

RELATIONSHIPS OF SOCIOMETRIC INCONSISTENCIES
WITH NEGATIVISM IN A CHILD
CARE INSTITUTION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Distributions of Social Status

The place an individual holds within the social hierarchy of acceptance or rejection has been a subject of research. Many investigators have reported personality trends within various social choice groups such as the highly accepted or socially successful individual as compared to the one who is not accepted. It is generally reported that those of higher status have more "opportunity for satisfying their psychological needs at the expense of his social relations."¹

That is to say that social and personal adjustment are not necessarily identical and an individual may be adjusted in one and maladjusted in the other. Nevertheless, in studies of the upper fourths of sociometric distributions as compared with those in the lowest fourths there are indications of group differences in the way of "personal-social assets."² The data obtained may be more applicable when speaking of groups than of individuals due to the social-personal variable previously

¹Norman E. Gronlund, Sociometry in the Classroom (New York, 1951), pp. 176-177.

²Merl E. Bonney, Mental Health in Education (Boston, 1960), p. 267.

mentioned. However, to know that an individual ranks first or last in the number of choices received lends information that is helpful in understanding his situation. Knowing the social status of an individual helps to answer the question that is frequently asked in staffings, "how do his peers feel about him," or "how is he accepted in this group?"

The middle group, or those that fall within the average range of acceptance or choices received, has also been studied in relation to the high and low groups. This one has usually been thought of as a group that has a very reasonable opportunity to be socially adjusted.

As long as one is able to know how much importance to place upon the degree of social acceptance, it may be said that it is helpful to know the social hierarchy when analyzing either a group or an individual. The question then arises as to whether or not additional information can be contributed to the understanding of the significance of individual choice status.

Recently Allan Keith-Lucas of Chapel Hill, North Carolina said in a meeting at Buckner Baptist Childrens' Home, "The child who is neither loved nor hated gets in the most trouble." In explaining further, he said indifference is very confusing to the child and "The state of ambivalence is the most paralyzing thing I know." In some ways these statements are related to a possible fourth social status group: the inconsistent. These are the ones who receive several

choices on one criterion and few on another. They are uncertain as to where they stand and are not able to depend on a consistent social acceptance. This is a group that has been investigated by researchers little, if any.

This discussion as to the general thoughts concerning the distributions of social status will serve as a backdrop for this study.

Related Research

Studies have been conducted on the high, low, and middle sociometric status groups as determined by the number of choices received. By using self-report techniques, projective techniques, problem check lists, and observational data, investigators have contributed information concerning the relationship between sociometric status and personality traits, dynamics, problems and worries, and personal adjustment.

One of the earliest studies of personality traits of socially strong and socially weak children was made by Bonney using eighty fourth-grade students as subjects.³ It was found that the socially strong child was characterized by positive social aggressiveness and friendliness. He was described as being enthusiastic, daring, and talkative as well as happy, friendly, and welcomed.

³Merl E. Bonney, "Personality Traits of Socially Successful and Socially Unsuccessful Children," Journal of Educational Psychology, XXXIV (1943), 449-472.

Reported in Psychological Abstracts is a Swedish study by Bjerstedt, using a Swedish version of the R. B. Cattell's Junior Personality Quiz with elementary children as subjects.⁴ It was found that there was a difference between the "High-status" and "low-status" groups. The "high-status" subjects scored high on "will-control, socio-morale, and intelligence" while the "low-status" subjects scored high on "nervous tension, neurotic, and fearful emotionality."

Using sixty-two student nurses as subjects, Allison and Hunt found that there was more aggressive expression in the "low social desirability" subjects as compared with those of "high social desirability."⁵ Three studies with adults as subjects were conducted by Izard as he correlated personality characteristics of 1,080 navy cadets and their "sociometric status."⁶ It was concluded that the evidence gave support to the "frequently made but infrequently tested assumption that sociometric measures reflect meaningful personality variables."

The differences in the way high, low, and middle sociometric status groups reacted to frustration was noted by

⁴Ake Bjerstedt, "Konadifferenser och 'status'--differenser pa JPR: En Notis," (Sex and Status Differences in the JPR: A Note), Pedagogisk Forskning: Nordisk Tidskrift For Pedagogikk, I (1959), 38-43.

⁵Joel Allison and D. E. Hunt, "Social Desirability and the Expression of Aggression Under Varying Conditions of Frustration," Journal of Consulting Psychology, XXIII (December, 1959), 528-532.

⁶Carroll Izard, "Personality Correlates of Sociometric Status," Journal of Applied Psychology, XLIII (April, 1959), 89-93.

Coons.⁷ In analyzing the results of the Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration-Test obtained from 145 children of the fourth and fifth grades it was found that children with high status were better able to withstand frustrating situations than those of low status. However, the children in the intermediate status seemed to react in the most desirable way from a "mental hygiene point of view."

Gronlund devoted several pages of his book, Sociometry in the Classroom, to the results of the studies on social status, using self-report questionnaires and projective techniques. In summarizing the studies that utilized the self-report techniques, Gronlund concluded that where complete groups were used, "there tends to be a low positive relationship between sociometric status scores and the various measures of personal adjustment." It is interesting to note that by using extreme sociometric status groups, the investigators reported that pupils with low sociometric status "have consistently lower adjustment scores than pupils with high sociometric status." Also it was noted that:

Pupils in the low status group tend to feel insecure, discriminated against, inadequate physically and socially, and show signs of emotional instability. They also compare themselves unfavorably with others and show concern with lack of social skills. In contrast, the responses of high status pupils

⁷Margery Coons, "Rosenzweig Differences in Reaction to Frustration in Children of High, Low, and Middle Sociometric Status," Group Psychotherapy, X (1957), 60-63.

generally reflect feelings of security, self-confidence, and other evidences of good personal adjustment.⁸

Similar to the findings obtained with self-report techniques are the results of comparing sociometric status with projective techniques results. In summarizing these studies Gronlund observed that the severity of problems distinguished the subjects of the low status group from the high group. However, it has been found that although those with low status showed tendencies toward greater anxiety and deviate patterns of adjustment, some of the students with high status also reflected neurotic tendencies. In other words, high sociometric status cannot be equated with good personal adjustment in individual cases. This would remind those who might intend to understand the individual fully with sociometric results alone that these results can be used "to locate those pupils who are most likely to have personal problems of adjustment," but is not primarily a personality test.

The only study that was located that lends data to the study of the inconsistent status subject is an unpublished thesis by Ewing Cooley.⁹ Using a revised version of a problem check list, it was observed that there was an implication

⁸Gronlund, op. cit., Preface.

⁹Ewing Cooley, "The Relationship of Individual Choice Status to Severity of Personal Problems," unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Psychology, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1958, p. 21.

"that those with settled status have fewer possible problems than do those whose status fluctuates from one criteria to the next."

Many studies have not been mentioned because they are not unusually different from the ones cited. The ones that were selected for mention were representative of other studies and were not necessarily superior as to findings.

Purpose of the Study

As mentioned previously, research has been plenteous on the subject of personality and social status by comparing the high, middle, and low groups. When it comes to the question of what can be said about the group that varies in acceptance according to the criterion being used, the inconsistent, the investigators are virtually silent.

Since there has been an abundance of research concerning high and low social status and little on inconsistent, the present study intends to shed some understanding of this group by comparing their feelings and attitudes to the highs and lows. Four principal areas are emphasized: family relationships, attitude toward sex, interpersonal relationships and self concept, with sub-areas lending added data.

Because of the exploratory nature of this investigation, hypotheses are difficult to establish. It is generally expected, however, that the inconsistent will demonstrate a group trend that will contrast with the other two groups, particularly

the highs, in maladjustment as expressed in negativism. This comprehensive hypothesis serves as a crux for this study with the possibility of finding other informative relationships from the test data.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects

The data used in this study were obtained from sixty-six adolescents at Buckner Baptist Childrens' Home in Dallas, Texas. These subjects fell within the extreme boundaries as to high, low, and inconsistent sociometric status and were from a population of 206 adolescents, 122 being girls and 64 being boys. Of the sixty-six used in this study there were thirty-two boys and thirty-four girls. The sexes were as nearly balanced as possible in each sociometric status group. Table I further describes the subjects as to their average stay at Buckner, and their average age, sex distribution, and parental situation.

Buckner Baptist Childrens' Home is a child-care institution consisting of large group care, primarily of dependent and neglected children. The total number of children on campus, ranging from the elementary age child to the high school graduate, varies between 500 and 540. The social structure of the institution, while allowing freedom in respect to large groups being assigned to one adult on the dormitory floors, is rigid with rules to which one must conform. The elementary


school and church are located on campus and the high school students go to Samuels High School. The majority of the children are from the lower socio-economic level of the population of Texas.


TABLE I
DATA CONCERNING SUBJECTS

Group	Ave. Stay at Buckner	Total	Ave. Age	Total	No.	Parental Situation
High Boys	5 yrs 6 mos	5-1	16-2	15-6	11	1 Orphan
High Girls	4 yrs 8 mos		15-4		12	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ -Orph. 15 Broken Homes
Low Boys	6 yrs 7 mos	7-8	15-3	16-2	10	3 Orphans
Low Girls	8 yrs 8 mos		17-0		12	8 $\frac{1}{2}$ -Orph. 11 Broken Homes
Inconsistent Boys	6 yrs 10 mo	5-9	14-6	15-2	11	3 Orphans
Inconsistent Girls	4 yrs 8 mos		15-10		10	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ -Orph. 14 Broken Homes
Group Totals	6-2		15-7		66	7 Orphans 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ -Orph. 40 Broken Homes

It must be pointed out that one should be cautious in generalizing the results found in this study to other populations. The subjects of this study are unique in that the

majority have experienced separation pains due to either death of parent and/or parents, desertion, neglect, or divorce of parents. The fact of their institutionalization not only marks the severity of the consequences of this separation, but in many cases points to inadequate parents who are incapable of taking responsibility. Not to be overlooked is the average length of stay within an institution which must in some ways contribute to the development of the personalities of the subjects.

In order to be placed in the inconsistent status group, an individual had to be high on the roommate criterion and low on the project criterion or vice versa. It seems that the roommate choices would be on a much more personal basis than the project choices with the project choices being more of a social nature. In this study, of the twenty-one inconsistencies (ten girls and eleven boys) twelve were high on roommate choices and low on project choices, while nine were high on project choices and low on roommate choices. Actually, two kinds of inconsistencies could be compared by comparing those who are highly chosen on personal criteria with those who are chosen highly on social criteria. The scope of this study however, is to compare the inconsistencies as a group, keeping in mind that further study would probably reveal a larger degree of maladjustment among those who are not accepted personally. 



Measure of Sociometric Status

All 206 of the children tested sociometrically were given an unlimited number of choices situation but had to choose from those that lived on their floor in the dormitory. These children were residents of five dormitories and no opportunity was given for heterosexual choosing. It is assumed that some of the lower status children would have received more choices had there been allowed unrestricted choosing. Two criteria were used as stimuli to choosing: (1) Of those on your floor, which would you rather have for roommates?; and, (2) Of those on your floor, which would you rather work with on a school project? The high status group are those that received the most choices on both criteria while the low status group are those that received the fewest choices on both criteria. The inconsistent status group was determined by the rank difference between the choices received on both criteria. That is to say that this group received several choices on one criterion and few on the other. An individual was included in the inconsistent group when the rank difference between criteria was ten or more.

The process of administering and recording was guided by the Bonney-Fessenden Sociograph materials and manual. It was explained that the caseworkers were interested in knowing who their friends were and that they could help us know who they preferred as roommates and schoolmates.

Sentence Completion Test

After the selection of individuals for the inconsistent, high, and low groups on the basis of sociometric data, a sentence completion test was administered. (See Appendix for a sample copy.) Consisting of seventy items, the test was designed after Sachs Sentence Completion Test.¹⁰ An effort was made to revise the test so that it would apply more specifically to the children who were at the institution. Stimuli were added that referred to work supervisors, group parents, and the Home in general. A few of the original sentence stems were eliminated because of their threatening nature to adolescents, most of these being in the area of sex.

Four general areas are tapped by the sentence stimuli with each area having sub-areas (see Appendix for a sample copy). These areas are those that are suggested by Sachs as being indispensable as areas that are intimate and revealing.

The sentence completion test was designed as a projective test of the personality but is not nearly so ambiguous as the Rorschach or Thematic Apperception Test. Yet, it is not as quantifiable as a self-report technique such as the Minnesota Counseling Inventory. Its structured, yet unstructured nature, seemed to offer research possibilities with these sociometric groups. As suggested by Lindgren, the sentence completion

¹⁰Joseph Sacks and Sidney Levy, "The Sentence Completion Test," Projective Psychology, XLIII (1951), 357-402.

test serves a useful purpose as a research tool.¹¹ The results are analyzed more in an attitudinal sense than in a projective sense as far as uncovering their unconscious feelings and dynamics, with the accent on positive and negative values.

Evaluation

As the sentence completion tests were completed for the various groups, the individual statements were recorded on a grouped series of responses to one question. Each of the groups were organized so that they fit into their general area category in order to facilitate group analysis rather than individual analysis of the results. It is granted that some interpretation is missed by grouping the results and by not affording the subjects an interview concerning their responses, but the purpose of using the sentence completion method was for the comparison of group trends in negativism, using a semi-structured technique.

An effort to quantify the data as much as possible was made so there would be more clarity in presenting comparisons. Such elements as the number of omissions, the average number of words used, the percentage of positive and negative statements, and the nature of the statements lend themselves to quantification.

¹¹Henry C. Lindgren, "The Use of a Sentence Completion Test in Measuring Attitudinal Changes Among College Freshman," Journal of Social Psychology, XIV (1954), 79-92.

Some of the judgments were made by agreement by three people, two holding the Master of Science Degree.¹² Other judgments were made by referring to Abt and Bellak's book, Projective Psychology.¹³ Tables were constructed to illustrate in the best way possible the findings as they compare with one another.

¹²In order to diminish the subjective factor involved in making this type of judgment, Ewing Cooley, Nelson D. Patterson, and Thomas Atwood were asked to assist with the evaluation of positive, negative, and neutral valences.

¹³Abt and Bellak, op. cit., Method, p. 92.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Number of Omissions

When an individual neglected to respond to a sentence stem, it was tabulated as an omission. The number of omissions for each of the sociometric groups was tabulated and the arithmetical average was computed. Figure 1 illustrates the group comparisons as to the average percentage of omissions. Because of the variations within the group as to the sex, the Low Boys, Low Girls, High Boys, High Girls, Inconsistent Boys, and Inconsistent Girls are presented separately. Figure 2 combines the sexes into their respective status groups.

Upon inspection of Figure 1, it is quickly noticed that the high boys and girls are fairly close together as are the inconsistent boys and girls. However, the low boys and girls are quite different when the average number of omissions is considered. The low girls submitted themselves to the task of completing the sentences while the low boys rebelled against the task more than any of the other groups.

When the sexes are combined in their respective groups, it appears that the inconsistents are characterized by negativism to a greater degree than are the lows and highs.

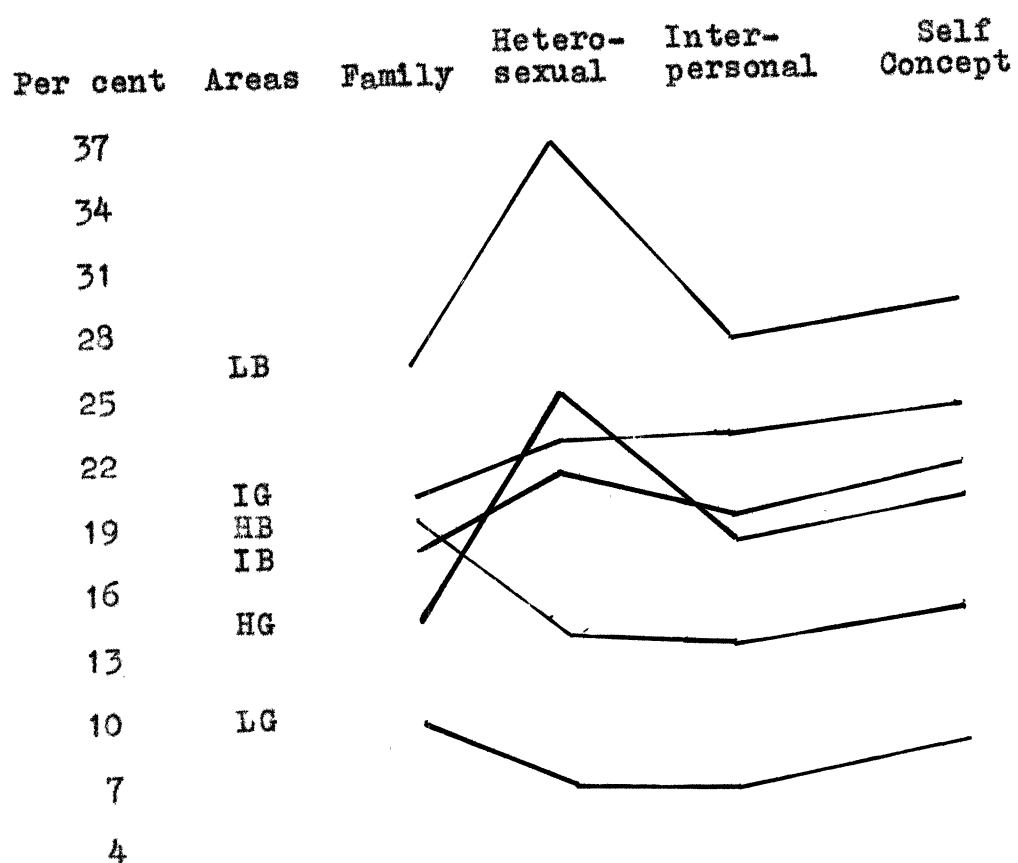


Fig. 1--A comparison of sub-group averages according to their sex in relation to the number of omissions in the four major areas.

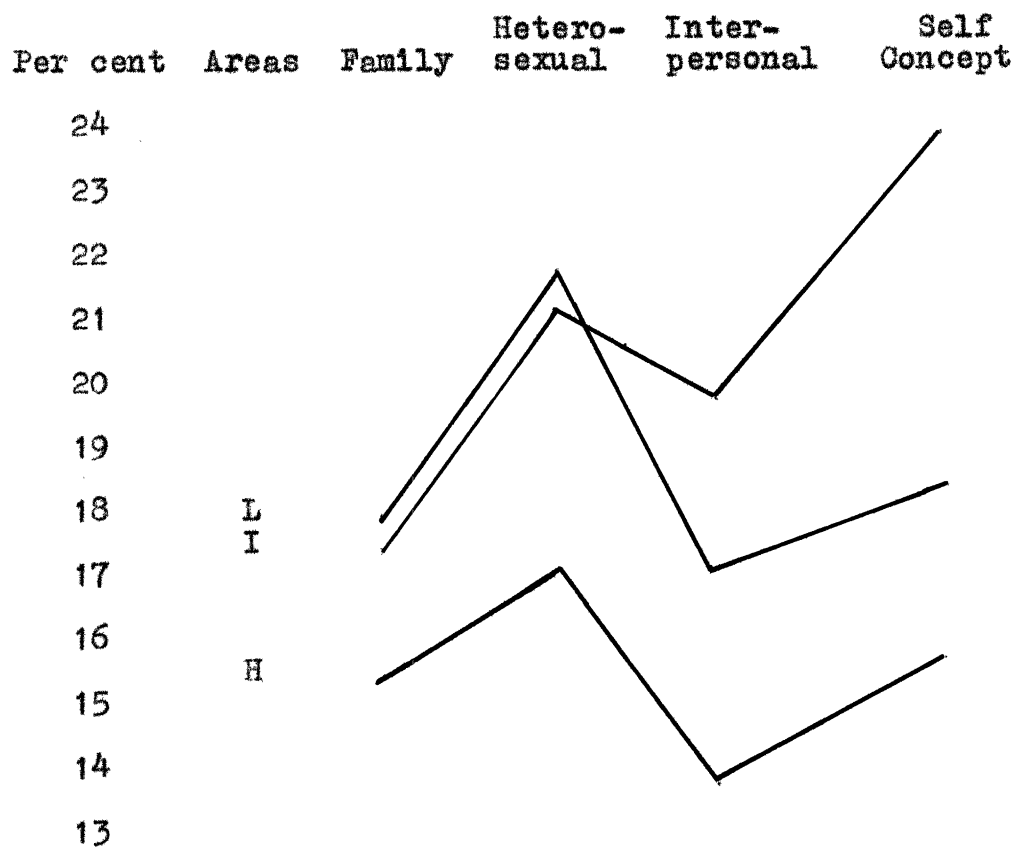


Fig. 2--A comparison of sub-group averages with sexes combined into either the High, Low, or Inconsistent Group in relation to the number of omissions in the four major areas.

The low status group reacted in much the same way as the inconsistent on sentences that had to do with family and heterosexual relationships, but the inconsistent were much more resistive to sentences that had to do with interpersonal relationships and their self concept. The high status group responded to a larger percentage of the sentences than did either the lows or the inconsistent, implying a greater degree of willingness to submit themselves to the testing experience and less tendency to block in sensitive areas.

Number of Words

The average number of words used in responding to the sentence stems is related to the number of omissions in that the greater the number of omissions a particular group has, the fewer sentences they have responded to, thus fewer chances for the use of words. Figure 3 demonstrates the amount of verbalism among the groups with the sexes again separated from their respective groups because of the sex difference evident in verbalization.

As noticed in comparing the sexes as to number of omissions, the boys and girls of the high status group and of the inconsistent group come close to coinciding while there is a wide difference in verbalism between the boys and girls of the low status group. Figure 3 also reveals more verbalism on the sentences concerning heterosexual relations and interpersonal relations.

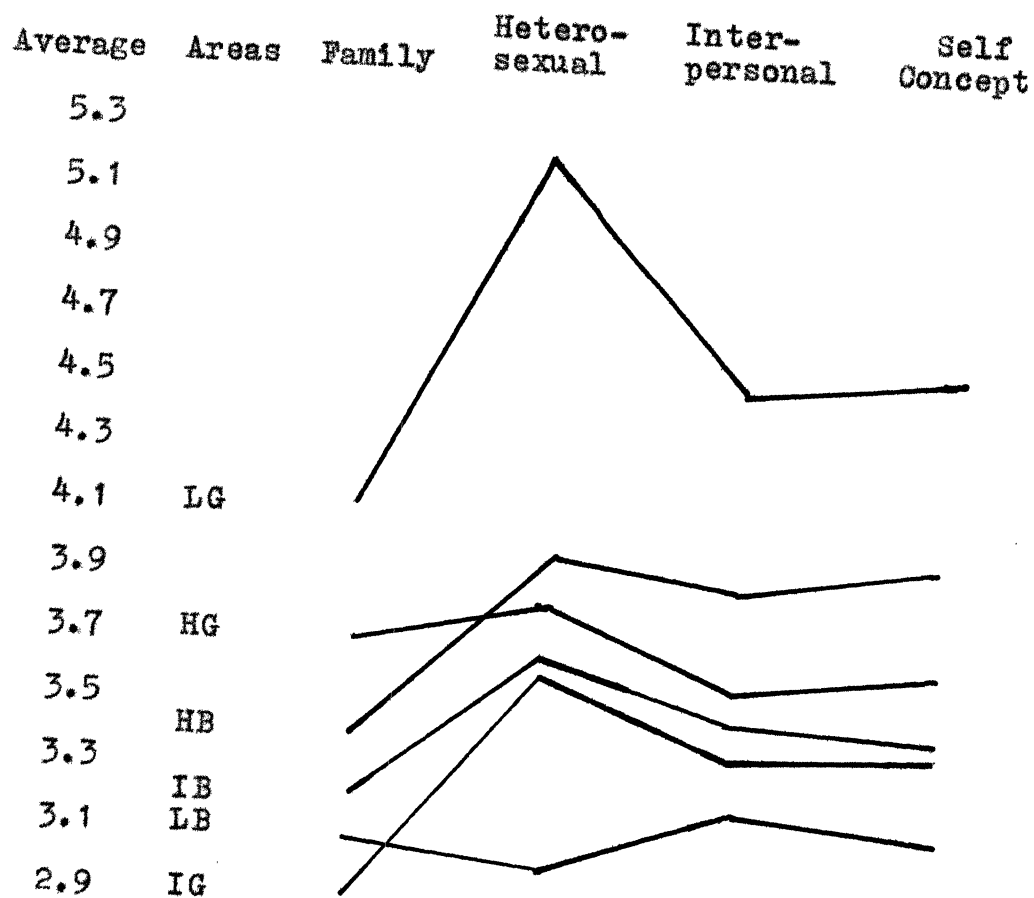


Fig. 3--A comparison of sub-groups in regard to sex differences within the groups as to verbalization, average number of words used.

Positive, Negative, and Neutral Statements

Each response to a sentence stem was assigned a positive, negative, or neutral valence with the omissions falling in the neutral category. All of the sentences were used in this evaluation with the exception of the following: 7, 25, 41, 60, 15, 34, 51, 69, 36, 3, 18, 37, and 56. These sentences were in the category of fears, guilt feelings, and goals, with one of them being in the section of attitude toward own abilities. The per cent was computed for each area and the negative per cent was subtracted from the positive per cent yielding one score which is termed the positive score. If the negative per cent was larger than the positive per cent, the positive score in Figure 4 is reported as minus. The number of omissions to some extent influences the positive-negative ratio since they were classified as neutral. They possibly could be assigned to the negative group, but the neutral group seemed more appropriate due to difference in expressed and unexpressed negativism.

The sex differences reported in these figures are not as evident in the tabulation of positive and negative statements. The high, low, and inconsistent status groups are presented in Figure 4 with the inconsistent group showing a consistent trend to be less positive, particularly in the areas of interpersonal relationships and self concept.

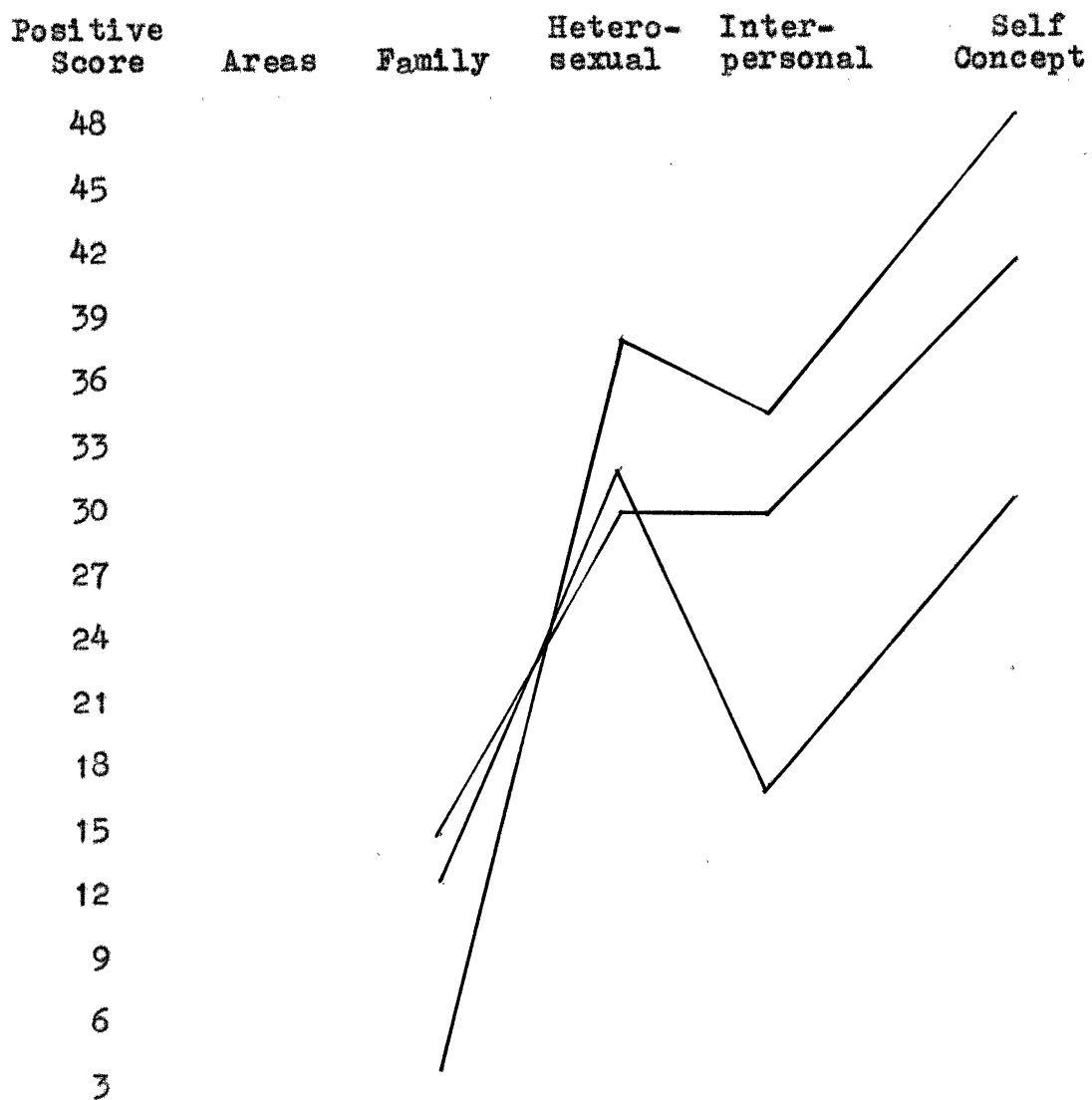


Fig. 4--A comparison of High, Low, and Inconsistent status groups as to the degree of positive responses in four areas.

Attitude Toward the Institution

In recording the individual responses, it was noticed that considerable feeling was expressed in relation to how they perceived the institution. By looking at each sentence response as to its feeling and application toward Buckner Home, it was found that a tabulation was possible of the negative statements applying specifically to the institution. The number of positive statements that related specifically to the institution were also tabulated.

After the tabulation of positive and negative statements regarding the institution, the sum of each was divided by the number of subjects in that particular group (high, low, or inconsistent). Upon obtaining the average number of statements, positive and negative separately, for the status group, the smaller averages were subtracted from the larger ones, yielding either a positive or negative score. These scores refer to what is referred to in this study as a covert expression of negativism toward the institution. The covert negativism index for each group is illustrated in Figure 5.

Apart from the sentence completion method, an attempt was made to obtain an overt index of negativism by keeping a record of the number of times each child transgressed the rules of the institution to the degree of requiring corporal punishment. The number of offenses for each subject in their respective status groups was averaged yielding a single score for each group. Figure 6 shows the comparison between these groups as to overt negativism.

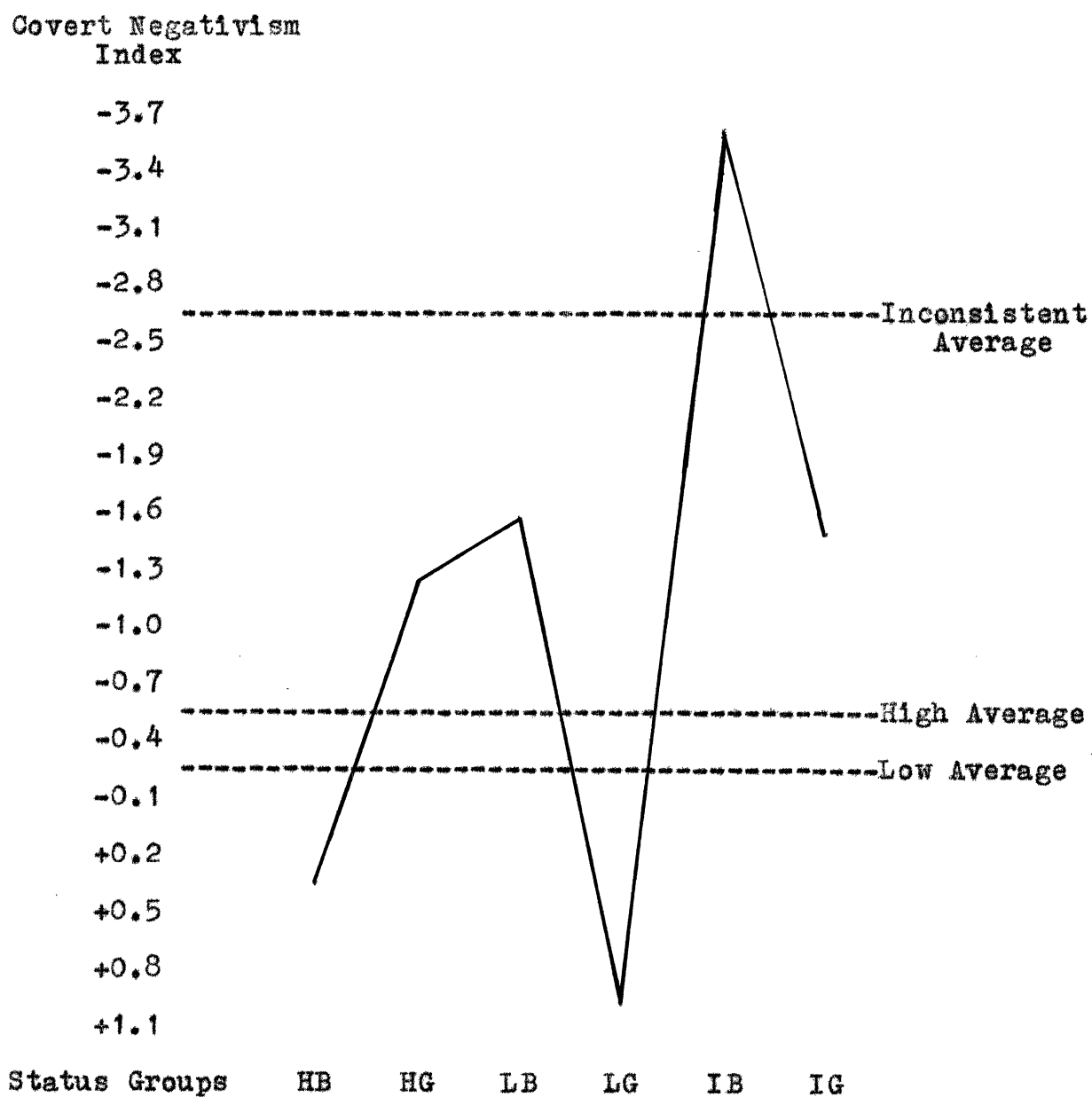


Fig. 5--A comparison of sex and status differences as to their covert expression of negativism toward the institution.

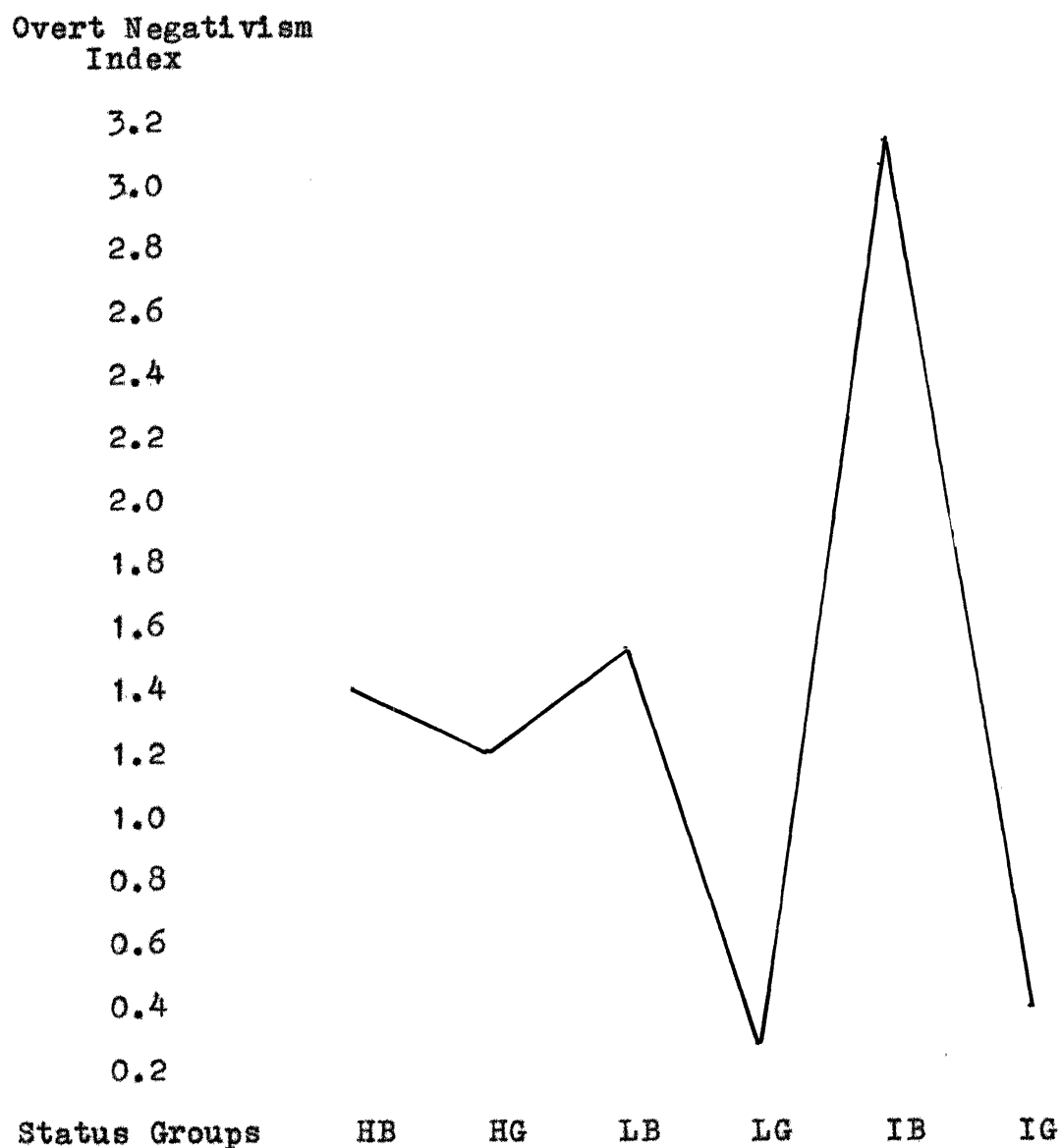


Fig. 6--A comparison of overt expressions of negativism toward the institution among the status groups with regard to sex differences. The higher the overt negativism index, the more that group has rebelled against institutional rules.

Although in a sense it is a comparison of incomparables, Figure 7 illustrates the comparisons of covert negativity and overt negativity among the various status groups. Each group was ranked on covert and overt negativity with number one assigned to the group expressing the least negativity. The sex differences are compared in Figure 7, and in Figure 8 there is a comparison with the sexes combined into their respective groups. The higher the rank on both Figure 7 and Figure 8, the greater the expression of negativity.

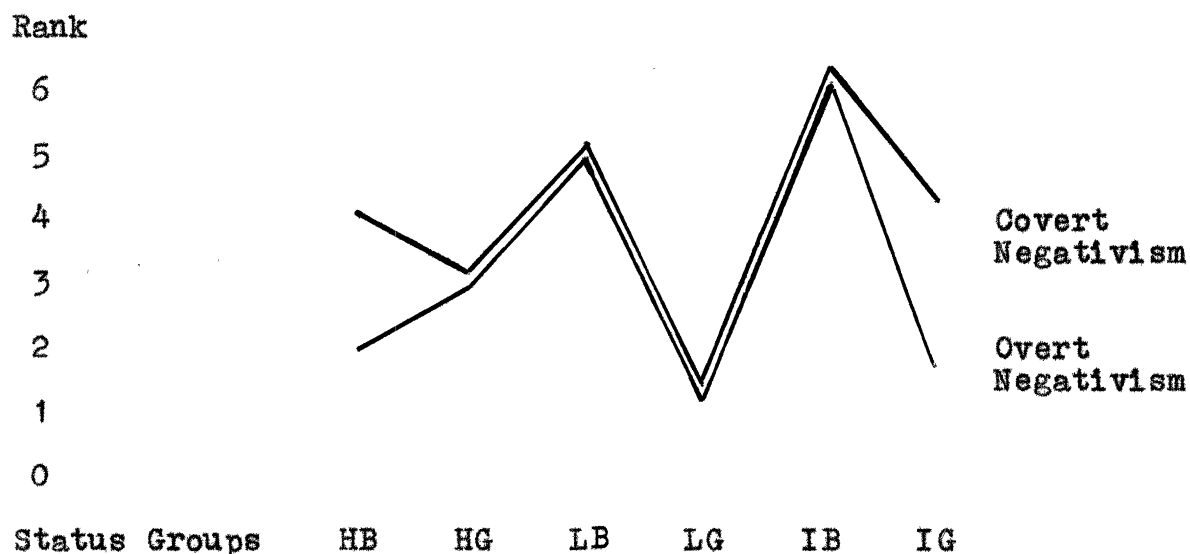


Fig. 7--A comparison of covert and overt negativity toward the institution among sex and status groups.

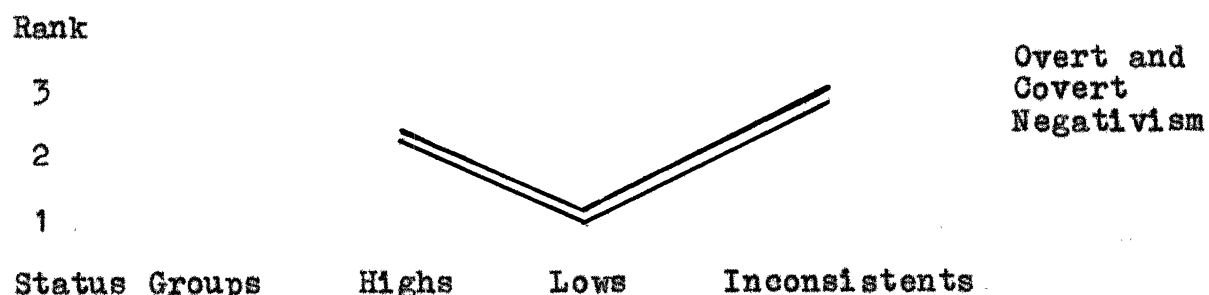


Fig. 8--A comparison of covert and overt negativism toward the institution among status groups with the sexes included in their respective groups.

A few of the sentences in the completion test are inclined to produce a response feeling toward the living situation and the work situation of the institution. The living situation (sentences 50, 63, 40, and 20) includes the expression of feeling toward group parents, peers in the dormitory, and the dormitory itself. The work situation (sentences 6, 32, and 67) is expressed in terms of relationships with work supervisors and work partners. Figure 9 compares the percentages of negative statements on the living situation and work situation sentence stems with the status and sex groups.

As to the variations in attitudes toward the institution, the comparison of covert and overt behavior using all sentence stems and tabulating the negative and positive statements toward the institution, and also records of offenses against the campus rules, the institution in general was focused upon. In attempting to locate the most likely direction of negativism, the individual sentence stems that are prone to elicit

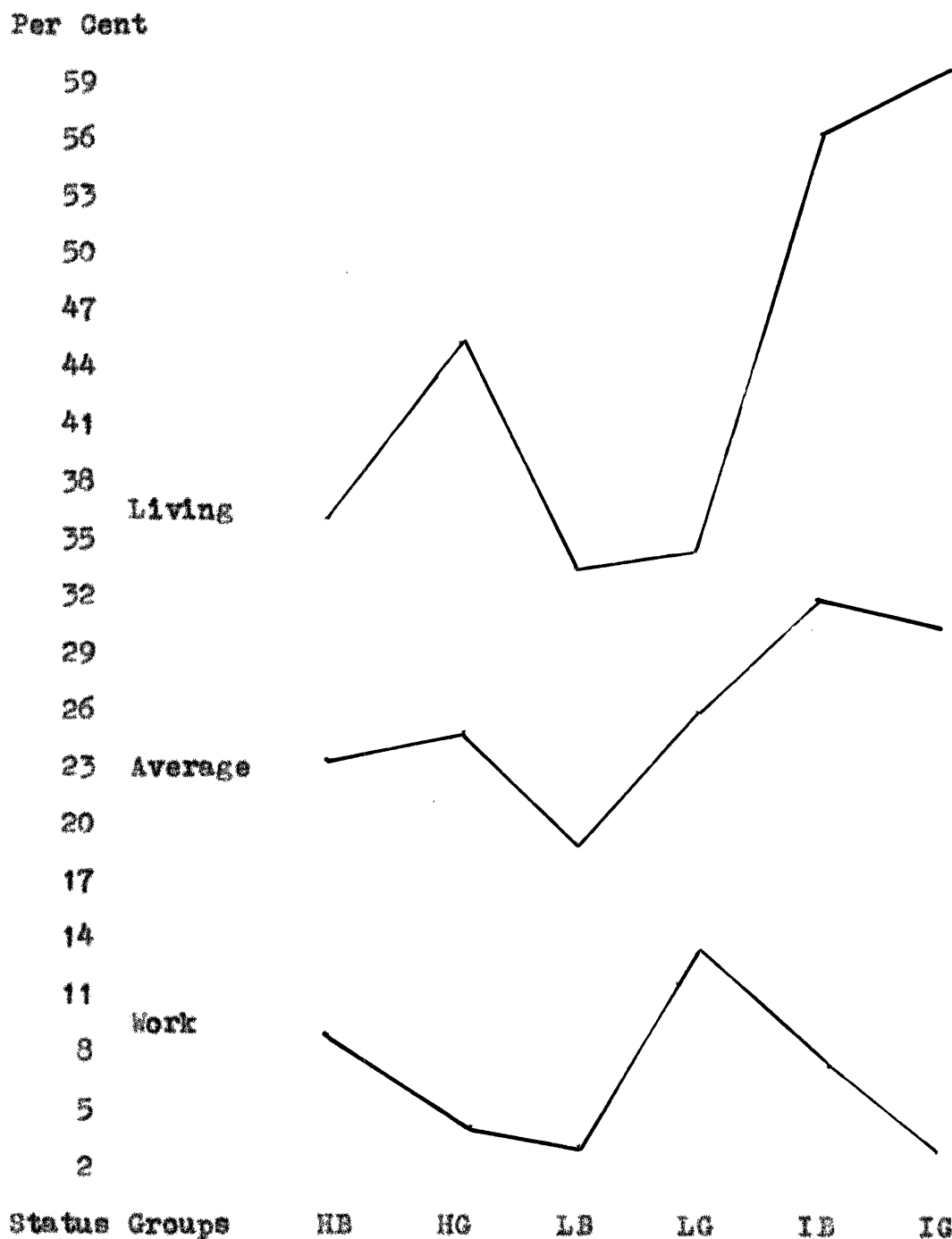


Fig. 9--A comparison of the percentage of negative statements toward living and work situations with status and sex groups.

responses concerning living and work situations were evaluated as to their positive and negative feelings. In all instances the inconsistent as a group demonstrated more negative feelings toward the institution, but there were sex differences within each status group. The living situation was responded to in much more negative terms than was the work situation. A detailed discussion of the significance of these results will be found in the next chapter.

Attitude Toward the Family

One of the major areas of investigation was the feelings the various groups expressed toward their families. Twelve of the seventy sentences on the sentence completion test fall within this area. The majority of the sentence stems were responded to by describing where the parent is, what he is, what he does, how he feels, or how he looks. Figure 10 compares how each status group responded to sentence stems referring to mother. The responses to father sentence stems are compared according to the status groups in Figure 11. In both illustrations the higher the percentage, the larger the number of statements was in proportion to the total number of statements possible.

In Figure 4 (page 22) it was pointed out that the highs were considerably more negative toward their family than were the lows and inconsistent. In describing the positive and negative emphasis characteristic of the various groups earlier,

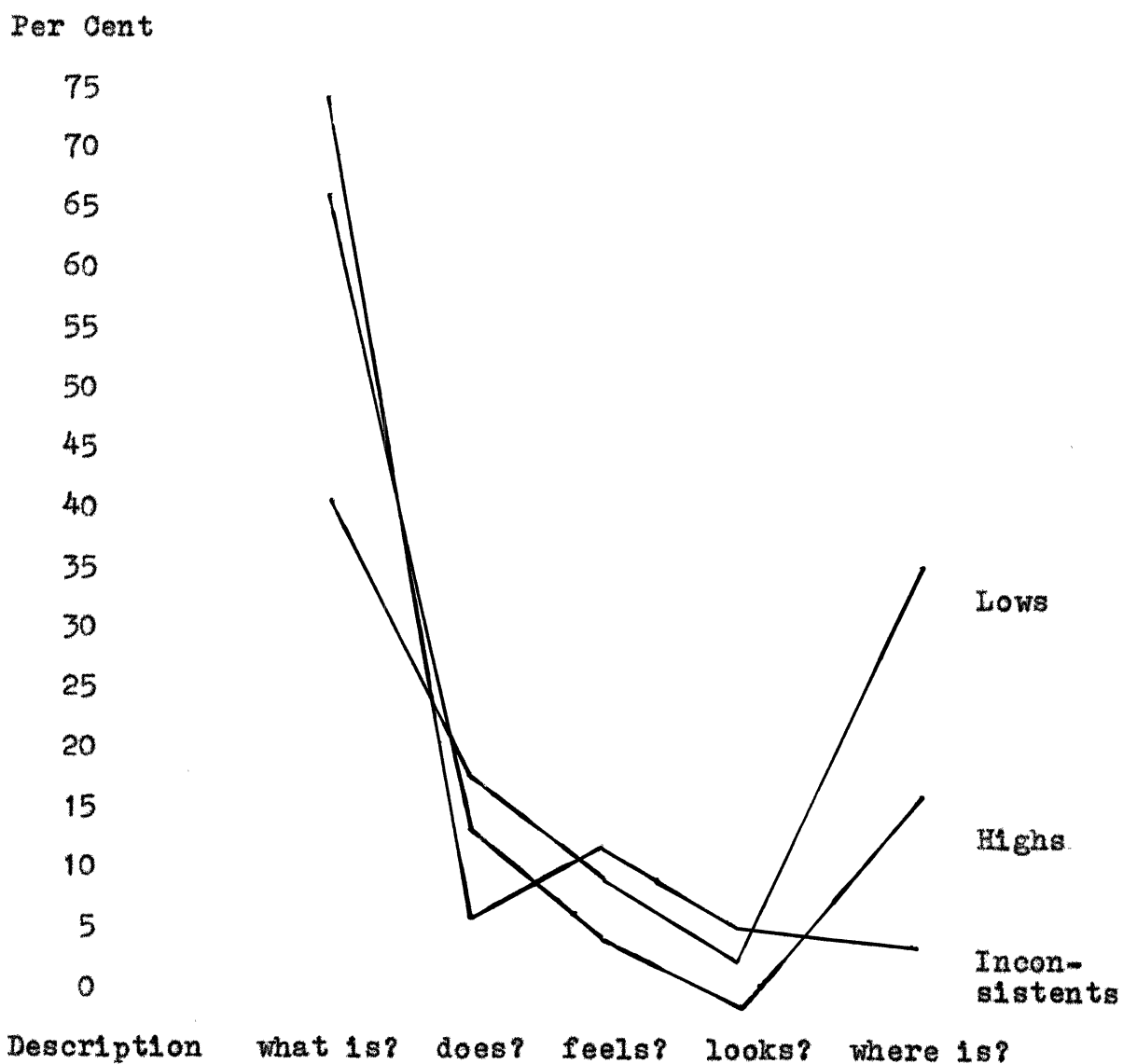


Fig. 10--A comparison of how the highs, lows, and inconsistencies describe their mother or mothers in general.

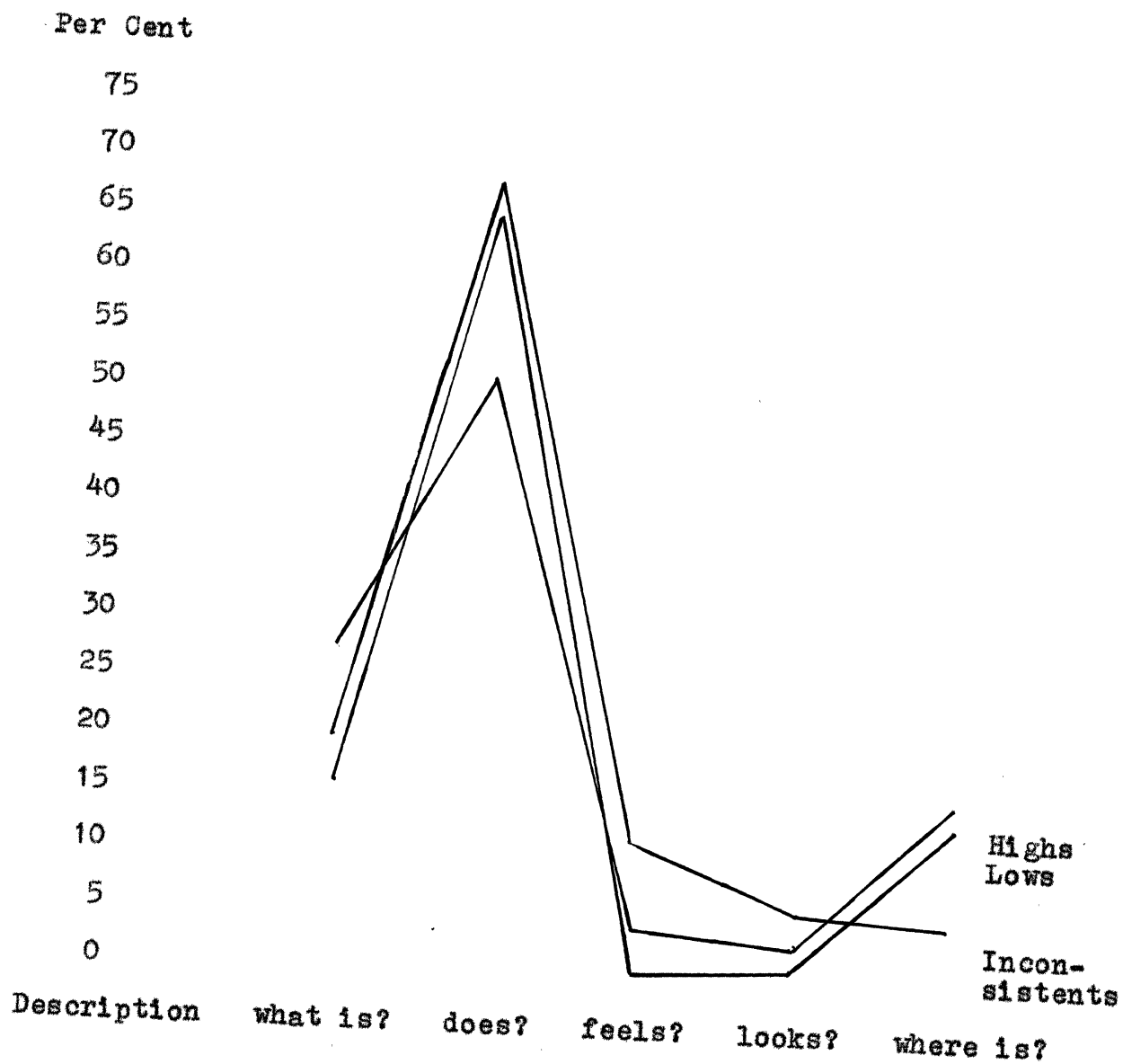


Fig. 11--A comparison of how the highs, lows, and inconsistencies describe their father or fathers in general.

the question was not answered concerning the variation of feelings toward mother and father. Figure 12 shows that each group tends to feel more negative toward his father than his mother.

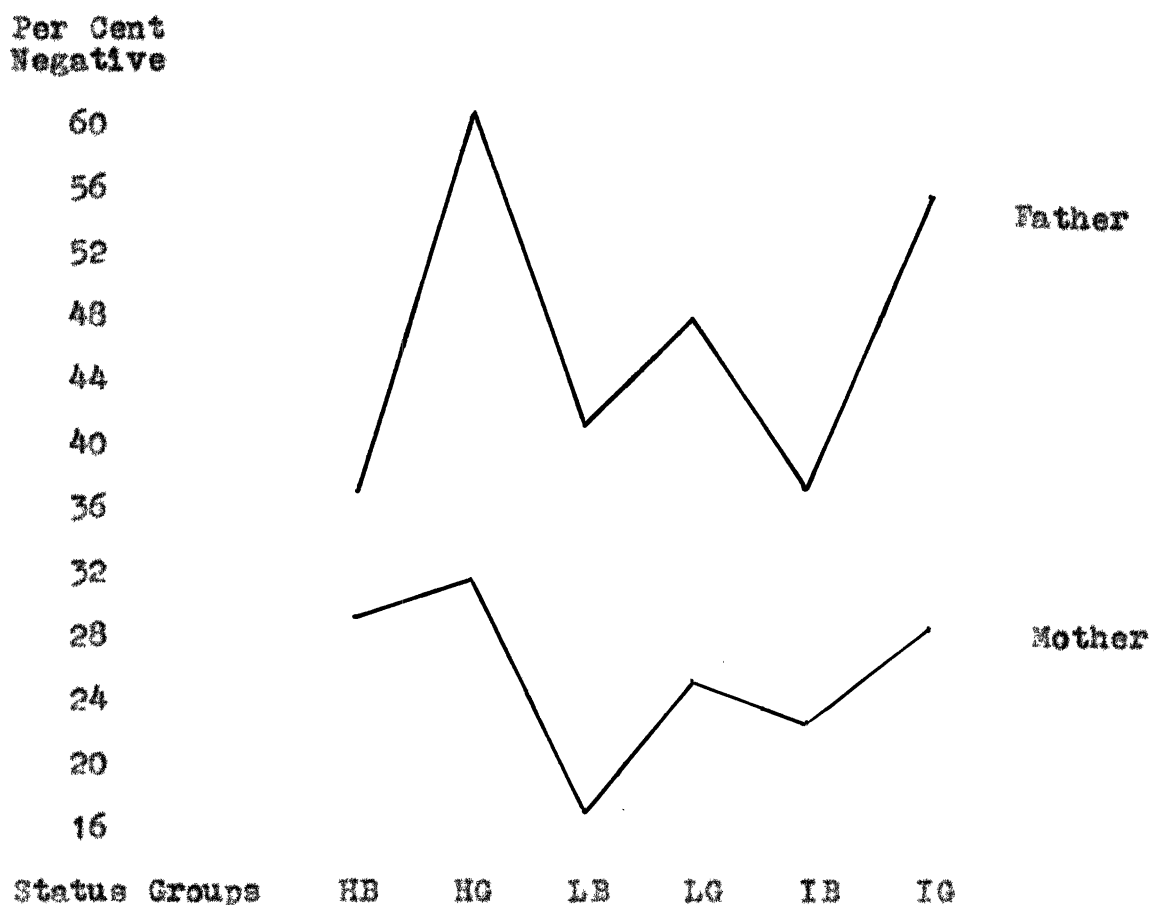


Fig. 12--A comparison of the negative feelings expressed toward mother and father in the status and sex groups.

It may be that the sentence stems for the father attitudes tend to elicit negative responses more than the mother sentence stems. Whether this is true or not does not seem to

change the observation that all groups tend to express more negative feelings toward the father figure.

As to group variations concerning the family unit, Figure 13 illustrates the differences in negativism among the groups and sexes with the highs demonstrating the biggest percentage of negative responses. The sentences in this group led one to respond to how he felt about his family, other families, and how his family treated him.

Per Cent
Negative

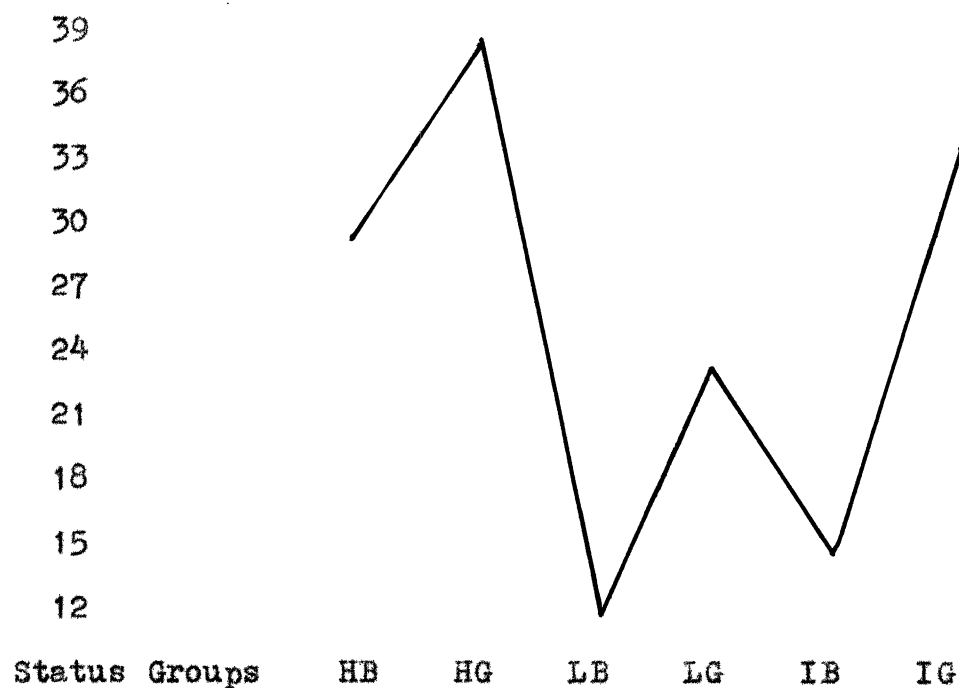


Fig. 13--A comparison of negative percentages of statements concerning the family unit among high, low, and inconsistent status groups.

Attitude Toward Sex

In determining the differences among the attitudes of the various status groups toward sex, their attitudes toward men and women, and their heterosexual attitudes were considered. Figures 14 and 15 illustrate how the various groups perceive men and women, and Figures 16, 17, and 18 indicate the positive and negative valences of the attitudes toward men and women, and heterosexual relationships.

Per Cent

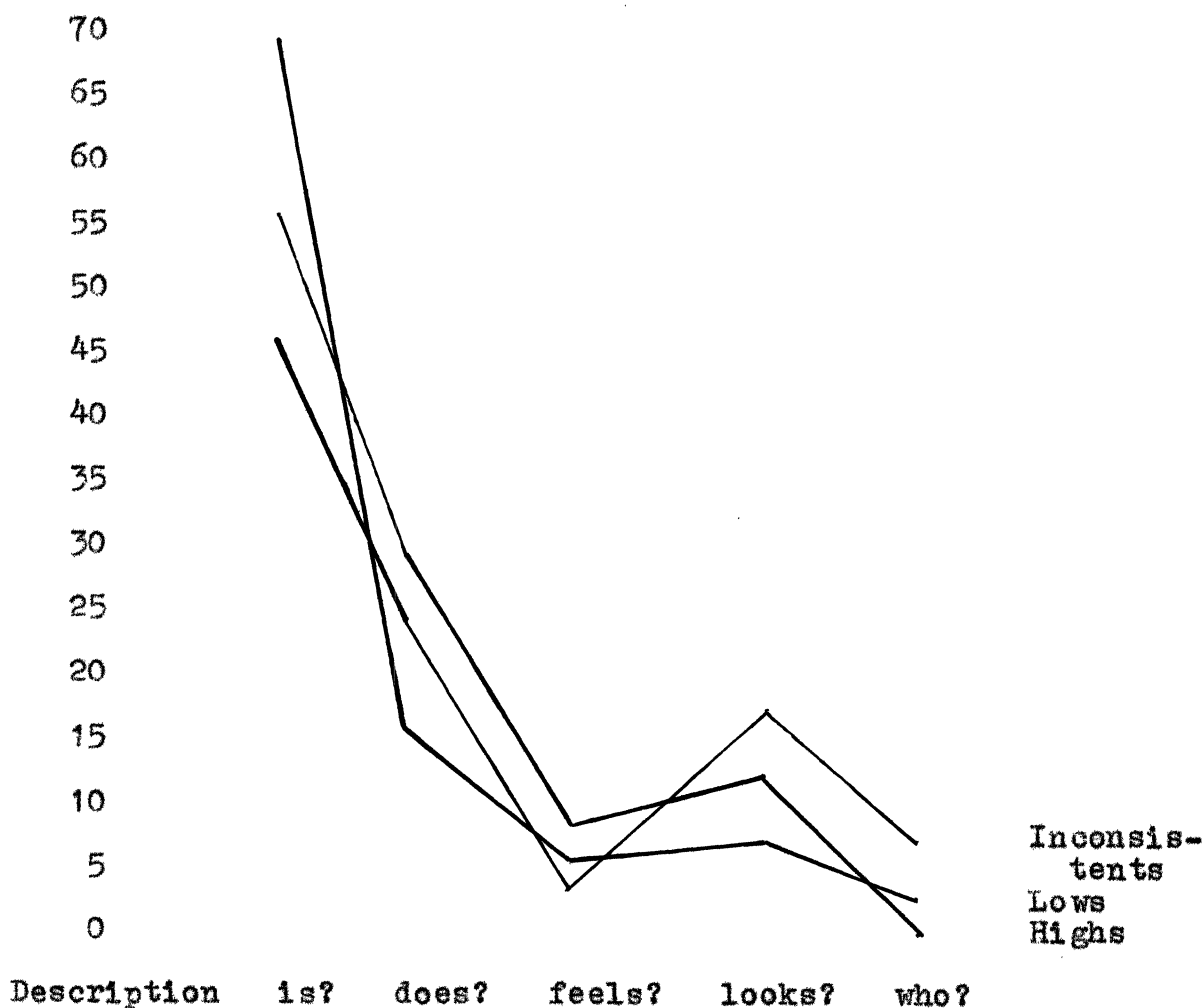


Fig. 14--A comparison of the way status groups perceive women by their description.

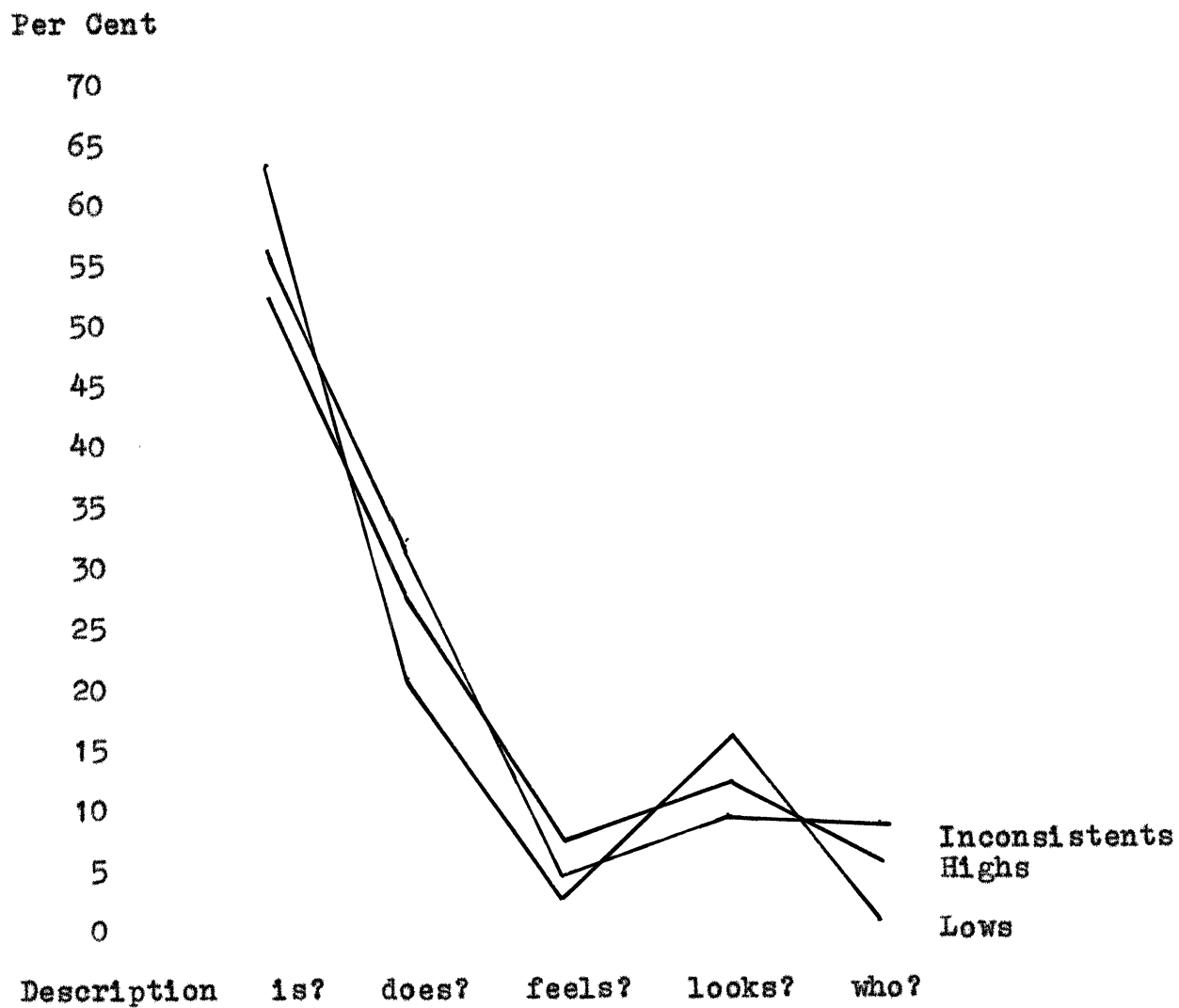


Fig. 15--A comparison of how various groups perceive men by their description.

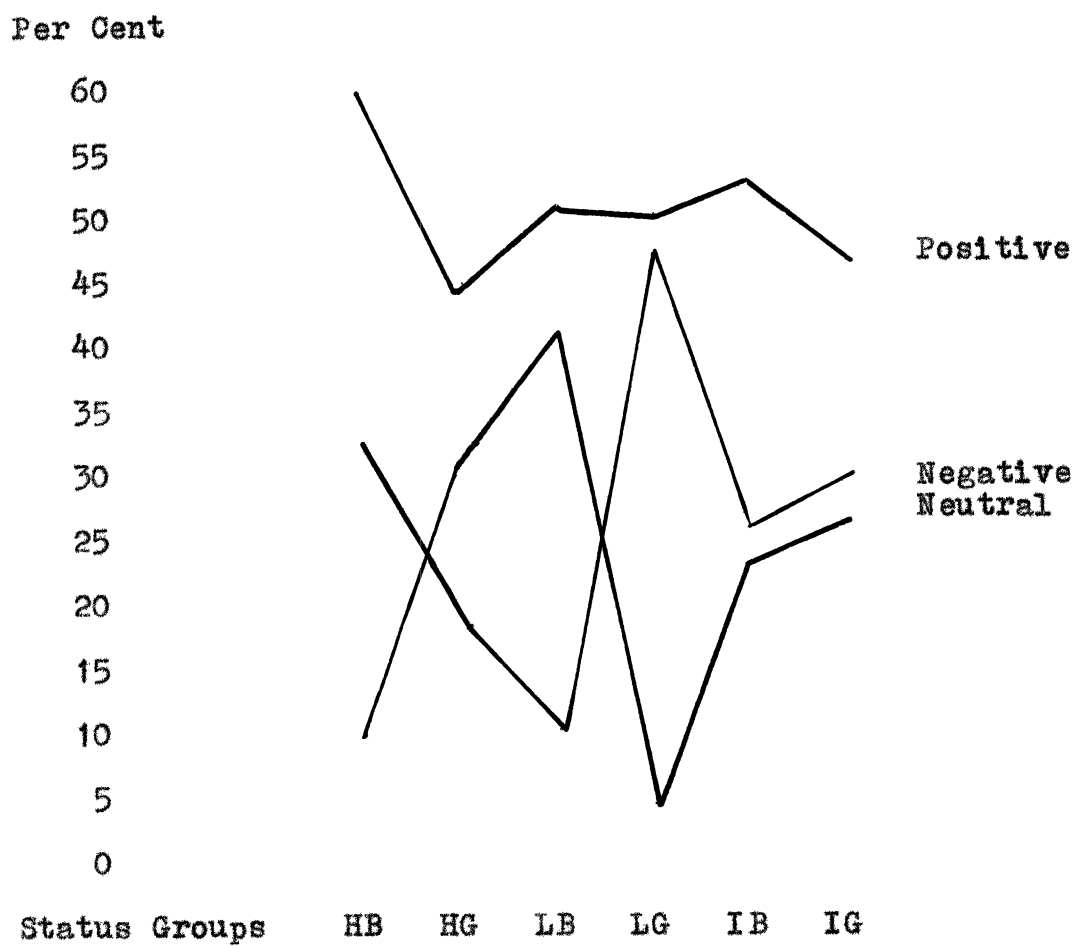


Fig. 16--A comparison of positive, negative, and neutral valences among various status groups toward women.

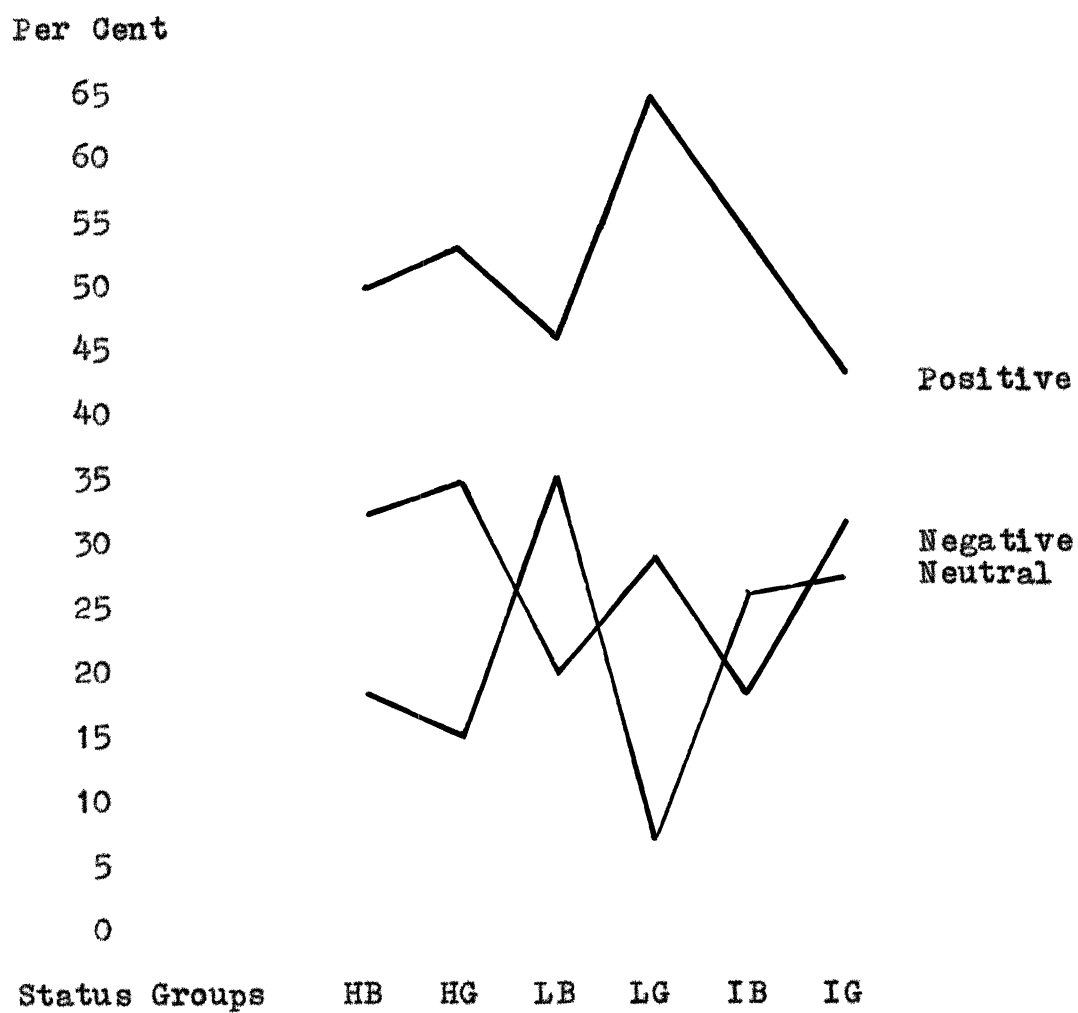


Fig. 17--A comparison of positive, negative, and neutral valences among various status groups toward men.

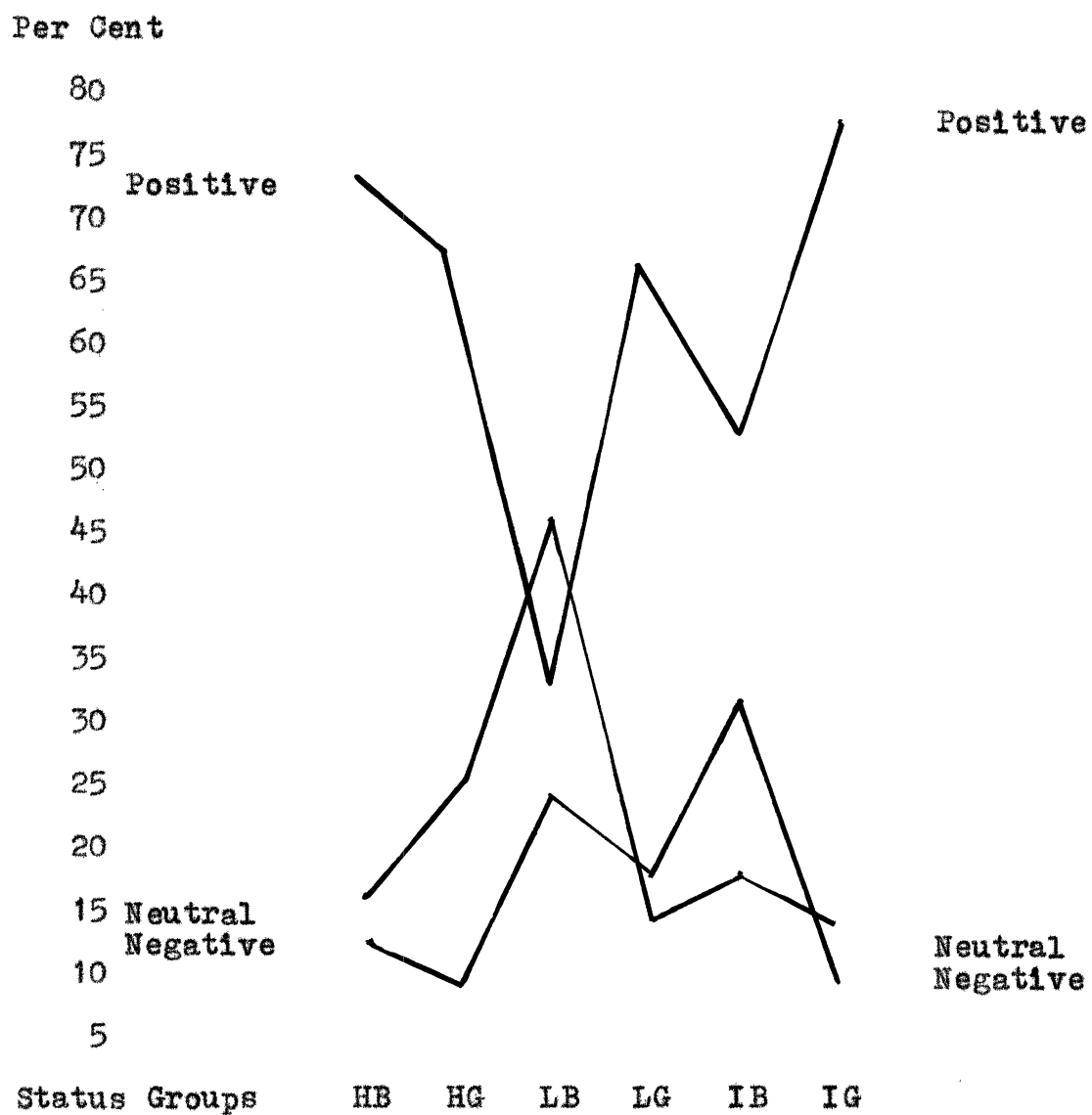


Fig. 18--A comparison of positive, negative, and neutral valences among various status groups as to their attitudes toward heterosexual relationships.

Interpersonal Relationships

The positive, negative, and neutral valences in four sub-areas of interpersonal relationships were tabulated for each status group. The percentages of these valences for each status group in each sub-area are compared in Figures 19, 20, 21, and 22.

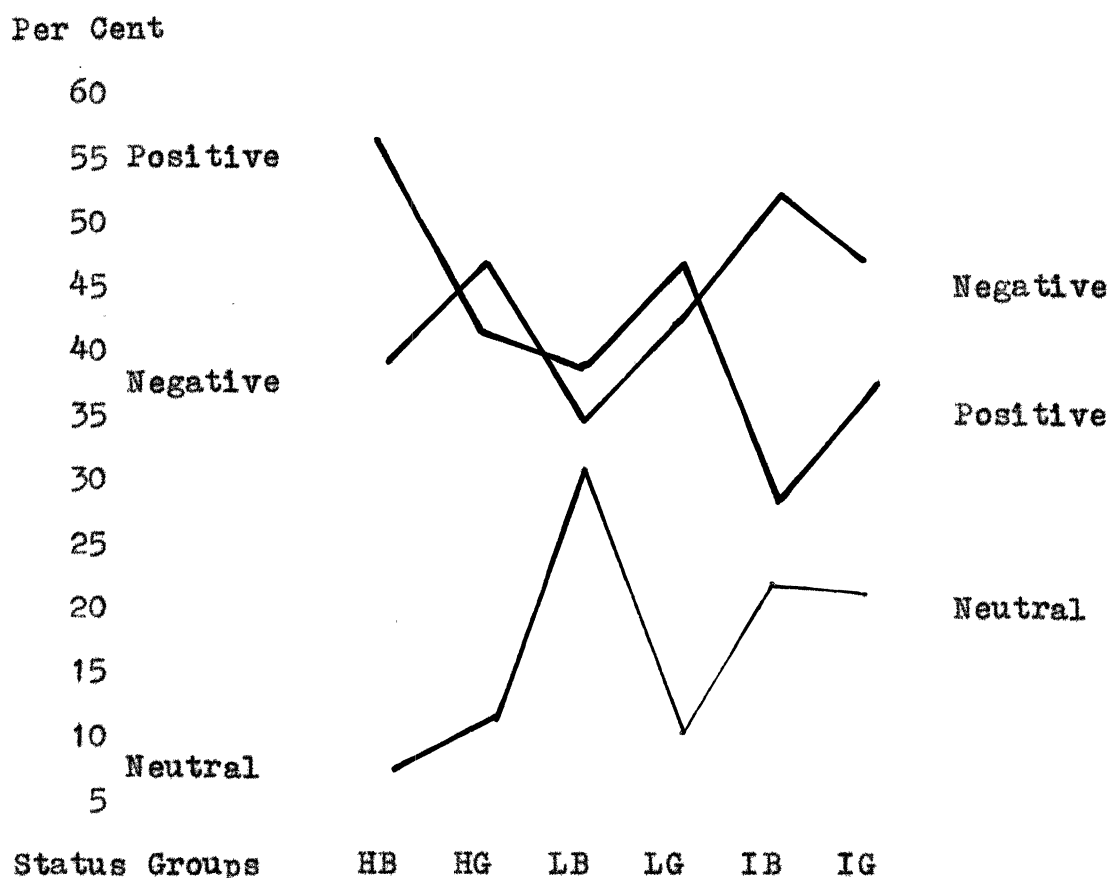


Fig. 19--A comparison of positive, negative, and neutral valences among various status groups concerning their attitude toward friends and acquaintances.

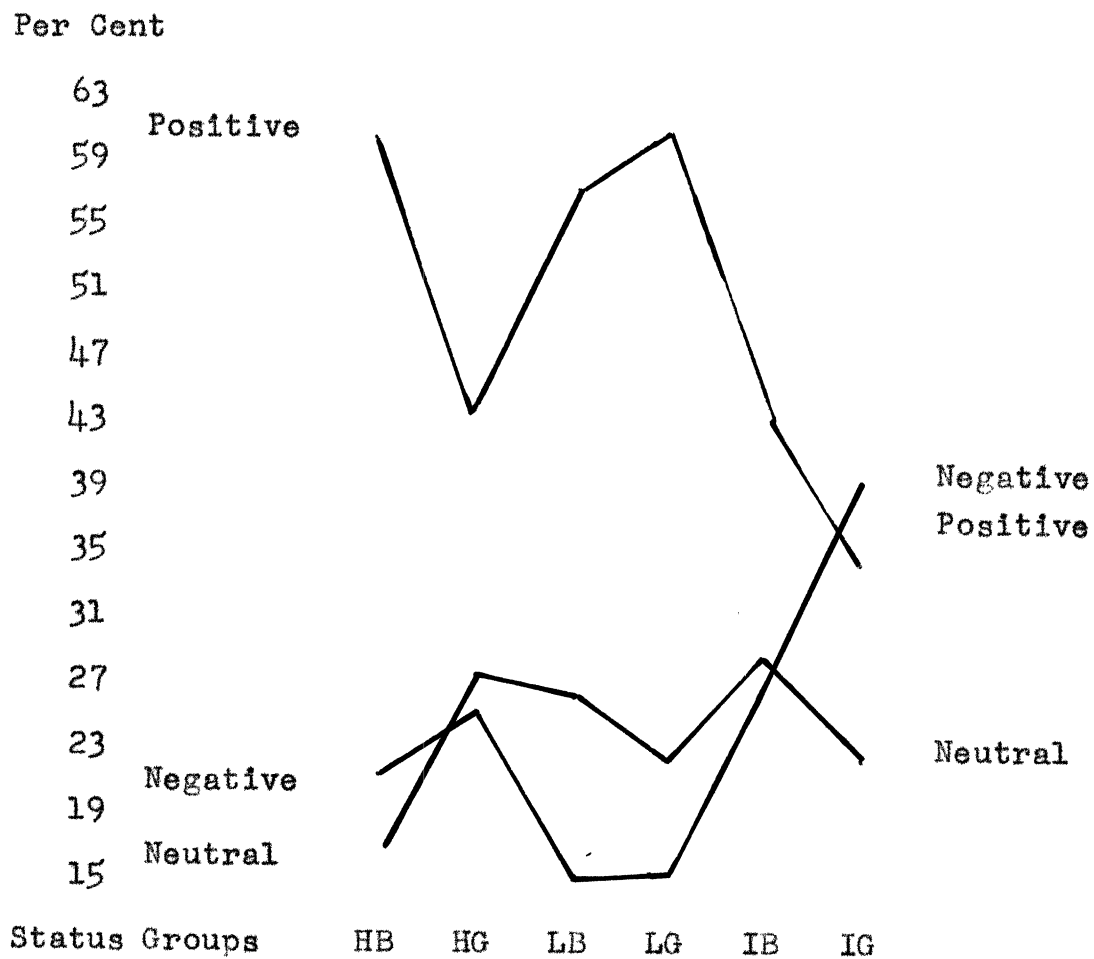


Fig. 20--A comparison of positive, negative, and neutral valences among various status groups concerning their attitude toward superiors.

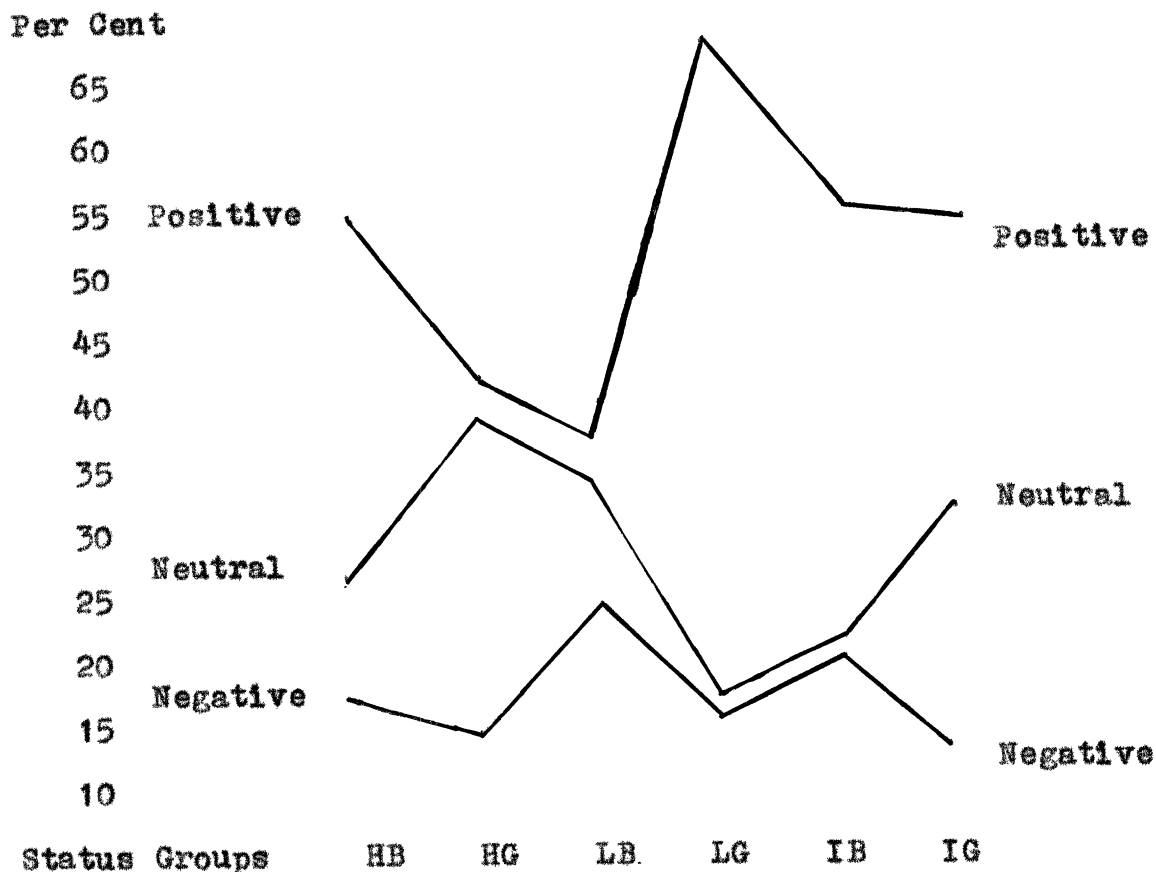


Fig. 21--A comparison of positive, negative, and neutral valences among various status groups concerning their attitude toward people supervised. (The subjects of this study do not supervise people in their work, but they were instructed to respond to the sentence stems as if they did. They were also asked to complete the questionnaire according to how they would feel if they were in a supervisory capacity.)

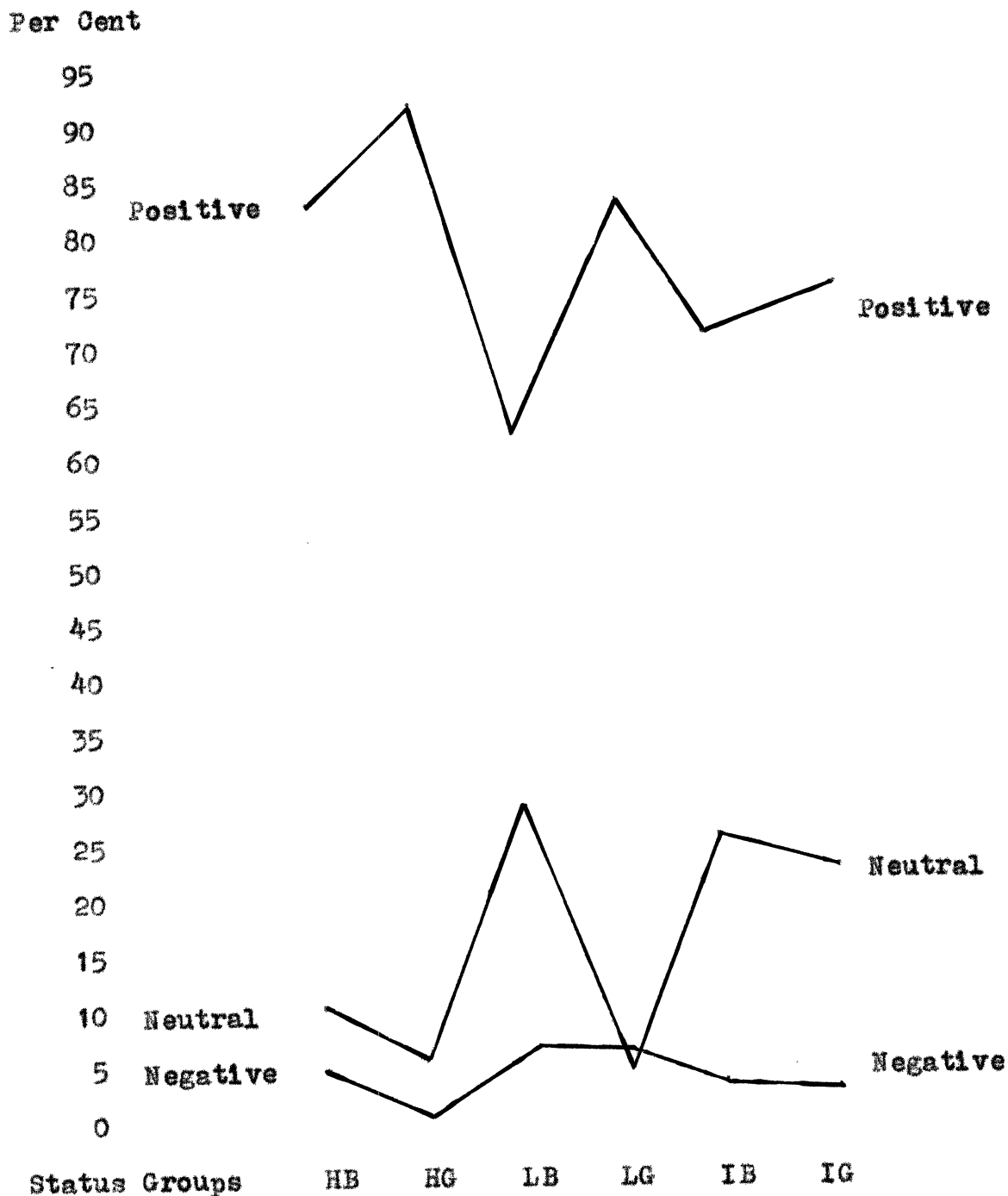


Fig. 22--A comparison of positive, negative, and neutral valences among various status groups concerning their attitude toward colleagues at work, school, or dormitory.

Self Concept

The self concept as proposed in this study is approached by evaluation of the sentence responses that have to do with fears, guilt feelings, attitude toward own abilities, attitude toward the past, and attitude toward the future. The sentence stems and responses regarding fears and guilt feelings did not lend themselves to a positive, negative, and neutral analysis as did most of the other sentences. The areas where these completions were prevalent were tabulated and are compared in Table II, Figure 23, and Table III, respectively.

In Table II abbreviations are used and are to be interpreted as follows: F = Feelings; An = Animals; E = Events; P = People; N = Nothing; and Ps = Physical Surroundings. Feelings refers to emotions that seem to have some element of fear for the individual. Some expressed fear of animals which is the area used in Table II for this category. Events that are laden with fear, such as death, marriage, or accidents are classified as events (E). When people are referred to as fear objects they are classified as such (P). A few of the subjects said they were afraid of nothing (N). Darkness, big cities, and the weather fall within the category of physical surroundings (Ps).

The reaction to fear that is experienced by the various groups is classified into two major groups, the passive reactions and the aggressive reactions. These are compared in Figure 23.

TABLE II
AREAS OF FEAR

Status Groups	P%	F%	An%	E%	N%	Ps%
HB	27	8	8	18	27	8
HG	45	37	21	0	7	14
LB	41	24	0	18	12	0
LG	31	6	17	26	3	17
IB	32	4	18	24	18	0
IG	27	4	23	23	0	15

Per Cent

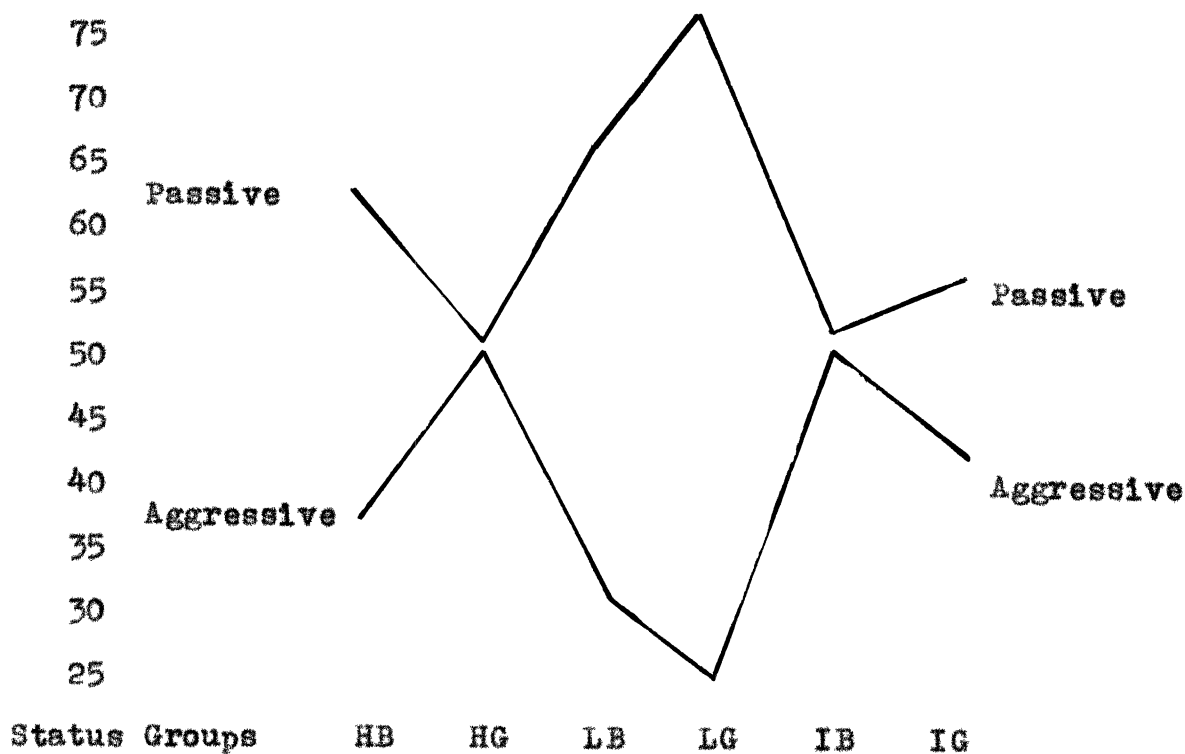


Fig. 23--A comparison of passive and aggressive reactions to fear among the various status groups

TABLE III
AREAS OF GUILT

Status Groups	G%	P%	Par%	Inst%		S%	Sch%	St%	A%
				g	h				
HB	12	16	3	(9)	(7)	22	3	25	3
HG	8	8	8	(17)	(8)	29	3	20	0
LB	23	4	9	(18)	(14)	14	0	18	0
LG	11	11	4	(11)	(6)	37	0	20	0
IB	23	7	10	(3)	(20)	17	10	7	3
IG	12	16	28	0		32	0	12	0

The abbreviations for Table III are representative of the areas where guilt was expressed. Responses that were general such as getting in trouble or when I was a little child are represented by G%. P% refers to the guilt that was expressed for actions or thoughts against peers and Par% refers to guilt associated with parents or parent figures. Guilt association with the institution had to be differentiated from hostile responses that occurred spontaneously and is represented by Inst%, with "g" standing for guilt responses and "h" for hostile responses. Guilt feelings toward the institution are represented by statements similar to feeling the greatest mistake was slapping a groupmother while hostile reactions are similar to feeling that the greatest mistake was coming to

Buckner Home. S% refers to guilt associated with the self, Sch% the school, St% for stealing, and A% for accidents (I was shot).

The areas related to the self concept that owned sentences that were analyzable for positive, negative, and neutral valences were the groups' attitudes toward their own abilities, their attitudes toward their past, and their attitudes toward their future. These are compared in Figures 24, 25, and 26 respectively.

Per Cent

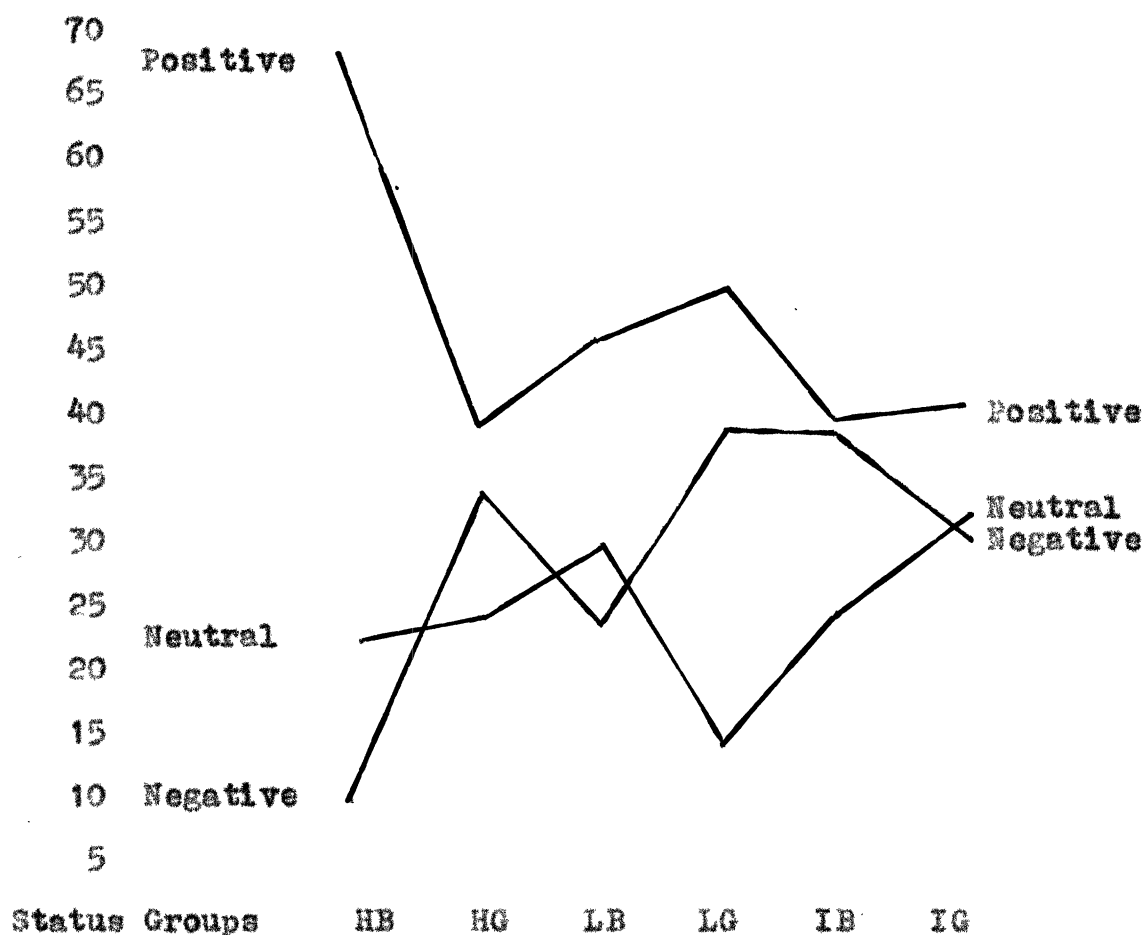


Fig. 24--A comparison of positive, negative, and neutral valences with the various status groups concerning their attitudes toward their own abilities.

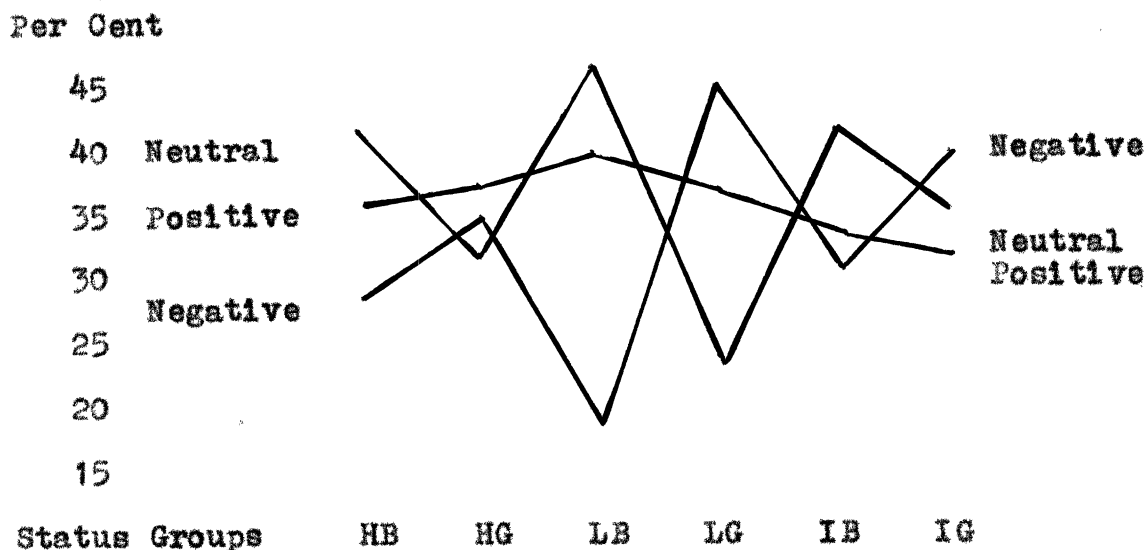


Fig. 25--A comparison of positive, negative, and neutral valences of the various status groups concerning their attitudes toward the past.

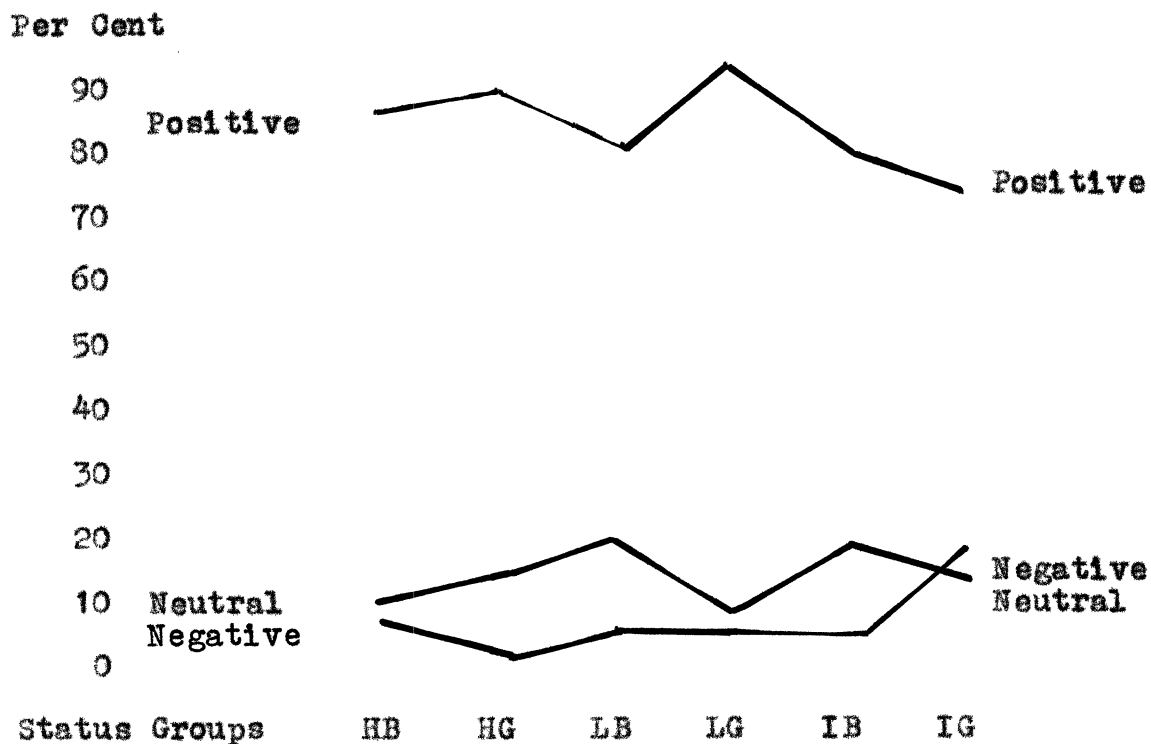


Fig. 26--A comparison of positive, negative, and neutral valences of the various status groups concerning their attitudes toward the future.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Introduction

As mentioned on page seven, a general hypothesis of this study is that the inconsistentes will demonstrate a group trend that will contrast with the other two groups, particularly the highs, in the maladjustment as expressed in negativism. A discussion of the results will follow under the same headings used in Chapter III and in the same order with attention given to group trends, both sex and status groups, in relation to the general hypothesis.

Number of Omissions

With the number of omissions being interpreted as meaning a general negativism and lack of willingness to commit oneself, it can be said that the highs were the least negative, while the inconsistentes and lows were near in negativism concerning the family and heterosexual relationships with the inconsistentes being considerably more negative as to the number of omissions concerning interpersonal relationships and self concept. When the status groups are separated according to sex, it was noticed that the sex groups among the inconsistentes and highs were reasonably close, but the low girls and

low boys were considerably different in omissions. The low boys were higher than all other groups as to the average per cent of omissions, suggesting a noncommittal attitude with the low girls being just the opposite, suggesting a positive, committal attitude toward the testing situation in general.

Number of Words

As indicated earlier, the average number of words used by each individual in his particular status groups is influenced by the number of omissions. An examination of Figures 1 and 3 reveals only minor changes among the various groups as compared to the number of omissions. Again, the main difference between groups was between the boys and girls of the low status groups with the girls being considerably more verbal than the boys.

Positive, Negative, and Neutral Statements

It is interesting to note that both the high boys and girls were more negative toward the family in general than were the other groups and more positive toward heterosexual relationships, interpersonal relationships, and self concept. The majority of children at Buckner Home have reason to be negative toward their parents. It may follow then, that the highs, being with reason positive in the latter three areas, can afford to be negative in their feelings toward their parents. In this sense the negativism expressed toward the parents would be closer to reality with this particular sampling of subjects than would positive feelings.

The inconsistent and lows are very similar in expression of negative statements concerning their family and heterosexual relationships with the inconsistent being considerably more negative in relation to their interpersonal relationships and self concept.

Attitude Toward the Institution

When the expression of negativism and the feeling of negativism (covert and overt) toward the institution are compared as in Figures 5, 6, 7, and 8, it is suggested in general that the highs fall between the lows and inconsistent in their overt and covert negativism, with the inconsistent being the most negative. There is a greater difference between the highs and inconsistent, however, than between the highs and lows.

A rank order comparison reveals the high boys as expressing more negativism than they are feeling and the inconsistent girls as feeling more than they are expressing. An inspection of all of the above mentioned figures reveals that this difference between feeling and expressing is much greater among the inconsistent girls than with the high boys. While the high boys were expressing more than they were feeling according to the inference made upon comparing rank differences, it is important to note that in comparison to the inconsistent boys, their overt expressions were not nearly so numerous. An explanation might be that the high boys are demonstrating the

aggressive characteristic mentioned by Bonney¹⁴ as this type of individual is placed under rigid regulations.

As evidenced by Figure 9, all of the groups tended to be more negative toward their institutional living situations than toward their work situations. Although they were more negative toward the living situation, the highs were not as negative as the inconsistent at this point. It is clear that the inconsistent, both the boys and girls, expressed more negative statements toward the living situation than did the other groups. The Low girls differed in their attitudes toward the work situation, being more negative. Possibly they are required to cooperate with others to a greater extent at work than in the dormitory where they can be satisfied by walling off others, making their living situation more positive when compared to the other groups.

Attitude Toward the Family

While Figures 10 and 11 do not lend any data as to the negativism among the groups toward the family, they do give an indication of how the various groups tend to see their parents and families in general. No outstanding differences among any of the groups were noted but in general, the trend seems to be that the highs respond to their mothers more in terms of what she is, with the inconsistent extreme on this point and the

¹⁴Bonney, op. cit., 1943, Preface.

lows very low concerning this evaluation. The lows balanced this by being the highest in percentage of responding to mother sentences by telling where she is or where she is located.

In general, the entire group sees the father more for what he does as contrasted to the trend of how they saw the mother as what she is. Again, the differences are not great, but the highs see the father less for what he does, more for what he is, and more where he is when compared to the other groups.

All the groups tended to be more negative toward the father than toward the mother and it is striking to note the sex differences as demonstrated in Figure 12. All of the girls tend to see both their mother and father in a more negative light than do the boys as a group. Status group comparisons are more evident as seen in Figure 13 as the highs reveal more negative feelings toward the family unit, but the sex differences are still evident. The more specific data regarding the family support the inference made earlier concerning the reason why the highs are more negative toward their family than are the other groups.

Attitude Toward Sex

By using the same approach used in determining how the various groups perceived their parents, no large differences were found in how they perceived men and women in general.

There is a change however, when the inconsistent and lows are compared as to how they perceived their mother and how they perceive women. In contrast, the lows see woman more in terms of what she is. It might be that the inconsistent are more concerned about their relationships toward their mothers than are the other groups comparatively speaking.

The groups are very close in how they perceive men with the trend being to see men mostly in terms of what they are but with what they do being also important. The difference among the total group that was seen in how they saw their mothers and fathers is not revealed in how they see men and women. The father is perceived in terms of what he does, while this is secondary regarding other men.

When positive, negative, and neutral valences are compared as in Figure 16, it appears that quite a variety of feelings toward women are expressed among the high and low groups, with the inconsistent being the most inconsistent in the way of sex comparison. The most evident sex difference among a status group is in the feeling expressed by the boys and girls of the low group. Both express a positive feeling that is very near in comparison but the low boys are largely non-committal as to their feelings toward women while the low girls are nearly as negative as they are positive toward women, with a very small percentage of their responses being scored as neutral. The opposite extreme was found in the highs but not to the degree as expressed in the lows.

While the sexes in the inconsistent group were the most consistent in their expression of positive, negative, and neutral feelings toward women, the highs are the most consistent in their attitudes toward men. With the fathers receiving more negative feelings than the mothers it might be concluded that more stable feelings among the high boys and girls in regard to men indicate a more settled evaluation among the group of men in general. The lows, being the most variable toward both men and women could be having difficulty identifying and accepting their own sex due to their partial isolation to the extent of not being chosen for either roommates or project partners.

The highs are again the most consistent in their feelings toward heterosexual relationships with a clear majority of positive responses. While the inconsistent are also positive toward heterosexual relationships there is a greater difference between the boys and girls with the boys being more negative and less positive. The low boys seem to be very negative toward heterosexual relations with also a high percentage of neutral responses, implying that if they are not expressing negative feelings, they are not going to express any feelings at all.

Interpersonal Relationships

Attitudes toward people, or groups of people, including friends and acquaintances, superiors, people supervised, and

colleagues at work, school, or dormitory, were analyzed for positive, negative, and neutral valences. In the general positive, negative comparison in Figure 4, it was pointed out that the highs were the most positive in interpersonal relationships with the lows running a close second. In contrast with this, the inconsistent were much more negative, generally speaking.

The feelings given in response to sentence stems in regard to their attitude toward friends and acquaintances were presented in Figure 19. It is very evident that the inconsistent feel more negative toward their friends and acquaintances. The highs had the lowest percentage of neutral completions as contrasted with the lows having the highest percentage of neutral completions which suggests that the lows tend to glorify their status situation by being noncommittal while the highs commit themselves either positively or negatively.

In general, the entire group was more positive toward those whom they considered to be their superiors than they were toward their friends and acquaintances. However, the inconsistent differ rather markedly in that they are predominantly negative in this regard. The lows are more consistently positive than the highs which may be close to the picture as the superiors might perceive. Many of the lows have compensated for their rejection by their peers by appealing to the adults on campus resulting in approval from their superiors.

As Figure 21 demonstrates concerning the attitudes toward people supervised, the inconsistent as a group tend to be more positive than either of the other groups. Few, if any, of the subjects in this study serve in a supervisory capacity in their work situation, so they were instructed to answer in an "as if" manner. Thus, the inconsistent seem to be saying that they would like to feel positive toward those under them and they are probably wishing for such a relationship which they feel would stabilize their status. This may be true also for the low boys who were more positive than all other status groups.

When it comes to expressing attitudes toward colleagues at work, school, or dormitory, the entire group responds much more positively. The attitude expressed toward this group of colleagues differs from that expressed toward friends and acquaintances in depths of relationship. The interpersonal relationship toward the group of people illustrated in Figure 22 is more shallow and social while the relationships toward friends and acquaintances tend to be more personal, resulting in the positive and negative feelings of a more intense nature. As to positive feelings toward colleagues, the highs are the most positive, the lows are next, and the inconsistent are the least positive, but without as much difference as evidenced in Figure 19 with more personal relationships.

Self Concept

Five factors are included in the evaluation of the self concept in this study and are referred to as sentence responses that have to do with fears, guilt feelings, attitude toward own abilities, attitude toward the past, and attitude toward the future. Of these, only the latter three were quantifiable as to positive, negative, and neutral valence.

As to the areas of fear, it is difficult to spot any status group trends. A few trends do seem to be present however, in regard to the areas most frequently referred to by different sexes. For example, the girls in all three status groups tend to be afraid of animals and physical surroundings to a greater extent than the boys while the boys tend to be afraid of "nothing" which would probably be expected among adolescent males.

An interesting status difference is noticed in Figure 23 as the lows very decidedly respond to fear in a passive manner as contrasted to an aggressive manner. A passive response to fear in this study is referred to as crying, getting blue, or giving up, as representative statements while fighting back is characteristic of an aggressive response. It seems that the lows have adapted the passive response to their status condition in many instances and perhaps this pattern is demonstrated in their response to fear.

Table III does not reveal any striking status differences concerning the areas of guilt. As mentioned in the

discussion of attitudes toward the family, the inconsistencies were the most positive. It is interesting to note that the inconsistencies expressed more guilt feelings in regard to their actions against their parents as compared to the other groups. This may be an influencing factor in their "Mother's Day card" statements of overglorification of their parents. In regard to guilt feelings toward the institution, the highs, especially the high girls, expressed much sorrow toward past offenses that got them in trouble with the campus policies. The inconsistent boys, on the other hand, released only hostile responses toward the institution even when the sentence stems were designed on the most part to elicit guilt feelings. All of the girls in the various groups seemed to feel the most guilt in relation to their own person, such as guilt associated with personal habits that are frowned upon by the campus definition of what is and what is not to be done.

The high boys were the most positive in attitude toward their own abilities with the high girls demonstrating more negativism at this point. When the group means are considered, the inconsistencies would be more negative toward their own abilities than even the low group, but the difference is not great. As seen in other comparisons, the inconsistent boys and high girls are the most alike of all the groups. Whether this is true in all instances with other populations remains

to be seen. It might be that this is a particular characteristic of children at Buckner Home.

An interesting pattern is presented in Figure 25 concerning attitudes toward the past among the various groups. The positive element is near the same for all groups but the negative and neutral valences demonstrate sex differences rather than status differences. The boys tend to be non-committal in attitude toward the past while the girls, being committal, tend to see the past in a negative light.

The future is reacted to in much the same way by all the groups, sex and status alike. The main element to be pointed out is the accent each group gave to seeing the future with a positive attitude. This might suggest that institutionalized children do not tend to dread the future because they will be cast out into a strange world, as often is expected, rather look forward to it because it offers a better life with more freedom than large care institutions can possibly offer.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Summary

In order to determine if those who reveal discrepancies on sociometric criteria, the inconsistent, differ from those who are highly chosen or lowly chosen in the way of negativism, subjects from Buckner Baptist Children's Home were utilized. Out of a population of 206 adolescents who were given a sociometric test using roommate and project criteria, extreme scores as to number of choices received were used to form the highs (those who received the most choices), the lows (those who received the least number of choices), and the inconsistent (those who revealed discrepancies between their rank of choices received on both criteria).

The sixty-six students used in this study (thirty-two boys and thirty-four girls) were then administered a revised version of Sachs Sentence Completion Test. The data were grouped according to the sociometric status of the individual in order to evaluate it as group data. The negativism scores were obtained from the assignment of positive, negative, or neutral valences to the sentence responses and by a tabulation of the number of omissions. One side line measure

of negativism was introduced as overt negativism by comparing the number of corporal punishment reports received by the various status groups. Other observations were introduced such as how various groups perceived their mothers and fathers as compared to men and women in general.

Findings

The general hypothesis of this study was supported in that the inconsistent as a group tend to express more negativism as measured by evaluation of sentence completion items. When the four general areas are analyzed separately, it is found that the inconsistent are not unlike the low as to negativism related to family and heterosexual relationships, but differ markedly in negativism as to self concept and interpersonal relationships.

When sex differences within the various status groups were compared, it was noticed that the boys and girls of the low group in this study were far from being alike in many cases. Other less significant variations were noted which indicate that boys and girls may react in different ways to their status within the group. When the sexes were averaged as to negativism scores, their status group was generally consistent in rank within the other groups, with the inconsistent being the most negative.

Other findings not related to the general hypothesis were found to be true of the entire group. One interesting indication was that institutionalized adolescents tend to

over-glorify their mothers in their thinking, while fathers are seen in a pretty bad light. Contrary to what might be thought, the adolescents in this study did not seem to have many qualms about the future and in most instances gave responses that imply that time perspective may be playing an important part in their ability to tolerate present circumstances.

Implications

The most important implication as suggested numerously in the test results is that the inconsistent seem to be a sub-group that is different from the frequently investigated highs and lows. This raises the idea that the group may offer a subject for further investigation to determine the significance and extent of this difference from the other groups.

[By going a step farther, it might be valuable to study inconsistent as two groups. It seems that there would be a difference between the personal and social criteria discrepancies with the group rating low on personal criteria evidencing more disturbance. In this study these two divisions of inconsistent were fairly balanced, but it would be interesting to compare these discrepancies with one another.]

APPENDIX

Sample of Sentence Completion Test

SENTENCE COMPLETION

Confidential: What you say will in no way be used against you and only the person giving this will be allowed to see what you have written.

NAME:

SEX:

AGE:

DATE:

INSTRUCTIONS: Below are seventy partly complete sentences. Read each one and finish it by writing the first thing that comes to your mind. Work as quickly as you can. If you cannot complete an item, circle the number and return to it later.

1. I feel that my father seldom
2. When the odds are against me
3. I always wanted to
4. If I were in charge
5. To me the future looks
6. My work supervisor
7. I know it is silly but I am afraid of
8. I feel that a real friend
9. When I was a child
10. My idea of a perfect woman
11. When I see a man and a woman together
12. Compared with most families, mine
13. At work, I get along best with

14. My mother
15. I would do anything to forget the time I
16. If my father would only
17. I believe that I have the ability to
18. I could be perfectly happy if
19. If people work for me
20. My groupmother
21. My idea of a perfect man
22. I look forward to
23. Before coming to Buckner Home I
24. In school, my teachers
25. Most of my friends don't know that I am afraid of
26. I don't like people who
27. I think most girls
28. My feeling about married life is
29. My family treats me like
30. I think most boys
31. I wish my father
32. Those I work with are
33. My mother and I
34. My greatest mistake was
35. Being at Buckner Home makes me feel
36. My greatest weakness is
37. My secret ambition in life
38. The people who work for me

39. Some day I
40. When I see my groupmother coming
41. I wish I could lose the fear of
42. The people I like best
43. I feel I am a person that
44. If I were young again
45. I believe most women
46. In dating, I like
47. Most families I know
48. I like working with people who
49. I think that most mothers
50. Living in a dormitory
51. When I was younger, I felt guilty about
52. I feel that my father is
53. When luck turns against me
54. I believe most men
55. In giving orders to others I
56. What I want most out of life
57. When I am older
58. People whom I consider my superiors
59. What I like least about men
60. My fears sometimes force me to
61. When I'm not around, my friends
62. My most outstanding memory of childhood
63. I like to have roommates, but
64. What I like least about women

- 65. My dating life (or love life)
- 66. When I was a child, my family
- 67. People who work with me usually
- 68. I like my mother but
- 69. The worst thing I ever did
- 70. When I leave Buckner Home

SENTENCE COMPLETION RATING SHEET

SUBJECT:

SEX:

DATE:

AGE:

I. ATTITUDES TOWARD FAMILY

Rating_____

1. ATTITUDE TOWARD MOTHER

- 14. My mother
- 33. My mother and I
- 49. I think that most mothers
- 68. I like my mother but

INTERPRETATION:

2. ATTITUDE TOWARD FATHER

Rating_____

- 1. I feel that my father seldom
- 16. If my father would only
- 31. I wish my father
- 52. I feel that my father is

INTERPRETATION:

3. ATTITUDE TOWARD FAMILY UNIT

Rating_____

- 12. Compared with most families, mine
- 29. My family treats me like
- 47. Most families I know
- 66. When I was a child, my family

INTERPRETATION:

II. ATTITUDES TOWARD SEX

1. ATTITUDE TOWARD WOMEN

Rating:_____

- 10. My idea of a perfect woman
- 27. I think most girls
- 45. I believe most women
- 64. What I like least about women

INTERPRETATION:

2. ATTITUDE TOWARD MEN. Rating_____

- 21. My idea of a perfect man
- 30. I think most boys
- 54. I believe most men
- 59. What I like least about men

INTERPRETATION:

3. ATTITUDE TOWARD HETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS. Rating_____

- 11. When I see a man and a woman together
- 28. My feeling about married life is
- 46. In dating, I like
- 65. My dating life

INTERPRETATION:III. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS.

1. ATTITUDE TOWARD FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES. Rating_____

- 8. I feel that a real friend
- 26. I don't like people who
- 42. The people I like best
- 50. Living in a dormitory is
- 61. When I'm not around, my friends
- 63. I like to have roommates, but

INTERPRETATION:

2. ATTITUDE TOWARD SUPERIORS. Rating:_____

- 6. My work supervisor
- 24. In school, my teachers
- 40. When I see my groupmother coming
- 58. People whom I consider my superiors

INTERPRETATION:

3. ATTITUDE TOWARD PEOPLE SUPERVISED Rating:_____

- 4. If I were in charge
- 19. If people work for me
- 38. The people who work for me
- 55. In giving orders to others, I

INTERPRETATION:

4. ATTITUDE TOWARD COLLEAGUES AT WORK,
SCHOOL, OR DORM. Rating_____

- 13. At work I get along best with
- 32. Those I work with are
- 48. I like working with people who
- 67. People who work with me usually

INTERPRETATION:

IV. SELF CONCEPT

1. FEARS Rating_____

- 7. I know it is silly but I am afraid of
- 25. Most of my friends don't know that I am
afraid of
- 41. I wish I could lose the fear of
- 60. My fears sometimes force me to

INTERPRETATION:

2. GUILT FEELINGS Rating_____

- 15. I would do anything to forget the time I
- 34. My greatest mistake was
- 51. When I was younger, I felt guilty about
- 69. The worst thing I ever did

INTERPRETATION:

3. ATTITUDE TOWARD PAST. Rating_____

- 9. When I was a child
- 23. Before coming to Buckner Home, I
- 44. If I were young again
- 62. My most outstanding childhood memory

INTERPRETATION:

4. ATTITUDE TOWARD OWN ABILITIES Rating_____

- 2. When the odds are against me
- 17. I believe that I have the ability to
- 36. My greatest weakness is
- 43. I feel that I am a person that
- 53. When luck turns against me

INTERPRETATION:

5. ATTITUDE TOWARD FUTURE.

Rating: _____

- 5. To me the future looks
- 22. I look forward to
- 39. Some day I
- 57. When I am older
- 70. When I leave Buckner Home

INTERPRETATION:

6. GOALS.

Rating: _____

- 3. I always wanted to
- 18. I could be perfectly happy if
- 37. My secret ambition in life
- 56. What I want most out of life.

INTERPRETATION:

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