



Mutual Deviance: Liking Individuals with Similar Unfavorable Opinions within Groups

JD Hogue¹, Andy Eichler¹, Devin Gill¹, Eric Wesselmann¹, Kipling Williams², & John Pryor¹
 Illinois State University¹ & Purdue University²



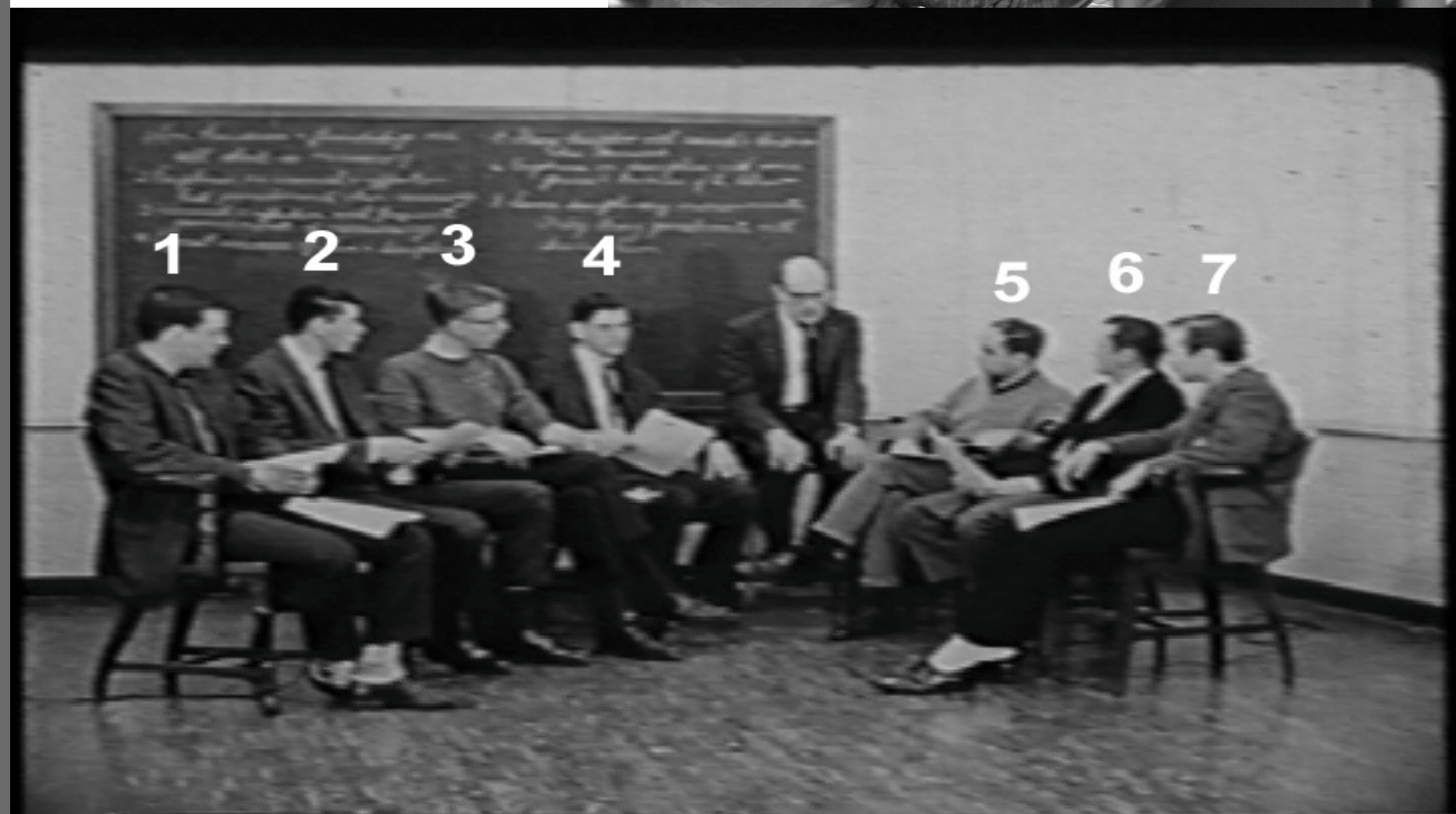
Background

- In Schachter's (1951) research, discussion groups involving 5-7 male participants and 3 male confederates deliberated about how to deal with a juvenile delinquent named Johnny Rocco. Whereas most participants advocated leniency, a confederate argued articulately and logically for harsh discipline, standing his ground against all counterarguments. Schachter found that over time participants attempted to achieve unanimity by increasing the amount of communication toward the deviate confederate. After it became clear to participants that he would not change his opinion, they stopped communicating with him entirely. At the end of the study, participants tended to suggest less prestigious roles for the deviate in subsequent discussion groups and typically did not choose him for future group meetings.
 - Confederates:**
 - Deviante:** argued articulately and logically for harsh discipline, standing his ground against all counterarguments
 - Slider:** Initially followed the deviate and later conformed to the group
 - Mode:** stuck with the consensus throughout the discussion

Purpose

- Because only two direct replications in roughly 60 years (Emerson, 1959; Schachter et al., 1954) used the original procedures and stimulus material, we conducted a replication of Schachter's original study.
- We also extended his research by examining how an individual's attitude similarity to the deviate predicted liking toward that member; Schachter's original study did not investigate how individual members' own attitudes differentially predicted evaluations of the deviate.

Our Confederates (to the right) and Schachter's Group Setting (below)



Method

- Participants**
 - Eighty-two men participated and comprised a total of 17 groups, which ranged between 3 and 7 participants (mode = 5). The final sample consisted of 80 men, of which 73.7% were Caucasian/White.
 - No participants indicated having prior knowledge of the Schachter (1951) study.
- The Confederates**
 - We trained three white male confederates. We trained the confederates to perform all three roles: mode, deviate, and slider. We counterbalanced confederates' role assignments using a Latin square design.
- Procedure**
 - The experimenter then gave a brief introduction, asked group members to introduce themselves, and explained that he was trying to obtain more funds to allow them to come back for future discussions.
 - The experimenter then gave participants the *Johnny Rocco* case study and 5 min to read it.
 - Participants orally indicated their opinions of how Johnny should be treated.
 - During the 45 min discussion, the experimenter took a census approximately 20 min into the discussion and again at the end of the discussion.
 - The confederates all answered last so that they could calibrate their opinions based on the rest of the group.
 - The experimenter then handed out the dependent variables questionnaire.
- Love-Punishment Scale**
 - 1 = Total Love;** Give Johnny nothing but love, kindness, and friendship
 - 4 = Equality;** Give Johnny equal love and punishment
 - 7 = Total Punishment;** Give Johnny nothing but a severe disciplinary environment by punishing him

Results

- Communication to Confederates**
 - Although we did not observe a significant interaction between communication to the different confederates over the course of time ($p = .30$), we did find that participants communicated significantly more with the deviate confederate compared to either the mode or the slider, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .57$. See Figure 1.
- Sociometric Test**
 - Using Friedman's non-parametric ANOVA, we found a significant difference in the participant's ranking of the confederates, $\chi^2 = 14.74$, $p < .01$. Specifically, participants preferred the slider ($M_{\text{rank}} = 1.74$) and mode ($M_{\text{rank}} = .191$) significantly more than the deviate ($M_{\text{rank}} = 2.34$).
- Group Nominations**
 - Participants were able to assign their fellow group members (including the confederates) to one of three groups, i.e., an executive committee, a steering committee, and a correspondence committee. We were unable to replicate Schachter's previous findings. There was no significant association between the confederate role and his assigned committee position, $\chi^2(4) = .79$, $p = .94$.
- Extension on Original Findings**
 - Participants' final Love-Punishment vote significantly predicted differences between the deviate ($\beta = .42$) and mode ($\beta = .07$, $R^2 = .13$, $p < .01$) as well as the deviate and the slider ($\beta = .02$, $R^2 = .08$, $p = .02$). No significant differences emerged between mode and slider. See Figure 2.

Figure 1

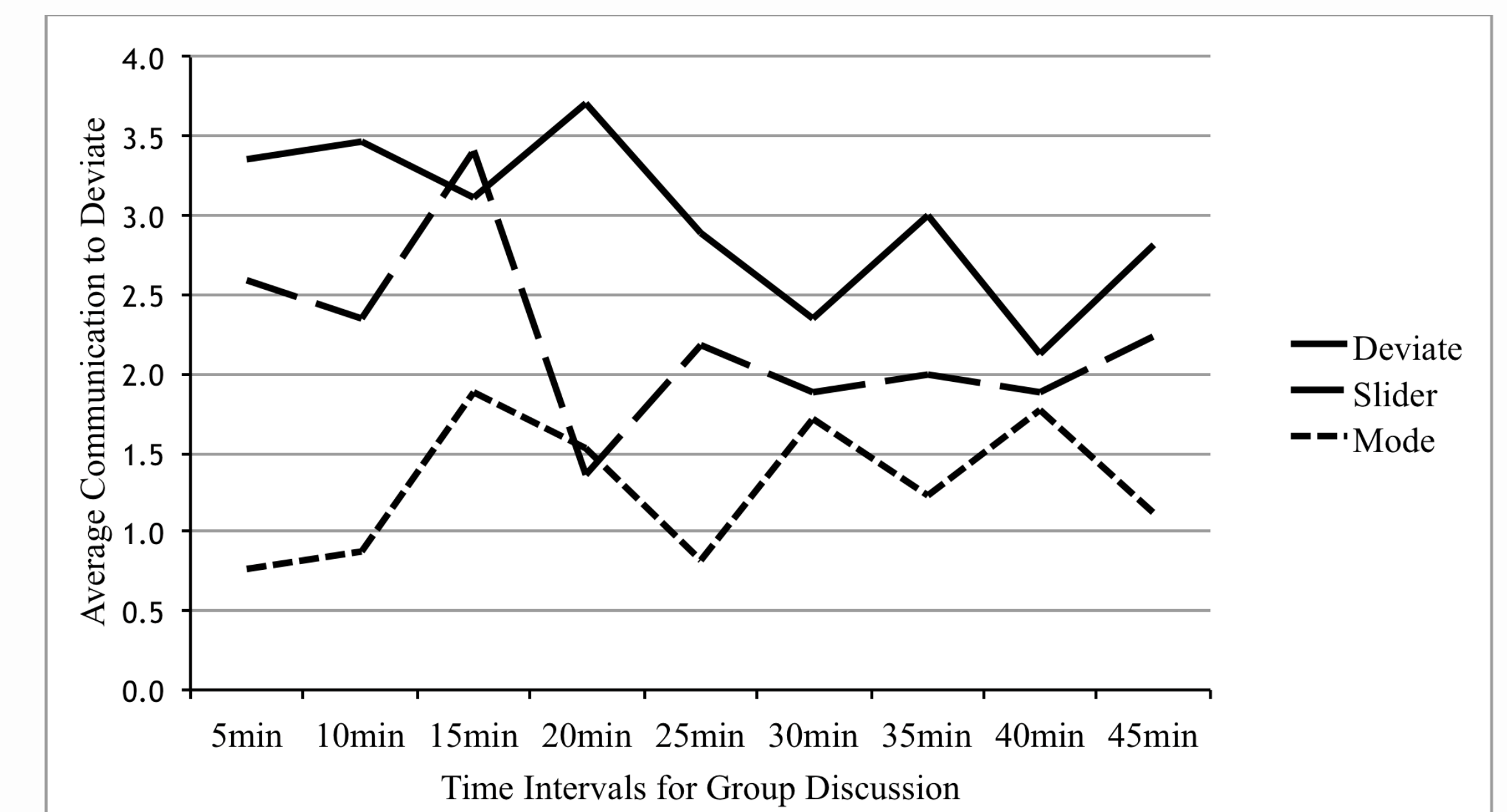
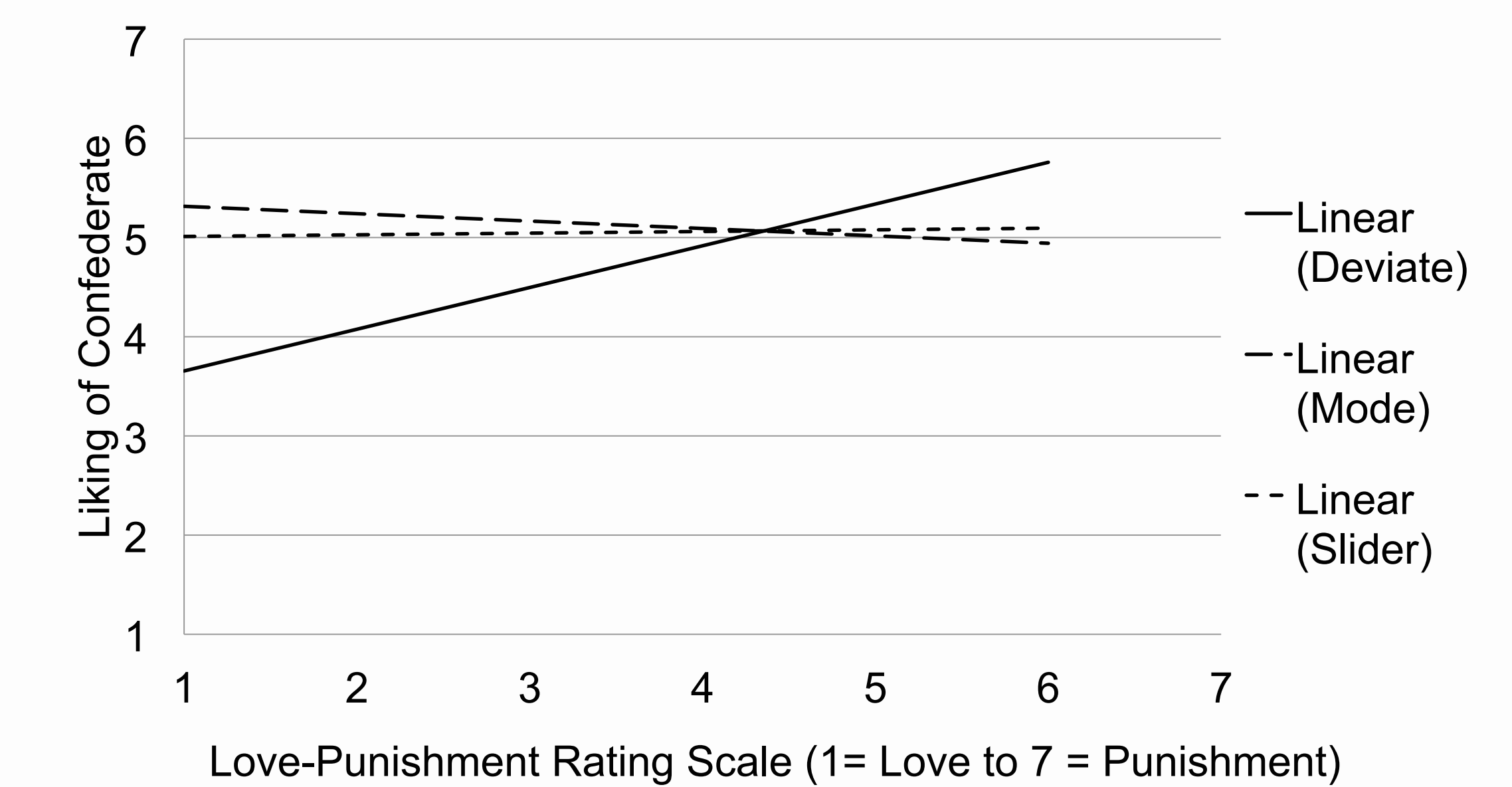


Figure 2



Discussion

- To conclude, our current study replicated the primary finding in Schachter's original deviance-rejection (the vote outcome), albeit with a smaller effect size. Of his other two dependent variables, we failed to replicate the committee assignment variable, but our data trend supported his original findings for communication patterns. One divergence from Schachter's original procedures in our study is that Schachter's participants believed they were guaranteed future sessions, while our participants only believed future sessions a possibility. This difference could have made the deviate's threat to group harmony less salient. However, similar to Schachter's participants the majority of our participants also expressed a general perception of group cohesion and a desire to continue meeting. One intriguing possibility is that our study found somewhat weaker reactions to deviates because society is becoming more tolerant of individuals who hold deviate opinions; only future research can answer this question.