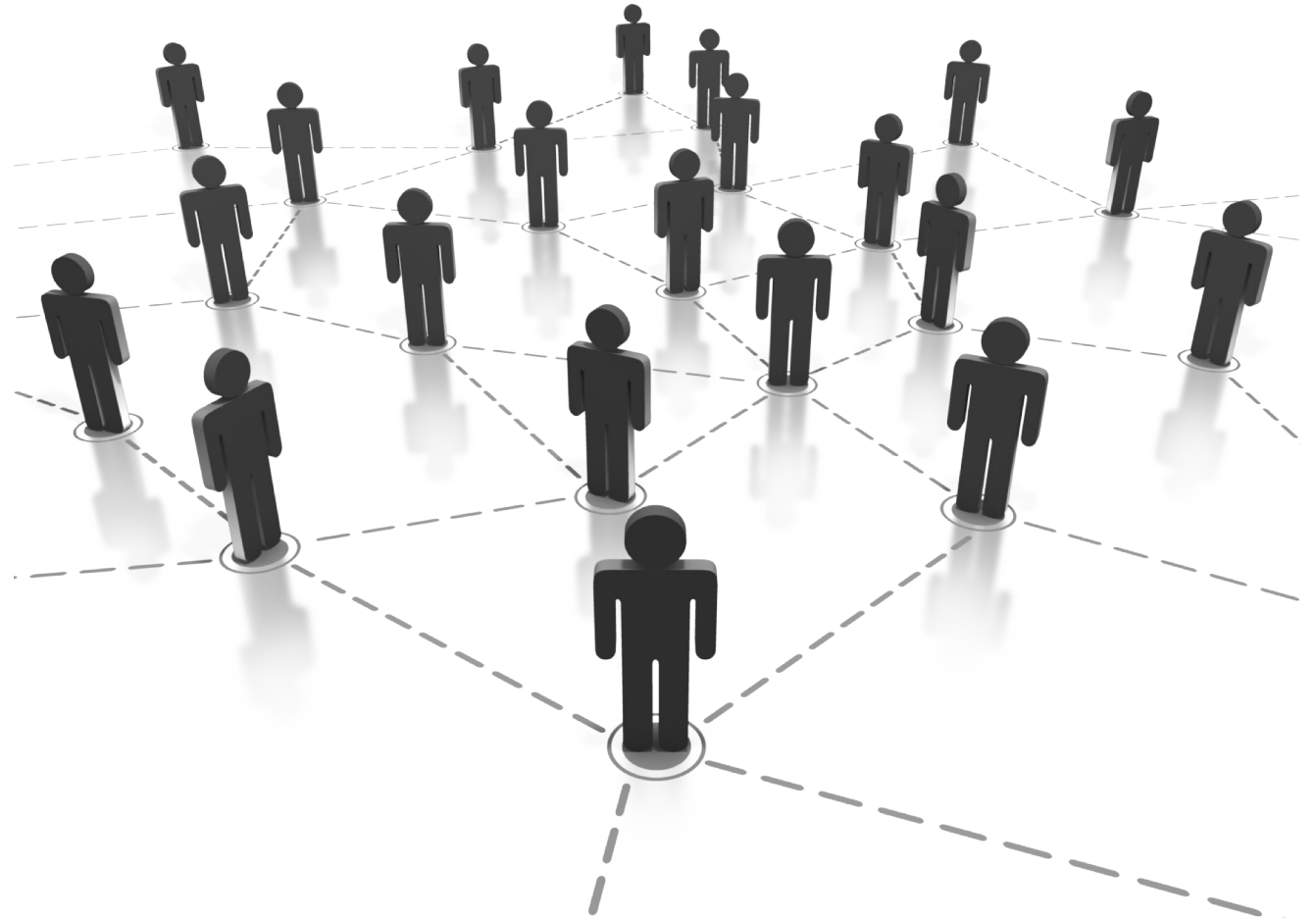


Personalities discussing politics

Hyunjin (Jin) Song &
Hajo Boomgaarden
University of Vienna

Citizen's political discussion network

- A central feature of contemporary deliberative democratic theories
- People get informed, affirm their political views, or being contested, etc.
- Robust evidence re: preference towards...
 - like-minded people (consistency)
 - Better informed people (understanding)



A dilemma

Ahn et al., 2013; Huckfeldt et al., 2014

“When available, individuals would most strongly prefer discussion partners that are well informed who *also* share the same political preferences ”

A tradeoff

Ahn et al., 2013; Huckfeldt et al., 2014

- One's ability to talk "ideal" (i.e., highly informed co-partisan) partners **depends on various factors outside of one's explicit control**
- In reality such **socially-supplied political expertise is not readily-available nor equally distributed** to every citizens
- In contrast, **exposure to political disagreement is common and widespread**

A role of personality traits

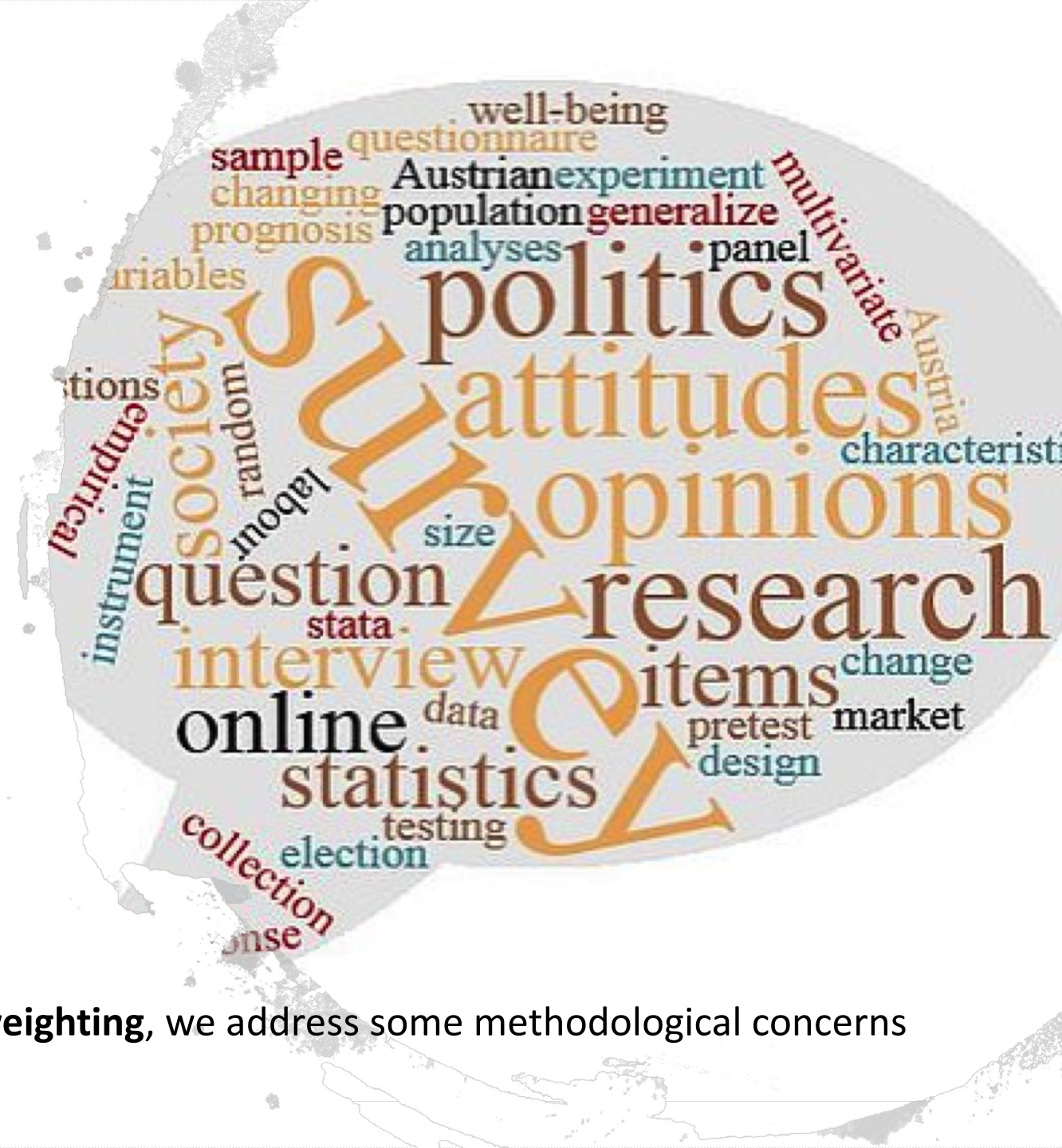
- **personality traits such as the Big-Five (John et al., 2008; McCrae & Costa, 1997) represent a stable and reliable way of how individuals orient themselves towards an outside world**
- **Existing studies suggests that preference for political agreement and expertise are uniquely related to personality factors**

Expectations

- **Effects of preference on talk frequency**
 - Preference towards opinion agreement and (alter) expertise will increase talk frequency
- **When preference towards agreement and expertise collide, does personality matter?**
 - Different facets of personality dimensions?
 - Different “topics” of political discussion?

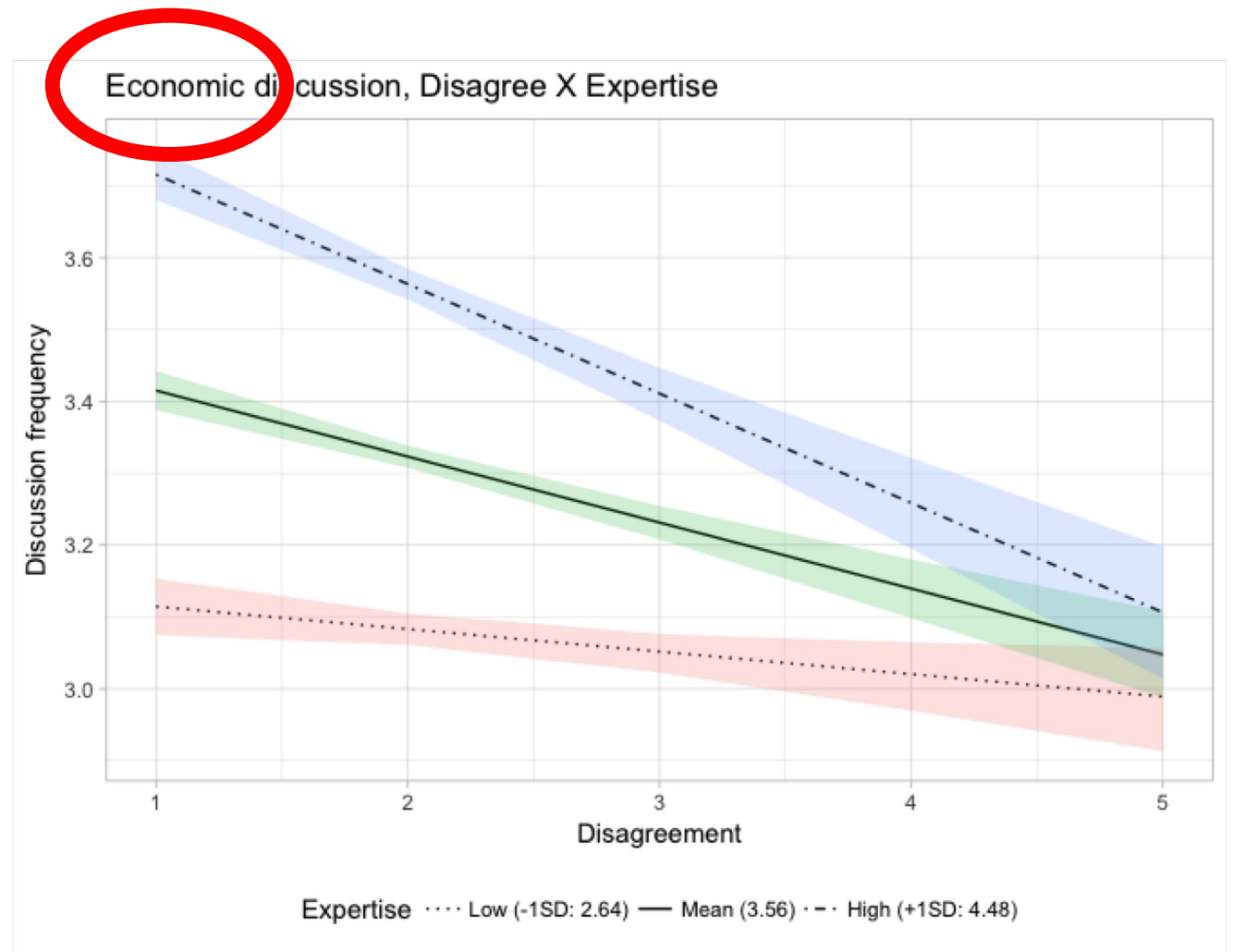
PUMA Online Survey

- Following standard egocentric network name-generator Qs, we ask:
 - Social contacts (up to 3 discussants)
 - **Discussion frequency of economic / immigration**
 - Perceived **opinion agreement**
 - Perceived (alter) **political expertise**
 - **Ego's personality traits**
- **PUMA survey module II**
 - Data collection in 2016
 - Representative survey data (N = 721)
 - Using **Covariate Balance Propensity score weighting**, we address some methodological concerns



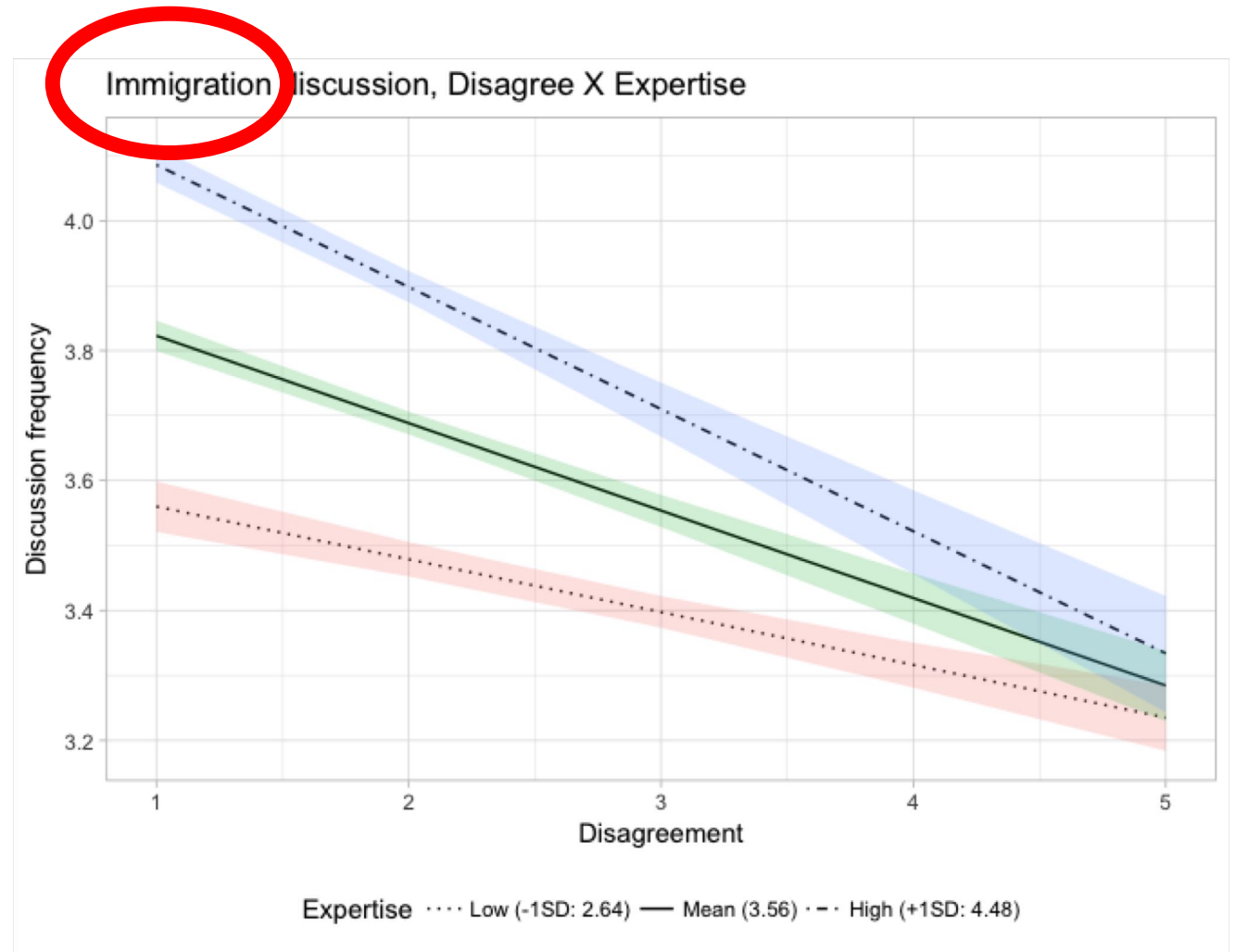
Preference towards “ideal” discussants

- Independent effects of disagreement *and* expertise:
 - If more agreement, more discussion frequency
 - If more expertise, more discussion frequency
- Clear preference towards “expertised but co-partisan” discussants

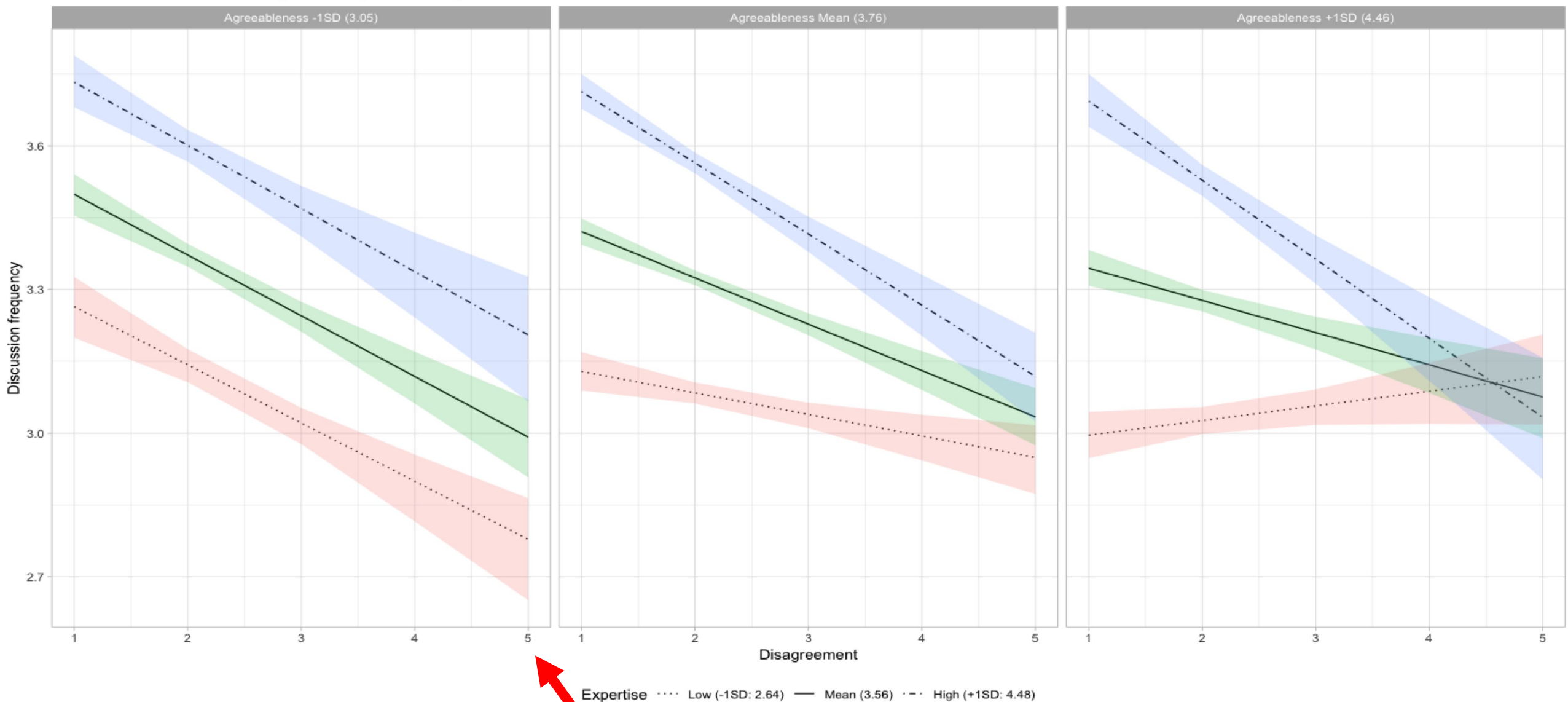


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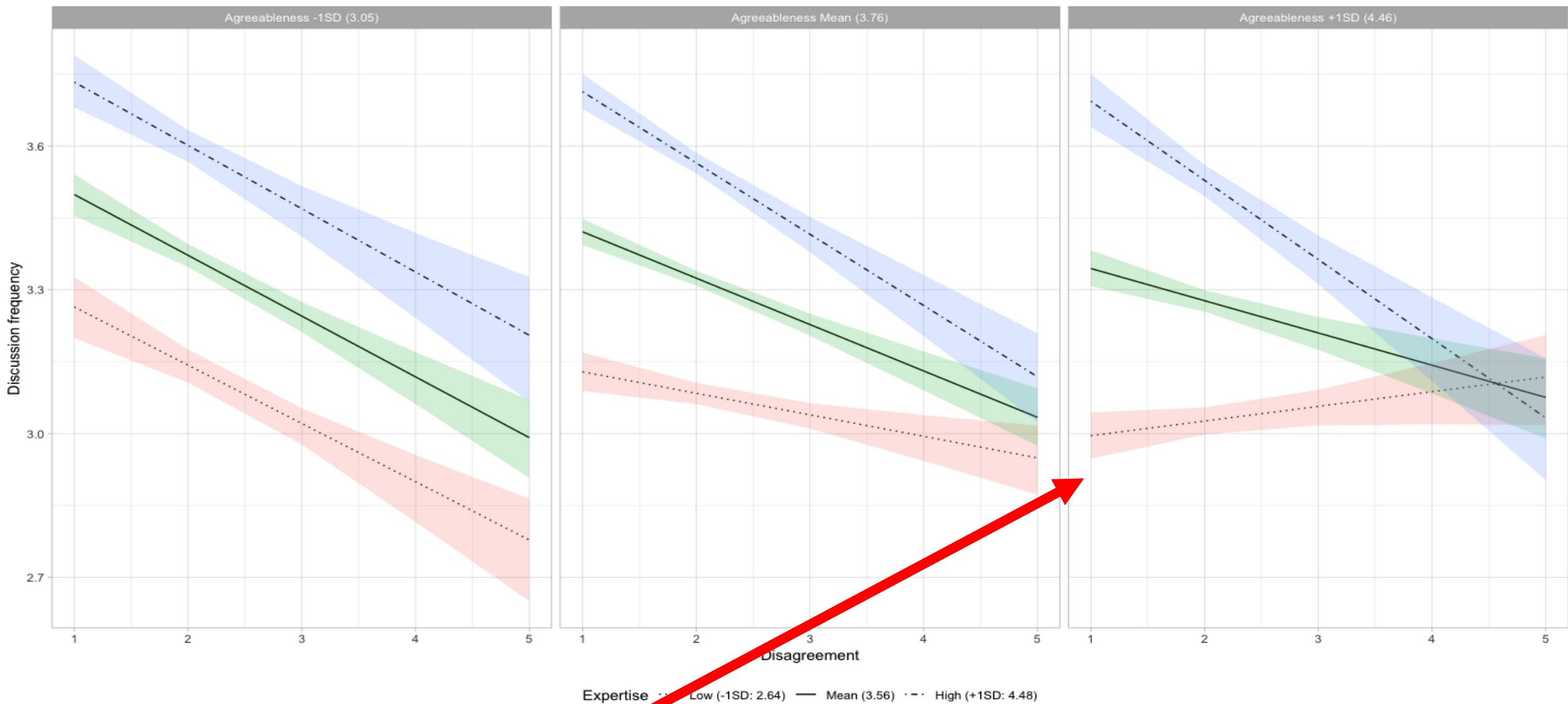
Economic discussion, Disagree X Expertise X Agreeableness



When agreeableness is low, one is mainly responsive to disagreement

Economic discussion

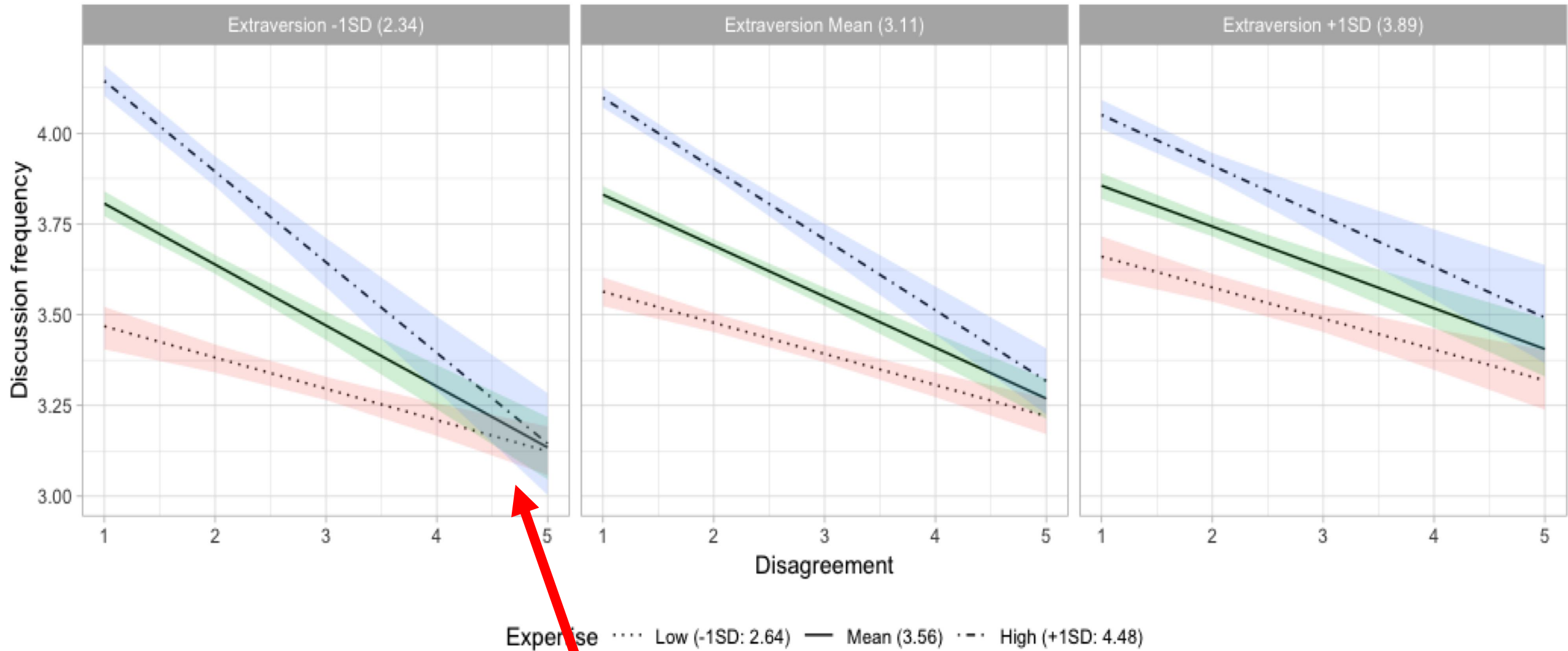
Economic discussion, Disagree X Expertise X Agreeableness



When agreeableness is high, disagreement has no effect when low expertised alter is concerned

Economic discussion

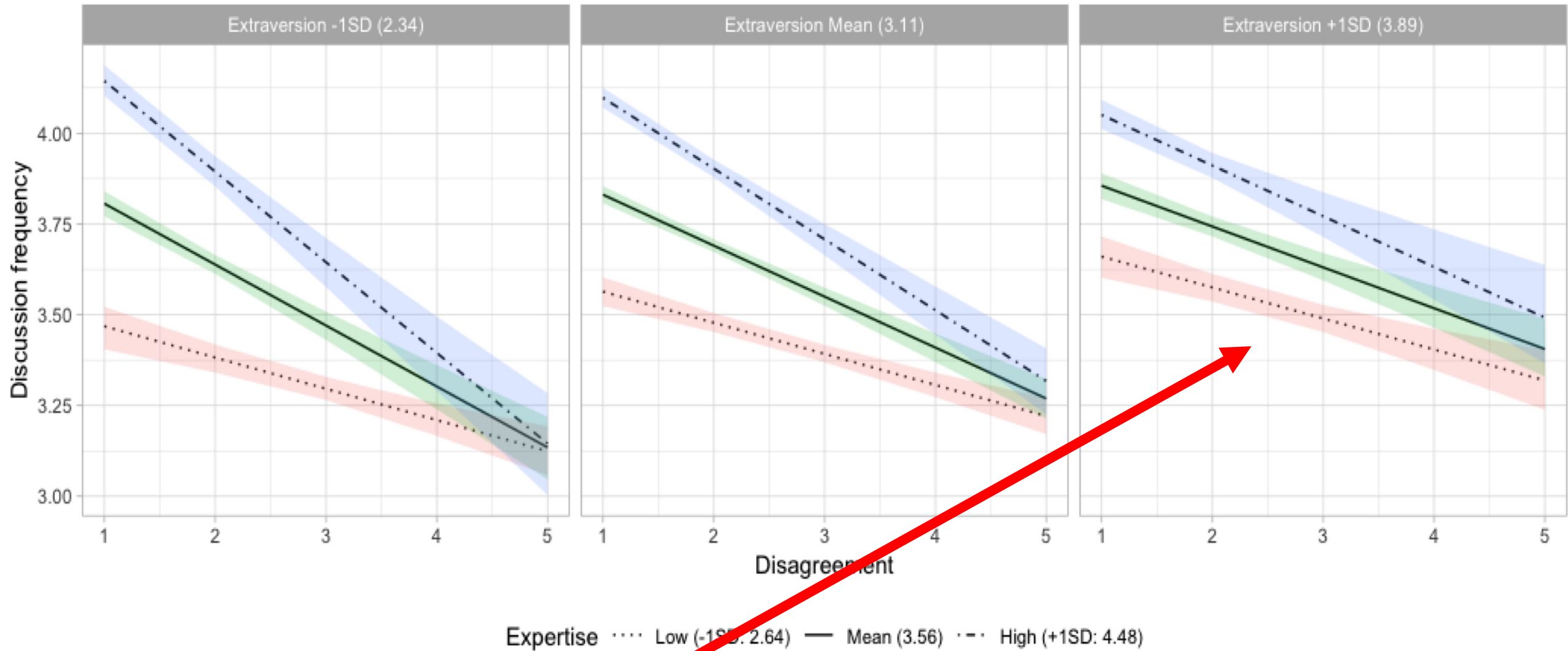
Immigration discussion, Disagree X Expertise X Extraversion



When Extraversion is low, one is more responsive to disagreement when expertised alters are concerned

Immigration discussion

Immigration discussion, Disagree X Expertise X Extraversion



When Extraversion is high, one is mainly responsive to disagreement

Immigration discussion

Conclusion

- Logic of agreement *and* expertise
- The relationship is then partly conditioned by individuals' personality characteristics
- Topic of discussion and personality appears to both affect the relationship between agreement and expertise in predicting frequency