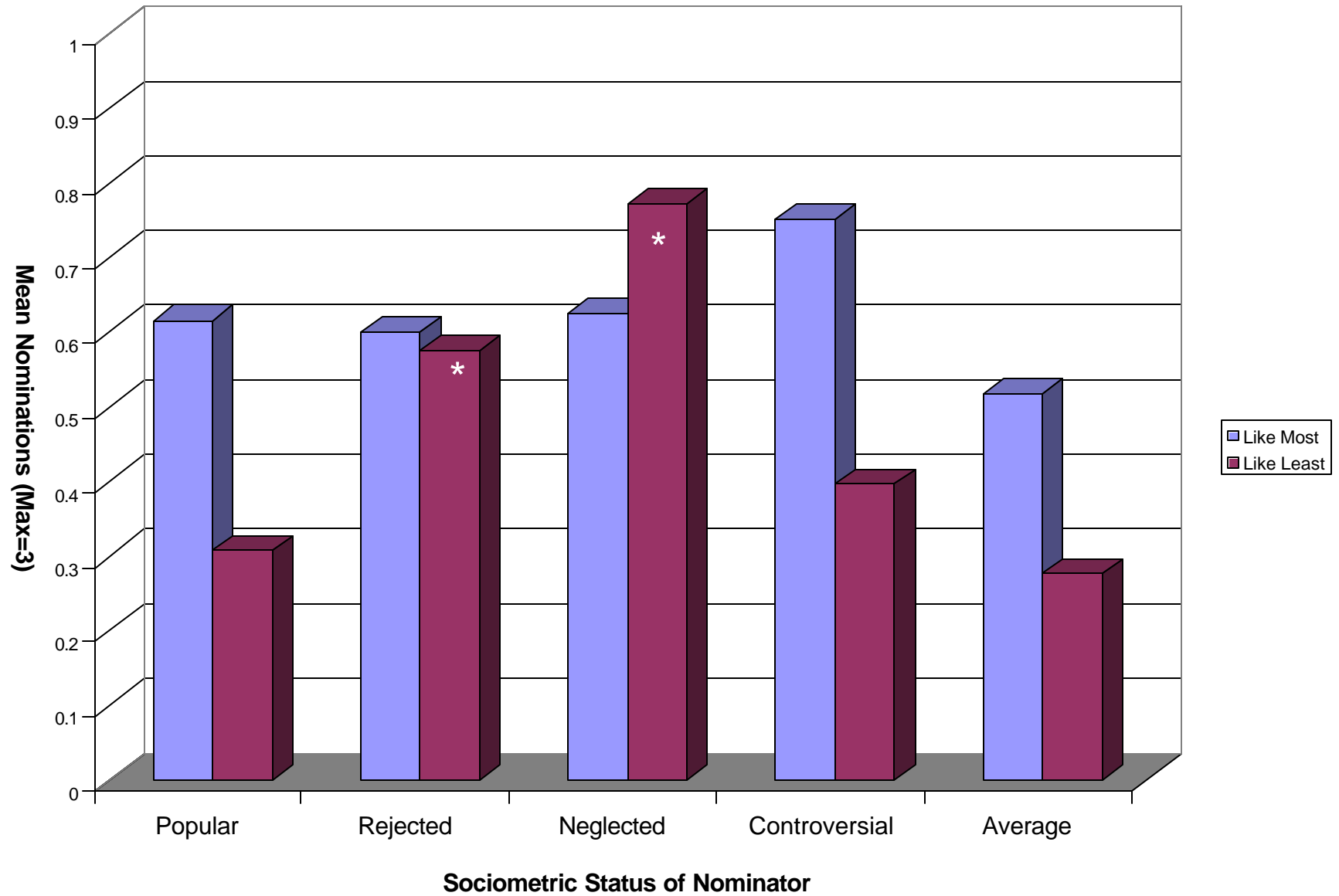
**Chart #1: Percentage of All Students Who Like and Dislike  
Fighters, Leaders, and Helpers**



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

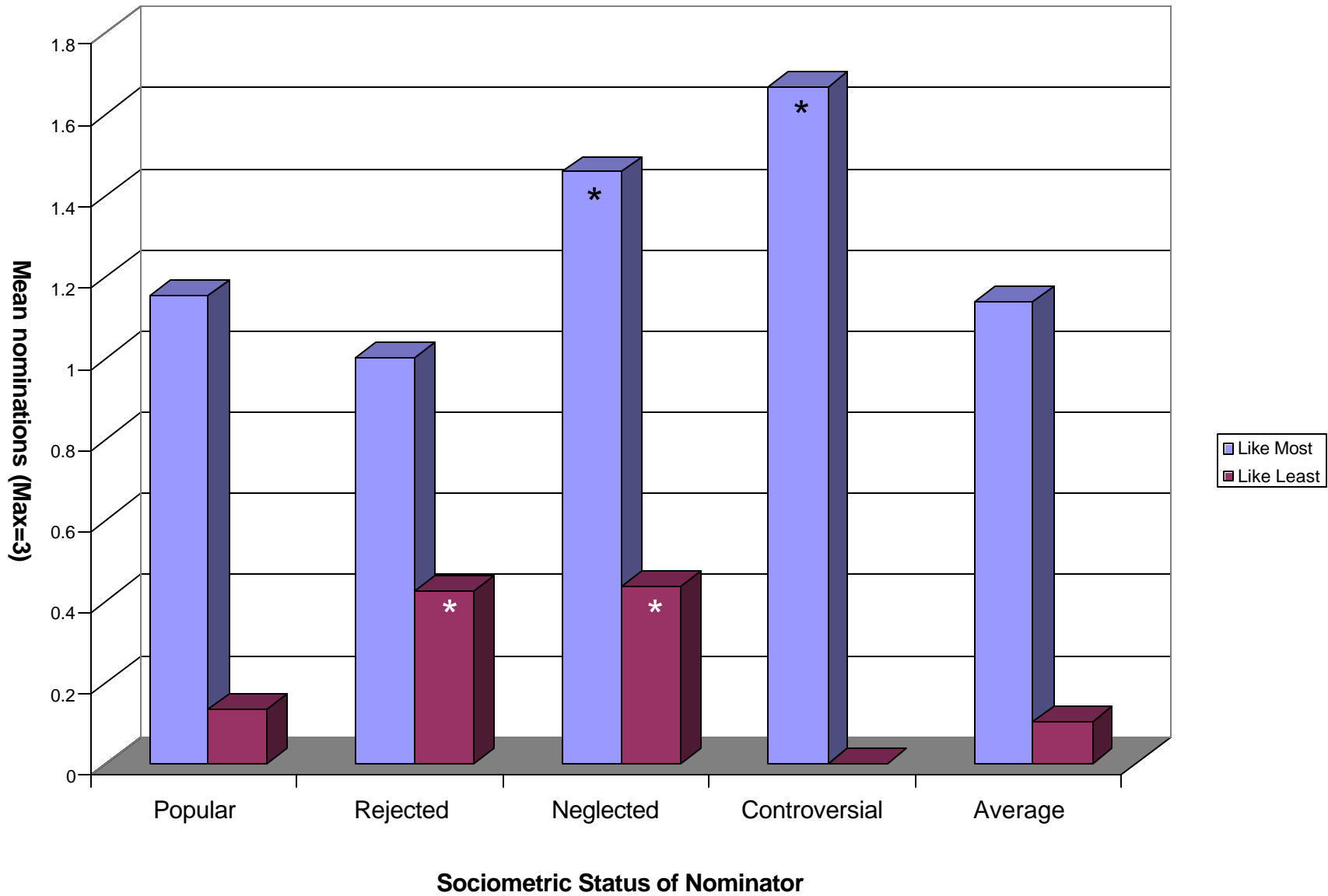


**Chart #3: Do Adolescents of Differing Status Vary in their Liking & Disliking of Leaders?**





**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)