POLITICIZING DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY: STRATEGIC SPEECH IN
DELIBERATIVE SYSTEMS

by

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B.A. (Honours), Queen’s University, 2007

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Political Science)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

August 2013

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Abstract

When using language to resolve conflicts and make decisions, people access democratic resources inherent in the practice of communication. Making a claim implicitly appeals to another’s capacity to agree to that claim autonomously—without being coerced or bought, and based on considerations he or she takes to be valid. Deliberative democracy describes political arrangements that harness this potential as the basis for collective decision-making. To the extent that it empowers individuals, however, actors have incentives to use language strategically to influence the very judgments deliberative democrats hope will be governed by carefully weighed reasons. In political contexts, language is often a tool for political ends, bypassing rather than engaging capacities for autonomous judgment. Deliberative democratic theories respond mostly by imposing the normative condition that deliberative speech should not be strategic. But the cost of this normative line is to depoliticize the theory, since it fails to engage much—even most—of the universe of speech in politics.

Where democratic institutions channel politics—characterized by conflict and competition—into communication, we should expect speech to be strategic. Yet it is still possible for such speech to underwrite democratic autonomy. To establish a better understanding of strategic speech and its implications for democracy, I develop an analytic framework for conceptualizing the force of language. Under the model of communicative influence, the democratic implications of strategic language use depend not on intentions, but on how language produces pragmatic consequences, shaping the processes by which actors reason towards judgment and action.
The model generates propositions about what common features of political communication—narratives, loaded words, and exaggeration, among others—entail for the quality of political judgments. It also systematizes the specific anti-democratic hazards strategic speech that result from the frame-based, subject-based, and institutional ecologies of discourse that condition communicative influence. A democratic theory with analytic capacity around strategic speech can identify institutional interventions into these ecologies that promote autonomous judgment by targeting these specific hazards of strategic speech, without trying to work against the incentives and motivations that make problems political. The result is a politicized theory of deliberative democracy.
Preface

This dissertation is original, unpublished work by the author, Aubin Calvert.
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Acknowledgements

In preparing this dissertation, I had many people helping and encouraging me, dedicating their own time to making it the best it could be. Most of all, I would like to thank my superb supervisor, Mark Warren, whose dedication and guidance were more than I could have asked or hoped for. Mark’s constant enthusiasm for the project kept me inspired, and I consider myself privileged to have had the opportunity to work with a supervisor so committed to his students’ success.

Committee members Chris Kam and Mike Neblo, were instrumental in helping me develop these ideas. Some of the biggest breakthroughs were the result of their thoughtful suggestions at crucial points in the process. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the other faculty members at UBC, who were always willing to make time to offer encouragement or feedback—especially Barbara Arneil and Bruce Baum. I also owe thanks to Dick Johnston for letting me work with him on the undergraduate honours program over the past two years. Mike Burgess of the Centre for Applied Ethics gave me great opportunities to apply this work in practical settings through interesting collaborations, for which I am very grateful. Finally, thanks to Jonathan Tomm, Sean Gray, and Kelsey Seymour for coming up with excellent insights and comments.

To my wonderful friends: thanks for keeping me busy—with awesome adventures, ski days, and volleyball tournaments—and happy—with your excellent listening abilities, your hilarious commentary, and your words of encouragement, understanding, and support. Finally, I am most grateful to my parents, Bob and Ann Calvert, without whom I would never have had the opportunity to accomplish something like this, nor any of the other experiences that I value most.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Speech is essential to democracy. Democratic systems valorize speech as a means of resolving conflicts and making collective decisions. Language and communication enable self-determination by creating opportunities for people to be motivated by reasons they can both know and accept. Through language, people articulate their choices, beliefs, and values, which is necessary if a political system is to be responsive to its citizens. Communication allows people to coordinate social action, to express their identities, to establish interpersonal relationships, and to build trust. For all its democratic potential, however, speech has its own hazards. Speakers can use words strategically: as tools to suppress some considerations and to favour others, to undermine one another’s credibility, to misrepresent their positions, to deceive, and to manipulate. Rather than replacing money and power as a means of exerting political influence, speech can become their vehicle. Between these two extremes—on the one hand, the democratic ideal of speech that channels the autonomous motivating force of reasons and, on the other hand, outright manipulation—lies a range of communicative forms and functions, each with its own democratic possibilities and pitfalls. The aim of this dissertation is to provide a theory that identifies these possibilities in ways that can guide democratic responses.

The problem of strategic speech can be formulated as follows. The benefits democratic theorists associate with speech—notably the ways speech can empower those affected by a decision to make autonomous judgments on the basis of reasons they are free to accept or reject—are premised on the absence of strategic orientations. The dominant assumption in deliberative democratic theory is that in order for speech to be consistent with democratic goods, it must follow the model of communicative action (Habermas 1984).
Political actors represent their positions and the reasons behind them genuinely, and they should be prepared to justify their claims on grounds others can at least potentially accept. Within the currently accepted framework in deliberative democratic theory, as soon as speech becomes *strategic* (words become tools in the service of ends beyond the immediate circumstances of communication), the democratic goods of talk-based politics are compromised.

At the same time, the circumstances under which strategic considerations pervade communication are precisely those cases in which it is most important for speech to function democratically: politicized situations with high stakes and conflicting interests. Such situations are often accompanied by mistrust and disrespect, and by the temptation for elites to use language to sway public opinion in their favour. This is not to imply that strategic speech is limited to fraught circumstances. Even friendly disputes may be characterized by selective uses of information or forceful logical structures, both of which deviate from the model of a pure exchange of justifications. Moreover, in neither case does speaking strategically necessarily entail deceit and manipulation.

The point of departure for this dissertation is Jürgen Habermas’s conceptualization of language, which remains the most comprehensive account of the positive democratic potentials of speech. As I explain in detail below and in Chapter 2, Habermas’s theory necessarily entails the exclusion of strategic speech from these positive potentials. Because it is tied to Habermas’s model of language use, most deliberative democratic theory currently lacks the tools to differentiate among the full range of ways that actors with strategic intent—understood in the minimalist sense of orienting themselves to securing some outcome—use language to pursue their desired ends. And yet this strategic intent defines most political
situations. Moreover, there are good reasons to think that the differences between being deceitful, using loaded words, and equivocating or hedging are normatively important, since each has implications for people’s ability to make autonomous judgments about politics. Likewise, the apparent differences between loose rhetorical appeals and tight syllogisms, or between invoking an issue frame and appealing to credibility, raise questions about the appropriateness of treating identically all forms of speech that are in some sense “strategic.”

The insufficiency of Habermas’s distinction between communicative and strategic action—both in terms of capturing variation among forms of strategic speech and in terms of the applicability of deliberative models to politicized situations—requires a theoretical response that can render insights about the democratic value of speech consistent with the realities of strategic intent.

To the extent that deliberative democrats, following Habermas, explicitly or implicitly conceptualize all forms of speech along the single dimension of communicative action to strategic action, a second problem follows. Standard responses by deliberative democrats to deviations from ideal communication generally take two forms. The first merely discounts the potential for such conditions to produce deliberation or communicative action. The second attempts to alter the conditions that produce strategic action in order to move speech towards the ideal, often by downplaying or seeking to remove the incentives (or the actors) that render a situation political in the first place. Theoretical accounts of the democratic benefits of communication rely, implicitly or explicitly, on actor motivations to separate those forms of speech that preserve autonomy from those that undermine it. As a result, democratic theory lacks the basis for working with the strategic elements of speech that are pervasive in politics. This leaves deliberative democratic theory with no means of securing the democratic
benefits of communication except eliminating the very strategic elements that follow from the structure of political problems.

This dissertation offers a theoretical response to the “problem” of strategic speech in deliberative democratic theory and practice. The approach I develop here represents a departure from the dominant solutions offered within the framework of deliberative democracy. The model of communicative influence I develop will provide a framework to connect the existing normative goals of democratic theory to a more refined set of distinctions among the ways communication exerts influence. One of the goals of the framework is to eliminate the implicit dependence on assumptions about actor intentions, which will allow the model to apply equally to conditions of conflict and cooperation. The analytic framework of the model of communicative influence yields a set of suggestions for institutional responses to the political conditions that select for different types of speech. Rather than trying to mirror or approximate conditions for ideal dialogue, these institutional responses seek to tap into the democratic potentials of strategic speech. Based on the theoretical framework I develop in the first half of the dissertation, I suggest that institutional responses can target the contextual factors that render strategic speech influential, either directly preventing hazards associated with communicative influence, or correcting for their consequences. One set of responses might include the ways political systems can position competing actors—representatives, interest groups, courts, and the media, for instance—to challenge one another when they use their status to exceed acceptable influence. Another might be to design sites of discourse with incentives that select for types of speech that counterbalance one another to secure broader, system-level democratic functions, ranging
from building empathy and tolerance to mobilizing public opinion towards making or challenging a collective decision.

I begin this introductory chapter by locating the roots of the problem of strategic speech in Habermas’s theory of how social actors use language to coordinate action on the basis of communicatively rational agreement. While I return to issues in the philosophy of language in detail in Chapter 2, I start here with a preliminary formulation that traces Habermas’s assumptions about communication into deliberative democratic theory. Second, I turn to deliberative democratic theory itself, identifying the psychological and incentive-based limitations on “deliberative” speech. Third, I review the literature in deliberative democracy that seeks to respond to these limitations. I suggest that an ongoing attachment to assumptions about the distinction between communicative and strategic action hinder these responses. Fourth, I sketch the foundation for the model of communicative influence developed in Chapters 3 to 5 and differentiate it from existing approaches. Fifth, I describe the core normative commitments behind the model of communicative influence. Sixth and finally, I outline the dissertation as a whole.

Communicative and Strategic Action in Deliberative Democratic Theory

The problem of strategic speech has its roots in Habermas’s work in pragmatics and philosophy of language. It is worth explaining Habermas’s pragmatics at some length for two reasons. First, his theory remains central and useful to understanding the positive democratic potentials of language and establishing a connection between communication and democracy, even though, as originally formulated, it is tied to a flawed understanding of language itself. Second, specifying the conceptual problem at its foundation enables me to justify the need to
step outside of existing frameworks in order to offer a theoretical framework capable of dealing with strategic speech.

I make use of the precision and abstraction afforded by pragmatic concepts like speech acts, assertions and inferences because understanding how people use language strategically implies an understanding of what it is to use language in any way. I have chosen to focus on pragmatics over two comparable alternatives. First, going deeper into language, to the level of semantics, is unhelpful because the problem of strategic speech is not an issue of the rules of reference and grammar, but rather of how actors use language to achieve ends. Moreover, I accept the premise that pragmatics is prior to semantics—that meaning derives from how language is used in discursive practice. Second, approaching strategic speech at a higher level of generality, such as the study of rhetoric, does not give a precise enough leverage as to how persuasive speech generates the force that it does.

Habermas uses pragmatics to advance a theory of social action grounded in discursive practice, the rationality of which, he argues, cannot be understood in terms of instrumental rationality. According to Habermas, when people use language to communicate, they necessarily incur commitments. This type of communicative action, in which people try to reach understanding on the basis of validity claims they raise and suppose can be redeemed, has the advantage that it relies for its effectiveness on people coming to agreement. That is to say, for communicative action to achieve coordination, people must accept one another’s claims (Habermas 1984). This idea of the voluntary, rationally motivating force of good reasons establishes a connection between communication and democratic autonomy, and grounds much of the deliberative democratic project discussed below.
Communicative action and strategic action

Communicative action is action oriented to reaching mutual understanding on the basis of validity claims. By raising a validity claim—making a statement that purports to be true, right, or otherwise valid—people are, in effect, doing something. To grasp what people are doing when they make claims, Habermas adopts from the speech act theory of Austin and Searle the distinction between the locutionary content of what is said, the illocutionary force of the speech act, and its perlocutionary consequences (Searle 1969; Austin, 1975; Habermas 1984, 286). The illocutionary component, which refers to what the speaker is doing in saying something—for instance, asserting, representing, commanding, prioritizing, warning, or identifying—is particularly crucial for Habermas’s theory (Habermas 1984, 320). In accepting a speech act offer's illocutionary component, the hearer also commits himself or herself to the rightness of the command, the truth of the assertion, or the sincerity of the expression. These commitments represent the illocutionary force of the speech act, which describes how they can be binding on the ongoing interaction.

Habermas defines communicative action in opposition to strategic action, that is action oriented to success. In communication, strategic action “instrumentalizes speech acts for purposes that are only contingently related to what is said” (Habermas 1984, 289). As James Johnson points out, Habermas also loads onto the concept of strategic action the idea that it involves treating other people as resources to be exploited (1991, 190). For Habermas, the difference between communicative action and strategic action amounts to the difference between working with someone to reach understanding, and exerting influence upon them causally (1984, 286). As I explain below, Habermas’s use of speech act theory drives this
theoretical distinction, which in turn prevents him from recognizing the ways in which strategic speech might tap into the rationally motivating force of reasons.

The centrality of intentions to communicative action

In distinguishing communicative and strategic action in this way, Habermas thus connects the meaning and normative significance of communicative action to the speaker’s intentions. In communicative action, speakers must “unreservedly pursue illocutionary aims” (Habermas 1984, 305). Meaning derives from the illocutionary intent of the speech act, because this intention determines the relevant validity basis, and this validity (what it would take to justify the intended claim) in turn confers meaning on the speech act’s content.

Habermas makes two assumptions that lead him to reject any normative potential for strategic speech. First, he assumes that the only form of normatively acceptable force is the illocutionary force of a claim that the hearer accepts as valid. Second, he assumes that the only time illocutionary force is legitimate is if it is self-sufficient, that is, if the speaker’s intention is only to secure the speech act’s acceptance as valid. Speech acts in which the illocutionary intent is not self-sufficient—that is, in which the illocutionary aims are not the whole purpose of the speech act—are strategic, not communicative. Such speech acts still make use of illocutionary force, but in order to secure that illocutionary force, the intent must be concealed. As a result, while the hearer accepts the validity of the speech act, it is not a rational (or autonomous) acceptance because the hearer has, in effect, been misled.

Therefore, in instrumentalizing speech acts and treating communication as a strategic means, Habermas suggests that speakers also treat people as means rather than ends. Their agreement or their opinions are harnessed towards the speaker’s own ends in ways that compromise the autonomy of the hearers (1984, 288).
Because perlocutionary consequences can only arise from accepting the illocutionary component of the speech act offer, Habermas claims that strategic action—an orientation to producing perlocutionary consequences—is parasitic on communicative action (Habermas 1984, 288). Strategic uses of language only work because the bulk of what goes on in discursive interaction is communicative. Parasitic forms of speech may reflect a narrow slice of how people use language. But it represents a particularly important slice for many of the most pressing political issues that do incentivize strategic behaviors that manifest themselves in language.

Within Habermas’s framework, normatively acceptable influence in speech is limited to the illocutionary binding force of a rationally accepted speech act offer. In order to meet this criteria, the speech act must not be oriented to producing a specific outcome beyond its acceptance. This theoretical move blocks consideration of the positive potentials of strategic speech, prevents more fine-grained distinctions among different forms of strategic speech, and renders the idea of the rationally motivating force of reasons inapplicable to many of the most pressing political problems.

An alternative account of the force of speech

Because Habermas’s conception of communicative action’s depends upon actors’ intentions, it is not easily applicable in circumstances in which actors’ dispositions do not already favour cooperation. Furthermore, it fails to capture the full range of ways actors use speech to produce consequences. To remedy these failures, we have to move away from Habermas’s problematic focus on communicative *intent*. This requires replacing the construct of *illocutionary force*, which is itself grounded in questionable aspects of speech act theory (Heath 2001, 47). I will set out such an alternative account of the force of speech in Chapter
2. My primary source is Robert Brandom’s pragmatic model of language use. According to Brandom, the problem with Searle’s typology of illocutionary acts, and similar philosophies of language, is that they are grounded in agent semantics: they attempt to define meaning in terms of how the speaker intends to be understood (1998, 147). I will explain how Brandom moves away from intentions by replacing agent semantics with functional semantics, in which meaning derives from the inferential antecedents and consequences of an utterance rather than intentional states (Brandom 1998, 147-51). In this way, Brandom’s account of language lays the groundwork for an account of the force of language that no longer prioritizes intentions.

**Deliberative Talk and Its Limitations**

Many strains of deliberative democratic theory take up the claims about political life that follow from Habermas’s theory of language, applying them to democratic institutions and to the public sphere. There are three principle ways in which deliberative democrats have drawn on Habermas’s theory of language. The central claim is that, under the right conditions, the right kind of talk can secure a democratic basis for collective action and ensure that decisions reflect the considered judgment of all affected. Deliberative talk generally involves “debate and discussion aimed at producing reasonable, well-informed opinions, in which participants are willing to revise preferences in light of discussion, new information, and claims made by fellow participants” (Chambers 2003, 309).

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1 Both Brandom and Habermas argue for the primacy of pragmatics over semantics; i.e. that the meaning of language derives from what it is to use language. Semantic assumptions, though, are still a necessary part of a pragmatic theory, even if they follow from pragmatics.
A second implication of Habermas’s work has to do with the democratic legitimacy of deliberative outcomes. Those deliberative democrats who take up the notion of the rationally motivating force of good reasons—in other words, the force of the better argument (Habermas 1984, 25)—see deliberation as ethically desirable insofar as it respects the freedom of interlocutors to accept or reject the claims that others put forward (Thompson 2008). The democratic impulse here is that agreement cannot be imposed, but must be earned on the basis of the validity of reasons, and that the conditions under which this agreement can be rational can be created or approximated. Deliberation is also said to be epistemically desirable, in that decisions are subject to vigorous testing on the basis of an expanded pool of reasons (Bohman 2006; Estlund 1997). This derives most directly from Habermas’s claim that when actors encounter a misunderstanding or disagreement, they move from communication, in which validity claims remain implicit, to discourse, in which claims must be justified in terms of their validity. Moreover, though discourse itself is only a small part of communication, the very idea of communicative rationality relies on the possibility of discourse as a “court of appeal” (Habermas 1984, 17) within which validity conditions are tested. Thus, the possibility of discourse enables the motivating force of reasons and enhances the epistemic quality of those reasons through testing. At a practical level, deliberative democrats look for such opportunities within political systems.

A third way in which deliberative democrats draw Habermas’s work into the realm of political systems is through the discourse principle (D), which states that “Just those action norms are valid to which all possibly affected persons could agree as participants in rational discourses” (Habermas 1996, 107). By rational discourses, Habermas means
Any attempt to reach an understanding over problematic validity claims
insofar as this takes place under conditions of communication that enable free
processing of topics and contributions, information and reasons in the public
space constituted by illocutionary obligations (Habermas 1996, 107-08).

In Habermasian terms, establishing the validity of norms using the discourse principle—in
other words, settling rightness claims—is analogous to testing truth claims through discourse
with reference to facts. Deliberative democrats apply these principles in practice to identify
or create enclaves under which the validity basis of decisions can be judged with reference to
the considered interests of those affected. Instances of genuine deliberation thus add
democratic or self-determination benefits to the advantages of deliberative speech.

Not just any form of talk can deliver these democratic benefits. Talk is deliberative
when it consists of “reason-giving” (Mansbridge et al. 2010, 498), generally in a reciprocal
or dialogical format such that participants in deliberation are responsive to one another,
rather than merely re-asserting a fixed position (De Vries et al. 2010; Stromer-Galley 2007).
Reasons should at least be potentially convincing to a broad or universal audience (Bohman
1996), under conditions of respect, inclusivity, and equality (Gastil, Black and Moscovitz
2008; Knight and Johnson 1997). While there are ongoing debates and competing
interpretations of some of these criteria, the above discussion represents a broad consensus
on the nature and advantages of deliberation. This conception of deliberation runs up against
two sets of barriers. The first is based on incentives, and the second, on psychological
constraints.

2 For example, on the necessity of sincerity (Adler 2008; Lenard 2008; Warren 2006, 2008) or the necessity of
consensus or decision-seeking (Thompson 2008; Sunstein 1999). For an overview of the key tensions in the
field, see Neblo (2007).
Incentive-based limitations on deliberative talk

The incentive-based limitations on deliberation are a result of the fact that political problems demand coordinated action under conditions of conflicting interests, high stakes, and uncertainty (Bohman 1996; R. Calvert and Johnson 1998; Warren 1995). By their nature, these conditions favour strategic action. Political actors are motivated to take the means that achieve their ends, and strategic speech can be a good way to get what they want, often at the expense of interlocutors’ preferences.

Hobbes was one theorist who recognized the problem of strategic speech clearly. The principal threat to rationality and civil society, according to Hobbes, is the corruption of meaning as a result of the fact that people use words in motivated ways (Pettit 2008; Ball 1985). Hobbes’s proposed solution was to generate external incentives to keep language use in line by establishing a sovereign who would guarantee all covenants, including those governing the meaning of words (Wolin 1960). Outside an Hobbesian state, in situations where we cannot count upon a sovereign to make, and enforce, rules governing how words are used, the balance of incentives will often favour the instrumental or strategic use of words.

The incentives that select for strategic speech may be a function of the features of the particular collective action at hand (Pellizzoni 2001, 79), and particularly of the extent to which actors’ preferences are misaligned, making communication more difficult (Bloom et al. 2001, 80). Incentives may also derive from the features of the institutions in which speech takes place. Do they promote competition or pre-determine when people will have opportunities to speak (Landwehr and Holzinger 2010)? Do they include or exclude powerful actors with a direct stake in the problem (Hendriks 2006)?
Rational choice theorists have modeled the role of communication in cooperation problems, with results that call into question the possibility of deliberation as it is currently conceived. This literature suggests that, under many circumstances, “talk is cheap” (Austen-Smith 1992, 46). Since, in many cases it costs nothing for people to make verbal claims, if it is in their interest to make the claim, they will do so whether it is true or not. As a result, words lose their ability to communicate meaning. In the absence of shared preference, costless verification, or costly signaling, private information cannot be credible (Austen-Smith 1992; Farrell 1995). Others have refined these models to suggest that there are some circumstances under which cheap talk can be informative. For instance, communication may be self-committing (where the structure of the game is such that the speaker would have an incentive to follow through if his or her proposal were believed) or self-signaling, (where speech is credible if one would want it to be believed only were it true) (Baglia and Morris 2002).

The direct implications of these models may be limited to circumstances in which speech serves only to convey private information. They nevertheless represent a fundamental challenge to deliberative theories of democracy, in that they highlight how incentives set limits on what deliberation can achieve. Democratic theory needs to take account of these limitations, in part by recognizing how different forms of communication may be compatible with, or complimentary to, preference maximization. Strategic actors can also leverage the power of speech to direct attention to particular considerations (Hafer and Landa 2007); establish connections among propositions (List 2011; Patty 2008); alter the dimensionality of issues (Riker 1996); or coordinate around focal points on the basis of principles, precedents, and symbols (R. Calvert and Johnson 1998; Johnson 1993). Each of these possibilities
suggests that the existing framework, which divides speech on the basis of either strategic or communicative action orientations, may be inadequate to understanding all the functions of speech under the conditions of politics, which demand some measure of strategic orientation from actors.

**Psychology-based limitations on deliberative talk**

A second set of challenges to the model of interpersonal communication behind much of deliberative democratic theory come from what research in psychology tells us about how people actually reason. To review, Habermas’s pragmatic account of communicative action takes the following form. When coordinating social action through the medium of language, actors, in effect, issue a warrant or guarantee that the claims they make can be justified. If a claim has any persuasive force, it is because the hearers have either accepted the speaker’s warrant, or the reasons that support it (and reasons for those reasons in a chain of justification).

This model of raising and testing validity claims is valuable for drawing attention to the democratic resources residing in the basic social practice of communication, as I argued above. But it bears little resemblance to what research in psychology tells us about how people reason. Rather than deliberately tracing the validity of a claim through a chain of justifications, people reason according to predictable patterns that are not necessarily determined by the substantive content of claims. Psychologists and cognitive linguists know that we make some connections rather than others on the basis of symbols (Sears 2001); that we respond to frames that draw our attention to some considerations over others (Chong and Druckman 2007b); and that we are biased towards confirmatory evidence (Mercier and Sperber 2011). Our thoughts are constrained by heuristics (Kuklinski and Quirk 2000),
structured by metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1981), and weighted according to our perceptions of a situation, including whether we stand to gain or lose (Mercer 2005). All things being equal, our judgments tend to favour simple explanations over those that are both more probable, and more complex (Lombozo 2007). Work in informal logic similarly suggests that we are influenced by the ways arguments are formulated, including the use of ridicule (Van Laar 2008), selective illustrations (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969), and even personal pronouns to deflect blame or enhance credibility (Fetzer and Bull 2008).

Thus, how we formulate and respond to arguments depends on much more than the logical or rational justifications of claims. The fact that interplay between language and pre-existing psychological tendencies and cognitive structures may determine the quality of the force of communication distances us from the notion that speakers articulate reasons that others simply accept or reject. These latent forms of psychological influence are worth exploring, in part because they may challenge the democratic value of even some well-intentioned forms of speech. As well, strategic actors can construct their arguments to take advantage of these tendencies, potentially extending their influence well beyond the substance of what they say. Both these possibilities suggest a need to revisit the idea that the force of the better argument rests solely with the acceptance of the validity of a claim.

**Current Responses to Limitations on Deliberative Talk**

Many deliberative democrats have recognized these limitations, and the deviations from deliberative ideals that strategic action entails. This section identifies several approaches that respond to the problem of strategic speech. These include, first, attempting to clarify the status of deliberative standards so as to make their criteria less stringent; second,
developing typologies that distinguish between deliberation and other forms of speech; and, third, establishing institutions to approximate the necessary conditions for deliberation. In addition to these approaches, I focus closely on Nathaniel Klemp’s (2012) *The Morality of Spin*, which offers another take on the problems associated with strategic speech.

### Modifying the status of rational dialogue

Three distinct theoretical strategies respond to the pervasiveness of strategic motivations in politics by modifying the status of the ideal of rational dialogue. The first strategy treats the ideal as *regulative*, the second specifies more inclusive criteria for what counts as deliberation, and the third attempts to identify the deliberative potentials of seemingly non-deliberative speech, namely, rhetoric.

*The ideal speech situation as a regulative ideal*

One response to the problem of strategic speech involves emphasizing that the ideal speech situation, a key component of communicative rationality, is a regulative ideal against which one can measure actual speech and its conditions. Treating the deliberative model as an ideal (Steiner 2008, 189) allows us to place specific instances of speech on a scale of being more or less deliberative (McCarthy 1990, 456), rather than making the binary judgment that all speech that does not mirror rational dialogue is simply not deliberative. But there are two problems with treating the ideal speech situation as a regulative ideal. The first is that its primary function is as a pragmatic presupposition. In order to engage in communicative action, actors must assume that all claims could, at least potentially, be justified under conditions of ideal dialogue. They must further assume that no force except the rationally motivating force of valid reasons—for instance, coercion, instrumental
incentives, or personal power—holds sway. The ideal speech situation is only indirectly about correspondence between the ideal and reality. It can be projected onto actual circumstances in order to ascertain whether or not people have good reasons to adopt the performative attitude communicative action requires, but it would be wrong to assume this means that the purpose of any single political institution should be to replicate these conditions.

Neither treating the ideal speech situation as a regulative ideal nor as a pragmatic presupposition we can project onto the world tells us anything about what happens when actors do not have sufficient grounds to attribute communicative intent to others. If reasons cannot have motivating force under such circumstances, the democratic potential of communication would be limited to relatively easy cases. Neutralizing limitations on deliberative speech by creating a space in which the only form of power is the persuasive force of reasons appears insurmountable in the face of the conflicting incentives that characterize most political situations. While we might succeed in creating small scale deliberative enclaves—the impetus behind designing and empowering mini-publics—that tells us little about most of political discourse, and whatever democratic potentials it may have.

Relaxing deliberative criteria

If the first approach is about loosening the way deliberative ideals apply to reality, the second is about relaxing the content of those ideals. For example, in *Public Deliberation* (1996), James Bohman suggests moving away from procedural accounts of deliberation, and focusing instead on instances of successful coordination on the basis of reasons. In their review of the field, Bächtiger et al. (2010) pursue a similar line of thought. They suggest
distinguishing Type I deliberation, which conforms closely to the Habermasian standard, from Type II deliberation, which admits more flexible forms of discourse. Type II deliberation emphasizes relatively democratic outcomes, and seeks to attend directly to the real world constraints on normative ideals (Bächtiger et al. 2010, 33).

Nonetheless, Bächtiger et al. also identify problems with the movement towards the less demanding Type II conception of deliberation. As the category becomes broader, deliberative democrats may no longer be able to claim many of the ethical and epistemic benefits attributed to deliberative talk. Loosening deliberative criteria without also offering a means of drawing distinctions between speech that serves deliberative ends and speech that does not represents another dead end in resolving the problem of strategic speech. Moving towards Type II deliberation entails giving up communicative action as a normative metric without replacing it with a new one. Bächtiger et al. recognize this problem, but their solutions involve reintroducing Type I standards, in the form of rational justification and sincerity criteria. By contrast, this dissertation will help resolve this problem by offering a more inclusive account of speech along with a way of specifying which forms of speech can secure the democratic benefits attributed to deliberative speech.

To foreshadow the argument in subsequent chapters, replacing communicative action with an alternative pragmatic model yields a conceptual framework capable of making distinctions among forms of discourse without re-introducing the same Type I standards that smuggle in assumptions about communicative intent. Such a framework will be better suited to covering a broad range of types of communication. Like the Type II approaches Bächtiger et al. identify, it will focus on outcomes rather than intentions. In this case, the relevant outcomes are at the level of individual commitments, judgments, and choices.
Rehabilitating rhetoric

A third way of modifying the status of the ideal of rational dialogue involves seeking the deliberative value in rhetorical speech. Rhetoric sits uneasily in a deliberative framework because it tends to be strategic, and would seem to admit both insincerity and demagoguery, both of which threaten deliberative goods. However, Simone Chambers and John Dryzek have both recently sought to integrate deliberation and rhetoric. According to Chambers, given the fact that mass democracy prevents most communication from being dialogical, deliberative democrats should distinguish between plebiscitary rhetoric, which is “concerned first and foremost with gaining support for a proposition,” (2009, 337) and deliberative rhetoric that prompts thoughtful reasoning and avoids emotional triggers. This contribution, while useful, leaves a number of questions unanswered. What makes some instances of rhetoric and not others spark thoughtful reasoning? What counts as putting winning ahead of reflection? These questions reflect the fact that while operating within a framework of communicative action, it is very difficult to avoid using speaker intentions to identify democratically undesirable forms of speech and risks leaving politics, with its winners and losers, outside the scope of deliberative rhetoric.

In Dryzek’s view, the democratic quality of rhetorical speech depends on its consequences. Does rhetoric facilitate reflexivity, generate legitimacy, or heal divisions (Dryzek 2010, 332)? While rhetoric may in some cases contribute to positive democratic outcomes, Dryzek’s theory does not provide the tools to establish systematic connections between these outcomes and forms or instances of rhetoric. What makes one instance of rhetorical speech promote the deliberative virtues of reflection and reflexivity (Dryzek 2010, 329), but not another? It may be possible to make more specific claims about the relationship
between forms of speech, on the one hand, and responses at the individual level, on the other, but only if we re-think the pragmatics of communicative influence.

Each of the three approaches outlined above reflects some effort to address the effects of strategy by altering the status of the ideal of rational dialogue. At the same time, they all recognize the importance of maintaining some basis for making positive normative claims about the democratic benefits of communication. As a result, the ideal of communicative action still skews their responses towards excluding strategic speech, and so moves deliberative democratic theory away from politics. If we continue to see strategic forms of speech only in negative terms, we will be unable to connect the normative insights of deliberative democracy to the conditions and practices of politics. The concept of strategic speech itself cannot capture normatively important variation in the ways speech can be oriented to securing outcomes because it is only defined on a single dimension of opposition to the ideal. Understanding how communication can enable or undermine democratic outcomes requires a closer analysis of how it works outside ideal conditions.

**Typology-based responses to incentive problems**

A second general set of approaches to the problem of strategic speech addresses incentive-based limitations on deliberative speech by developing typologies. These approaches start from the premise that it does not make sense to apply deliberative criteria to all social interaction mediated through language. Just because actors use communication to coordinate does not mean that one should be looking for communicative action. Rather, sometimes coordination is clearly governed by instrumental rationality, which is associated with strategic action. In this section, I consider three such approaches.
Arguing vs. bargaining

The first, and perhaps most familiar typology is a distinction between arguing (the realm of communicative rationality) and bargaining (the realm of instrumental rationality, and by extension, strategic action) (Holzinger 2004; Risse 2000; Elster 1997). Arguing and bargaining envision very different connections between speech and outcomes. In argument, speech targets and changes beliefs. In bargaining, speech enables a mutual adjustment of demands and the identification of overlapping preferences. The claim here is that the presence of instrumental reasoning in communication does not represent a fundamental challenge to the normative account of deliberative talk, because deliberative standards are only properly applied to the realm of communicative action: argument, and not bargaining. The problem with this approach, at least as an answer to the problem of strategic speech, is that the distinction between communicative and strategic action does not map onto the distinction between arguing and bargaining. The former distinction has to do with action orientations, and the latter, the purposes and types of claims being made (Saretzki 2012, 177). The arguing and bargaining typology does not resolve the problem of strategic speech because strategic motivations can pervade both sides of the dichotomy. If strategic speech is defined broadly to include any communication where speech is oriented to outcome rather than mutual understanding, there is no reason to think that argument cannot be just as strategic as bargaining, although speech acts may be performing different functions.

Four ways deliberative talk can resolve conflict of interest problems

Second, in an effort to combine self-interest and deliberation, Mansbridge et al. (2010) suggest a four part typology for understanding the role of deliberative talk in resolving conflict. In convergence, actors reach an agreement for the same reasons; in
incompletely theorized agreements, they reach agreement, but for different reasons; in integrative negotiations, parties find a way around conflict by exploiting different aspects of an issue for joint gain; and in cooperative negotiations, parties deliberate to settle on a fair process, eschewing power and strategic posturing (Mansbridge et al. 2010, 7-10). This typology does address the issue of incentives, but it does not speak to the exact problem of strategic speech. The problem of strategic speech instead concerns how actors can use speech to secure ends not by hammering out agreements, but by influencing the judgments and decisions of others. Because Mansbridge et al.’s typology is an answer to a slightly different question—namely, what kinds of agreements can actors reach in the face of conflicting self-interest—it does not challenge the assumption that actors proceed on the basis of reasons, albeit potentially competing or contradictory reasons.

Coordinative and discursive types

Claudia Landwehr’s (2010b) typology comes closest to the specific problem of strategic speech I identified above. Landwehr’s typology applies to the communication that precedes political decisions. The features of communication relevant to Landwehr’s typology are whether or not it is discursive (characterized by dialogue and publicity) and coordinative (oriented to producing agreement on a course of action). These two dimensions yield a four part typology. Discussion is discursive but not coordinative. It involves an exchange of reasons that others might potentially accept, but not necessarily with an orientation to securing some outcome. Deliberation is both discursive and coordinative. Debate is neither. It is not meant to be dialogical, nor is it oriented to actually making a collective decision. Bargaining is coordinative but not discursive. Actors seek an outcome, but not on the basis of reasoned exchanges (Landwehr 2010b). Landwehr’s typology has the advantage of not
crowding the modes and purposes of speech onto the communicative action/strategic action distinction. Because she avoids relying on the concept of communicative action, she is able to highlight some important differences between kinds of communication. For example, her typology illuminates key aspects of debate that differentiate it from discussion, on the one hand, and bargaining, on the other. Debate is not intended to elicit dialogic responses, nor does it provide a direct link between communication and decision. However, Landwehr’s typology falls short in resolving the problem of strategic speech. It is a step removed from the level at which communication actually operates. Speech works first on individual beliefs and judgments at the level of reasoning, and only second on collective decisions. I argue that we need a “micro” account, where outcomes refer to the immediate connection between speech, on the one hand, and a target’s belief or action commitments on the other. The question of how these add up to collective decisions is a separate issue. It does not require a theory of the pragmatics of language like the one on which deliberative democratic theory currently founds its normative arguments for talk. Rather, it requires theories of aggregation and negotiation. The same rules that are said to enable deliberation—excluding forms of power and influence based in money or coercion, for instance—may also be necessary conditions for these other forms of talk-based coordination, but we still need to understand how strategic speech exerts influence, rather than lumping it in with other forms of instrumental action that unfold through communication.

The three typologies discussed above capture distinct ways of connecting communication to a joint or collective decision. One problem that afflicts all of them, however, is that they are framed at the wrong level of analysis to understand the distinct problems posed by strategic speech. Our conception of strategic speech needs to be focused
first of all on how individual speech acts induce others to take up commitments. Just as communicative action concerns the pragmatic orientation towards the validity basis of claims and their uptake or rejection, strategic action can be conceptualized at the same level: how do actors use words as tools to get people to take up claims? Distinguishing instrumental rationality, self-interest, or decision-orientedness in the ways people reach decisions through communication reflects a secondary stage of the process. This secondary stage should be primarily concerned with decision-rules, thresholds for agreement, resources for bargaining and the like. To understand the pervasive influence of strategic speech, a typology should capture the ways that actors use language to target the beliefs and judgments that precede aggregation and negotiation.

**Mini-publics: An institutional workaround for the problem of strategic speech**

Part of the problem of strategic speech is that politics undermines the conditions for genuine deliberation. Another response, then, is to create those conditions by designing institutions that foster good deliberation and discourage strategic speech. “Mini-publics,” small scale deliberative bodies created by governments and civil society actors, are well known examples. Mini-publics are made up of a sample of the constituency relevant to a problem. Members are asked to learn about it, deliberate, and issue advice or recommendations. Mini-publics can range from relatively formal citizen juries empowered to make decisions, such as the Oregon Citizen’s Initiative Review, to informal venues that generate considered opinions, such as AmericaSpeaks’ 21st Century Town Meetings. Variations on such processes have proliferated (see Fung 2003). Generally speaking, one of the unifying assumptions is that mini-publics can better approximate the conditions of ideal deliberation than the uncontrolled public sphere (Webler 1995). They typically enforce
equality and mutual respect (De Vries et al. 2010; Gastil, Black and Moscovitz 2008), use facilitation to draw out an exchange of reasons, and ensure that participants have sufficient information on which to proceed (Abelson et al. 2003).

One of the attractive features of mini-publics is that, in principle, they make it possible to create enclaves of deliberation genuinely insulated from all force except that of reaching agreement on the basis of validity claims. However, mini-publics are an incomplete solution to the problem of strategic uses of language for two reasons. First, as discussed above in the section on psychological constraints on deliberation, framing, heuristics, and language choices, among other features of discourse, can themselves exert force on reasoning that exceeds the substance of claims. There is no reason to think that participants, even in the relatively controlled circumstances of a mini-public, will overcome these psychological tendencies—and indeed, group dynamic may exacerbate them and introduce others (Perrin 2006). Nor, as a general matter, are mini-publics likely to remain insulated from powerful discourses that pervade the public sphere, which can affect the way that reasons are articulated and received within more sheltered processes (Fraser 1990). Second, as Chambers points out, the trend towards thinking that mini-publics are the only sites at which deliberation can take place is troubling because this emphasis comes at the expense of the democratic quality of political systems more generally (2009, 330).

The framework I develop in this dissertation opens up new possibilities to respond to Chambers’s concern. I argue that democratic quality at the system level does not require proliferating deliberative venues or rendering established venues more deliberative, desirable as these may be. Rather, democratic theorists need to identify the ways that communication exerts influence that may either underwrite or compromise autonomous judgment. Instead of
thinking of mini-publics as isolated enclaves of deliberation, then, one should consider them as supplements to the deliberative quality of political systems. Mini-publics create space for types of speech that, while not necessarily deliberative, correct for the autonomy-compromising tendencies of public discourse around certain fraught issues. They may inject new reasons or interpretations of problems or give people space to engage in dialogue that allows them to interrogate the sources of their own beliefs. Chapters 7-9 argue for an expanded set of functions for mini-publics based on these possibilities.

**A moral approach: Klemp’s typology of deliberative persuasion, strategic persuasion, and manipulation**

Klemp identifies and responds to the problem of strategic speech by developing a set of conceptual tools for distinguishing among various forms of non-ideal speech (2012, 5)—in other words, better and worse versions of the rhetoric that pervades public discourse. According to Klemp, it is possible to distinguish three kinds of speech: manipulation, strategic persuasion, and deliberative persuasion. The typology is based on two criteria: first, whether the speech bypasses the listener’s rational capacities and, second, whether the speaker intends it to do so. Rhetoric is manipulative when it deliberately bypasses the listener’s rational capacities—with an intention to use this avoidance of rational capacities to secure some outcome. Strategic persuasion takes place when the listener’s rational capacities are engaged openly, but with an intention to win. Deliberative persuasion, finally, is pursued in good faith and on the merits of the argument (2012, 57).

Klemp’s typology remains grounded in Habermas’s distinction between communicative and strategic action, and merely introduces an additional distinction within strategic action. In contrast, by using Brandom’s basic framework instead of Habermas’s, I
am able to focus on the dynamics of language use rather than its intent. Both my approach and Klemp’s highlight speech’s power to induce agreement, and ask when this capacity compromises autonomy. However, I proceed on the assumption that the best way to study speech as a feature of political life is to look at language more deeply, and ask how words and arguments can be said to exert any force at all. Following from his use of Habermas, Klemp keeps intentions at the heart of his argument, whereas my purpose is to try to understand the normative potentials and hazards of speech, including strategic speech, apart from intentions.³

An intentions-based account like Klemp’s asks if people are being treated as ends or means. A framework based on the dynamics of language use asks what it means for a choice or judgment to be considered autonomous in the face of exposure to a range of often competing influences, each deploying the resources of information and context. My model of communicative influence takes this second approach. While intentions may dictate the moral quality of speech, democratic theorists should be more concerned with the effects of speech, measured in terms of their ability to secure or undermine the goods associated with talk-based politics.

**Situating the model of communicative influence**

The model I develop in this dissertation overcomes many of the limitations of the approaches discussed above. It uses pragmatic theories to explain communication on its own

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³ Klemp draws on Philip Pettit to support his use of intentions, arguing that theorists need to be concerned, not with protecting people from chance, but with protecting them from one another (Pettit, 1999 p. 52-53 qtd. in Klemp, 2012, p. 70). However, as I discuss in Chapter 5, the domination with which republicanism is concerned is a feature of interpersonal relationships. I argue these should be the subject of a different type of normative evaluation from the dynamics of speech, which should focus on the autonomous quality of judgment rather than parallel questions of whether the choice that follows is empowered. Manipulation may be a form of domination, but it must also be subject to evaluation as part of a broader complex of communicative types.
terms, apart from speakers’ intentions or stipulations about the conditions that actors must fulfill in order to engage in deliberation. I explain, in Chapter 3, that the inferential structures inherent in language use—structures that parallel the webs of inferences that confer meaning and enable reasoning—can exert force by directing reasoning through inferences that actors are compelled to accept, insofar as they are competent users of language. Like many of the approaches discussed above, I develop a typology; however, where other typologies focus on how communication is connected with decisions, I ask about the different ways speech operates as a form of influence. While the approaches discussed above do include belief change as a mechanism of reaching agreement or coordinating action, they do not specify how speech can change beliefs, except by appeal and agreement.

Assigning analytic priority to good intentions has contributed to de-politicizing deliberative democratic theory. I intend to offer a theoretical means of reversing this tendency. Focusing on intentions neglects the possibility that even well-intentioned speech can compromise autonomous judgment to some extent—for instance, by perpetuating a strong frame or claiming undeserved status. At the same time, speech intended only to win might actually enhance autonomous judgment by placing claims in direct competition. To grasp these possibilities, one needs an account of speech that does not rely on speakers’ intentions or motivations, since these only matter for the force of language by virtue of the structures that motivated speakers are able to project to exert influence.

The model of communicative influence developed in the first half of the dissertation generates a series of arguments presented in the second half about the kinds of institutions that can best respond to the hazards strategic speech can pose to autonomous judgment. Rather than introducing mini-publics into chains of political decision-making in order to tap
into the benefits of genuine deliberation, I ask how democratic goods can be secured at both the site and the system level through mixed types of communicative influence. This yields a much wider range of suggestions, while maintaining a role for mini-publics as environments in which institutional variables can be most directly controlled to draw out specific types of speech.

The model of communicative influence and the idea of strategic speech

Despite the problems with Habermas’s formulation of strategic action, I do use the term strategic speech in the dissertation. Without the assumptions about egocentrism, deception, illocutions and perlocutions that Habermas loads onto the concept, however, “strategic speech” is more of a useful shorthand than a meaningful conceptual category. I use the term strategic to describe speech that directs its force towards some end beyond merely achieving understanding. What is theoretically more interesting than this orientation, I argue, is the variable magnitude and nature of this force. The model of communicative influence draws on Brandom’s pragmatics to build an alternative account of speech, including strategic speech. In the model, I distinguish among a number of ways speech can exert influence, each with different implications for autonomous judgment and for democratic systems more broadly. Rather than treat strategic speech as one among these types, I use the term to suggest that speakers aim towards some broader purpose. The important variation is not between strategic and non-strategic forms of speech, but in how speech is producing outcomes.

Communicative Influence and Autonomy

I have argued for abandoning Habermas’s concept of communicative action because of its untenable distinction between “good” communicative action and “bad” strategic action.
Habermas’s conceptualization, however, does have the virtue of establishing the positive
democratic potentials of talk and to possibility of shifting conflict onto the resources of
language. The normative goal of the theory I develop is to establish that it is possible for
speech to secure these same democratic goods without requiring communicative intent—that
is, without excluding speech governed by the strategic incentives that go hand in hand with
politics.

I begin by providing an alternative account of the force of speech. On this account,
speakers may still borrow force from hearers’ agreeing to or endorsing claims. But speakers
may also use this endorsement strategically to leverage further influence without necessarily
treating people as means. In Chapter 5, I reintroduce into this framework normative
considerations derived from democratic theory. I argue that the primary basis for the
normative evaluation of communicative influence should be the autonomy of the judgments
speakers try to influence through speech. Here, autonomy refers to the reflexive character of
these judgments, and their authenticity—their grounding in reasons actors can recognize as
their own.

Building an account of autonomy into the model of communicative influence sets
aside a subset of democratic theory’s most important questions—notably, the empowerment
of those affected by an issue to have a say in decisions. Instead, the framework I develop in
this dissertation focuses directly on the speech-based influence that precedes those decisions,
perhaps even targeting them most forcefully when a decision is most empowered. Revisiting
the idea of the force of language creates opportunities to establish which kinds of speech and
conditions can underwrite autonomous judgment. This reconceptualization opens new
possibilities for institutions to respond specifically and directly to threats to autonomy, arguments I develop in Chapters 7 to 9.

The concept of autonomy is generally associated with intentionalist ethics, wherein autonomous persons are to be treated as ends, not means. Ultimately, while noting that intentions may determine the ethical standing of speakers—whether they are indeed treating people as means or ends—I focus on the consequences of speech. There are ethical dimensions to my argument that follow from the importance I place on autonomy. This said, it is not a work in ethics. The model of communicative influence locates these consequences at the level of the effects of speech on judgments, and that in turn drive changes in individuals’ commitments. Theories of autonomy help determine whether these consequences are good or bad, but democratic theorists should be concerned primarily with the conditions that bring these consequences about. Kant recognized the value of such a two-track approach in *Perpetual Peace*. On the one hand, a theory of right serves to justify normative imperatives like the requirement to treat others as ends, rather than means. On the other hand, Kant also tells us that “as hard as it may sound, the problem of setting up a state can be solved even by a nation of devils (so long as they possess understanding)” (Kant 1795 (1970), 112). In this remark, the task that interests him is one of bringing about certain forms of conduct, rather than consequences, by setting up neutralizing oppositions. The same impulse can be applied to the problem of setting up institutions that instantiate behaviors consistent with autonomy in practice, even against a background of self-interested incentives.
Chapter Outline

Each chapter of this dissertation builds on the theory developed in the preceding one and, as a result, introduces greater complexity to the model and to its implications. It begins at the micro-level of pragmatics: first, to understand how assumptions about intentions are built into Habermas’s account of language, and how this can be avoided (Chapter 2); and second, to account for the force of language, and the variation in the nature and extent of that force (Chapter 3). It then introduces considerations of context to communicative influence, based on the idea that the character and extent of influence is not solely a property of claims and arguments, but of their interaction with a discursive environment (Chapter 4). I then reintroduce the democratic goods currently associated with speech-based politics. I use the lens of autonomy to ask how communicative influence affects these goods (Chapter 5). These three pieces—inferential structures, the discursive ecosystem and the democratic goods of speech-based politics—provide the conceptual foundation for the dissertation. I also discuss certain recognizable, generalizable patterns of communicative influence that we might recognize from everyday political communication: metaphors, analogies, narratives, hedging, deceit, and the like (Chapter 6).

In the remaining chapters, I consider the implications of the model for existing democratic institutions as well as emerging democratic innovations. I argue that institutions can create the conditions that render communicative influence consistent with autonomous judgment: first, by controlling and correcting for contextual features that excessively limit or compromise reasoning processes (Chapter 7); second, by ensuring that when speakers’ statuses increase their influence, the grounds for this magnification can withstand critical reflection (Chapter 8); and, third, by ensuring that institutions can select for an appropriate
mix of types of communicative influence (Chapter 9). Finally, I illustrate the potential of the model to provide tailored, effective responses to threats to autonomous judgment that are particular to a given set of institutional arrangements. I suggest that political systems favouring different mixes of representative behaviors create different hazards of communicative influences. These, in turn, require different correctives to ensure that people have an adequate basis for autonomous judgment (Chapter 10). I conclude by identifying some further implications of the analytic framework the model of communicative influence offers (Chapter 11).

Chapter 2. Habermas and Brandom: From illocutionary force to deontic scorekeeping

Chapter 2 begins with a closer examination of Habermas’s pragmatics. I focus on the concept of illocutionary force, highlighting the way it builds assumptions about speaker intent into the model of communication that ultimately underwrites deliberative democracy. I also explain how this formulation necessarily leads to the conclusion that strategic speech treats people as means, not ends. I then introduce and explain Brandom’s pragmatics, which provides the basis for an alternative account of the force of speech. Before proceeding to the model of communicative influence, I identify the necessity of moving beyond a baseline justificatory model that accounts for meaning and understanding, to an active, other-regarding model that accounts for the influence of speech on the commitments—the beliefs and actions—of others.

Chapter 3. The model of communicative influence I: Inferential structures

In Chapter 3 I introduce an alternative conceptual framework for understanding speech, using the notion of inferential structures. The starting point is the claim that
articulating single assertional commitments, the fundamental units of Brandom’s model of deontic scorekeeping, is the most basic thing people can do with speech. When making an argument, for instance, speakers offer a series of inferentially linked propositions or commitments, leveraging accepted rules of inference to direct the reasoning processes of others, often towards certain conclusions. Chapter 3 develops the idea of communicative influence— influence that works directly on the commitments of others on the basis of the uptake of claims that are arranged in these inferential structures. I argue that these arrangements can vary in three ways. First, they can be more or less rigid, exerting pressure on reasoning and making the hearer take on certain commitments by virtue of the inferential connections embedded in the structure. Second, they can be more or less reciprocal, in the sense of engaging or appealing to the hearer’s existing commitments, and borrowing force from those commitments in order for influence to be successful. Third, the elements that make up the structure—the propositions and inferences among them—can be more or less transparent. Together, these three dimensions generate an eight-part typology of communicative influence, enabling useful analytic distinctions among types of speech that we intuitively believe are different: proof, persuasion, rhetoric, manipulation, explanation, discussion, assertion, and disclosure.

Chapter 4. The model of communicative influence II: Discursive ecosystems

Inferential structures represent only part of the model of communicative influence. In Chapter 4, I argue that the character and extent of communicative influence depends on the interaction between inferential structures and the context in which communication is embedded. I use the metaphor of an ecosystem to capture the ways that the parts of a complex system interact with speech to produce outcomes. The parts of this ecosystem
comprise, first, the existing commitments speakers must engage with (or avoid) and the frames that establish connections and salience among them; second, subject-based features that establish credibility through trust or expertise, on the speaker side, and limit potential reciprocity by the absence of commitments, on the hearer side; and third, the institutional arrangements that incentivize certain types of communicative influence over others. I group the ecological effects of these features into three types. First, modification effects alter inferential structures directly, rendering them more or less reciprocal, transparent and rigid depending on whether or not they involve commitments that are part of a pre-existing structure like an issue frame. Second, magnification effects occur when inferential structures or their components are more likely to secure uptake because of something about the speaker, as opposed to something about the structure. Finally, selection effects capture the incentive structures institutions generate, and the costs or consequences they impose on certain communicative behaviors.

**Chapter 5. Communicative influence and democratic goods**

Chapter 5 reintroduces normative content to the model of communicative influence. It begins by demonstrating that the goods democratic theorists associate with discourse—the motivating force of reasons and freedom in will formation—are grounded in considerations of autonomy. Autonomy can, in turn, be disaggregated into three components: what is autonomous, in this case, a judgment, choice, or action; reflexivity, or the awareness of one’s own reasons for judgment, choice or action; and authenticity, or the requirement that those reasons be in some meaningful sense the autonomous actor’s own. The three elements of autonomy map onto the three dimensions of communicative influence. Rigidity limits choice and constrains judgment; transparency enables reflexivity; and reciprocity enables
authenticity, in that the commitments exerting influence can be endorsed on one’s own terms. This leads to the normative claim that for communicative influence to be consistent with autonomy, increases in rigidity must be accompanied by increases in reciprocity and transparency. Following from this claim, I argue that features of the discursive ecosystem can be subject to normative evaluation in terms of autonomy because of their modification, magnification, and selection effects on communicative influence, the medium through which autonomy may be either supported or damaged.

Chapter 6. Patterns of communicative influence

In Chapter 6, I apply the model of communicative influence to commonplace features of political communication. Patterns of communicative influence are recognizable, repeated, generic characteristics of inferential structures. The patterns I group together have certain pragmatic features and functions in common. From these, I theorize their relationship to the three dimensions of communicative influence, to the immediate context of interaction, and to the discursive ecosystem more broadly. The five patterns are, first, narrative patterns, including storytelling and testimony; second, comparative patterns, including metaphors, analogies and examples; third, evocative patterns, including loaded language and persuasive definitions; fourth, deceptive patterns, including lies and exaggeration; and fifth, avoidance patterns, including hedging, equivocation, and non-answers to questions. In each case, I make claims about how these may alter inferential structures. For example, analogies may render them more rigid by establishing necessary inferences. Narratives may, in some cases, promote reciprocity by putting arguments in easily relatable terms. Deceptive patterns necessarily compromise transparency. In addition, the existence of these tendencies from each type of pattern means that their use has implications for the discursive ecosystem. For
example, narrative patterns may establish credibility, while being caught in deception may undermine it.

**Chapter 7. Institutional responses to the anti-democratic hazards of modification effects**

In Chapters 7 to 9, I develop the idea that the way to ensure communicative influence is consistent with, or even enhances, autonomy is to direct institutional interventions at the discursive ecosystem to modify the conditions under which communicative influence takes place. The framework for these chapters is based on two premises. First, interventions can serve two purposes. On the one hand, *direct* interventions shape communicative behaviour directly by generating incentives or imposing limits on speech. On the other hand, through *corrective* interventions, to the extent that influence might threaten autonomy, arrangements are in place to counter its effects. Second, institutional interventions might be applied at the level of a specific site or venue of discourse, or at the level of what theorists have begun to call the deliberative system, which captures the interaction among sites of talk-based politics (Parkinson and Mansbridge 2012). Within this framework, I argue that institutions should respond to the specific anti-democratic hazards each type of ecological effect poses. In Chapter 7 specifically, I examine modification effects that derive from the structure of pre-existing commitments and audience characteristics. The presence of dominant frames in the discursive ecosystem, for example, enables rigidity by establishing pre-given connections among commitments. At the same time, as I argue in Chapter 4, they have the potential to compromise both transparency and reciprocity by rendering these connections implicit, and by excluding alternative considerations. The second set of hazards concerns the modification effects of audience-based ecological features—notably the reciprocity-compromising effects of lack of knowledge. In both cases, I suggest ways that rules, procedures, tasks, and other
features of institutions can control and correct for these effects, and how sites might balance one another.

Chapter 8. Institutional responses to the anti-democratic hazards of magnification effects

Chapter 8 follows the same logic as Chapter 7, identifying direct and corrective institutional interventions at the site and system levels that respond to the specific anti-democratic hazards of magnification effects. Magnification effects occur when speaker-based ecological features—particularly the status or credibility conferred by expertise, first-hand experience, shared identity or trust—enhance the uptake of individual commitments, with or without an accompanying inferential structure. This status enhances the uptake of inferential structures, thus magnifying whatever kind of influence they would otherwise exert. I argue that the anti-democratic hazards specific to magnification effects occur when magnification effects are poorly connected to the grounds for credibility. Misplaced trust or misleading, mistaken claims to expertise, or selective appeals to a record enable influence that lacks the potential for authenticity or transparency. Direct interventions might include, for example, keeping a record of speakers’ words and actions, or empowering sites to track the behavior of others. Correctives would ensure moments of reflexivity focused on the sources of credibility, and make sure actors are not forced to depend on speaker status for their judgments by providing accessible justifications as well.

Chapter 9. Institutional responses to the democratic hazards of selection effects

As with the chapters on modification and magnification effects, Chapter 9 begins with the anti-democratic hazards of selection effects. The most direct form of selection hazard is that institutions might select for manipulative influence—which is to say, they incentivize
rigidity, along with non-transparency and non-reciprocity. Assuming that a site is meant to produce a certain type of influence, I suggest a set of direct institutional interventions that might, hypothetically, favour more or less of each of the dimensions of communicative influence. For example, raising and lowering the stakes may prompt greater or lesser rigidity in argument. The second hazard concerns the appropriate mix of influence types in a discursive site or system. I argue that autonomy is best served when communicative influence types balance one another. I explain why an excess of any one type of communicative influence is itself a hazard to the conditions of autonomous judgment, and suggest a set of corrective balancing relationships that can help determine the purpose of a discursive process, and its component parts.

Chapter 10. Communicative influence and representation

In Chapter 10, I apply the model of communicative influence to a central feature of modern democratic systems, namely, representation. I take up Mansbridge’s theory of types of representation that exceed a simple principal-agent based theory. I argue that three types of representation—anticipatory, gyroscopic and surrogate—each generate their own particular hazards, which are ultimately hazards of the institutions that promote these types of representation. For example, in anticipatory representation, actors may attempt to change voter preferences ahead of the next election. Competition in such circumstances produces hazards that map onto those of selection effects; namely, that the pressures of competition might select for manipulation, or select for too much rhetoric and not enough of its counterpart, explanation. Institutional arrangements that are likely to channel electoral competition into anticipatory representation, then, should include correctives such as institutionalizing spaces for low-stakes discussion, to ensure that people can develop and
reflect on their own commitments so that the basis for autonomy remains intact (although I do not address the link between institutions and representation types in depth). Similarly, institutions favouring gyroscopic representation generate the hazards of modification effects, in that actors may try to render certain sources of credibility or status claims more salient and establish, often implicitly, connections between their abilities and the demands of the role. Similarly, surrogate representation is likely to yield hazards of magnification. I use the correctives developed in Chapters 7 to 9 to suggest institutional responses to the hazards inherent in competition for representative status under a given set of institutional conditions.

Chapter 11. Conclusion

In the final chapter, I elaborate some further implications of the model of communicative influence for democratic theory and for further empirical research. I summarize the argument of the dissertation, and I identify its five principle contributions: a platform for connecting democratic theory with empirical research in several key fields; a research agenda in its own right; an intervention into democratic institutional innovations; a strategy for thinking about deliberative systems; and a politicized theory of deliberative democracy.
Chapter 2. Habermas and Brandom: From Illocutionary Force to Deontic Scorekeeping

The first half of this dissertation develops a conceptual framework for differentiating among the ways that speech can exert force, whether or not actors are leveraging this force for strategic purposes. This framework will be grounded in pragmatics—a theory of what it is to use language. This chapter establishes the background in philosophy of language that sets the conceptual foundations for understanding communicative influence, beginning with an explanation of Habermas’s concept of communicative action. I then identify an important and fatal misstep in Habermas’s theory: he derives the persuasive force of speech from the illocutionary motives of speakers, rather than from the pragmatic consequences of speech acts. I show that the central, if implicit, status he assigns to intentions renders the problem of strategic speech insurmountable within Habermas’s framework.

In the second section, I suggest that democratic theory move towards a better account of the pragmatics of language use. I introduce Brandom’s model of deontic scorekeeping as such an alternative. I explain the concepts most central to Brandom’s model of deontic scorekeeping in preparation for Chapter 3, in which I construct the model of communicative influence. Brandom’s approach displaces assumptions about intent in favour of rules of inference (logics of antecedents and consequences). In doing so, he sets out a pragmatic framework that can preserve the democratic value of reason-giving, while making room for the reasonable assumption that speakers’ intentions may exceed the immediate end of reaching understanding. In the third section, I set up the model of communicative influence by suggesting that Brandom’s “thin” model of language use needs to be expanded to provide analytic purchase on the ways that actors can use speech to exert influence, rather than
merely to justify their own commitments and to understand those of others. Specifically, I suggest that when actors articulate claims, they may do more than merely authorize others to take them up. Rather, they can advance groups of interconnected commitments that leverage the force of linked propositions to produce commitments in others.

**The Pragmatics of Communicative Rationality and Communicative Action**

Habermas begins *The Theory of Communicative Action* with an argument for communicative rationality, a form of rationality proper to discursive practice and fundamental to social coordination achieved through language. He develops this notion out of a concern with preserving the integrity of the intersubjective basis of social life in the face of the rising dominance of instrumental rationality. Communicative action both perpetuates and relies on language as the ultimate shared resource for social integration. Language operates on the rational basis of systematically interconnected universal validity claims. This internal connection between meaning and validity ensures that reasons can have “rationally motivating” force, which in turn provides for autonomous will formation (Habermas 1996, 1987). The conditions of possibility for communicative rationality are the unavoidable presuppositions of argumentative practice (Habermas 1984, 17)—implicit in how people communicate even when they are not arguing—that can tap into the system of context-transcending validity claims. The perspective of someone engaging in argumentation, in which the only force is “the force of the better argument,” is the only perspective from which the validity of claims can ultimately be established. To establish the validity of action norms, Habermas adds that this idealized rational discourse must include all those affected (Habermas 1996, 107).
Communicative action taps into this rationality simply by using the resources of the linguistic medium according to their proper end: that is, reaching understanding. However, communicative action requires certain performative presuppositions on the part of actors: assumptions that participants in communication have to make in order for it to make sense to be persuaded by each other’s claims. These presuppositions constitute what Habermas refers to as universal pragmatics. In communicative action, speakers give warrants that their claims are well-grounded, that is, that the claims’ validity conditions are met. The validity basis of a claim can be its truth, grounded in the objective world of facts; its rightness, grounded in the social world of norms; or its truthfulness (or sincerity), grounded in the subjective world of inner states. Warrants to truth claims can be redeemed in theoretical discourse, and to rightness, in practical discourse. One of the presuppositions speakers must make when acting communicatively is that their validity claims would be convincing under idealized conditions of theoretical or practical discourse. Communicative action refers to the dynamic process of reaching agreement on the basis of the validity of an utterance—agreement that is motivated by the persuasive force of valid claims, and achieved rather than imposed. The acceptance of a speech act offer on the basis of its connection to a criticizable validity claim renders communicative action consistent with autonomous opinion and will formation (Habermas 1979, 1984).

**Illocutionary force, communicative intent**

Communicative action achieves coordination through rationally-motivated agreement. As I described briefly in Chapter 1, Habermas explains the persuasive force of communication with reference to the distinction, borrowed from speech act theory, between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary components of an utterance. The locutionary
component refers to the propositional content of an utterance, or what is said. The illocutionary component refers to what the actor is doing in saying something: for example, asserting, stating, affirming, denying, or commanding (Habermas 1984; Austin 1975). The illocutionary component is the only part of a speech act offer that can motivate acceptance (Habermas 1987, 68). That is, when an actor accepts the illocutionary component of an utterance, he or she understands or accepts it as an assertion, a warning, an affirmation, or a command. The nature of the illocutionary offer determines the type of validity claims that could motivate its acceptance (Habermas 1984, 308). In accepting a speech act’s *illocutionary offer*, a hearer accepts that the validity conditions *appropriate to that type of speech act* are met—that it asserts a true fact or commands in accordance with a valid norm. A speech act’s illocutionary force derives from this acceptance, along with whatever obligations are incurred as a result.

The illocutionary roles that, for Habermas, can establish the validity basis of speech include: first, *constatives*, which assert or represent a state of affairs, and can thus be contested on grounds of truth; second, *regulatives*, which refer to something in the shared social world, establishing an interpersonal relationship that can be contested in terms of its rightness; and, third, *expressives*, which refer to something in the subjective world of inner states (Habermas 1984, 325-26). In accepting the illocutionary component of a speech act

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4 Habermas’s typology of illocutions also includes *imperatives*, which drop out of the analysis because they are only expressions of will; *communicatives*, which organize speech according to whether something is an objection, answer, question, prediction, etc; and *operatives*, which merely apply rules, for instance by classifying or identifying.
offer on the basis of these criticizable validity claims, interlocutors take on commitments that are relevant to the ongoing interaction.\(^5\)

By relying on speech act theory in this way, Habermas makes the meaning of an utterance dependent, in part, on the speaker’s intent. The illocutionary intent, or what the speaker is trying to do with the speech act, is what renders communicative utterances self-sufficient or intelligible. Meaning is internally connected the intention of the speech act offer, because the illocutionary intent (whether something is meant to represent a state of affairs, establish a relationship, or express a subjective state) determines the validity basis on which hearers should accept (or reject) the speech act offer. Understanding a speech act requires understanding what it would take to validate or falsify it, and what it would take (that is, its validity \textit{basis}) is determined by the illocutionary intent.

Action is communicative when speakers “unreservedly pursue illocutionary aims” (Habermas 1984, 305). In order for illocutionary force to hold—that is, in order for actors to agree to a speech act’s validity and incur rational obligations as a result—actors must adopt the performative stance that they and others are pursuing only the ends implied by the illocutionary component of their claims, and not ends tied to the perlocutionary consequences of illocutionary force being successfully applied. Following Habermas’s logic, if the intention reaches beyond the stated illocutionary content, interlocutors would need to understand that further intention in order to understand the meaning of the claim— which is difficult because it is only “contingently related” (1984, 289) to the content of the utterance. In Habermas’s framework, this type of language use constitutes \textit{strategic action}, in which

\(^5\) Illocutionary types do not themselves determine which action category a speech act belongs in, although certain types of illocutions tend to go with certain action types—for instance, expressive with dramaturgical action. Communicative action is distinguished, in that actors seek to reach understanding on the basis of validity claims, the types of which are determined by the illocutionary component of an utterance.
speakers instrumentalize speech acts in order to produce perlocutionary consequences. For such a claim to have force, however, the hearer would still need to accept the illocutionary component of the speech act offer. Habermas takes a further logical step in stating that in order for such speech to produce its consequences, the hearer must be unaware that intentions exceed the illocutionary component of the speech act.

It is this move that excludes strategic speech from the realm of normative acceptability. Because strategic speech requires an element of concealment, in which hearers’ naive acceptance of illocutionary offers can harness their wills to the speaker’s ends, acceptance of the speech act cannot claim the basis of rational agreement. Following Habermas’s logic, treating speech acts as means rather than ends entails treating subjects as means rather than ends. Moreover, political circumstances often yield cases where language is being used with an orientation to success or to producing a particular outcome, and generally both parties to the exchange as well as their audiences know it. And yet even in such situations, speech is nevertheless expected to have some impact on judgment. The idea of illocutionary force as it is currently formulated offers no way of accounting for the force or influence of speech in such circumstances.

What is the alternative to this intentions-based conception of communicative action? I argue that it is possible to avoid this dependence by turning to an alternative pragmatics of language use: Robert Brandom’s model of deontic scorekeeping. In a 2008 interview, Brandom directly suggests extracting political consequences for political theory by a method similar to that of Habermas, but starting with his own very different understanding of language (Brandom in Pritzlaff 2008, 365). The goal is to displace intentions from their central, if implicit, status as determinants of the democratic quality of speech.
According to Brandom, a philosophy of language like Searle’s, on which Habermas builds his account of illocutionary force, is based on agent semantics (1998, 147). Agent semantics ground meaning in how the speaker intends to be understood. The conceptual content derives from the speaker’s attitude that the utterance is an expression of a belief, combined with the intention that it be understood as an expression of that belief (Brandom 1998, 147). Thus, agent semantics depends upon the prior content intentional states to explain how speech acts can have meaning (Brandom 1998, 151). The alternative to agent semantics is a functional semantics. A functional semantics ascribes content in the first instance to linguistic acts by virtue of the role they play in a system. The system in question is a system of discursive or linguistic practice, where the function of a unit depends on the “proprieties of input and output, antecedents and consequences” (Brandom 1998, 147).

Brandom argues that we should understand intentional states in terms of linguistic practice, and not the other way around. We cannot understand what it is to have and to articulate a belief without also understanding what it would mean to use that belief in linguistic, discursive practice (1998, 152). Assigning priority to linguistic practice over intentionality at the level of meaning opens the door to the possibility of a force of language independent of intentions. In fact, Brandom achieves what Habermas sets out to do: namely, loading the work of social interaction onto the resources of language, rather than intent. However, Brandom’s account of linguistic practice is thin. It is geared towards merely

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6 Habermas does acknowledge intentionalist or agent-based semantics within his own framework, but in the context of indirectly producing understanding by way of context. When speakers do not yet have sufficient shared understanding of a situation to achieve coordination on the basis of agreement, they can produce understanding through perlocutionary effects. Intentionalist semantics treat perlocutionary effects as “giving someone to understand” something (Habermas 1984, 331). Yet Habermas fails to see how intentionalist semantics turn up in the very idea of the illocutionary component of any speech act offer, rather than simply its perlocutionary forms.
providing an account of the fundamental characteristics of what it is to use language—which, he argues, is conceptually prior to rational agency, to having beliefs, and to undertaking actions. A thicker account of linguistic practice might seek to capture a greater range of what competent speakers can use language to achieve—including to influence one another’s commitments and actions. I suggest replacing Habermas’s concept of communicative action—which is tied to the intentional component of illocutionary force—with Brandom’s model of deontic scorekeeping as the basis for determining the democratic value of communication.

**Robert Brandom’s Model of Deontic Scorekeeping**

In *Making it Explicit* (1998), Brandom introduces a pragmatic model of discursive practice as *deontic scorekeeping*. The purpose of this section is to explain this model, which provides many of the concepts I use throughout the dissertation. The basic idea of the model is that in discursive practice, actors have a constantly evolving set of deontic statuses, having to do with the set of assertions and actions to which they are committed and entitled. Because commitments are related to each other inferentially, deontic statuses are not limited to what the speaker has explicitly articulated; they also include those to which he or she is further committed by virtue of the commitment-preserving (must) and entitlement-preserving (can) inferential relationships among claims (1998, 169). When people communicate and reason within one another, they do so by keeping track of their own and one another’s commitments, hence Brandom’s term “deontic scorekeeping.” Disagreements occur when there is an inconsistency in the “score,” that is, when the commitments an actor attributes to himself or herself are not the same as the ones that others attribute. When this happens, actors must make explicit the relevant commitments and relationships among them (1998, 178). Figure
2.1 provides a visual representation of Brandom’s model of deontic scorekeeping, with each concept explained in detail below.

**Figure 2.1. The Model of Deontic Scorekeeping**

**Deontic statuses: Commitment and entitlement**

A deontic status refers to either a commitment or an entitlement. A commitment is something that is, or could be, asserted. Commitments can be *beliefs* about a state of affairs that obtains (which Brandom calls “doxastic commitments”) or *intentions* to bring about a state of affairs (which Brandom calls “practical commitments”). Doxastic and practical commitments—what one takes to be true, or intends to make true, respectively—are the
fundamental units of the model of deontic scorekeeping. To undertake a commitment is to make a claim, typically in the form of an assertion, and this act is at the heart of discursive practice. Speech acts that perform different functions—functions Searle and Habermas, among others, seek to categorize—are ultimately derivative of the constitutive practice of claim making (Brandom in Pritzlaff 2008, 379). While Brandom acknowledges the distinction between practical and doxastic commitments, and while practical speech acts and practical commitments may be especially salient in political institutions (Brandom in Pritzlaff 2008, 379), Brandom’s baseline model concerns discursive practice based on declarative or assertional (doxastic) commitments.

The deontic status of being committed or entitled to a belief or intention determines the “score” that participants in “the game of giving and asking for reasons” are tracking. The score is determined by the previous score—previous commitments and entitlements—and the acceptability of the inferences that led to the current commitments. An actor is entitled to a claim if he or she has reasons for it, has undertaken other commitments that lead to it by accepted patterns of inference, and has not taken on any incompatible commitments.

**Deontic attitudes: Undertaking and attributing**

Discursive practice is essentially social, and thus requires a social perspective. The deontic score of the players is a property of their attitudes towards themselves and others. Deontic attitudes involve both undertaking and attributing deontic statuses—that is, commitments and entitlements. To *undertake* a commitment involves acquiring and acknowledging new commitments, taking responsibility for them, and keeping track of the way they change the score. Actors then must treat themselves as having those commitments, and draw further inferences consistently, according to whether or not having that
commitment necessarily entails, generates entitlement to, or precludes another. Actors also attribute commitments and entitlements to others (1998, 166). When there is a disconnect between commitments undertaken and commitments attributed—when people view the score differently—participants in discursive practice are forced to make their commitments and their inferences explicit. In undertaking a commitment, actors also take on a responsibility to demonstrate entitlement to that commitment. Moreover, by asserting a claim, they authorize others to undertake that claim themselves.

Patterns of inference

Doxastic commitments are connected by patterns of inference, logical if/then relationships of three types. First, *committives* are commitment preserving: if someone is committed to X, he or she is necessarily also committed to Y. Second, *permissives* are entitlement preserving: if someone claims X, he or she may also claim Y. Third, *incompatibility* relationships establish that someone who is committed to X cannot commit to Y. Together, the inferential relationships among commitments generate a justificatory structure or web that confers meaning on individual commitments by establishing which claims can be given as a reason for which further claims or actions (Brandom 1998, 90, 188; Fultner 2002, 123). This idea represents a more intuitive understanding of how dialogue unfolds than Habermas’s metaphor of grounding. Interlocutors can challenge not just the commitments and inferences that constitute the sources of entitlement to a claim, but also those that necessarily follow from it, as conversations spread to cover related issues or consequences that might follow from the commitment, as well as the reasons for the commitment. The idea that commitments have both entailments and justifications (that is, both inferential antecedents and consequences) also points towards the possibility of speakers
“racking up” commitments that ultimately might compel them to undertake other specific commitments.

People reason from states of the world—doxastic commitments—to practical commitments by patterns of practical inference. These types of inference follow linguistic patterns of “should” reasoning, sometimes crystallized in normative concepts and evaluative categories. Patterns of practical reasoning can be of three types. First, prudential oughts follow the logic of preferences or desires. An actor, committed to a certain state of affairs, reasons to an action based on his or her preferences. Second, institutional oughts use norms to reason from states of affairs to action. Some kinds of institutional roles or statuses come with widely-shared norms attached that dictate action, given a certain state of affairs. Third, unconditional oughts refer to moral imperatives that apply universally, regardless of preference (245-47).

This aspect of Brandom’s model offers two advantages over Habermas’s theory of communicative action. First, it incorporates norm-based and instrumental patterns of reasoning into the same baseline model of reasoning, seeing them as a different form of the same type of discursive practice rather than fundamentally different orientations to the world and to language. Second, Brandom’s recognition that people reason from states of affairs, via patterns of “ought” reasoning, to action opens the possibility that interlocutors can challenge practical commitments either at the level of preferences, norms, or morals, or at the level of beliefs about states of affairs. Habermas acknowledges a similar possibility when he suggests that prior to being able to engage in communicative action, actors may have to negotiate a common situation definition if one is not already sufficiently shared (Habermas 1984, 331). However, where Habermas relegates this possibility to (in his view) the lesser domain of
strategic action and perlocutionary consequences, the possibility that disagreement can operate at either or both of these levels fits easily within Brandom’s overall model. At a more practical level, Brandom’s framework reflects the intuition that, in political life, disputes are often not over principles, but rather over the states of affairs to which they are said to apply—and that competing understandings about the world can lead to quite different outcomes, albeit through application of the same principle.

**Inferential articulation: Communicative and justificatory**

For Brandom, there are two types of moves in the game of giving and asking for reasons—two ways in which a person can acquire new commitments. The first type of move is the *intrapersonal, intercontent* (1998, 186) acquisition of commitments. This move occurs within a single actor’s inferential web, as when the same speaker demonstrates entitlement through reference to other content within his or her set of commitments. Within a single actor’s reasoning (intrapersonal), he or she can make inferences, acquire new commitments and entitlements, and grasp the connections among his or her commitments (intercontent) in terms of the proprieties of inference that connect the universe of possible beliefs and actions. This internal reasoning type of move need not be explicit; rather it refers to the process of keeping track of inferential consequences and adding and subtracting commitments. One commitment may necessitate some further commitments and entitle an actor to others (169). This type of inferential articulation is *justificatory*: it involves recognizing how one commitment can serve as a reason for or necessitate another.

The second type of move involves the *interpersonal, intracontent* acquisition of a commitment: in short, acquiring a commitment from someone else through communication. Making an assertion is also the fundamental move in interpersonal communication. “Putting
a sentence forward in the public arena as true is something one interlocutor can do to make that sentence available for others to use in making further assertions” (170). This type of communicative move works through authorization and responsibility, which enable interlocutors to inherit entitlements to commitments from one another. In communicative inferential articulation, the speaker authorizes the claims that follow from his or her assertion. For Brandom, this type of move in the game of giving and asking for reasons is interpersonal, intracontent because when actors undertake commitments as a result of another speaker’s authorization, the commitment travels “in one piece,” and only subsequently alters the hearer’s own set of commitments through intrapersonal, intercontent (justificatory) articulation (Brandom 1998, 175).
<table>
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<td>Patterns of Practical Inference</td>
<td>Normative should/shall language (where should is an accepted pattern of reasoning from a state of the world to an intentional state, and shall is the intentional state or practical commitment). Patterns of practical inference can be of three types: (a) prudential ought (model of preferences or desires); (b) institutional ought (model of norms for which there is shared endorsement that they apply to someone with a given status or role); (c) unconditional ought (entitlement preserving for everyone, blind to preferences. This is a moral ought).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discursive Practice is Communicative when...</td>
<td>Commitments are inherited “interpersonal, intracontent.” This is to say, when one person undertakes a claim put forward by another, the content of that claim does not transform.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discursive Practice is Justificatory when...</td>
<td>Commitments are related “intrapersonal, intercontent.” This is to say, claims are related to one another in terms of proprieties (or accepted rules) of inference.</td>
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**Table 2.1. Summary of Brandom’s Deontic Scorekeeping Model**

**From Thin to Thick Models of Language Use**

The model of communicative influence I introduce in the next chapter builds on these core concepts. However, I argue that Brandom’s is a minimalist theory, including only those concepts and assumptions necessary to account for reasoning and meaning in terms of discursive practice. I use this as a foundation for a thicker account of language use, focusing on the things actors can do using the articulation of commitments, including argument,
explanation, and rhetoric. The idea of *authorizing* inferences is my starting point. One speaker’s assertion has an effect on the commitment structures of others, and alters the score because it implicitly authorizes further claims. I argue that the idea of authorizing and inheriting claims in an “interpersonal, intracontent” way is insufficient to understand the force of speech, and the many things that strategic actors can do to leverage this force.

Among other things, Brandom’s thin model does not help us to understand the force of argument as opposed to assertion. The question of what it would take to adapt deontic scorekeeping to the understanding of how speakers use language in argument points towards a thicker model of language use. Both Habermas and Brandom are interested in a basic account of language use—a theory of the conditions of possible understanding (Habermas) and grounding of the normativity of social practice (Brandom). In both cases, justification and the possibility of justification are fundamental to language. I argue that a thin account of language is a good foundation, but is insufficient for understanding influence. Beyond the practice of justification, how do Habermas and Brandom envision the force of language? As I discussed above, for Habermas, the coordinating effects of speech rest with illocutionary force. Speakers make speech act offers of various types, which hearers can either accept or reject on the basis of their validity, and in doing so they incur commitments. Similarly, for Brandom, in interpersonal communication, inferential articulation between commitments—which can generate changes for an actor’s score—temporarily ceases in favour of interpersonal, intracontent inheritance of claims. Speakers authorize others to undertake the commitments they articulate, and for which they take responsibility. I argue below that the idea of inheriting commitments is insufficient for understanding language use, and in particular strategic language use in politics. In some cases, particularly where strategic
motives guide action, speakers do not merely authorize others to undertake commitments, but in some way compel them to do so.

Both Habermas and Brandom also theorize a distinction between everyday communicative practice and discourse, a reflexive stance towards the generative structures of speech. In Brandom’s terms, when we make a commitment, we undertake responsibility to demonstrate entitlement for that commitment, and authorize others to take it up and make inferences from it. These aspects of communicative practice—responsibility and authorization—remain implicit unless actors encounter a discrepancy in the score. Commitments and proprieties of inference must be made explicit when people encounter a discrepancy in the score. Justificatory practice makes the previous scores and proprieties of inference that lead to a commitment (or set of commitments) explicit, much like argumentation serves as a court of appeal for testing the validity of claims in Habermas’s theoretical framework. Missing from Brandom’s argument is an account of the opposite end of the spectrum from justification—a reflexive, deliberate, explicit form of communication that lends force to authorization, allowing it not just to justify new commitments, but to compel or induce them. Figure 2.2 illustrates these claims.

*Figure 2.2. Implicit and Explicit Communication*

Understanding this dynamic requires abandoning the premise that the inheritance of commitments in communication is solely interpersonal, intracontent. That is to say, what is
communicated is not necessarily a single, discrete claim from which the hearer then draws his or her own inferences. Rather, we also communicate larger inferential structures. These function to “rig” antecedents and consequences so that specific reasoning pathways follow from putting forward a commitment, along with a surrounding inferential structure. Just as, for Habermas, argumentation serves as a court of appeal that enables us to speak meaningfully about the validity of claims, at the explicit end of the communication spectrum that is oriented towards producing rather than grounding commitments, argumentation can be a source of influence—and this is particularly the domain of politics, and that of strategic speech.

Exerting communicative influence is not the same as demonstrating entitlement. The concept of communicative influence is similar to justification, in that actors take an active stance towards inferential structures and prior commitments, but it produces new commitments in others rather than grounding a speaker’s own commitments. The practice of argumentation drives the idea of communicative influence, although I show in Chapter 3 that communicative influence does not have to be argumentative. New commitments are produced, not as a consequence of the speaker’s intent, but as a consequence of what must and can follow from the inferential structure that a speaker articulates.

Chapter 3 takes up these ideas to develop a detailed model of communicative influence, which operates through these inferential structures, and on the commitments of others. By producing certain commitments, I argue, these inferential structures are what enable language to exert force beyond the simple consequences of undertaking an authorized claim; however, the nature of these inferential structures—how they exert force and produce consequences on the commitments of others—can vary in important ways. Moreover, just as
within Brandom’s model the exact consequences of authorizing a commitment through assertion depend on the existing score, I argue in Chapter 4 that communicative influence ultimately depends on the interplay between these inferential structures and the discursive context in which interlocutors are embedded. Ultimately, rather than targeting speakers’ behaviors and the inferential structures they produce, this contextual variation might enable interventions to ensure that communicative influence is consistent with autonomous judgment.
Chapter 3. The Model of Communicative Influence I: Inferential Structures

The model of communicative influence developed in this chapter offers a way of explaining the force of language. By focusing on the dynamic structures through which speech produces new commitments by imposing inferential constraints and leveraging existing commitments, the model avoids having to rely on speakers’ motives to determine the democratic value of reason giving, and allows us to focus instead on the pragmatic consequences of speech for democratic goods. The concept of communicative influence is intended to capture the ways speakers can use words and arguments to shape the commitments of others—both to beliefs and to actions—by drawing on and directing the pragmatic, inferential consequences that follow from getting someone to make a commitment, even if that starts with the simple acceptance of a claim.

In Chapter 5, I will specify the democratic goods normative theorists attribute to talk-based politics. Here and in Chapter 4, I identify how features of speech itself, on the one hand, and the discursive context in which it is embedded, on the other, generate force. This framework will allow me to articulate a theory of how speech produces its pragmatic effects, and to connect the issue of how utterances are effective (as opposed to the intentional question of why they are made) to normative accounts of the democratic goods of speech. Though the strength of incentives under the conditions of politics often preclude directly altering speakers’ behaviour and the inferential structures they produce, it is possible to envision ways of arranging institutional environments to get the most out of communicative influence, while correcting for its more harmful tendencies. The model of communicative influence opens up a range of possibilities that extends beyond current approaches in
deliberative democratic theory. This chapter provides the conceptual foundation for the subsequent development of such a theory.

The force of speech operates through *inferential structures*: packages of assertions or commitments and the inferential links that connect them. In explaining inferential structures, and communicative influence generally, I use the terms “speaker” and “influence target” or “target” throughout the chapter and the dissertation to refer to the source of the inferential structure (the actor trying to exert influence) and its target (the actor who is subject to the influence). These inferential structures vary in how they secure influence. Notably, the amount of force a speaker builds into the structure can vary, as can the level of engagement of the influence target’s own commitments. These three dimensions generate eight ideal types of communicative influence. Unlike communicative action (which asks how people can achieve sufficient understanding to provide a rational basis for social coordination) and deontic scorekeeping (which asks what it is to have a belief or practical commitment), communicative influence is a generic concept that gives analytic purchase on the question as to how people use speech to modify the commitments of others. I show how the model of communicative influence pays off later in the dissertation. In this chapter, I explain the conceptual framework in detail, first by identifying the three dimensions of variation in communicative influence—rigidity, reciprocity, and transparency; second, by characterizing the eight types of communicative influence; and finally, by highlighting some of the theoretically significant ways these types relate to one another.
Communicative Influence

Communicative influence refers to the capacity of speech to alter the commitment structures of others—to induce them to adopt certain beliefs or take certain actions. This type of influence is communicative because it operates through speakers putting forward claims that others take up and from which they reason. As in Brandom’s thin model, consequences in targets’ webs of commitments may be the product of taking up a single assertion. However, I argue that assertions are only the simplest, most basic source of influence. Particularly when actors have a strategic interest in using language to secure an outcome, they may use inferential structures—packages of inferentially linked commitments—to extend their influence. A syllogistic argument, for instance, is an inferential structure comprised of premises and a conclusion. An inferential structure can exert communicative influence by leveraging agreement with some or all of its components into an arrangement that directs an influence target to adopt certain commitments, potentially producing far ranging consequences for the target’s overall commitment set. While their directive force may derive in part from their formal logical properties, I demonstrate below that there are other ways inferential structures can generate and direct force, even where their properties may actually violate criteria of formal logic. These inferential structures may be more or less explicit but, once taken up, they modify commitments from within. Their capacity to do so, and the way in which they achieve this effect, depends on the both the nature of the inferential structure—addressed in this chapter—and features of the discursive context in which it is embedded, including traits of speakers, hearers, and institutional environments—addressed in the next.
Communicative influence is a more general concept than strategic speech, in that it does not involve assumptions about the speaker’s orientation to others, or to certain ends. Rather, actors with any kind of intent may use inferential structures to secure those ends by producing a given effect on the reasoning processes of others. Their strategic intent may start and end at changing the commitments of others, and in that case the possibility that they can tailor inferential structures to suit that end does not necessarily exclude the influence itself from democratic merit. Such behavior is consistent with the full range of influence types identified below. The concept of communicative influence recognizes that careful, deliberate, even strategic planning—in the sense of anticipating the beliefs, preferences, and likely choices of others (Schiemann 2000)—may go into choosing the right inferential structure for the task. It is variation in how inferential structures produce their effects that determines the democratic quality of influence; that is, its consistency with the exercise of autonomous judgment, rather than the speaker’s attitude towards the hearer. For example, choosing examples to promote the uptake of a given commitment could be consistent with either thoughtful persuasion or outright manipulation, depending on how those examples are situated within inferential structures. The sources of variation in communicative influence depend on differences in inferential structures. These sources of variation serve to establish a set of conceptual categories more fine-grained than Habermas’s communicative/strategic action dichotomy. The analytic leverage these categories provide will give democratic theory the tools to make normative differentiations not only among particular instances of
communicative influence, but also among the conditions that promote better or worse types of influence and condition their effects.\(^7\)

**Dimensions of Communicative Influence**

The notion of “the force of the better argument” (Habermas 1984, 25) implies that some arguments are stronger and others weaker, and that the former have the capacity to override the latter—but that the consequences of this overpowering effect are the result of understanding and acceptance, rather than inducement (Pellizzoni 2001). The purpose of articulating a concept of communicative influence is to capture what this force actually entails. The key idea is that when influence targets buy into part or all of an inferential structure, their undertaking of its commitments has the capacity to produce further commitments and entitlements, and invalidate others, with potentially far ranging consequences.

The features of the inferential structure that exert this influence vary along three dimensions that will be important for distinguishing better and worse effects from the standpoint of democratic goods. The first dimension, rigidity, describes the logical structure of speech. A rigid inferential structure, such as a syllogism, derives force from the arrangement of the commitments it contains, and the relationships among them.

Communicative influence rests on the uptake of these commitments. The second dimension is reciprocity. Reciprocity concerns the extent to which inferential structures rely on, require, or draw in interlocutors’ existing commitments. The force of a reciprocal

\(^7\) Klemp also offers a typology for understanding speech’s capacity to secure agreement. However, he takes rhetoric as a general category that is roughly equivalent to persuasive speech, of which “deliberative persuasion,” “strategic persuasion,” and “manipulation” are subcategories. I address the differences between Klemp’s approach and my own in the introduction.
inferential structure derives from its resonance with these commitments. Arguments are never put forward in a vacuum and, as scholars of rhetoric note, speech is often most compelling when it resonates with existing beliefs (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 19; Delia 1970). The third dimension is transparency. Transparency captures the extent to which elements of the inferential structure—its premises, its conclusions, and the proposed logical relations among them—are rendered explicit and thus made available for evaluation.

Taken together, rigidity, reciprocity and transparency—and their opposites—characterize communicative influence in a way that opens it up to normative evaluation and, ultimately, institutional interventions. The effects of each dimension are as follows. Rigidity concerns the magnitude of influence: how much force the inferential structure exerts on the reasoning that follows from it. Reciprocity concerns engagement and buy-in, but also control over reasoning. With increased reciprocity, the speaker may give up some measure of control as the reasoning process becomes more of a joint intervention, with each step subject to external validation or endorsement. However, the control the speaker gives up is compensated for by the force derived from an increased buy-in. Transparency is the property of inferential structures that determines the extent to which the commitments and inference upon which communicative influence depends—whether its force derives from logical connections, external buy-in, or both—are made explicit or left implicit. The remainder of this section explains each of these dimensions, laying the groundwork for identifying eight “ideal types” of communicative influence. These three dimensions of judgment have complex implications for questions of autonomy, which I examine in detail in Chapter 5.
Rigidity

*Rigidity* describes the extent to which the inferential structure, should the commitments that make it up be accepted, necessarily entails a given conclusion or directs reasoning towards a limited set of beliefs or actions. In Brandom’s terms, rigid inferential structures take advantage of committive proprieties of inference (if you accept X, then you necessarily accept Y) and incompatibility relations (if you accept A, then you cannot also hold B).

To illustrate the idea of a rigid argument, consider Lewis Carroll’s “What the Tortoise Said to Achilles”:

“Now that you accept A and B and C and D, of course you accept Z.

“Do I?’ said the Tortoise innocently. “Let’s make that quite clear. I accept A and B and C and D. Suppose I still refuse to accept Z?”

“Then logic would take you by the throat and force you to do it!’

Achilles triumphantly replied. “Logic would tell you ‘You can’t help yourself, you must accept Z.’ So you’ve no choice, you see’” (Carroll qtd. in Winch 1958, 56).

Although the Tortoise points out that, in fact, he *still* must not accept Z, the idea that logic could “take someone by the throat” and force them to acceptance effectively captures the concept of rigidity. Actors are compelled to either take on a new commitment or risk incoherence.

No such compulsion exists with non-rigid inferential structures. In such cases, speakers make assertions or sets of assertions in ways that leave the hearer free to take them up themselves, or not, and alter their own commitment structures as they see fit. The two
dynamics here are, on the one hand, a constraining effect of rigidity on the inferences that can be drawn from speech and, on the other hand, the enabling effect of non-rigid speech, which works by opening up new inferential pathways. Non-rigid influence most closely resembles Brandom’s baseline model, where people articulate commitments and sometimes demonstrate entitlement. In making an assertion, for example, speakers authorize the uptake of others, but the commitment itself does not compel or demand uptake. By contrast, as Achilles and the Tortoise illustrate, the paradigm case of rigid communicative influence is an argument. Arguments work by establishing logical or inferential connections among commitments such that by accepting some of them, targets are induced, by virtue of those connections, to accept further commitments.

Does the dimension of rigidity merely smuggle intentions back into the framework under a guise different from that of illocutionary force? A speaker’s success in building a rigid inferential structure may require the intent to produce a certain commitment. For instance, it is hard to imagine someone unintentionally constructing a correct syllogism. However, a speaker can intend that the target make a commitment—adopt a belief or take some action—without necessarily employing rigidity to achieve this outcome. The intention to produce an outcome is consistent with a variety of ways speech can exert force. The normative evaluation of this influence should depend on how it secures uptake, and the model of communicative influence gives conceptual traction to the nature of this variation. Having an intention to produce or alter a commitment may be a condition for producing a rigid structure, but rigidity itself is not defined by this intention. Moreover, intention may not even be a necessary condition for rigidity. As I argue in the next chapter, following certain
common patterns of inference—for instance, analogies or loaded definitions—can add rigidity to an inferential structure without the speaker necessarily having intended it.

To further illustrate the concept of rigidity, consider a hypothetical discussion about policy responses to climate change. It might contain a single assertion, for instance, that climate change is caused by greenhouse gas emissions. There is an implicit inferential structure behind this assertion, namely, evidence, or a theoretical explanation of the connection. It accounts for entitlement to the claim, but—particularly when it is implicit—exerts no force, except insofar as the target uses those same grounds to attribute entitlement, and thus becomes more likely to undertake the claim himself or herself. Undertaking the claim that climate change is caused by emission could lead to a range of other commitments; that, for instance, governments need to do something about it, and what in particular they ought to do. But by itself, the assertion and the implicit structure that renders it intelligible is not exerting force. However, if the speaker combines the original assertion with the claims that climate change will have severe and irreversible consequences, and that intervention could make a difference, then a structure begins to emerge around the claim that drives reasoning towards a particular conclusion—namely that something needs to be done.

Rigidity does not guarantee the force of an inferential structure across contexts. Any of the commitments and inferences that make up a given inferential structure, while perhaps consistent within the context of the inferential structure itself, may prove incorrect when an interlocutor reveals a new piece of information. For instance, an interlocutor might challenge the argument that “something needs to be done about climate change” with the claim that any available measure would cause short term harm. In doing so, he or she would neutralize that piece of the inferential chain. Depending on which commitment a target rejects, more or less
of the inferential structure may fall apart. For instance, if, instead of focusing on the possible harms of action, an interlocutor were to offer data that conclusively denied the existence of climate change—the starting premise of the above example—he or she would have neutralized any of the force deriving from subsequent inferential connections.

Although articulating a set of claims necessarily opens them up to challenge, whether in terms of their internal coherence or external validity, rigidity is a useful way of describing the structural arrangements of the commitments and inferences that make up an argument. An inferential structure is rigid if each claim that is successful—that garners agreement or uptake—is able to direct that success to some further inference. The possibility that one of the commitments that makes up an inferential structure may fail to secure uptake does not make the original structure less rigid, in the sense of its design leveraging potential uptake into influence. By contrast, an assertion without such a rigid structure surrounding it can generally do little to pre-determine the inferential consequences that follow from its uptake. To the extent that even a simple assertion can or does work to shape the consequences uptake has for reasoning—for example, a simple comparison—it begins to take on rigid qualities.

Returning to the example of climate change, a speaker might even argue that some specific action needs to be taken. He or she might, for instance, argue for controlling carbon emissions through a cap and trade system, for standards and regulation, or for individual behaviors. While the argument is still rigid, in that it directs the target to a conclusion—we should do something, therefore we should do x—the final piece of the structure is not solid enough to generate force for the final step. The inference from doing something to doing one specific thing requires endorsement on a number of fronts if the target is to accept it: that the measure would be effective, feasible, or consistent with other values and priorities. These
considerations suggest the importance of the next dimension of communicative influence:
reciprocity.

**Reciprocity**

*Reciprocity* refers to the potential for an inferential structure to be redirected at a
given stage as a result of a weak, incomplete or porous links that requires buy in on the basis
of the target’s other commitments, external to the inferential structure. Reciprocity conveys
the extent to which an inferential structure makes room for considerations the audience finds
pertinent to the issue at hand. A reciprocal inferential structure still exerts influence, but the
target of the influence can claim some authorship or agency with respect to where and how
that influence manifests itself in changes to the target’s own commitment set. In essence, the
nature of the inferential structure allows the target to participate in the construction of the
argument by ensuring that it is consistent with his or her prior beliefs.⁸

Inferential structures are reciprocal to the extent that they depend, for their force,
more on these prior commitments, and less on commitments, inferences, and assumptions
supplied by the speaker. To the extent that a speaker uses unfamiliar or inconsistent
commitments to impose order on a target’s reasoning—in the extreme case, allowing for little
or no engagement of the target’s prior commitments—an inferential structure is non-
reciprocal. I address the normative trade-offs along this dimension in Chapter 5.

The existing commitments on which reciprocal inferential structures can draw belong
to what Bohman calls *perspectives*—a set of practical stances towards the world, informed by
experience, that give reasons their cogency (2006, 179-80). In a similar vein, Minozzi, Neblo
and Siegel (2010) develop a formal model of interactive reasoning on the assumption that

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⁸ I am grateful to Chris Kam for this formulation.
participants in discourse start with cognitive structures—webs of belief, modeled as networks of connections between simple, inferentially-linked statements—on which opinions and discursive priorities are grounded. If one thinks of rigid arguments as having force and direction, the idea of reciprocity introduces the possibility that new additions to the inferential structure can alter the outcomes of this force. Reciprocity in an inferential structure does not guarantee that such a shift will necessarily take place. If a speaker has constructed an argument entirely on the basis of commitments he or she knows the listener would agree to, we should not expect any major changes in direction; however, to the extent that an argument draws in these commitments, it is distinct from a non-reciprocal situation, in which the conclusion depends only on the commitments the speaker advances. The idea of reciprocity also draws on Aristotle’s concept of enthymeme, a form of incomplete or degenerate syllogism in which the speaker leaves the audience to fill in missing assumptions or premises (Tindale 2011, 389; Dyck 2002; Rodden 2008).  

As Klemp points out, Rawls uses the principle of reciprocity to determine the acceptability of public speech (Klemp 2012, 28). The key to public reason, for Rawls, is to address people in terms of reasons they can accept, which is similar to the idea that inferential structures can borrow force from the commitments undertaken. However, Rawls operates on a different level of analysis than the model of communicative influence I am developing here. He uses the principle of reciprocity to ground an account of political legitimacy. According to Rawls, “Our exercise of political power is proper only when we

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9 Whether the substance of claims compromises the autonomy of certain subjects by compromising their interests is a separate question. The substance of such claims must be judged, just as Habermas suggests, in terms of rightness or moral validity—the discourse over which might be subject to communicative influence, insofar as the ideal rational dialogue can only be approximated. Here, reciprocity concerns the means by which speech exerts force, and specifically the extent to which that force must rely on commitments the target has already undertaken.
sincerely believe that the reasons we would offer for our political actions—were we to state them as government officials—are sufficient, and we also reasonably think that other citizens might reasonably accept those reasons” (1997, 771). While Rawls appeals to the same intuition—that people should be able to accept or reject reasons on their own terms—at the micro-level of communicative influence, reciprocity is about the linguistic processes by which someone “reasonably accepts” an argument put to them.

When an argument is non-reciprocal, the inferential structure excludes the target’s commitments, ensuring that reasoning proceeds on the original basis of the argument. A target is free to accept or reject a non-reciprocal inferential structure in its entirety, whether by rejecting a key premise or denying its internal consistency. Although the force of such a structure depends on the uptake of commitments, the consequences that follow if they do so depend on properties of the inferential structure, rather than on targets’ prior commitments. For instance, a false dichotomy, a strong analogy, or a dominant frame in argument can forestall or devalue alternative considerations, and so impose a conclusion by virtue of a combination of (a) the internal logic of the argument and (b) its structural exclusion of alternative considerations. For example, a mathematical proof, which would also be rigid, is judged only on the basis of the premises stipulated in the problem—a student cannot just make up a new value and change the outcome. In a more political example, an argument equating abortion with murder is not very reciprocal; the very definition of murder works to exclude any form of reasoning besides the universal moral claim that it is necessarily wrong.

Just as rigidity in inferential structures limits the range of possible conclusions that a target can draw from an inferential structure, non-reciprocity insulates inferential structures from external modification. Non-reciprocal inferential structures, whether elaborate
arguments or relatively straightforward claims, deny targets access points for their own knowledge and facts. Non-reciprocal inferential structures can be rejected as false, but they must be accepted or rejected as stated by the speaker.

Consider, again, the example of the climate change deliberation. A relatively non-reciprocal inferential structure might look like the following set of statements. If greenhouse gas emissions cause climate change, and we want to slow or halt climate change, we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Of course, outside of math—or a mathematical representation of logical arguments—it is hard to come up with a perfectly non-reciprocal set of claims, because to even be intelligible one needs to accept them. To accept them we need to understand the reasons for them, and they quickly root into our own commitment structures. However, it is possible for an inferential structure to be more or less reciprocal, as I illustrate below. With a reciprocal inferential structure, from the premise that greenhouse gas emissions cause climate change and that something must be done to prevent this, advancing a more specific course of action might depend on the target’s endorsement of a broader principle. For example, an actor committed to market-based measures might suggest a cap and trade system, whereas another might envision a greater role for government regulation. The pathway from cause (greenhouse gas emissions) to action, while promoting the uptake of some commitment, also leaves scope for the hearer’s own commitments to redirect the conclusion. If this deviates from what the speaker had envisioned, he or she can respond, but the original argument, insofar as it needed to borrow force from the endorsement of a premise or inference to secure the conclusion, opened itself to revision on the basis of engagement with the influence target’s own commitments. A reciprocal inferential structure also need not be rigid. Rather, it might be more exploratory, offering
commitments to elicit a response in order to scope out the reasons others hold for their commitments. Actors can establish the sources of entitlement to each others’ claims without necessarily having to undertake those claims themselves.

A reciprocal inferential structure create space for the target’s commitments, external to the inferential structure, to shape and direct its force. In some cases, reciprocity may simply reinforce the existing inferential structure by multiplying points of agreement. While actors give up some measure of control in order to tap into this force, they can be strategic by anticipating the commitments of others and building inferential structures accordingly, if their aim is to produce a specific commitment. However, speakers are limited by the need to achieve resonance with targets’ existing commitments. For instance, Brewer and Gross (2005) show that in the school vouchers debate, the same value, equality, can send people in different directions if they disagree over its meaning in a given situation. Both rigidity and non-reciprocity can be used to exert control over an argument’s intended effect. But whereas rigidity protects arguments from challenge—creating conditions whereby targets have no choice but to accept the speakers inferences and conclusions—non-reciprocity works by insulating them from modification or redirection as a result of target-supplied premises or facts.\(^\text{10}\)

**Transparency**

The third dimension, *transparency*, concerns the extent to which the different elements of the inferential structure—the commitments that make it up and the inferential relationships among them—are made explicit. To what extent are implicit premises working to secure uptake, and would they still be able to do so if they were made explicit? The force

\(^{10}\) I thank Chris Kam for this insightful formulation.
of argument will sometimes, even often, depend on omitted assumptions. Where this is the case, articulating those assumptions can show them to be either false in terms of the targets’ prior commitments (implicating reciprocity) or logically incoherent and inconclusive (implicating rigidity). Revealing potentially faulty aspects of an inferential structure can thereby change or neutralize the force of communicative influence. Non-transparent arguments bury premises or obscure logical connections. When arguments are transparent, hearers can accept or reject pieces of the inferential structure by evaluating proprieties of inference internal to the argument (in non-reciprocal inferential structures), or in terms of their own commitments (in reciprocal inferential structures). Non-transparent inferential structures put forward sets of claims whose logical foundations and entailments evade scrutiny, perhaps by using rhetorical tropes, by diverting attention, or by relying on assumptions targets typically take for granted.

Transparency also raises a question about whether or not these dimensions vary independently of one another, particularly reciprocity and transparency. As an inferential structure becomes more transparent, each inference can become a point of potential challenge or endorsement by the target. However, as the case of a math proof demonstrates, the possibility of each transparent commitment being potential grounds for acceptance or rejection does not thereby render the inferential structure reciprocal. Transparent commitments and inference do not necessarily constitute opportunities for participation or authorship, as reciprocity would imply. Rather, they ensure that targets can be aware of the commitments and inferences that are shaping their reasoning processes. Analytically, the two dimensions address different issues in communicative influence. In a mathematical proof, for example, all the assumptions are explicit, and yet it must be judged on criteria internal to the
structure itself—notably its coherence or consistency. By contrast, a reciprocal, transparent inferential structure enables contributions that can modify its shape by reinforcing loose inferences, reordering the commitments, or identifying points of divergence. For example, one might argue from the premise that greenhouse gas emissions cause climate change to a conclusion defending a cap and trade system, as I suggested above. A non-transparent version of this argument can leave any or all of the in-between steps in reasoning implicit. And yet, the very tenuousness of the connections invites response—or relies on the hearer’s ability to make the missing assumptions. Merely asserting the need for a given policy measure likewise lacks transparency. As Brandom remarks, any assertion, just to be intelligible, must come with an implicit set of sources of entitlement and the entailments that follow. With a bare assertion, the structure remains implicit. Figure 3.1 illustrates the three dimensional space constituted by rigidity, reciprocity, and transparency that allows us to characterize moves in “the game of giving and asking for reasons” (Sellars qtd. in Brandom 1998, 167).

*Figure 3.1. The Three Dimensional Structure of Communicative Influence*
Types of Communicative Influence

The model of communicative influence enables one to describe influence in terms of its inferential structure and, by extension, its effect on ongoing reasoning processes. The three dimensions yield eight ideal types of communicative influence.

Table 3.1. Types of Communicative Influence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicative influence Type</th>
<th>Rigidity</th>
<th>Reciprocity</th>
<th>Transparency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Rigid Types of Communicative Influence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertion</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigid Types of Communicative Influence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetoric</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proof</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the table represents each mode of communicative influence as a binary—rigid or not, reciprocal or not, transparent or not—in fact, they are matters of degree. Moreover, in practice, one is likely to find mixes of these in a given discursive interaction. In what follows, I explain how each of these modes combine rigidity, reciprocity, and transparency to exert a particular type of communicative influence. The concluding discussion will demonstrate how the model helps with some of the pressing questions around the strategic

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11 Can the scale of an inferential structure can vary, from sentences to paragraphs, or entire texts or speeches? The answer to this problem, for the time being, is that the inferential structure stands as the key unit for communicative influence, and it can vary in scale—from the overarching thread of a campaign, to a speech, to a sentence. A great deal of text could serve to articulate a very simple structure of commitments. What matters is how the speaker constructs the relationships among commitments. Inferential structures may be nested within one another. For instance, a speaker may use one non-reciprocal claim—equating abortion with murder, for instance—as a piece in a broader argument justifying a political position. On the other hand, the overarching theme of a political campaign, manifested in or supported by individual instances of communicative influence of any type, may have a given structure that resembles one of these types.
nature of speech, including how one ought to distinguish between manipulation and persuasion, or between more or less acceptable forms of rhetoric.

**Non-rigid types of communicative influence**

Non-rigid types of communicative influence more closely resemble Habermas’s and Brandom’s pragmatics. In non-rigid influence, inferential structures merely represent offers, rather than representing force. The offers may be rendered more or less appealing in terms of their validity, as Habermas would suggest, but the agency involved in the uptake and subsequent modification of the targets’ commitments is their own. Indeed, communicative influence that is non-rigid and non-transparent, as I explain in Table 3.2 and the following discussion, is characterized by the lack of explicit structure built around a commitment. Non-rigid communicative influence involves inferential structures that do not exert directive force or control over the reasoning of others. It does not leverage agreement with one commitment into uptake of others. The speaker’s influence—his or her ability to secure desired consequences—is less than with rigid types of communicative influence, although the speaker also knows that whatever uptake he or she does get is secured by the target’s broader commitment structure. Non-rigid communicative influence types include discussion, assertion, explanation, and disclosure.

*Table 3.2. Types of Non-rigid Communicative Influence*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Reciprocal</th>
<th>Reciprocal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transparent</strong></td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Transparent</strong></td>
<td>Disclosure</td>
<td>Assertion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Discussion**

Discussion is non-rigid, reciprocal and transparent. Rather than seeking to change one another’s commitments, actors reveal the reasoning behind one another’s claims. In many ways, discussion most closely resembles the ideal of deliberation conveyed in Habermas’s account of discourse, and subsequent theories of deliberative democracy. For Habermas, although communication—in which actors are not explicitly oriented to validity claims—serves an action coordination function, discourse does not (Habermas 1979, 19). In discourse, participants demonstrate the validity of their claims or work to achieve a common definition of their situation, including identifying relevant norms and facts.

Neither implies the forcefulness one intuitively associates with a persuasive argument. Rather, in discussion, actors explain to one another “where they are coming from.” Discussion is characterized by the capacity to permeate boundaries, the requirement to give justification, and the knowledge that assertions can and will be challenged, but it does not necessarily serve directive functions in interaction (Landwehr 2010b). Discussion is reciprocal in the sense that Speaker 1 reveals his commitments and Speaker 2 does the same and, in doing so, they can each explore points of convergence and divergence.

Discussion does not necessarily require that one attribute cooperative intentions to actors—each may just want to know where the other is coming from so that one can influence the other more effectively. The key is that the inferential structure in this case, which might follow from encountering a disagreement, is a partially shared or overlapping structure of entitlements. To that end, discussion is transparent, in that its purpose is to clarify aspects of commitment structures already present in discourse, including probing implicit premises (Goodin 2006, 255). Such an inferential structure can be visualized as emanating
from two points, perhaps of agreement or disagreement. It lacks force because it lacks direction, but the reciprocity derives from producing a claim that elicits a response that connects it to the target’s commitments. As I show with disclosure, there is not always a potential for such connections. This shared inferential structure helps social actors navigate one another’s commitments.

**Assertion**

If discussion most closely resembles Habermas’s search for mutual understanding, assertion belongs to Brandom’s model. Assertions are non-rigid, reciprocal, and non-transparent. They are non-rigid in that they involve single commitments rather than structures. They do not impose their effects, but rely on hearers to take them up and use them as reasons—with little immediate control over what the target treats them as reasons for. This is the sense in which assertions are reciprocal. In most cases, the influence of assertions depends on uptake, on the target’s independent evaluation of the speaker’s entitlement, and on whatever inferences the target thinks follow. Assertions are non-transparent in the sense that these connections—both in terms of the grounds for the assertion, and its potential entailments—are not spelled out. Assertions are the basic building block of all the forms of influence, but what distinguishes their non-rigid, non-transparent reciprocal mode is the fact that they are typically not articulated as part of inferential arrangements that pre-determine the consequences of accepting them.

Although they generally lack a defined structure, sometimes assertions can take on the properties of more rigid forms. To the extent that the way an assertion is articulated predetermines the consequences of uptake, even a relatively simple assertion can take on rigid qualities. For example, the assertion that abortion is murder, if taken up, immediately
prompts the inference that abortion is wrong or should be forbidden in a similar manner to murder. And to the extent that this predetermination is a function of the exclusion or prohibition of alternative way of thinking about the claim, it is less reciprocal. I return to this issue in Chapter 6 in a discussion of the pragmatic consequences of persuasive definitions and loaded words.

Explanation

Explanation is closest to Brandom’s notion of “making it explicit”—demonstrating entitlement to an assertion. It is non-rigid, non-reciprocal and transparent. Explanation demonstrates the speaker’s sources of entitlement to a claim—what the speaker takes as reasons for it. To the extent that these patterns of commitments ought to compel universal agreement, explanation may take on a more rigid character. However, demonstrating entitlement need not produce the compelling force of a rigid inferential structure. For instance, a speaker may explain how he or she came to have a particular commitment on the basis of another speaker’s authority, a personal experience, or a broader set of consistent commitments that would have no relevance to the target. A speaker might explain why he or she does not believe in evolution by referring, in a systematic, logical way, to religious premises. But the target would have no need to accept the speaker’s conclusion if his or her own commitments were to scientific evidence rather than religious belief. Explanations establish a speaker’s justification and do not necessarily invite response. Explanations are non-reciprocal, because there is little room for engagement and redirection. An explanation articulates a set of entitlements particular to the speaker, although in principle there is no reason it could not be a shared entitlement. As with non-reciprocal inferential structures more
generally, accepting or rejecting a piece of an explanation applies to the entire structure of entitlement as articulated.

Disclosure

Disclosure is non-rigid, non-reciprocal and non-transparent. Like assertions, disclosures consist of unitary claims, rather than whole inferential structures. Unlike assertions, they are non-reciprocal. Non-reciprocity in disclosure means that the (implicit) sources of entitlement are particular to the speaker—they represent sources of entitlement only for the speaker. These implicit justifications might be sufficient for a target to attribute to the speaker a commitment and an entitlement, but not sufficient for the target to undertake that commitment himself or herself. The exemplary case of disclosure is articulating a subjective state. People are free to keep their reasons largely to themselves and, as with subjective states, disclosures are immune from challenge on the basis of someone else’s commitments. Truth and reconciliation commissions, for example, may prompt disclosures, in the sense that the nature of the communication does not invite listeners to introduce their own commitments or challenge sources of entitlement on their own terms. As a mode of communicative influence, disclosure has little force except what it contributes to context; for instance, building empathy or credibility. In disclosure, speakers may reveal preferences or subjective impressions.

The difference between assertion and disclosure is like that between a question and a rhetorical question. The latter discourages contradiction by assuming agreement. It tends to be a conversation ender, not a conversation starter. But explicitly valuing disclosure as a mode of communicative influence also creates space for important aspects of identity politics. Self-representations and other ways that people seek to establish a social identity are
valuable in themselves, and should not necessarily be judged on whatever justifications could be given for them. This is particularly the case for marginalized identity groups, who may feel that any attempt at reciprocal engagement will necessarily take place on the terms of the dominant group, and thus lead to distortion and potential further harm. There is the risk that to the extent disclosures verge towards rigidity—towards directing someone to adopt a conclusion or take action on the basis of a non-transparent, non-reciprocal form of communicative influence—they begin to resemble manipulation. For example, a speaker might make a claim about some experience of victimization in a way designed to elicit some effect—perhaps avoiding a responsibility or receiving some benefit. Had the connection been made transparent but non-rigid, the speaker would have articulated an explanation for their entitlement to the outcome. Had it been rigid and transparent, it might have sought to prove that entitlement. However, to the extent that the disclosure itself generates rigid influence towards some outcome or conclusion, without being transparent about that influence, manipulation should be a concern.

A hypothetical discussion of humanitarian intervention helps illustrate these different types of communicative influence. Beginning with assertion, a speaker may simply claim that the UN should authorize an intervention in Country A. Whether this is an assertion or a disclosure would depend on what the potential, but implicit, sources of entitlement to the claim are, and whether they are somehow attached to the speaker’s subjectivity. A disclosure might be differentiated by signals within the articulation that mark it as subjective; by its content, for instance, with a declaration of preferences; or by a contextual cue. The distinguishing feature is that the entitlement cannot be inherited. In this example, it might look like “I cannot tolerate non-intervention.” The transparent types of influence would
reveal the structures behind such claims, perhaps revealing or contesting a commitment to a norm or moral principle, or exploring whether or not the conditions for its application are met. A discussion along these lines would yield a shared inferential structure that would enable speakers to understand each other’s stance, what commitments they share, and where they disagree.

**Rigid types of communicative influence**

I concluded Chapter 2 by suggesting an expansion on Brandom’s model of deontic scorekeeping to account for how speech could have force. The inferential structures articulated in speech, I suggested, have the potential to generate their own momentum, rigging antecedents and consequences of reason-giving, and leveraging agreement into force that extends into the commitment structure of the influence target. The paradigm case of a rigid inferential structure is argument. One actor seeks to convince another to accept a conclusion on the basis of a series of premises or commitments and logical relations among them. Rigidity can range from an iron-clad syllogism with undeniable premises to a probabilist *enthymeme* that requires hearers to endorse implicit premises based on common knowledge (Gross and Dascal 2001, 277). They share, however, the common feature of directing changes to commitments on the basis of the logical arrangement of claims, rather than merely putting something forward and leaving the hearer free to alter or maintain commitments accordingly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.3. Types of Rigid Communicative Influence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Reciprocal</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transparent</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Transparent</strong></td>
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</table>
Persuasion

*Persuasion* is distinguished by the fact that the speaker must use reasons that a hearer finds acceptable on his or her own terms—which is to say, it requires reciprocity. This understanding of persuasion is consistent with Wrong’s definition of persuasion as a form of power, “when A presents arguments, appeals, or exhortations to B, and B, after independently evaluating the content in light of his own values and goals, accepts A’s communication as the basis for his own behaviour” (Wrong 1979, 32). More than any of the other types, persuasion tends towards leveraging explicit agreement into further commitments. Persuasion makes use of the active judgments of the targets of influence. Reciprocity means that people’s own commitments lend an argument force, and this, in addition to the logical structure implied by rigidity, is what makes persuasion compelling. For example, if the US committed to intervening in Syria if there were evidence of chemical weapons being used (and someone produced such evidence), an inferential structure promoting intervention could borrow compulsive force from the target’s explicit commitment.

Persuasion, on this model, also requires transparency. Targets being persuaded can only actively engage their own commitments if they are aware of opportunities to do so. To the extent that premises are hidden but continue to exert force, they circumvent endorsement or rejection. The more of the argument that is hidden in this way, the less an inferential structure is a case of persuasion. This is not to say that transparency and reciprocity are identical. As I demonstrate, inferential structures can be reciprocal without being transparent. Rhetoricians can harness people’s values to give their arguments force without listeners necessarily being aware that they are doing so. Likewise, speakers can construct arguments that are perfectly transparent without being reciprocal, because they create no space for
evaluation or modification on the basis of commitments external to the logic of the inferential structure. Persuasion, however, requires both transparency and reciprocity, and the two work together to ensure that people are influenced on the basis of commitments they would reflexively endorse. Inferential structures that are transparent and reciprocal still leave speakers with plenty of scope to make strategic use of communicative influence to secure some end. For example, speakers can activate a favourable latent consideration that listeners had not previously taken into account (Dickson, Hafer and Landa 2008; Hafer and Landa 2007). Thus, persuasion as I am describing it here represents an important point of departure from the initial Habermasian framework explained in Chapter 2.

The measure of control strategic actors can maintain over the reasoning process depends on the arrangement of the inferential structure contained in their argument. For instance, how many junctures are there at which the introduction of an external commitment might derail the speaker’s intended outcome? To the extent that a single commitment is sufficient to entrap the target in a chain of reasoning, influence is less reciprocal and tends towards proof. Likewise, if the inferential structure can somehow predetermine which external commitments enter the picture—for instance, by invoking an issue frame—persuasion also becomes less reciprocal.

Rhetoric

*Rhetoric* is rigid, reciprocal, and non-transparent. Its structure pushes towards certain inferences and conclusions, and it draws force from resonance with the commitments targets already hold. But it does not necessarily engage or invoke this agreement explicitly. In *Saving Persuasion*, Garsten attempts to re-evaluate rhetoric for modern political discourse by introducing a neutral definition of rhetoric as “speech designed to persuade” (2006, 5). While
avoiding what he sees as a typical move of equating rhetoric with the manipulative or the superficial, Garsten instead undermines a distinction that I argue is worth maintaining between persuasion and rhetoric. Like persuasion, rhetoric is a rigid form—it drives towards conclusions by way of inferences. Also, like persuasion, it does so by engaging pre-existing commitments—values, beliefs, and dispositions (Danblon 2009; Dryzek 2010; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969). However, unlike persuasion, it does not necessarily do this in a transparent manner. Rhetoric may even obfuscate rather than clarify the (perhaps flawed) logical relationships speech seeks to establish, or it may hide necessary premises—often the most vulnerable ones (Rodden 2008, 163). Rhetorical influence may also work through style, arrangements, or proofs of character (Dascal and Gross 1999), not all of which can or must be fully transparent. This understanding of rhetoric as a communicative influence type is consistent with Goodin’s notion of rhetoric as “implicit assertion,” in which premises necessary for the argument to hold together may be kept in the background, and would be rejected were they presented in explicit form (1980, 96).

Rhetoric becomes less reciprocal when inferential structures are arranged in such a way that premises are supplied and evaluated from within the scope of the argument, rather than from the hearer’s existing commitments. Consider the famous “47 percent” video of republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney speaking to donors, leaked during the 2012 campaign. The rhetorical structure of the message equated “not paying income tax” with an attitude of victimhood, and with people being unwilling to shake dependency on the government and take responsibility for their own lives. Much as this statement may have resonated with audience’s values of self-help and independence, the structure of the

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12 The understanding of rhetoric as obfuscating problematic logical relationships was suggested by Chris Kam in discussions about a separate paper at UBC in Spring 2011.
statement worked to exclude a competing commitment that members of the audience also likely shared: namely, that many of the people included in the “47 percent”—particularly seniors and vulnerable groups who receive credits and exemptions that dropped them below the federal income tax threshold—actually should pay lower taxes (Lowrie 2012). Instead, Romney’s speech implied that all “47 percent” were freeloaders who would, in the absence of this leg up, be forced and expected to make it on their own. By masking the true referent domain of the “47 percent,” the talking point worked to exclude many of the relevant considerations that would arise, and subsequently did arise, when that number was articulated in terms of the demographics it actually describes.

Rhetoric may engage commitments implicitly by directing targets’ attention to some considerations over others (Johnston et al. in Iyengar and Simon 2000, 158). Such practices, while not necessarily transparent, are also not necessarily that harmful. Rhetoric is similar to persuasion in that it derives part of its force from the target buying-in to the claims being made. The difference is that in rhetoric, this agreement remains implicit, and thus less subject to critical reflection. Examining the extent to which communicative influence is relatively reciprocal, rigid, or transparent pinpoints more precisely the normative potentials and pitfalls of rhetoric. When rhetorical influence, which is non-transparent, becomes non-reciprocal as well—that is, when it derives its force from imposed commitments rather than from the target’s own commitments—it turns into manipulation. “True” rhetoric, which is non-transparent, is less cause for concern—although, as I show in Chapter 9, there are problems that accompany over-reliance on this type of communicative influence as well.
Proofs

Proofs are rigid, non-reciprocal and transparent. Their structure exerts logically compelling force so that they only have to borrow minimal force from buy-in to secure influence. Proofs operate as coherent units. Because rejecting one piece means rejecting the proof as a proof, targets cannot redirect force by introducing new commitments. Proofs most resemble pure syllogisms, or even mathematical representations of arguments. In such cases, while the premises and conclusions are transparent, as are the rules of inference, judgments on the basis of considerations external to the argument are neither relevant nor invited. Proofs exert influence insofar as the hearer buys into the inferential structure—perhaps by endorsing a single premise from which everything follows, or perhaps by accepting the whole inferential structure as an independently compelling unit. The exchange does not require audiences to accept intermediate premises or temporary conclusions in order to build upon their commitments. Rather, the structures are beyond challenge, whether because a challenge would make little sense, as with a mathematical problem; because the structures exhaust all possible situations; or because the argument is structured in such a way that alternative considerations are not relevant. Hobbes’s Leviathan is an example of the proof mode of influence of this third type. His premises are transparent, but he does not put them forward in a way that invites commentary or evaluation in terms other than those already contained in the scope of the theory; rather, Hobbes sought to develop a “geometry” of politics, structured tightly and syllogistically so as to propel his readers towards a necessary conclusion (Wolin 1960, 247). Readers are free to reject the premises, and with them, the entire argument, but to do so would be beside the point of a proof.
Manipulation

Manipulation is rigid, non-reciprocal, and non-transparent, and for these reasons is the most normatively problematic form of communicative influence. Elements of manipulative inferential structures cannot be exposed to judgment because they are not made available (non-transparency). And because they are non-reciprocal, they are removed from potential external grounds of judgment because inferential structures supply premises, conclusions, and their own validity conditions. For example, in relation to a 2012 bill giving authorities increased power to track internet activity, Canadian Minister of Public Safety Vic Toews claimed that critics of the bill could either support it, or stand with child pornographers (National Post 2012). This claim approaches the status of manipulative influence. If these were truly the only two options, the situation would generate a very forceful inferential structure. It would leave the target with a negligible choice if, as the speaker reasonably assumes, being against child pornography is a nearly universal commitment. Ultimately, the Canadian public rejected Toews’s argument because the assumption that these two alternatives exhausted the possible positions on the bill was obviously untenable. But it still demonstrates the potential force of non-transparent, non-reciprocal claims within an inferential structure.

This theory of manipulation diverges from others found in the literature. In his account of manipulation, Wrong defines manipulation in terms concealed intent, in that the desired response on the part of the recipient has not been communicated (1979, 27). It is closer to, Riker’s emphasis on structure in his account of manipulation as *heresthetics*, “the art of setting up situations—composing alternatives among which policy actors must choose—in such a way that even those who do not wish to do so are compelled by the structure of
the situation to support the heresthetician’s purpose” (Riker 1996, ix). Riker uses the term heresthetic to refer to changing the features of an issue space, but the concept also sheds light on what individual arguments can do to channel, direct, and exclude certain forms of judgment. Manipulative inferential structures can combine non-transparency and non-reciprocity to generate influence without the target being aware that his or her capacity to engage his or her own commitments is being sidestepped.

Goodin’s (1980) criteria for manipulatory politics resembles these dimensions of non-transparency and non-reciprocity. He examines the range of ways manipulators can lead rational agents to act against their putative will by taking advantage of imperfect information, laying linguistic traps, deceptively playing on emotion, and “rigging the obvious,” among other techniques. Because the combination of non-transparency (concealment or deceit) and the structural exclusion of external judgments makes manipulation so difficult to resist, it represents the ugliest way of exercising power (Goodin 1980, 19; Wrong 1979, 30). This account of manipulation is similar to Klemp’s, in that it reflects the idea that manipulative speech bypasses rational capacities (2012, 54) and exerts hidden force (2012, 47). However, Klemp’s distinction between manipulation and persuasion rests on the intention to bypass rational capacities, rather than asking how speech manages to bypass these capacities. It may be that this intention is a necessary condition for engaging in manipulation—it would be hard to accidentally construct an argument that closes out other considerations and masks connections that might be subject to challenge—but it is not essential to manipulation, nor is it necessary for understanding what manipulation entails.

To illustrate the differences among rigid influence types, I turn once again to a hypothetical argument about humanitarian intervention. A persuasive inferential structure
might look something like this: “If you accept the validity of the norm that the international community of states has a responsibility to protect civilians, and you accept that the conditions for the norm to justify that intervention are met, then you must accept intervention as the right course of action.” While the argument is made up of commissive patterns of inference, the force of its inferential structure depends on the target undertaking, or having undertaken in the past, the commitments that serve as the argument’s premises. Both premises present potential points of departure, challenge, or revision of the conclusion. A rhetorical inferential structure, by contrast, might look like this: “states must intervene in Country A because there is a genocide” or “states must intervene or face another Rwanda.” Here, the inferential structure is less transparent, as the premise “if it is a genocide, states must intervene” is now implicit rather than explicit. Nevertheless, the argument remains reciprocal because to have force, the implicit principle must resonate with the targets’ own commitments.

How is this different from Toews’s argument, which I used as an example of manipulation? There, the inferential structure depended on the implicit claim that people would not stand with child pornographers if there were an alternative. In that case, the hidden premise was nearly a guarantee in that rejecting the proposal would entail also abdicating many other commitments. In other words, the claim was both non-transparent and non-reciprocal. Moreover, in the Toews quote, the assumption that the two positions—supporting the government or supporting child pornographers—are exhaustive generates more of the force towards supporting the bill than the simple commitment to reject child pornography.

The premise “states must intervene in a genocide” or “states must intervene to avoid another Rwanda” can be the object of active agreement or disagreement, while maintaining
the integrity of the targets’ broader commitment set. The latter formulation is a less transparent, and thus more rhetorical, version of the same logic—that a certain condition generates a universal, moral obligation to respond. It buries the premise that establishes the conditions for intervention under another layer of interpretation. The Rwanda analogy also embeds the assumption that actors need to avoid another Rwanda at all costs into the inferential structure as self-evident. It is thus less subject to external endorsement than the claim “states must intervene because it is a genocide,” and thus perhaps slightly more manipulative.

A proof, finally, might look like this: “large-scale loss of life perpetrated by the state or which the state is unable to prevent, or large-scale ethnic cleansing establish the criteria for military intervention. Those conditions are met, so the conflict meets the criteria for military intervention.” Targets can contest the validity of either premise—that the conditions are met, or that they establish a threshold for intervention—but to reject one or the other is to reject the entire proof. It will not be a matter of engaging, redirecting, or changing the conclusion that can be drawn from a set of facts by introducing some new consideration.  

**Summary and Comparison of Communicative Influence Types**

Table 3.4 provides an overview of the eight communicative influence types, with diagrams to illustrate the nature and direction of the force of different types of inferential structures, and brief examples.

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13 The premises of these example arguments are grounded in the principles of the Responsibility to Protect norm articulated in the ICISS (2001) Report on the Responsibility to Protect.
Table 3.4. Summary of Communicative Influence Types (Letters are commitments or claims. Subscripts - S: speaker commitment; T: target commitment; S/T: potentially shared commitment; None: property of the inferential structure)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Inferential Structure</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>( X_S \rightarrow Y_T )</td>
<td>The speaker thinks there should be intervention (( X_T )) because he or she endorses the norm of responsibility to protect (( B_{S/T} )). The target disagrees (( Y_T )). They determine that while he or she may also endorse the norm (( B_{S/T} )), but he or she thinks the conditions have not been met (( C_T )), whereas the speaker does (( A_S )).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertion</td>
<td>( X )</td>
<td>The speaker asserts that the international community should intervene (( X )). Implicit are sources of entitlement that are potentially shared with the target (( A_{S/T} \rightarrow C_{S/T} )).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>( X )</td>
<td>The speaker justifies intervention (( X )) on the basis of of the principles of the norm, and their applicability (( A_{S/T} \rightarrow C_{S/T} )). They may be shared, but do not need to be to constitute an explanation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure</td>
<td>( X_S )</td>
<td>The speaker asserts that he or she can or cannot support an intervention, on the basis of sources of entitlement that are not potentially shared, though they can be attributed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion</td>
<td>( \rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow X )</td>
<td>The speaker argues that the target must accept intervention (( X )) if he or she accepts the validity of the principle of responsibility to protect (( AT )), that it’s conditions hold (( BT )), and that there are no other overriding considerations (( CT )).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetoric</td>
<td>( \rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow X )</td>
<td>The speaker argues for intervention (( X )) by claiming that “we must not have another Rwanda”—that implicitly invokes the targets values or commitments: that it was a tragedy and that it could have been prevented, and that case ( X ) is sufficiently similar—though the latter may be a property of the structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proof</td>
<td>( A_{S/T} \rightarrow B_{S/T} \rightarrow C_{S/T} \rightarrow X )</td>
<td>The speaker demonstrates that the conditions (( A-C )) for the norm (( X )) to apply are met. Force depends on assuming the premises—for instance, the existence of the norm (( A_{S/T} )).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td>( A_{S/T} \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow X )</td>
<td>The speaker claims that if the target values human life (( A_{S/T} )) he or she must support intervention (( X )) because to do otherwise would amount to sanctioning genocide. Implicit is that it is a genocide, and to do nothing is to sanction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A few important pairwise comparisons begin to demonstrate the usefulness of this model of communicative influence. Several influence types parallel one another across the rigid/non-rigid divide. For example, persuasion and discussion are analogous, but where the former uses inferential structures to drive towards new commitments, the latter is more exploratory, working backwards through chains of reasoning rather than forward. Because rigidity is a matter of degree, the boundaries between persuasion and discussion are fuzzy. Discussion begins to look like persuasion to the extent that the speaker introduces arguments that exert influence on the targets’ commitments. Similarly, explanation and proof are analogous. Where explanation demonstrates the speaker’s entitlement to a claim, proofs show that anyone committed to a certain set of claims would also necessarily be committed to a certain conclusion. To the extent that inferential relationships in the inferential structure are commitment-preserving (if you accept x, you must accept y), they tend towards proof. Entitlement-preserving inferences are more characteristic of explanations.

Some of the types are opposites. For instance, within rigid modes, rhetoric is the opposite of proof. Rhetoric draws people’s commitments in so that they are more inclined to accept a conclusion or inference, without necessarily realizing that their existing commitments are generating this force. A pure proof would treat these commitments as irrelevant and yet, precisely because such forms of influence do not rely on shared knowledge, all premises must be made available and obvious in order to exert leverage. Both rhetoric and proof can transition into other types. As rhetorical premises become more transparent, influence begins to resemble persuasion. As the logical structures of a proof become less transparent, such that only partial buy-in is required for inferential structures to secure outcomes without targets’ knowledge or agency, it moves towards manipulation. The
fact that in real situations, speakers will mix the eight ideal types further complicates the process of disentangling how speech secures influence.

Consider the example of climate science and the role of experts in the deliberative system. Well-positioned experts explain, injecting connected facts into public discourse that other actors may take up as reasons and from which they may even make their own arguments. In practice, however, information is rarely presented in neutral ways. Findings are often presented in a way that urges change. Insofar as this reasoning is transparent, it looks like proof. To the extent that such arguments try to compel action by, for example, articulating the implications of climate change in terms of values people hold or their long term interests, communicative influence is persuasive. Such interventions from experts are unlikely to yield discussions between experts and the public. The presentation of scientific facts does not invite hearers to respond with alternative considerations, except perhaps among expert peers. The positions of speakers and audiences relative to one another, as well as the venues within which speech takes place, can alter the nature of communicative influence. The interaction between inferential structures and contextual conditions that condition communicative influence is the topic of the next chapter.

**Conclusion**

Unlike communicative action, which describes a process of interpersonal coordination through the potential for mutual justification inherent in language, I offer communicative influence as a more generic concept of what people are doing when they use language to try to modify the beliefs and actions of others. Although all types of communicative influence work only when targets take up new claims and use them in their
own reasoning processes, there are important sources of variation in how this occurs. This variation is captured by three theoretical dimensions: rigidity determines whether speech constrains reasoning; reciprocity, whether people can bring their own commitments into a reasoning process and, potentially, alter its direction; and transparency, whether speech clarifies or obfuscates the commitments that targets are being asked to make. Taken together, these three dimensions generate eight ideal types of communicative influence.

How different are the accounts I offer here—particularly of persuasion and discussion—from the original model of rational discourse envisioned by Habermas and early theorists in the deliberative democratic tradition? The criteria of transparency and reciprocity seem just as rigorous (and perhaps just as difficult to replicate in reality) as the conditions of ideal speech. However, the model of communicative influence offers several advantages. First, it focuses on the features of speech itself rather than on the features of motives or institutional arrangements (although, as I will explain in later chapters, it has implications for institutional arrangements). Second, the dimensions of communicative influence capture the fact that both reciprocity and transparency are matters of degree, and speech should not be dismissed as strategic the moment one or the other is compromised.

Third, the added dimension of rigidity enables us to examine the ways speech can leave room for strategy—understood as trying to secure specific outcomes in light of the influence target’s existing commitments—without compromising its normative value. By contrast, understanding rational discourse as the testing of validity claims does not take account of strategic dimension present even in friendly, cooperative exchanges—for instance, when speakers casually overlook examples that may hurt their case, or try to argue one another into a corner. In Chapter 5, I explain the connection between the dimensions of
communicative influence identified here and an autonomy-based account of the democratic goods of speech.

Fourth, the model of communicative influence allows us to situate speech on three dimensions rather than one. For instance, looking at rhetorical speech, one can ask: was it more like manipulation, in that the implicit premises were supplied rather than engaged? Or was it more like assertion, in that it did not forward a logical structure that drove the influence target to accept some further conclusion? Fifth, by reconstructing speech and argument in terms of the pragmatics of discursive exchanges, the model of communicative influence presented in this chapter creates a common ground for bridging a number of theoretical and empirical approaches to the problem of strategic speech. Because it is abstract, the model enables us to pull out the generic features of communication, which provide a translation point between findings in psychology and rational choice, on the one hand, and normative democratic theory, on the other. The conceptual framework will enable democratic theory to reflect the real constraints and incentives speakers and audiences face when using words under conditions of political conflict. This will include, in the latter part of the dissertation, making concrete suggestions for change that will harness the democratic potentials of strategic speech, while correcting its most pathological effects. In the next chapter, I theorize the contextual limitations on communicative influence, as well as the incentives and opportunities actors have to deploy different types.
Chapter 4. The Model of Communicative Influence II: Discursive Ecosystems

In this chapter, I introduce and develop a second component of the model of communicative influence, based on the idea that the context in which inferential structures are embedded partially accounts for the nature of their influence. For example, knowledge imbalances between speakers and targets on a given issue—like those between scientific experts and lay publics—may make reciprocal types of communicative influence unlikely in that area, thereby favoring explanation over discussion, and proof over persuasion. Credibility deriving from expertise, trust, first-hand knowledge or shared interest may allow some speakers to exercise greater influence than others, regardless of how convincing or unconvincing their arguments are. In addition, the prior commitments into which inferential structures intervene may be organized according to what political psychologists call frames, and these can affect the way targets weigh the considerations prompted by inferential structures. And, of most importance for designing democratic institutions, institutional environments create incentives to engage in different types of communicative influence. For instance, institutions that enable people to challenge implicit premises may induce speakers to simply make their premises explicit in the first place. Or speakers may instead engage in reciprocal argumentation that incorporates the targets’ own commitments in ways that forestall potential criticisms. In institutions that record explicit commitments and make it costly to violate them, speakers may leave more of their inferential structures implicit. The aim of this chapter is to系统atize these contextual considerations in order to build them into the model of communicative influence.
Contextual constraints can render well-intentioned speech harmful to autonomous judgment, as when someone unconsciously invokes a dominant frame that crowds out competing considerations. But context also has the potential to draw out the democratic value, even in speech that lacks deliberative intent. For instance, institutions can draw benefits out of strategic behaviour by allowing actors to challenge one another, rendering implicit aspects of inferential structures explicit—benefits that could not be identified using intention based theories of deliberation.

Examining the context dependency of communicative influence provides a more complete picture of the force of speech, and is consistent with a pragmatic approach. Indeed, in the study of language, pragmatics is distinguished from semantics by virtue of its focus “on the users and context of language rather than on reference, truth, or grammar” (Fotion 1995, 709). Attention to context reveals how strategic actors leverage opportunities to expand their communicative influence. For instance, they may seek to build up their own credibility and undermine that of their opponents. They may invoke frames that support their position in order to take advantage of familiar patterns of reasoning among influence targets. And they may use institutional rules and procedures to hedge and equivocate, while perhaps maneuvering to force opponents to take unpopular positions. The conceptualizations I develop here lay the foundations for Chapters 7 through 9, in which I theorize the ways interventions at the level of context—particularly altering institutional environments—can secure better forms of communicative influence, even harnessing actors’ self-interested behaviour to do so.

To help develop this piece of the model of communicative influence, I conceptualize the discursive context in which speakers and audiences are embedded as an ecosystem. An
ecosystem is “a biological system composed of all the organisms found in a particular physical environment, interacting with it and with each other,” although the term can also describe complex non-biological systems that comprise both internal and environmental influences (Oxford English Dictionary). The analogy between discursive context and an ecosystem will enable me to talk about the structure of prior commitments, the statuses of speakers and subjects, and the institutional arrangements that govern communication, all under the headings of ecological features and ecological effects. Much like physical environments, these discursive ecological features interact with the primary objects of concern: speakers, targets, and inferential structures. Moreover, the ecological analogy draws attention to the idea that when people speak and listen, they both respond to and alter their discursive environments, and even minor modifications to those environments can have far reaching effects.

The idea of a discursive ecosystem resembles the phenomenological concept of the lifeworld (Schutz 1970), which Habermas uses to work out the notion of communicative action by positioning it as “a reservoir of taken-for-granteds, of unshaken convictions that participants in conversation draw upon in cooperative processes of interpretation” (Habermas 1989, 170). The notion of a discursive ecosystem differs from that of the lifeworld in that it grants special status to subjects and institutions, as well as the structural relationships among pre-existing commitments. Beyond merely labeling them as shared meanings necessary for communication, ecological features can have real force, altering incentives, directing reasoning, empowering some subjects, and disempowering others.

The first section of this chapter establishes and explains the ecological features that make up the discursive ecosystem. I describe these features in pragmatic terms, but the ideas
are drawn from other fields, primarily political psychology and rational choice. First, 
*structural/substantive features* frame issues and establish their dimensionality. Second, 
*subject-based* features like expertise, first-hand knowledge, or trusted status generate 
credibility, on the speaker side. On the target side, knowledge, engagement, and 
psychological tendencies set limits on the ways inferential structures can engage targets’ 
commitments. Third, *institutional features* determine whether or not explicit commitments 
are costly to back out of, as well as who speaks to whom, when, and with what kind of 
audience.

In the second section, I explain three types of *ecological effects* associated with these 
features: *modification effects*, *magnification effects*, and *selection effects*. In order to illustrate 
some specific propositions about selection effects, I also include a theoretical exercise in 
which I trace the consequences of institutional characteristics of some typical discursive 
venues, given a set of assumptions about the behaviour of political adversaries. Finally, I 
reflect on how strategic actors might target discursive ecosystems directly, in order to 
generate advantages and opportunities to exert greater communicative influence. Chapters 7 
through 9 take each of these ecological effects in turn, explaining the kinds of generic *anti-
democratic hazards* they generate for autonomous judgments, and suggesting institutional 
interventions that might respond to these hazards.

**Conceptualizing the Discursive Ecosystems**

Recall from the last chapter that communicative influence operates on the reasoning 
processes of others, leveraging uptake and agreement into further commitments. Speakers 
advance inferential structures: sets of inferentially connected commitments with the capacity
to drive logical and practical reasoning towards conclusions. These inferential structures rely for their force on explicit or implicit commitments and inferences, which are supplied either by the speaker or from the targets’ own prior commitments. But their influence is also conditioned by the context in which speech takes place, which I have described as a discursive ecosystem. My aim in this section is to describe the three sets of ecological features introduced above — structural/substantive, subject-based, and institutional — in terms of pragmatics, setting up the second section in which I explain the implications of these features for communicative influence. Admittedly, theorizing context as I am adds additional complexity to my model. But I hope to make that complexity that arises from theorizing context tractable by ideal-typing both types of ecological features and types of ecological effects. Table 4.1 summarizes the types of ecological features explained below.

**Table 4.1. Ecological Features that Condition Communicative Influence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ecological Feature</th>
<th>Object of interest</th>
<th>Types and Sub-types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Structural/Substantive</td>
<td>Concern the arrangement of pre-existing commitments, both in terms of salience and common connections</td>
<td>Frames</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Subject-Based</td>
<td>Concern subject characteristics that condition communicative influence</td>
<td>Target Characteristics Speaker Characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Institutional</td>
<td>Concern the rules, procedures and practices within which speakers, and thus communicative influence, operate</td>
<td>Generative Institutions Transactional Institutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Substantive/structural features of the discursive ecosystem: Frames**

The uptake of inferential structures, and thus the influence of speech, depends at least in part on their resonance with existing beliefs (Delia 1970; Benford and Snow 2000; Iyengar and Simon 2000). What people already take to be true matters for the inferential
consequences of incorporating a new proposition. This ecosystem feature is closely connected to reciprocity, one of the three dimensions on which the inferential structure of utterances varies. Reciprocal inferential structures are open to external commitments or shut them down. When an inferential structure successfully alters a commitment, this produces consequences for other commitments that are inferentially linked to the one that was changed.

In this section, I add complexity to this account by considering the role of contexts in determining what happens when an inferential structure activates a target commitment with strong links to further commitments constituted by the substantive structures that, I argue, are superimposed onto the basic inferential connections that make up an actor’s web of commitments. I conceptualize this “superimposed” structure in terms of the concept of frames, drawn from political psychology. To the extent a frame is pervasive in public discourse around an issue, it structures existing commitments in ways that modify communicative influence. In practice, framing occurs when “a speaker’s emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions” (Druckman 2001, 1042). It establishes the dimensions of evaluation and render beliefs available, accessible, and applicable (Chong and Druckman 2007b, 105, 11).

I am assuming that framing, in addition to being something speakers can do, also exists as part of the political landscape that constitutes the discursive ecosystem around an issue. To some extent, frames are an inevitable part of people’s ability to think and talk about politics (Nelson and Kinder 1996; Lau and Schlesinger 2005); however, they also have the potential to allow strategic speakers to leverage the existing inferential pathways constituted
by the structure to exert influence that extends far beyond the substance of what they claim. Frames may pit tax hikes against welfare programs, individualism against compassion, or jobs against the environment. In pragmatic terms, frames work by packaging commitments together, and by creating tight links among beliefs, between beliefs and values, or between values and actions. These bundles may also work through processes of exclusion. By establishing, for instance, that an issue is of a certain type (e.g. a moral issue or a national security issue), a frame renders some commitments more relevant than others. On this account, frames work not by changing beliefs, but by causing some considerations to be weighed more heavily than others in making a judgment. That means that by invoking a frame, a speaker can activate inferential processes, without necessarily having to spell the inferences out. Moreover, frames may mask instances in which some commitments, which an actor would not endorse, may follow implicitly from another aspect of the frame that they have endorsed (A. Calvert and Warren 2012). Frames can also limit the range of considerations an actor is likely to bring to bear when reasoning in response to a speaker’s effort to influence them.

There are two important ways in which the frame-based discursive ecologies can vary. The first concerns frame strength. Although it is not apparent what makes a frame strong, it is clear that certain frames are more powerful than others, and more powerful frames can trump the effects of frame repetition (Chong and Druckman 2007b) in making beliefs more available, accessible, and applicable (Arceneaux 2012, 273). If frames have the pragmatic effect of linking and excluding inferences, these effects are likely to be more

14 In much of the literature, framing is distinguished from persuasion in terms of “the weight parameter.” Whereas persuasion involves actual belief change, framing merely alters the weight given to different considerations (Nelson, Oxley and Clawson 1997).
pronounced with stronger frames. Second, competition among frames over a given issue also has implications for communicative influence. Empirical research has shown that conversations that cut across frames mitigate their effects, increasing the accessibility of a broader range of underlying considerations (Chong and Druckman 2007a, 652). Others qualify this finding by pointing out that although the magnitude and direction of shifts in opinion may be less when subjects are exposed to competing frames, the frames nevertheless continue to shape the range and substance of considerations subjects access when articulating their opinions (Brewer and Gross 2005, 943). Moreover, competing frames may have the pragmatic effect of what Calvert and Warren (2012) call “epistemic discounting,” in which audiences give less weight to the substance of a speaker’s commitments if those commitments are associated with a competing frame, thus hindering the potential for dialogue to move people beyond the limiting effects of frames. For example, communication between Republicans and Democrats may be more challenging if, as Barker (2005) suggests, Republicans respond to individualist frames and Democrats to egalitarian ones.

According to Riker, strategic political actors can seek to modify the dimensions along which actors situate their preferences when evaluating an issue (1990, 46-47). Adding dimensions alters the shape of the issue space, breaking down majorities and moving voters around in relation to set choices, without actually changing their preferences (Riker 1986). While Riker’s account of dimensionality is different from the political psychologists’ account of frames, both work by determining which considerations or preferences inform judgment on a particular issue. The powerful pragmatic effects of this practice, which Riker dubs heresthetics, can also be explained at the level of practical reasoning. When people engage in practical reasoning, they move from an account of the state of the world to intentional states
through patterns of practical reasoning (types of oughts, including preferences). By defining the situation as consisting of a particular set of dimensions, strategic actors can modify outcomes without actually speaking directly to preferences, institutional roles, or moral obligations. Taken together, frames and heresthetics offer both a psychological and rationalist take on the idea that the pre-given structures of the target commitment sets into which inferential structures intervene matter for communicative influence.

Subject-based features of the discursive ecosystem: Speaker and target characteristics

The discursive ecosystem is populated by speaking and listening subjects whose characteristics and tendencies favour or undermine the uptake of claims and yield more or less careful evaluation of inferential structures. Table 4.2 lists such subject-based ecological features according to whether they belong primarily to the speaker or to the target.

Table 4.2 Subject-Based Features of Discursive Ecosystems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target-Based Features</th>
<th>Speaker-based Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Knowledge (including engagement and personal experience)</td>
<td>Credibility, deriving from…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stake (including interests and level of commitment to the beliefs or actions)</td>
<td>- Expertise,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Records and issue ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Trust (interest and identity-based)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Target-based ecological features

Target characteristics and tendencies can alter the way the inferential structures speakers articulate affect their reasoning. Are targets knowledgeable on an issue? Are they politically sophisticated or engaged enough to situate that issue in a broader context? Are they motivated to engage their cognitive capabilities? A variety of empirical findings suggest that audience traits matter in how people receive and process arguments. A first set of traits concerns knowledge and engagement, which tells us something about whether an influence
target is likely to have prior commitments on an issue, and how well grounded those are in his or her broader web of commitments. Several noteworthy empirical tendencies suggest the importance of target characteristics. Those who are less engaged in politics are more likely to rely on metaphors to construct their opinions (Barry et al. 2009) or rely on cue-based processing, in general (Bullock 2011). Moreover, when people are given little information, plausible explanations will trump evidence in argument (Brem and Rips 2000, 584; Rips, Brem and Bailenson 1999, 117). Finally, the reference group with which a target identifies on a given issue may determine the substantive basis on which he or she responds to arguments (Chong 2000, 74) or, in pragmatic terms, which commitments they access.

Second, the effects of communicative influence on reasoning may also depend on a target’s stake in a given problem. Knowing that one is likely to be affected promotes conscious, thoughtful, or rational processing over reliance on cues or heuristics (Petty and Cacioppo 1986, 126; Marcus, Neuman and Mackuen 2000, 129). Stake can also be conceptualized in terms of a target’s web of commitments. If an inferential structure puts pressure on a core commitment—for instance, a belief that is integral to someone’s comprehensive worldview—the pragmatic consequences of giving it up will be more profound than for a relatively peripheral belief like which movie is best. Because of the magnitude of these pragmatic consequences, the force required to change a core commitment or a commitment in which the target has a strong stake, may be higher. Thus, for influence to be successful in such cases, inferential structures would need to leverage greater reciprocity, greater rigidity, or both. To further complicate matters, a targets’ perceived stake also depends on his or her perception of the risks involved. Prospect theory suggests that people have a bias towards avoiding loss over making equivalent gains (Mercer 2005). If the target is in a
domain of potential loss, then arguments promising to avoid loss are more compelling than those promising gains (Arceneaux 2012, 281).

In pragmatic terms, we can think of target characteristics as altering the conditions under which targets undertake commitments. Some characteristics raise the bar for the uptake of commitments, requiring that inferential structures be more transparent, reciprocal, or rigid in order for a speaker to generate communicative influence through uptake. For example, if targets have a higher stake or greater knowledge, speakers may need to use more transparent inferential structures to secure influence. By contrast, targets with lower stakes, lower anxiety, or less knowledge, will be more susceptible to non-transparent inferential structures. Similarly, low knowledge situations may make it harder for speakers to construct reciprocal inferential structures because there are fewer pre-existing beliefs to engage. Finally, if targets determine, consciously or unconsciously, that the relevant basis for judgment on a given issue is tied to some aspect of their identity, speakers who fail to engage that identity may not be able to draw target commitments into an inferential structure, weakening their capacity to generate communicative influence.

*Speaker-based ecological features*

Intuitively, some speakers wield greater influence than others. Rightly or wrongly, they may be perceived as more credible, knowledgeable, or genuine. These kinds of statuses, however, usually exist only in relation to a given issue. The person to whom one implicitly attributes entitlement to make military decisions is not necessarily the same person one would trust to make decisions about environmental policy. Thus, the enhanced communicative influence generated by speakers’ status within the discursive context must be defined in relation to issues.
At this point, I wish to introduce a pragmatic distinction between credibility and authority. Credibility is a feature of the discursive ecosystem adhering to subject statuses. Authority, on the other hand, can be a source of appeals, and can be built into inferential structures. Both credibility and authority establish entitlement; however, with authority, the source of authority functions as an implicit or explicit premise—accept X because I, the speaker, have some source of authority pertaining to X. By contrast, with credibility, its source is not actually part of the argument. In pragmatic terms, credibility concerns the deontic attitude of attributing entitlement. Put simply, on some issues, some speakers are more credible than others, and this status enhances their influence, even when inferential structures do not make appeals on the basis of this status. This theoretical claim resonates with empirical findings. Persuasion appears to be most effective when it comes from a credible source (Iyengar and Simon 2000). The effects of credibility also raise normative concerns, to which I return in Chapter 8. Targets may also sometimes attribute unwarranted credibility in the form of misplaced trust, misunderstood expertise, power or popularity (Landwehr 2010a), or by basing their judgments on misleading accounts of a speaker’s record.

Actors sometimes have good reason to take people at their word—in pragmatic terms, to attribute entitlement to a claim. The most obvious basis of credibility—and perhaps the most difficult to distinguish in practice from an implicit claim to authority—is when targets value the speaker’s expertise or firsthand knowledge. Credibility might also derive from consistency of a speaker’s record on a given subject. The attention politicians pay to building up, defending, and promoting voting records suggests the importance of this source of credibility (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1996, 111-12). In addition, the need to maintain this
credibility by protecting reputations constrains the kinds of commitments speakers can articulate. Targets might also attribute entitlement to claims on the shakier ground of party affiliations, and targets’ cognitive associations between speakers, parties, and issues (Iyengar and Valentino 2000, 128), which may also preclude credibility or entitlement on issues seen as “belonging” to another party (Feldman and Conover 1983). As I shall explain in detail below, credibility enhances communicative influence. When a target attributes to a speaker entitlement to the claims that make up an inferential structure, the likelihood that the target will undertake the new commitments, and the conclusions that follow, increases.

**Institutional features**

The most concrete of the ecological features are institutional. Institutional features determine whether speakers can reach a wider or narrower audience; they establish rules concerning questioning and cross examination; and they reward or penalize different types of communicative influence—favouring, for example, explanation over persuasion, or rhetoric over discussion. Institutions may also create incentives that affect when and how people choose to speak and what they reveal. For instance, if a speaker knows he or she will be challenged for deceitful speech, he or she may be less likely to be deceitful in the first place. Institutions constitute much of the terrain on which political communication plays out.

In this section, I present a description of these institutional features. Defined in relation to pragmatics, institutions can be grouped according to two types: transactional and generative. *Transactional* institutional features determine how speakers are positioned in relation to targets, including whether or not the targets also become speakers and whether or not parties to an exchange aim influence towards a non-participating audience. *Generative* institutional features embed commitments in the discursive context, making it easier for
actors to keep track of one another’s commitments and build them into inferential structures. They generate solid reference points around which subsequent discursive interactions may revolve.

**Transactional institutional features**

Transactional institutional features determine the direction of communication, the number of parties, and the likelihood of exchanges.\(^{15}\) They also concern whether or not speakers have the opportunity to verify one another’s claims and impose penalties for lying (Lupia and McCubbins 2000, 50). These features establish the structure of the relationship between speaker(s) and influence target(s) and, in dialogic situations, enable these positions to be reversed—or permit both speakers to try to influence third parties, as in televised leaders’ debates. A courtroom’s transactional features, to take another example, are adversarial,\(^{16}\) but they also establish strict rules of conduct, evidence, and burdens of proof. In representative assemblies, transactional features establish rules for who gets to speak when, and whether others have an opportunity to respond.

In pragmatic terms, transactional features of institutions alter the extent to which inferential structures can be made explicit, either voluntarily because of speaking rules, or forcefully because speakers have been challenged. Moreover, as I explore in the next section, knowing that one may be challenged may prompt certain behaviors—for instance, a speaker

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\(^{15}\) The term “transactional” is drawn from Pinto (2010, p. 232) but expanded considerably. I use it to capture whether communication is one-directional—from speaker to audience—or two-directional, allowing for exchanges between parties.

\(^{16}\) Ideas about the importance of adversarial relationships and the status of court-room style exchanges were developed in conversation with Bernard Manin at a conference in June 2011. Manin also discusses the importance of adversaries in *Democratic Deliberation: Why We Should Promote Debate Rather than Discussion* (Manin 2005).
may anticipate the interlocutors’ commitments in order to co-opt claims that might otherwise enable challenges.

Generative institutional features

Generative institutional features arise when the commitments speakers articulate become embedded in institutional contexts, and thus alter the discursive ecosystem. Actors can then leverage these explicit commitments in future interactions. For example, when representatives vote on bills and amendments they enter positions in the public record, generating explicit commitments to which they can later be held. Similarly, governing parties in minority parliaments can extract positive votes from opposition parties with the threat that the opposition will be “responsible” for triggering an election if they do not make those commitments. Further examples of generative institutions include provisions to agree to stipulative definitions, or reliance on definitions already in place in legislation (Walton 2001). Rules that enable agenda-setters to manipulate the order of votes can generate commitments by forcing actors to take position against one alternative before proceeding to the next pair in order to eliminate otherwise popular alternatives (Riker 1986).

Institutions might also be generative in slightly less concrete ways. For instance, a gesture on behalf of a state—a formal apology for past injustices, for instance—can provide a permanent, if symbolic, point of reference for ongoing discursive interaction. As Mihaela Mihai (2013) argues, even strategically articulated official state apologies generate symbolic recognitions that have profound consequences for relationships between victims and the demos. She argues that official apologies can create positive shifts in political culture by virtue of the capacity of official apologies to set an example that is taken up in the form of judgments about the past (Mihai 2013, 218).
By exposing and punishing inconsistency to varying degrees, generative institutions can raise or lower the costs of going back on commitments, and, to the extent that reneging is costly, speakers can build into inferential structures targets’ past commitments as dependable points of leverage. Institutions that raise the costs of violating expressed commitments thus also make these commitments more meaningful, both as subsequent pressure points and also because actors may think twice about making them in the first place. Hobbes takes this notion to an extreme in claiming that “covenants, without the sword, are but words, and of no strength to secure man at all” (Chapter XVII, 93). For Hobbes, without explicit costs to reneging, actors cannot ever depend upon the word of others.

Even without going to Hobbes’s extreme, any argument for the force of language must assume that commitments have some staying power internal to the communicative process. But particularly where past commitments conflict with current incentives, the extent to which speakers can count on one another’s commitments may vary with the structure of the institutions in which they are embedded. Finally, merely by participating in institutions actors can incur certain general commitments—for instance, a commitment to the legitimacy of the institution itself, a commitment to following the rule of civility, or a commitment to abiding by the outcome of collective decision-making, even if it does not go one’s way. Indeed, most institutions work by generating norms to which people who occupy a position, such as an elected office, are held. Institutions impose normative commitments—to represent, to be accountable, or to hold the public trust—simply by recognizing someone as holding a position. Generative institutions give speech a sticky quality: commitments are recorded and formalized, providing solid reference points within their web of commitments.
Features of discursive ecosystems: Summary

My aim in this section has been to lay the groundwork for a discussion of how these ecological features affect communicative influence. Re-constructiong research findings around reasoning and behaviour in terms of pragmatics makes it possible to relate these findings to the idea of communicative influence—and, in later chapters, to their democratic implications. By incorporating the notion of a discursive ecosystem, the model of communicative influence provides a pivot point between these empirical findings and a normative account of the democratic functions of speech. Table 4.3 presents a summary of the descriptive ecological features and their pragmatic effects.
Table 4.3: Summary of the Features of Discursive Ecosystems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature Type</th>
<th>Pragmatic Effects</th>
<th>Sources of Variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural-Substantive:</strong> Framing</td>
<td>- The presence of frames, particularly strong frames, in the discursive ecosystem imposes a structure on top of the baseline inferential links among commitments, establishing stronger and weaker connections or rendering some more salient than others. Establishing issue dimensionality can change the grounds for judgment and decision.</td>
<td>- Frame strength, Frame reliance, Frame reliance, Frame reliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject-Based:</strong> Target</td>
<td>- Audience characteristics may raise or lower the threshold of how much reciprocity/ rigidity/transparency is necessary for influence to be successful. Lack of knowledge may set a ceiling on reciprocity.</td>
<td>- Knowledge, Stake in an issue (both interests and level of attachment to the commitment speakers seek to dislodge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject-Based:</strong> Speaker</td>
<td>- Credibility promotes attribution of entitlement, increasing the likelihood of uptake of the commitments that make up an inferential structure.</td>
<td>- Expertise, first-hand knowledge, individual or party records on a given issue, trust (identity or interest based)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional:</strong> Transactional</td>
<td>- Structure discourse, establishing who gets to speak to whom, when, the audience size, and whether target/speaker positions get reversed.</td>
<td>- One-way, two-way, or two-way directed at a non-participating third party, Adversarial, cooperative, cross-examination, questions, turn-taking, time allotments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional:</strong> Generative</td>
<td>- Embed articulated commitments into the discursive ecosystem, making them available as reference or leverage points in future interaction. They make speech “sticky,”</td>
<td>- Do institutions record commitments and make it costly for people to break them? Does participation involve making a commitment to shared rules or definitions? Can they establish non-inferential links between commitments (i.e. omnibus bills, amendments)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Effects of Discursive Ecosystems on Communicative Influence

In addition to identifying these features of discursive ecosystem, it is possible to think systematically about their effects. Ultimately, understanding these effects will help to guide
institutional remedies against forms of influence that undermine autonomous judgment.

There are three ways in which ecological features can affect communicative influence. The first is modification. Here, the interplay between inferential structures and the discursive ecosystem moves communicative influence along its three dimensions, increasing or decreasing rigidity, reciprocity, and transparency. The second type of effect is magnification, in which ecological features promote the uptake of the commitments that make up an inferential structure, thus magnifying its force. The third is a selection effect, in which ecological features—especially institutions—incorporate certain types of communicative influence over others. Generally speaking, I find that structural/substantive and target-based features of the discursive ecosystem exert primarily modification effects; speaker-based features exert primarily magnification effects; and institutional features exert primarily selection effects.

Table 4.4. Types of Ecological Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Effect</th>
<th>Ecological Features</th>
<th>Ecological effect...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Modification** | - Structural/Substantive: Frames  
- Subject-based: Target characteristics | Interaction between inferential structures and the discursive ecosystem modifies communicative influence by rendering it more or less rigid, reciprocal, or transparent |
| **Magnification** | - Subject-based: Speaker characteristics | Interaction between inferential structures and the discursive ecosystem magnifies influence by promoting uptake of commitments within inferential structures. |
| **Selection** | - Institutional: Generative and transactional | Institutions incentivize more or less rigidity, reciprocity and transparency, selecting for different types of communicative influence. |
Modification effects

Modification effects occur when inferential structures combine with ecologies to render communicative influence more or less rigid, more or less reciprocal, or more or less transparent. Inferential structures do not operate in a vacuum, but interact with pre-existing commitments, from which they can also draw force. These commitments are often subject to frames, which organize beliefs, values, and preferences around an issue. Frames work to strengthen some inferential connections and weaken others, and to alter the salience of commitments. When an inferential structure touches on a frame, whether deliberately or not, it can trigger frame-based reasoning processes that modify communicative influence.

First, frames can modify by compromising reciprocity. They do this by establishing that an issue is of a certain type, which blocks considerations people might have brought to bear in the absence of the frame. For example, a dominant frame in Canadian discourse equates discussions of health care reform with privatization and Americanization. The dominance of this frame precludes meaningful consideration of alternative pathways to reform and deters useful comparisons with other, better performing systems (A. Calvert and Warren 2012). Frames are part of context, but to the extent that inferential structures implicate frames, the frames themselves can work to favour some commitments over others that might have steered the reasoning process in a different direction.

Second, frames can modify the transparency of communicative influence, enabling inferential structures to leave some of their components implicit. For example, in Canada the Harper government framed the F-35 fighter jet purchase as a military necessity, suppressing considerations of the actual cost by casting any questions about cost as military weakness or as neglect of the needs of military personnel. In pragmatic terms, because frames “bundle”
commitments and pre-determine the inferential relations among them, familiar frames can prompt people to skip steps and endorse implicit assumptions. Because frames trigger a script instead of constructing an explicit argument (Mutz, Sniderman and Brody 1996, 5), hearers will not necessarily recognize the grounds on which they are agreeing to something.

Third, some frames may also modify communicative influence by rendering it more rigid. Frames can embed assumptions that render certain inferences more likely or even necessary. For instance, framing a social program as a tax hike can leverage people’s preference not to pay more taxes. Depending on the strength of the frame, this may allow an inferential structure to simply bypass considerations of the merits of the policy.

Understanding framing effects in pragmatic terms suggests possibilities for correcting for them. For example, institutions that place actors in adversarial positions—as in a courtroom exchange—may artificially induce transparency and reciprocity by prompting them to challenge one another’s inferential structures, thus revealing implicit assumptions and alternatives. Empirical evidence suggests that such competition mitigates the effects of frames (Chong and Druckman 2010). I examine these possibilities in greater depth in Chapter 7.

Like frames, target-based ecological features can also work to modify communicative influence. For instance, an inferential structure open to reciprocal engagement cannot by itself account for reciprocity in communicative influence. Targets must actually have the commitments to engage, and sufficient understanding to do so. Similarly, if an actor is not motivated to engage in active processing because of low stakes or low anxiety (Marcus 2002), influence is also unlikely to be reciprocal. By contrast, knowledgeable, engaged, or motivated targets are more likely to engage in reciprocal, active processing. They may
perhaps even impose transparency and reciprocity on inferential structures by challenging commitments the inferential structure treats as given. In terms of potential correctives, examined in Chapter 7, these potentials for positive modifications reinforce the importance of learning phases in deliberative processes and additionally suggest that achieving autonomy-preserving exchanges might require helping people identify their own stake in an issue.

**Magnification effects**

Magnification effects also result from subject-based ecological features, but from speaker rather than target characteristics. I associate magnification effects primarily with statuses, traits, and relationships that make speakers credible. Credible speakers, by virtue of their relationships with an issue or with an audience, are more likely to be granted entitlement to their commitments, increasing the chances that audiences will undertake those commitments themselves, without actually altering the inferential structures they articulate. By magnifying influence, expertise or trusted status may make targets more likely to be influenced even by assertions, although the speaker still cannot control for what it serves as a reason. Conversely, lack of credibility can also undermine influence, potentially even the influence of otherwise compelling inferential structures. In recognition of this possibility, strategic speakers may seek to prevent their words from being dismissed out of hand as either self-serving or otherwise not credible in a given situation. One such familiar tactic is to preface an argument with “I’m not a Democrat/Republican/environmentalist/conservative/local resident, but...”.

The notion that a speaker’s communicative influence derives in part from his or her credibility may create an environment where speakers face unequal starting points for influence on certain issues. Some have to overcome a “credibility gap” that forces to offer
more elaborate inferential structures to secure the influence someone else could achieve with an assertion. While there may be good reasons for credibility to be unevenly distributed, deliberative systems need to be attentive to this form of inequality for two reasons. First, in order for this aspect of the discursive ecosystem to be consistent with autonomy, the sources of credibility on a given issue should be able to withstand reflexive, critical scrutiny—and, moreover, should be subject to periodic reconsideration to ensure that they do. Second, speakers should have opportunities to use inferential structures to exert influence in ways that can overcome this credibility gap. I return to the problems magnification creates for autonomous judgment, and ways of responding to those problems, in Chapter 8.

**Selection effects**

Selection effects occur when institutional ecological features incentivize some types of communicative influence over others. Institutions do this particularly well by structuring the consequences of speech. For example, transactional contexts that favor exchanges, rather than one-directional communication, may promote greater transparency. Not only can adversaries (or colleagues) make explicit the implicit components of a speaker’s original inferential structure, but the knowledge that their implicit claims may be rendered explicit on someone else’s (unfriendly) terms may make speakers more forthright in the first place—or at the very least more careful in what they articulate (Lupia and McCubbins 2000, 50). When the target of influence is part of the exchange, knowing that he or she will have a chance to introduce his or her own arguments may lead the speaker to attempt to engage those commitments in the first place, perhaps in the form of appeals to common interests (Dryzek and List 2003). In some cases, speakers may engage in reciprocal argument in highly strategic ways; for instance, in an effort to foreclose avenues of challenge, a speaker might
co-opt an opponent’s values into an inferential structure that favours the speaker’s conclusion.

In other instances, institutional structures will select, not by indirectly incentivizing behaviours, but by directly forcing speech to conform to certain rules. For example, the forced transparency of scientific publishing—citing sources, providing data for replication, and subjecting work to challenge in organized forums—produces communicative influence of the “proof” and “explanation” types. At the same time, insofar as competing theories are at work, the context may also select for persuasion and discussion. People are forced to work out their differences in reference to a shared set of commitments—a body of previous findings and work—that provide common ground and allow actors to ground their arguments reciprocally in commitments that others presumably share. In generative institutions, where talk may be decision-oriented and binding, as opposed to everyday talk, actors know that commitments represent potential future force, and may be more evasive and less responsive to the reasons of others as a result.17

**Selection effects of generative and transactional institutional features**

In order to expand on the idea of selection, I briefly illustrate how institutional arrangements might incentivize different types of communicative influence, using a thought experiment that assumes a set of incentives, and asks how these play out across different institutional conditions. For the purposes of the argument, I specify a set of assumptions that stylize political contestation. The starting assumption is that speakers are motivated to influence others—to convince them to undertake a new commitment or abandon an old one. I

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17 For a discussion of the differences between everyday and decision-oriented talk in the deliberative system, see (Mansbridge 1999).
also assume that strategic actors want to minimize the number of commitments they articulate when institutions are generative, because each commitment limits potential future claims by virtue of relationships of incompatibility that threaten incoherence. Additionally, each represents a potential point of pressure that can be used against them by an adversary. This assumption is a simplification, since in any given situation, there would be many harmless commitments speakers would willingly acknowledge for every one they might strategically wish to avoid. However, I maintain the assumption in order to simplify this exercise. I further assume that strategic actors want others to have more commitments on the record so that they can increase the leverage they gain through concrete attributions of explicit commitments. In short, this set of assumptions stipulates that actors typically want others to rack up explicit commitments, without racking up commitments themselves.

Transactional features of institutions can be one-way, in which only one actor gets to speak; two-way and direct, in which two speakers direct influence at each other; or two-way and indirect, in which two speakers direct influence at a non-participating audience. I assume that institutions can be generative for neither speaker, for one, or for both. For the sake of argument, I treat a venue or political practice as either generative or not, when it may actually be a function of how relatively costly the institution makes it to renege on explicit commitments. Table 4.5 lists some typical political practices that reflect the eight possible combinations of generative and transactional conditions.
Table 4.5. Institutional Ecological Characteristics of Common Discursive Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>One-Way</th>
<th>Two-Way, Direct</th>
<th>Two-Way, Indirect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generative for neither actor</strong></td>
<td>Anonymous comments</td>
<td>Anonymous comment threads (i.e. internet message boards)</td>
<td>Anonymous comment threads (i.e. internet message boards) with a perceived audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generative for one actor</strong></td>
<td>Public statement, position paper</td>
<td>Cross-Examination, Town hall Q&amp;A (I assume institutions are generative only for the answerer)</td>
<td>Press Conference, Parliamentary Question Period (I assume institutions are generative only for the answerer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generative for both actors</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>- Deliberation where actors are trying to influence one another, rather than an audience</td>
<td>Debate (i.e. televised leaders’ debates during campaigns; public representative assembly debates)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These categorizations highlight a number of possible selection effects. First, institutions that are generative for whomever articulates an inferential structure lead to less transparency because each commitment a speaker makes explicit represents a potential point of leverage against them. Second, generative institutions lead to greater rigidity, because actors want to produce commitments in others, and can derive force from inferential structures in order to do so. Finally, two-way transactional contexts, particularly those that are generative for both actors, may favour some form of reciprocity, because actors may want to take advantage of the commitments of others, rather than articulating their own, to construct an inferential structure.

In the first row in Table 4.5, we might expect to see any of the influence types. A non-generative venue like an online forum does not select against transparency. Because actors cannot be held to their commitments, they do not mind articulating them. Likewise, a non-generative venue would, under the specified conditions, fail to select for rigidity because
there is no particular incentive to produce commitments in others to which they cannot later be held. Because there is no incentive to construct rigid inferential structures while avoiding articulating commitments of one’s own, such practices also do not select for or against reciprocity. If we relax the above assumptions to allow that people may be willing to abide by their commitments (and others can attribute that willingness to them) one might expect to see increases in rigidity as people actually try to convince one another. On the whole, though, in institutional venues featuring these non-generative conditions—think, again, of online, anonymous forums—all three transactional contexts are consistent with the full range of communicative influence types and, speaking in broad strokes, this is what one sees in anonymous, uncontrolled exchanges like internet comment threads.

The second row of Table 4.5 comprises venues and arrangements that are generative for one of the two actors. They include public position statements, town hall Q&As, and press conferences. Their generative character may work against transparency on the part of the speaker for whom they are generative. That is, a speaker may not to spell out all of his or her commitments—for instance, in a public position paper—lest these cause trouble later on, particularly now that records of communication are so easily archived, retrieved and disseminated. However, two-way contexts like town halls and courtrooms also position interlocutors to prompt or compel speakers to spell out their commitments “on record.” While these two-way transactional features do not necessarily select for transparency by altering incentives, this arrangement may end up producing greater transparency because the questioners force the speakers to render their commitments explicit. By contrast, the third column describes institutional circumstances in which influence is aimed at an audience that is not part of the exchange, with one of the two participants—the answerer—having the
additional concern of avoiding generating commitments on record. In the press conference example, while questioners may attempt to impose transparency—asking questions in a rigid way designed to prevent equivocation, or invoking the speaker’s prior commitments in an effort to get “a straight answer”—speakers nevertheless have incentives to avoid transparency. Ruling out transparent types, then, circumstances that are two-way, indirect, and generative for one actor select for assertion, disclosure, manipulation and rhetoric.

The final row describes venues that generate commitments for both actors. This is where we might locate deliberative venues—dialogic exchanges involving reasons, preferences, beliefs, and values. Transactional features will be two-way, and either direct or indirect. In two-way, direct, and generative circumstances—that is, when parties to an exchange direct influence at one another, and both incur commitments that stick—one might expect to see rigid types of communicative influence as participants try to get one another to take on commitments. Because I assumed that actors do not want to articulate their own commitments, generative features continue to select against transparency. As such, this row leaves three options: manipulation, rhetoric, and persuasion. Manipulation and rhetoric each apply because they are both rigid and non-transparent. Proof is excluded because it would require actors to articulate commitments of their own. Persuasion is included because it is reciprocal. As such, it makes it possible for speakers, using persuasion, to build compelling inferential structures from commitments their opponents already have on the record, rather than having to articulate their own.

The possibility of constructing compelling inferential structures out of one another’s commitments opens up possibilities for moving from manipulation towards persuasion. If both parties can begin to articulate claims in terms of the commitments of their opponents,
they can gradually expand the pool of commitments to which speakers can appeal, increasing the scope for persuasion and resisting the pull towards manipulation. This theoretical result suggests a possible insight for how two-way, direct exchanges in adversarial situations—assuming actors actually have some reason to attempt to influence one another at all—can move from manipulation, through rhetoric, to persuasion. For instance, using an intermediary to have actors sign on to a set of beliefs, an agreed upon account of events, or a set of values can enable actors to engage in reciprocal rhetoric or persuasion and over time expand the range of commitments to which speakers can appeal.

This means of escaping pressures towards manipulation by gradually building up shared resources for persuasion may not be possible in more public exchanges—described in the third column—where influence is indirectly aimed at a non-participating audience. In cases like televised campaign debates and parliamentary question period, speakers are typically not trying to influence one another. To the extent that speakers do incorporate opponents’ commitments into inferential structures, it is most likely for the strategic purpose of undermining the opponent’s credibility in the eyes of the audience. Rather than a source of reciprocal influence, opponents’ commitments are offered as premises from which audiences are meant to reason: ”my opponent said X, therefore he or she cannot share your commitment to value Y.” Because speakers know that in articulating a commitment they may leave themselves exposed to such tactics, generative, two-way indirect contexts select against transparency.

Because influence is directed at an audience, it is engagement with audience commitments that has the potential to render communicative influence reciprocal. Arrangements such as leaders’ debates select for rhetoric or manipulation—rhetoric to the
extent that they seek to resonate or engage with audience’s beliefs and values, and
manipulation to the extent that they seek to include in inferential structures necessary
assumptions that would likely not receive uptake. Elaborating the theoretical consequences of
*transactional* and *generative* institutional features under a given set of assumptions about
political actors’ incentives demonstrates the way the discursive ecosystem concept helps to
draw out the implications of everyday political practices for communicative influence.

**Summary: Effects of discursive ecosystems on communicative influence**

In the preceding section, I identified three types of ecological effect. *Modification* of
communicative influence occurs when inferential structures encounter either entrenched
frames, or subject tendencies that produce variation—and gaps—in target commitments
through knowledge, engagement, and stakes. *Magnification* effects occur when some
speakers, for reasons of expertise, trust, or perceived shared interest, wield greater
communicative influence than others, independently of the inferential structures they
articulate. *Selection* effects occur when institutional incentives favour some types of
communicative influence over others. Institutional features of discursive ecosystems,
however, have implications for all three types of effects. In addition to being designed to
select for specific types of communicative influence, institutions can correct for modification
effects of frames by prompting speakers to unpack the ways others are using frames to render
certain inferences implicit, inducing transparency and potentially reciprocity. They can
facilitate learning, engagement, and awareness of stakes. Institutions can confer or revoke
markers credibility, and render explicit the sources of speakers’ credibility so that it can
become objects of critical reflection, and enable concrete demonstrations of credibility.
Institutions are versatile in their ability to produce and condition ecological effects. I explore
this versatility in Chapters 7 to 9, in which I explore institutional responses the three types of ecological effect—modification, magnification, and selection—each of which poses its own particular anti-democratic hazards.

**Strategic Actors and Discursive Ecosystems**

It follows from this analysis that strategic actors can also take advantage of the opportunities generated by credibility, strong frames, or institutions. It is therefore unsurprising that actors often orient themselves not directly to modifying the commitments of others through rigid influence, but rather to modifying the discursive context, thereby securing influence indirectly. Strategic considerations may lead speakers to try to introduce or to perpetuate a frame that is favourable to their position; to try to enhance their credibility by touting a record, reporting personal experience, or invoking partisan cues; or to force opponents into taking unpopular positions on legislation. These strategies can certainly have a profound effect on actors’ ability to exert or resist communicative influence in subsequent interactions. For example, in seeking to perpetuate or take advantage of strong frames, speakers may merely “state facts” rather than making arguments; however, carefully chosen facts, stories, or words can entrench a frame, creating the conditions under which only certain appeals can achieve purchase with a given audience.

A speaker might also use a simple assertion for heresthetic purposes, increasing the dimensionality of issues in order to move people’s choices into a more favourable range (1990, 1986). A simple assertion can raise a dimension of judgment that splits the opposition, bringing an evaluative dimension to the forefront without actually constructing an argument. Taking advantage of modification effects that pre-determine the commitments on which a
target draws, and their level of attention to those commitments, opens up a range of strategic possibilities for even non-rigid forms of speech: assertion, explanation, disclosure, and discussion. For example, asserting X may not persuade someone that X is true, but the assertion may suggest that something about X is worth considering, thus modifying the dimensionality of some issue. Likewise, a disclosure, articulated without background and with no expectation of response, may be sufficient to enhance a speaker’s credibility on some issue, or to undermine someone else’s. Strategic speakers can also alter the ecological conditions under which communicative influence takes place by raising awareness of an issue —increasing knowledge, sophistication, or even perception of having a stake in order to prompt more deliberate processing.

A rich ecological account allows us to understand how statements that do not, on their surface, appear to seek influence over a target nonetheless modify the discursive ecosystem in ways that can have a significant indirect impact on communicative influence. This may be particularly true of several of the common patterns of communicative influence addressed in the next chapter. For example, narratives typically involve non-rigid types of influence rather than those trying to secure agreement on a commitment. And yet they might have even greater long term effects by virtue of their potential to perpetuate a frame or establish credibility through first-hand experience or shared identity.

**Conclusion**

The concept of a discursive ecosystem is critical to the model of communicative influence, and thus to understanding the democratic implications of strategic speech, because it allows us to theorize how context affects communicative influence. This chapter
highlighted the ecological features—structural/substantive, subject-based, and institutional—that condition communicative influence. I argued that these ecological features interact with the inferential structures of speech to produce three generic types of effect—modification, magnification and selection—and that we cannot understand communicative influence or its democratic implications without grasping this context-dependency.

Each of these types of effect provides the foundation for the analysis I undertake in Chapters 7 through 9 to show how institutional interventions into discursive ecosystems can generate democratically desirable consequences from strategic speech. This kind of analysis has been largely excluded from democratic theorists’ understanding of communication. In order to pursue this line of inquiry, however, democratic goods need to be systematically reintroduced into the conceptual framework of the model of communicative influence. Unlike Habermas’s distinction between communicative and strategic action, the multidimensionality of communicative influence will allow the identification of some of the trade-offs among the multiple democratic functions of political communication.
Chapter 5: Communicative Influence and Democratic Goods

Habermas developed the notion of communicative action as a means of understanding how human interaction based in language proceeded on the basis of rational agreement. This idea holds powerful normative appeal. Having established, in the model of communicative influence, an alternative way of thinking about the force of language in politics, I now return to the normative principles behind democratic theory’s interest in speech and ask: how do different types of communicative influence and the discursive ecosystems that produce them enhance or undermine the quality of democracy?

The search for mutual understanding on the basis of validity claims both depends upon and reinforces the democratic norms of mutual respect, reciprocity, equality, and consent. The notion of an exchange of reasons that provides a rational, consensus basis for political decisions that includes the agreement of all affected provides one normative justification for deliberation. This is one justification; equally important is the justification grounded in the value of autonomy. Genuine reason-giving treats others as self-authenticating sources of validity claims (Rawls 1993, 72). Communicative action thus both requires and enables political autonomy (Habermas 1996, 127).

Yet, as the first chapter demonstrated, by establishing these norms as requirements and setting themselves apart from strategy at their very pragmatic foundations, the proponents of theories of deliberative democracy effectively removed many political situations—characterized as these are by disrespect, ill intent, and strategic imperatives governing the use of language—from the scope of autonomy. The model of communicative influence starts from the premise that, in situations where there are incentives to do so, actors will use language in an effort to secure favorable judgments, belief changes, and action.
among targets of influence. It allows us to understand, quite precisely, the potential and risks of a variety of forms of strategic speech, including, for example, the much discussed question of the role of rhetoric in political deliberation (Chambers 2009; Dryzek 2010; O’Neill 2002; Young 2002).

The aim of this chapter is to determine what becomes of the normative arguments for communicative action—the democratic goods it is said to secure, and the supposed benefits of deliberation in meeting its strict standards—when one replaces the pragmatics of communicative action with the pragmatics of communicative influence. Strategic orientations are excluded from models based on communicative action precisely because they are taken to violate autonomy (O’Neill 2002). However, I argue that the same normative principles as underwrite communicative action can be integrated into the model I develop in this dissertation in order to distinguish better and worse uses of communicative influence. The key difference is that according to the model I develop here, in many cases, strategic discourse can still support autonomy.

This chapter proceeds as follows. In the first section, I identify the key normative criteria at stake in evaluating communicative influence by looking at existing normative arguments for deliberation, which I reconstruct in terms of autonomy. The second section examines how what I will call “discursive democratic goods”—understood in terms of autonomous judgment—fit into the framework of communicative influence. I argue that they do so by linking the three dimensions of communicative influence (rigidity, reciprocity, and transparency) with the key elements of autonomy. By connecting discursive democratic goods to the dimensions of communicative influence, we can have a clear sense of why, for example, persuasion is superior to manipulation, despite both having strategic elements. In
the third section, I show how the normative concepts discussed in the first two sections link with the idea of the discursive ecosystem introduced in the previous chapter. This discussion will offer an account of when contextual conditions—understood in terms of structural/substantive, subject-based, and institutional ecologies—uphold autonomy.

To give a preview of the arguments to come, this chapter lays the groundwork for subsequent chapters by bringing discursive democratic goods into the model of communicative influence alongside the concepts of inferential structures and the discursive ecosystem. In Chapter 6 I apply the model to a series of pervasive features of political communication including, among others, story-telling, analogies, loaded words, exaggeration, and hedging. In Chapters 7 to 9 I consider how institutional interventions into the discursive ecosystem can be used to secure discursive democratic goods.

**Discursive Democratic Goods and Autonomy**

The concept of communicative action captures two features of discourse that further normative ends, which I call discursive democratic goods. They are, first, the motivating force of reasons and, second, freedom in discursive opinion and will formation, both of which are “democratic goods,” I argue, because they instantiate the demands of autonomy at the level of discursive practice. For the purposes of this dissertation, I leave aside the democratic and universalization principles, which specify the validity of norms and the moral character of rules in terms of whether they would gain rational acceptance in idealized discourse (Habermas, 1996). While undoubtedly an important component of communicative action as part of a moral and ethical system, they pertain only to idealized discourses that serve as the testing grounds for norms and as sources of (hypothetical) justification.
The purpose of this section is to explain Habermas’s ideas of the motivating force of reasons and freedom in discursive opinion and will formation in order to establish the conceptual connection between the practice of reason-giving and the principle of autonomy. According to Habermas, intersubjectively shared and discursively produced beliefs have their own kind of motivating force. Accepting or rejecting a speech act offer implies a tacit acceptance or rejection of obligations that follow from the speech act (Habermas 1996, 147). The very act of taking this yes or no position is a manifestation of the second key feature of discourse, which assures the democratic desirability of speech: freedom in discursive opinion and will formation. The motivating force of reasons can only derive from “structures of undamaged intersubjectivity” (Habermas 1996, 151)—that is to say, the “force” of reasons cannot be imposed, but by its very nature must be accepted.

In a Habermasian framework, the obligations that result from the acceptance of speech act offers are consistent with democratic autonomy insofar as discourse works only through the discursive democratic goods of the motivating force of reasons and freedom in discursive opinion and will formation. This normative argument for discourse is separate from other claims that provide important normative bases for democracy—for example, the all-affected principle of democracy—which suggests that people should have a say in the decisions that affect them. The questions of how, when, and whose choices should be empowered is central to democratic theory, and are those to which the all-affected principle is a suitable answer; however, the normative question of what makes a choice autonomous, and thus worth empowering, is distinct from questions of empowerment. While there are many definitions of autonomy, current definitions of political autonomy converge on the notion that
a person is autonomous if he or she acts intentionally on the basis of reasons (Forst 2005, 230).

I argue that autonomy is the appropriate normative principle with which to judge communicative influence for two reasons. The first has to do with its internal connection to the discursive democratic goods identified above. The ideas of both the motivating force of reasons and of freedom in discursive opinion and will formation represent what Habermas sought to develop: a social, discursive account of Kant’s imperative to treat others as autonomous beings (as means, rather than ends) and one that loads this requirement onto the linguistic resources that enable social action to begin with. The second reason has to do with autonomy’s position as a conceptual counterpoint to influence. Specifically, I am able to frame both autonomy and influence at the same pragmatic level of analysis, in which influence imposes constraints on reasoning, and autonomy provides the principle with which it is possible to judge the democratic acceptability of those constraints.

Before proceeding to a deeper analysis of autonomy and communicative influence, I briefly consider two alternative approaches to a normative analysis of communication. The first of these two approaches is also based on the concept of autonomy, but instead comes at autonomy from the speaker’s intent—in particular, the speaker’s intent to bypass the listener’s rational capacities (Klemp 2012, 54) and his or her intent to engage in a cooperative search for the truth (Dowding 2011). In both cases, the moral quality of the action rests with the speaker’s intent. As I argued in the introduction, however, such an approach cannot get traction on questions of how speech actually exerts force, nor on the question of how different ways of leveraging speech into influence have different effects on autonomous judgment. Questions of the morality of the speaker’s behaviour aside, what
should be at issue for discursive democratic goods—and thus for the deliberative quality of a
democracy—is a target’s ability to grasp, and potentially challenge, the grounds a speaker
articulates for adopting a commitment, both in terms of the structure of claims and the
conditions under which they are articulated. In other words, it is not concealed intent that
makes manipulation problematic for democratic theory, but concealment of the assumptions
and inferences that are exerting force on targets’ choices, judgments, and actions. Focusing
on these effects means that, rather than ruling out the strategic forms of speech that
accompany political incentives—even the openly strategic behaviours Klemp labels as
morally neutral—the model of communicative influence can identify and correct for harms of
the specific effects of strategic speech in discursive ecosystems.

A second plausible alternative approach to normatively evaluating communicative
influence lies in theories of domination. According to Pettit, domination describes the
capacity, actual or potential, for an actor to interfere arbitrarily with the actions of another.
Interference refers to actions that reduce the range of options available to another, or which
alter the profile of those options—for instance, by altering their payoffs and so making some
options more salient than others. Interferences are “arbitrary” insofar as they as discretionary
—initiated and controlled only by the will of the interferer (Pettit 1999, 52). The idea of
domination offers some useful insights. For example, if inferential structures are
conceptualized as potential forms of interference at the level of reasoning and judgment,
manipulation can certainly be described as arbitrary. It is not subject to the will of the person
being interfered with. If it were transparent, the target would be free to reject it. If it were
reciprocal, his or her will would have been attended to in the first place. Domination as a
concept is best suited to describing interpersonal relationships, and particularly the positions,
statuses, or capacities that put one actor in a position to interfere with another. Thus, manipulation may enable domination. But, for the purposes of the model of communicative influence, domination is not the opposite of autonomy. Rather, autonomy is a property of the will actors can bring to bear on the inferential structures that interfere with their reasoning processes.

**Communicative Influence and Autonomy**

Recall from Chapter 2 that the impetus behind the move from communicative action to communicative influence is the insight that speech is often used to secure outcomes—to alter the beliefs, judgments, and actions of others. The key reason to develop the model of communicative influence is that it allows us to consider how instances of speech that do not meet the model of communicative action—for instance, disclosure or rhetoric—can nevertheless engage people’s capacity for judgment and reflection. But at the same time, we still need to be able to distinguish between normatively desirable and undesirable types of communicative influence. The discursive democratic goods that enable theorists to make normative arguments in favour of talk-based politics are the right ones, but they need to be matched with an alternative account of communication itself. Whereas the previous section worked upwards from the specific normatively desirable features of discourse to the general principle of autonomy, this section works from autonomy to communicative influence. Here, I break the concept of autonomy into its component parts, and then situate these parts in relation to the three dimensions of communicative influence. I then use this framework to characterize types of communicative influence—rigidity, reciprocity and transparency—in terms of autonomy.
A person is autonomous if he or she acts intentionally on the basis of reasons (Forst 2005, 230). The intentionality component of Forst’s definition reflects one core elements of autonomy—reflexivity, meaning that people are aware of their reasons for action. This definition should be qualified to include the requirement that an autonomous person have the “capacity to judge, decide, and act on the basis of her own attitudes and reasoning” (Mele qtd in Blöser, Schöpf and Wilaschek 2010, 240). This refinement specifies that autonomy involves her own attitudes and reasoning, which reflects an important component of autonomy: what Christman and Anderson call authenticity (Christman and Anderson 2005). An autonomous person is in a position to give voice to his or her reasons (Benson 2005), and these reasons must be his or her own.

While there are persistent academic disagreements about what autonomy entails, it is possible to extract several themes that constitute its core elements. The first element of autonomy is choice. Where we are concerned with the impact of specific instances of speech on reasoning, it makes more sense to talk about autonomous judgments. Judgment is the focus here over choice, because at the level of reasoning, judgment precedes the choice of whether to undertake a commitment. The vocabulary of autonomous judgment captures something important about the moment at which an inferential structure begins to generate pragmatic consequences for a target’s commitments.

The second element of autonomy is reflexivity. Reflexivity refers to how consciously or intentionally arguments or assertions are processed. If autonomy means acting for reasons, an actor needs to be aware of those reasons and able to identify them. Theorists of autonomy suggest a more fine-grained understanding of reflexivity by distinguishing between the

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18 A person may be described as autonomous, but autonomous personhood is the domain of theories of domination, because it depends on the social relationships in which that person is embedded.
capacity for and the exercise of reflection. I take up this distinction with respect to the transparency of inferential structures in terms of whether speech enables or disables capacity for reflexivity, understood as thinking through the propositions and entailments that make up an inferential structure. Autonomy assumes the capacity for critical reflection, but the question for communicative influence is whether or not speech has the effect of engaging critical reflection.

The third element of autonomy is *authenticity*. Authenticity concerns the extent to which a target can recognize himself or herself in the reasons for action. The key here is not just that people are moved by reasons, but that these reasons are, in some way, meaningful for them. That reasons are meaningful for the target is part of what accounts for their robustness to reflexive scrutiny. Like transparency and reciprocity (as discussed in Chapter 3), authenticity and reflexivity are interrelated. Non-authentic reasons—those that would not resonate with an actor’s other beliefs or values—would not withstand reflexive scrutiny. On the other hand, without some substantial commitments with which to compare a reason, scrutiny would be meaningless. Authenticity captures the extent to which uptake of an inferential structure depends on reasons one can own, and identify with, or at least that one would not feel alienated from upon taking a more reflexive stance (Christman 2005, 333).

The relationships between these elements and communicative influence should begin to become apparent from this analysis. Choice pertains to rigidity. By virtue of the logical entailments that necessitate certain propositions and foreclose others, rigid structures constrain choice. If speech is to achieve anything, at a certain point it must drive towards decision, which demands some amount of limiting, ruling out, and directing judgment. The deliberative democratic commitment that rests on communicative action is that these
decisions should be made on the basis of reasons. Interpreted through the model of
communicative influence, however, the deliberative democratic commitment should be that
decisions should follow from chains of commitments linked by reasons that those being
influenced could endorse. Admittedly, in their directive function, the chains of commitments
constituted by inferential structures do reduce choice. The extent to which this is acceptable
depends on the other two dimensions of speech. Before proceeding to this question, it is
worth noting that in situations of non-rigid speech, choice is constrained only by ecological
factors, and not by the logical structure of inferences. Hence, one must evaluate non-rigid
speech in terms of its effect on context, and how it affects subsequent instances of
communicative influence. I return to this issue in the following section.

The first criteria that determines whether the constraints that accompany rigidity in
communicative influence are democratically acceptable is reflexivity. In terms of the model
of communicative influence, whether communicative influence will engage or repel a target’s
capacity for reflection depends on the transparency of its inferential structures. When
inferential structures are transparent, people reflect on their sources of entitlement and their
implications, whether on the grounds of their own pre-existing commitments, or the grounds
supplied by the speaker. Reciprocity describes whether an inferential structure prompts or
enables targets to bring their own commitments to bear on the matter. Reciprocal inferential
structures promote authenticity, the third core element of autonomy. To be autonomous, it is
not enough to be moved by reasons. Those reasons must be grounded in considerations the
hearer can accept on the basis of his or her own web of commitments. Authenticity that
renders the discursive democratic good of the motivating force of reasons is normatively
desirable. To be motivated by reasons does nothing for autonomy if those reasons are not one’s own.

Consider again the example, discussed in Chapter 3, of a hypothetical discussion of humanitarian intervention. If a target agrees that the criteria he or she has endorsed—for instance, the requirements for the principle of “Responsibility to Protect” to justify intervention—are met in a given case, and that these are the only considerations relevant to the conclusion, the target is inferentially compelled to agree with an intervention because of her commitment to the principle. The speaker may have provided information that show the criteria are met. But agreeing to those facts compels further inferences only as a result of the target’s commitment to the principle of Responsibility to Protect. To the extent that the argument is transparent and thus subject to reflexive endorsement (as opposed to implied by analogy, for instance), the “force” of communicative influence is consistent with autonomous judgment. Even argument by analogy can draw out active and reflexive engagement, so it does not necessarily preclude autonomous judgment. On the other hand, if agreement were compelled by reasons a target could neither recognize nor endorse, speech would compromise his or her autonomy.

The discursive democratic goods of the motivating force of reasons and freedom in discursive opinion and will formation require both reflexivity and authenticity—which is to say, speech must be both transparent and reciprocal. To take a yes/no position on a validity claim—one that generates further obligations—one needs to know what that validity claim is, and this requires some measure of transparency. At the same time, for position-taking to be free, one must be taking that yes/no position on grounds one would have chosen for oneself. Does this kind of argument leave us where we started? That is, does it imply that the only
normatively acceptable kind of speech for deliberation is that intended to persuade? Not necessarily, since linking the model of communicative influence with an account of autonomy yields a much more complex account of the normative potentials and pitfalls of different types and patterns of speech, which I will now examine in detail.

**Using autonomy to evaluate types of communicative influence**

For judgments that result from inferential structures to be fully autonomous, they must be both transparent and reciprocal. That is to say, they must engage people’s capacity for reflection, and draw on authentic beliefs. To the extent that choice is constrained, it should be constrained only by the will and judgment of the influence target. While manipulation is a form of domination, and persuasion is autonomy-preserving, this insight also yields a number of normative propositions about the other six types of communicative influence: proof, rhetoric, discussion, explanation, assertion, and disclosure.

In its purest form, proof is normatively neutral. Without minimal buy-in (accepting the starting premises) it can have no force. The transparency involved in a proof may be valuable for other reasons, but without this buy-in, it can have no immediate effect on autonomy. To the extent that actors do buy into the premises, they may be forced to accept what follows; but transparency ensures that this buy-in is reflexive and that it enables

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19 An interesting question arises here with respect to the grounds for persuasion. Should speakers still have to work within targets’ commitments to generate inferential structures—reasons and arguments—if the target’s beliefs are themselves immoral or clash with the speaker’s worldview? What if he or she wants to avoid even giving these commitments any kind of airing, as he or she might wish in the instance of racist or homophobic views. There are two options for influencing the target that are consistent with his or her autonomy. One is to draw on those commitments that are not so objectionable, in order to secure incremental agreement. However, this option will not always be available. The second option is to create an inferential structure on the basis of the speaker’s own commitments, knowing that, without buy-in, it will have limited influence—e.g. a proof. The influence of a proof depends on if, and where, the target buys in. Leaving speaker commitments that are necessary inferences but which, if the target were aware of them, would cause him or her to reject the inferential structure, is inconsistent with the target’s autonomy (this reflection emerged from discussion with Mike Neblo).
reciprocal, or authentic, endorsement. When transparency declines, influence tends towards manipulation. When reciprocity increases—thereby increasing the opportunities for authentic buy-in to the force of an inferential structure—influence tends towards persuasion. Like proof, rhetoric only partially captures the requirements of autonomy. In its purest form, rhetoric is entirely reciprocal. That is, its force derives from the beliefs and values that already make up the recipient’s web of commitments, even though it is not transparent and thus does not lend itself well to reflection.

To the extent that a rhetorician introduces or imposes external commitments or logics, rhetoric becomes manipulative. Thus, the dimensions of non-transparency and rigidity enable us to separate the normative harms of a rhetorical demagogue from more acceptable uses of rhetoric. A demagogue may rely on premises (and emotional content) that derives from the target’s own web of commitments. When a speaker builds into an inferential structure implicit, forceful connections and inferences that do not derive from commitments the target would otherwise accept, however, rhetoric begins to move in the direction of manipulation. If, however distasteful, a speaker truly restricts himself or herself to the substantive content and connections among pre-existing commitments, that influence would have to be taken as consistent with the targets’ autonomy—though it might violate other, non-communication based democratic norms. Conversely, to the extent that logics and implicit connections are rendered transparent, rhetoric begins to resemble persuasion, and thus favours autonomy.

Non-rigid types—discussion, explanation, assertion, and disclosure—do not lend themselves to quite the same approach to normative evaluation because the inferential structures of speech they embody do not themselves constrain choice and judgment. Of course, they can still have effects, in that actors are free to take up their claims or not. But
these cases are normatively benign or even positive, because choice is unconstrained by the structures of speech themselves. However, the uptake of claims, as well as the kinds of claims available to speakers in the first place, will be constrained by the characteristics of the discursive ecosystem. These ecological conditions and constraints can be evaluated in terms of whether or not they create positive conditions for autonomous judgment, as I explain in detail in the next section, and in detail in Chapters 7 through 9. For instance, discussion may favour autonomy by helping actors to identify their own commitments, thereby enabling authenticity. Explanation may help actors build, understand, and make connections among commitments in the first place. By contrast, assertion and disclosure may have the advantages of lowering the threshold to disrupt the influence of problematic inferential structures. For instance, if a dominant frame in the discursive ecosystem generates rigid influence that compromises the autonomous judgment, it should be possible for others to challenge that frame—and perhaps improve the overall conditions for autonomous judgment—without having to construct an inferential structure to do so. In this respect, assertion and disclosure may themselves have value for autonomy, in that they make it easier to articulate challenges to instances of communicative influence that do threaten autonomous judgment. But in order to determine whether or not non-rigid influence aids or undermines autonomy, we need to first understand how these ecological features themselves relate to autonomy, in terms of the three elements under consideration here: judgment, reflexivity, and authenticity.

**Evaluating Discursive Ecosystems from a Democratic Perspective**

Chapter 3 identified three sets of ecological features that make a difference for communicative influence: structural/substantive, subject-based, and institutional. These
features exert modification, magnification, and selection pressures on speakers as well as on the ways recipients process the information and arguments that speakers put to them. In this section, I revisit these three types of features in turn in order to show how the autonomy-based discursive and democratic goods identified above can ground a normative evaluation of the conditions of discourse.\textsuperscript{20}

**Structural/substantive ecological features**

A discursive ecosystem consists in part of the pre-given relationships among beliefs and values that structure actors’ existing commitments. This structure includes the salience of some beliefs or dimensions of evaluation over others as well as the connections people tend to make among ideas and values. In Chapter 4, I discussed these ecological features under the concept of frames. The ecological effects of frames can have profound implications for autonomy. An account of frames grounded in pragmatics, as the model of communicative influence is, explains frames in terms of “bundling” some commitments, to the exclusion of others. An actor who signs on to one commitment has effectively signed on to further commitments in ways determined by the substance of the frame, rather than the logic of individual inferences (A. Calvert and Warren 2012). Frames compromise reciprocity by limiting the accessibility of considerations not prompted by the frame, and they compromise transparency by pushing inferential links and assumptions into the background, where they are less subject to reflective testing. The modifying effects of frames—their tendency to undermine reciprocity and transparency—mean that deliberative democrats should be

\textsuperscript{20} Klemp also turns his attention to what he calls the discursive environment, arguing that what distinguishes contexts, from a normative perspective, is whether or not they intensify manipulative speech’s capacity to interfere, while lessening the possibilities for contestation (2012, 67). While this is part of the story, I argue that a communicative influence-based account of democratic goods highlights a larger range of contextual conditions than are implicated in the normative judgment of speech.
concerned about the presence of a strong frame in the discursive ecosystem around an issue, and about the non-rigid forms of speech that perpetuate such frames. Frames that function to establish the relative weight of considerations around an issue compromise authenticity, because targets do not access the full range of considerations they might in the hypothetical absence of a frame. For example, the Harper government framed their decision to proceed with a no-bid procurement of F-35 fighter jets frames the question of procurement in terms of the armed services needing the latest and best equipment, period. This frame operated to suppress arguments about costs, whether the government should consider cost as a factor in weighing alternatives, as well as important considerations about Canada’s future defense needs. When an inferential target triggers a frame, it can evoke responses that lack reflexivity and authenticity. It can damage reflexivity because it does not make explicit claims relevant to the issue, such that they cannot be subjected to conscious processing and critical reflection. It can damage authenticity, because, by keeping claims implicit, it prevents people from mobilizing their own reasons to evaluate an argument.

To the extent that even non-rigid communicative influence types entrench a frame—for instance, a speaker explaining why this jet is the best plane, or a speaker disclosing his or her preference for “whatever is best for the troops”—their modification effects raise problems for autonomy for which institutions should correct. I return to this issue in Chapter 7. Framing is an inevitable part of how people think about issues, and non-rigid types of influence like assertion are part of that process. The key is to identify when the frames around which communication gets organized are particularly damaging—as when they enable significant rigidity while compromising reciprocity and transparency—and correct for those cases.
Speech that triggers frame-based reasoning does not preclude authenticity, and thus autonomy. Demanding that communicative influence avoid frames in order to leave open access to a full range of considerations around an issue is an impossibly high bar. On the other hand, frames that work by admitting only one type of consideration—for instance, constraining the F-35 debate to revolve only around the issue of equipment, and casting objections as unpatriotic—should and do raise serious concerns about the autonomy of the judgments that follow. In between these two extremes, we can offer normative evaluations of frames that become embedded and replicated within discursive ecosystems in terms of the implications for authenticity and reflexivity that follow from their conscious or unconscious use. That is, to the extent that a frame renders communicative influence less reciprocal by excluding considerations, less transparent by rendering inferences implicit, or both, it becomes problematic.21

Subject-based ecological features

Recall from the previous chapter that subject-based ecological features concern traits of speakers and targets. On the target side, the processes by which ecological features connect to autonomy are similar to those of structural/substantive features, in that they modify communicative influence. In Chapter 7, I return to a more specific account of the threats modification effects pose to discursive democratic goods. For now, and as I argued in Chapter 4, target features such as lack of knowledge, low engagement and psychological

21 Recall that here we are talking about frames as features of discursive ecosystems. The ecosystem itself may contain a number of frames, each of which may be accessible to a speaker or target, and each of which might raise different considerations. To the extent that frame competition can compensate for the harmful effects of frames taken individually, we may be less concerned about autonomy considered from the system level. However, as Calvert and Warren (2013) suggest, highly polarizing frames in competition with one another may undermine or preclude any salutary effects of discussion that cuts across frames.
predispositions can preclude or compromise reciprocity, independently of the arrangement of inferential structures in speech. The absence of commitments precludes reciprocity and thus authenticity, a core element of autonomy. The implication of the absence of commitments in a low-knowledge situation is this: if speaker’s articulate rhetorical structures—which are rigid and non-transparent—these structures become manipulative in the absence of target commitments that generate reciprocal force. Targets have only a gap in their web of commitments, where otherwise there would be beliefs and values for the rhetor to engage. This is why explanation is a critical corrective to rhetoric, as I argue in Chapter 9.

Explanation can fill in actors’ webs of commitments and, by articulating a number of connections, better integrate into the target’s existing beliefs to promote understanding. As a result, rhetoric will present less of a risk of creating manipulative inferential effects because actors will be better positioned to challenge or endorse inferential structures on their own, authentic terms.

Similarly, I suggested in the previous chapter that having a stake promotes more deliberate processing, creating the conditions for greater reciprocity independent of the inferential structure itself. In terms of evaluating subject-based features from the perspective of democratic goods, having a stake is neither good nor bad: people are unlikely to reach for and actively engage their own commitments on a claim or argument if they cannot see how the issue affects them. As I develop in detail in Chapter 7, anti-democratic hazards arise when people cannot see their stake on issues that do affect them, whether directly or peripherally. Though autonomous judgments are generally better than non-autonomous ones, the issue of autonomy is particularly pressing in situations where the all-affected principle tells us that a choice ought to be empowered.
On the speaker side, ecological features magnify a speaker’s influence by conferring a status that favours uptake of their commitments due to their assumed credibility, whether deriving from trust, expertise, first-hand knowledge, shared identity, or shared interest. Under such circumstances, assertions can even exert influence beyond their status as single commitments. The conditions that govern credibility can alter communicative influence in two ways, both of which are normatively troubling. The first condition is relatively straightforward. The dangers of magnification effects depend on what is being magnified, and this simply kicks the issue back to the evaluation of different types of communicative influence—persuasion, explanation, discussion and the like. In other words, the magnification of persuasive influence may be acceptable, but the magnification of manipulative influence is not.

The second condition concerns whether or not actors have sufficient grounds for making credibility judgments. One way of thinking about the issue of how targets make credibility judgment is this: magnification effects generate supplementary influence, over and above what inferential structures generate. This supplementary influence should be subject to the same conditions of authenticity and reflexivity as influence deriving from inferential structures. Actors need to be able to see how sources of credibility connect to their own commitments. Regardless of what speakers actually say, if the grounds for attributing credibility to them are non-transparent, then there is also cause for concern. For instance, where credibility derives from cues like party affiliation or issue-ownership, there is a risk that some commitments will remain implicit, and yet an inferential structure will nevertheless receive uptake.22 While substituting judgments of speakers for judgments of content has the

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22 Further, certain important arguments will not be aired at all because speakers know they are not perceived as credible on that issue.
advantage of freeing up cognitive capacity and helping citizens allocate scarce resources for learning—a key argument in the trusted proxy literature (Lupia and McCubbins 1998)—the downside is that when such judgments are based on non-reflexive cues, influence may be magnified in a way that the influence target may not reflexively endorse. They are being moved, not by the force of reasons, but by the force of the cues themselves.

The question of whether the influence that follows from magnification effects is consistent with the demands of autonomous judgment comes down to whether people have made judgments of credibility on the basis of reasons that they can reflexively identify and authentically endorse. In Chapter 8, I suggest that institutional arrangements can provide people with reasons. For instance, judges and juries are issue statements following a commitment to hearing arguments in a way that lends weight to their eventual judgments, and also creates space for advocates to focus solely on the needs of their clients and the demands of their case. In both cases, recognized institutional roles provide reasons that help people to decide how to use what they know about speakers to inform how they interpret claims and arguments—perhaps giving different weight to the content of a judges reasoning than a lawyer’s.

**Institutional ecological features**

Institutional features of the discursive ecosystem determine who speaks to whom, when, and with what audiences. They determine how inferential structures translate into concrete outcomes, be they decisions, votes, policies or individual opinions. Institutional ecological features condition communicative influence by way of selection effects. In Chapter 4, I argued that there are two kinds of institutional ecological feature: generative and transactional. Generative institutional features are those that embed actors’ commitments into
the discursive ecosystem, rendering them accessible to interlocutors and audiences for attribution and, sometimes, reciprocal leverage. They might include, for instance, voting records on bills, signatures on petitions, or recorded comments. Generative institutional features, by themselves, are difficult to evaluate. On the one hand, getting more powerful actors’ commitments on the record can be a tool available to disempowered actors seeking to leverage “the civilizing force of hypocrisy” (Elster 2011). On the other hand, we can imagine situations in which actors are forced to acknowledge something, thereby generating a commitment to which they can be held absolutely and indefinitely. For instance, the coercive power of an interrogator combined with the generative aspect of a written confession risks creating a situation in which a forced confession creates extreme consequences. In a less extreme case, actors with less power certain rules or premises just to get a seat at the table, only to have those commitments used against them. Marginalized groups might have to capitulate to certain commitments in order to participate in an exchange, potentially in ways that place them at a starting disadvantage. Similarly, political representatives may be trapped into voting for amendments in order to get a policy passed.

Generally speaking, generative institutions create opportunities to leverage reciprocity into rigid force because there are external, institutional pressures on actors to acknowledge their commitments. However, the normative evaluation of such practices depends on how those commitments were generated in the first place—through forced confession, to get a seat at the table, or to get a bill passed. Questions for the normative evaluation of such circumstances might include an evaluation of the communicative influence type that led the speaker to undertake a commitment in the generative environment
—was it manipulative? Or was there some other, non-linguistic form of coercion or inequality that ought to call into question the integrity of the generated commitment.

Transactional features—those that determine the flow of influence from speakers to targets and whether they switch roles, the parties to an exchange, and the scale of audiences—similarly raise competing normative considerations. Deliberative democratic theory, as it currently stands, tends to favour dialogue in all situations. Without rational dialogue, one cannot be said to have genuinely tested propositions and norms. Yet focusing on the rational validation of arguments through ideal discourse is misleading. In principle, there is no reason that one-way communication cannot further the discursive goods envisioned in deliberative accounts of democracy (see Goodin 2003).

Generative and transactional features combine with actors’ incentives to select for different types of influence. This selection effect is key to a more systematic analysis of the normative potentials and pitfalls of institutions. As I suggested in Chapter 4, features of political institutions can select against transparency, against reciprocity, and towards rigidity—in other words, they can favour manipulative influence. To the extent that they do have this selection effect, they undercut autonomy, and for this reason they demand the kinds of direct and corrective institutional interventions I develop in Chapter 9. Beyond that, I argue that democratic theorists should look for pathological selection effects—which is to say, the effects of institutions that select for types of influence that go against their purposes. For instance, if a site of discourse was meant to produce explanations—for instance, a public

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23 Other accounts of manipulation focus on the level of agenda setting, and preventing those forms of manipulating the process in ways that avoid arguments and judgments—moving unfriendly amendments or filibustering, for instance—are important for many democratic values. But this is a different kind of manipulation from manipulative communicative influence. Both work to bypass or avoid reflexive, authentic judgment, but only the latter uses people’s own reasoning capacities against them.
information session—and instead produced rhetoric, there would be cause for concern. Similarly, sites meant to produce discussion that turn to manipulation would, as I argue below, compromise the overall conditions for autonomous judgment.

The idea of pathological selection, of course, raises the critical question of what types of communicative influence selection effects at different sites ought to aim towards, particularly if they are to constitute the conditions under which the discursive democratic goods of the motivating force of reasons and freedom in discursive will formation can thrive. Answering this question requires a theory of deliberative political systems that conceptualizes how sites of deliberation ought to compensate for and complement one another. Rather than seeking persuasion from every institution—and thus superficially appearing to meet the criteria of autonomy—I suggest that different sites should select for different types of influence in the broader deliberative system. In Chapter 9, I develop a detailed argument that communicative influence types should balance one another, since an excess of any one type can become pathological. Too much discussion, and communication cannot accomplish anything. Too much rhetoric, and people will never acquire new commitments. Too much disclosure, and people will never understand one another. In each case, I argue the pitfalls of an excess of one type can be compensated for by its opposite—with the obvious exception of manipulation. Finally, institutions can also correct for some of the anti-democratic hazards of magnification and modification effects, and can be judged as well in terms of their ability to do so, an argument I develop in Chapters 7 and 8.
Conclusion

In this chapter, I suggested that the model of communicative influence offers an alternative way of conceptualizing the relationship between speech and the normative aspirations of deliberative democrats. Ultimately, the democratic justification for reason-giving as a specific linguistic practice comes down to two discursive democratic goods: the motivating force of reasons, which allows people to apply obligations and constrain themselves; and freedom in discursive opinion and will formation, which ensures that people take on these obligations only on the basis of their agreement to the validity of the reasons. Taken together, these two discursive democratic goods reflect the broader principle of autonomy, or the idea of acting intentionally, for reasons that one can recognize as one’s own. The elements of autonomy—judgment, reflexivity, and authenticity—map on to the dimensions of communicative influence, providing a framework for its normative evaluation.

The dimensions of rigidity, reciprocity, and transparency can be used to evaluate rigid forms of speech in terms of their consistency with autonomy. Less directly, we can evaluate non-rigid influence types in terms of their effects on the discursive ecosystem, because the discursive ecosystem ultimately feeds back into the autonomous quality of judgment in the face of communicative influence. In the third section, I explained this feedback in terms of how structural/substantive, subject-based, and institutional ecological features create or undermine the conditions for autonomy. The normative argument in this chapter suggests that one can achieve, or at least approximate, many of the goods identified with ideal theory, in a way that is attentive to the strategic conditions of politics. In Chapters 7 to 9, I develop the idea that one can look at institutions, not just in terms of how closely or distantly they resemble an ideal forum, but rather in terms of the kinds of influence they allow, incentivize,
or penalize. In addition, in Chapter 6, I apply the model of communicative influence to an assessment of the pervasive patterns of political communication: first, in terms of how they use inferential structures to exert influence; second, in terms of the effects of their use on the discursive ecosystem; and third, in terms of how both of these features of political communication together cause these generic features of political communication to either enhance or compromise autonomous judgment.
Chapter 6. Patterns of Communicative Influence

Part of the reason political discourse rarely resembles the straightforward exchange of reasons envisioned in much of deliberative democratic theory simply lies with the way people talk in everyday politics. Speech is full of metaphors, analogies, ad hominem arguments, stories, hyperbole, selective argumentation, and other devices, all of which can be deployed strategically. These recurrent features of political discourse structure reason giving, often with a strategic gloss that puts it at odds with much of deliberative theory. My aim in this chapter is to treat these aspects of political discourse as patterns of communicative influence: identifiable, generic inferential structures that speakers fill in with specific content and commitments. When speakers use patterns of communicative influence successfully, it will often be because they are attending to the ecological conditions I detailed in Chapter 4. Speakers must be attentive to what resonates with targets: which analogies prompt them to draw the desired connections between claims? Which metaphors have entailments they will recognize? Speakers must also attend to how patterns of communicative influence alter discursive ecosystems, granting credibility, establishing interpersonal relationships, and perpetuating frames.

In this chapter, I use the model of communicative influence to shed light on these and similar pervasive features of political communication, and I identify their implications for the theory of autonomy developed in Chapter 5. There has been a tendency to criticize deliberative democracy in the Habermasian tradition for undervaluing modes of communication that do not fit into the rationalist, logical understanding of “reason-giving.” The corresponding call to admit alternative forms of communication—notably narrative (Young 2002; O’Neill 2002)—has received broad acceptance. At the same time, this move
has not been accompanied by an account of what it is about what the act of storytelling—as opposed to its content—contributes to deliberation. From a pragmatic perspective, stories arrange claims in a specific way. As I show, however, storytelling in fact arranges claims and commitments in a very specific way. Deliberative democrats who idealize rational dialogue assume that the persuasive force of reasons is, in principle, separable from the form in which those reasons are conveyed. The notion of inferential structures I have been developing in this dissertation offers a way of moving beyond this assumption. In this chapter, I use the concept of a pattern of communicative influence to explore some of the ways in which the form of claims take gives them force that exceeds their content. In fact, a claim’s form can also alter the character of its influence—not just narratives, but also comparisons, evocative language, deception, and evading commitments. Elaborating the concept of an inferential structures—whose rigidity, reciprocity and transparency can vary—makes it possible to reflect on the way patterns of communicative influence generate force, so that we can pinpoint their implications for autonomous judgment.

This chapter proceeds as follows. I offer a pragmatic analysis of five distinct patterns of communicative influence, each in turn: first, storytelling, anecdotes, and testimony; second, analogy and metaphor; third, persuasive definitions and loaded words; fourth, exaggeration and deceit; and fifth, evasion and hedging. I identify each pattern’s pragmatic properties and ecological functions. Pragmatic properties describe how patterns of communicative influence arrange commitments and inferential connections. Ecological functions refer to the patterns’ effects on the broader discursive process. For example, through ridicule, a speaker can distance himself or herself from a position he or she does not find credible (Van Laar 2008). Based on both pragmatic properties and functions, I discuss
each mechanism’s effect on communicative influence in terms of rigidity, reciprocity, and transparency. On this basis, I evaluate what each pattern implies for the theory of autonomy introduced in the previous chapter. Table 6.1 lists the patterns of communicative influence I cover in this chapter.

Table 6.1. Summary of Patterns of Communicative Influence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern of Communicative Influence</th>
<th>Key Forms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Storytelling, anecdotes and testimony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative</td>
<td>Metaphor, analogy, example and illustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evocative</td>
<td>Persuasive definitions and loaded words</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deceptive</td>
<td>Lies and exaggeration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>Evasion and hedging</td>
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Narrative Patterns: Testimony, Anecdotes, and Story-telling

Critics of overly rationalist accounts of deliberation have insisted that inclusive dialogue requires a valuation of alternative forms of communication, the chief among them being story-telling, narratives, and testimony (O'Neill 2002; Ryfe 2005; Young 1997, 2001, 2002). Some empiricists have incorporated these calls for diversity into measures of quality of deliberation (Stromer-Galley 2007). Given the attention it has received, narrative provides a good starting point for my exploration of patterns of communicative influence. We can think of narratives, particularly stories, as linking fictional events or facts, often in ways that establish relatable dilemmas, develop character, or make sense of personal biographies. For example, success stories involving self-made men or women who pull themselves up by their bootstraps imply a simple connection between hard work and success. But in doing so, they tend to also downplay the role of external supports. This is because stories tend to revolve
around a single central problem (Polletta and Lee 2006, 702) and, in doing so, they convey the overriding importance of that problem. Think of a representative tells a story of a constituent’s personal struggle in order to convey the immediacy of a problem he or she hopes to address. Here, the problem becomes the overriding theme of the narrative. Within the category of narrative, I distinguish anecdotes by virtue of their specificity and the implication that an anecdote truthfully reports events without embellishment. Their “groundedness” tends to be one of their important features. For example, politicians’ personal anecdotes can work to convey a sense of authenticity, or of familiarity with voters’ concerns. This said, scholars, Young acknowledges that stories can also be used manipulatively (2002, 79). And yet deliberative democratic theory currently lacks meaningful criteria for determining when story-telling might actually be harmful to deliberation.

**Pragmatic properties of narrative patterns**

Narratives connect a series of assertions in ways that embed the relationships between them. They leave inferences implicit, although targets can infer the if/then and cause/effect relationships from the requirement that narratives form coherent wholes, rather than random sets of claims. For example, an anecdote about a 100-year-old voter making the trip to the polls on election day augments a claim about the importance of voting, with the implicit argument that if he or she can do it, so should others. Unlike straightforward reason-giving, stories integrate description, explanation, and evaluation (Polletta and Lee 2006). At the same time, stories remain detached from broader discourse, standing as relatively self-contained units. Because of this detachment, the merit of inferences among events and facts are instinctively first judged in terms of a story’s coherence, as opposed to in terms of their independent validity (Polletta and Lee 2006, 702) as an “exchange of reasons” model might
lead us to believe. Narratives can also explain experiences, which are necessarily unique to each person (Young 2002, 75). To the extent that narratives are articulated and accepted, they can enable reciprocity by establishing shared premises for joint reasoning (Young 2002, 7). Polletta and Lee also find that stories can function hypothetically as tools to work out the implications of a given position (2006, 712). Using narratives to spin out the implications of a position then provides others with a basis for challenging or agreeing with the commitment that led to that inference.

Testimony, for its part, is distinguished from other narrative-based patterns by the speaker’s position of privileged access based on observation or direct experience to the propositions that make up a narrative. Testimony’s influence derives from this explicit, privileged entitlement. The attribution of privileged entitlement may derive in part from institutional settings and the roles they establish. For instance, a “witness” or “expert,” or anyone called to give an account of events, may enjoy privileged entitlement simply by virtue of having been selected for the veracity and insight of their particular account. They might be required to make an explicit commitment to truthfulness, or asked to give an account of their credentials as part of their testimony. But like storytelling, testimony is also judged in part in terms of whether it makes sense on its own terms—or whether it is self-contradictory or incoherent, as we know from the genre of courtroom dramas.

Ecological functions of narrative patterns

Given these properties, the effects of stories, anecdotes, and testimony on the surrounding discursive process can vary widely. Narratives have the potential to become part of the substantive structure of the discursive ecosystem, particularly as they contribute to framing effects (Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Nelson and Kinder 1996). For example,
stories about “welfare mothers” perpetuate stereotypes that prompt inferences about welfare spending in general (Kuklinski and Quirk 2000, 170). “Founding” stories like those around the US constitution can implicate values, often in a way that implies that what the founders had envisioned ought to trump competing considerations. On a smaller scale, in his study of group deliberation at AmericaSpeaks events, Ryfe finds that, left to their own devices, people tend to produce and then deliberate around competing narratives on an issue (Ryfe 2006, 81).

Narrative patterns can guide and direct group reasoning processes by imposing some structure on the considerations actors deem to be relevant.

In terms of speaker-based ecologies, narrative patterns may serve to establish credibility in relation to a given issue. Beyond enabling people to lay claim to first-hand experience, stories establish social identities (Young 2002, 73), and anecdotes allow speakers to show that they are “no different” from those to whom their speech is directed by generalizing their experiences. Stories allow people to offer accounts that they hope will protect their reputations in the face of failure (McGraw 2001).24 On the target side, identities conveyed through stories may help people identify their own obligations and commitments, and to consider what their preferences should be in light of shared experiences (Polletta and Lee 2006, 704; Ryfe 2006, 76).25

24 In the pragmatic terms of the model of communicative influence, we might think of the use of stories to give accounts as a form of explanation, in the sense that they enable a speaker to show why a given set of circumstances, encountered sequentially rather than all at once, provides adequate entitlement (a reason for) a given course of action. Even though the account might not have the same compelling force for a target to commit to that same outcome, they might nevertheless demonstrate the speaker’s entitlement.

25 If one expands Brandom’s notion of the “institutional ought” to include not only institutional roles but social roles in general, this notion of identities incurring commitments links up nicely with Brandom’s account of obligations—patterns of practical reasoning that constitute the middle ground between preferences and moral, or universal, oughts...
For these reasons, stories play key roles in activist “consciousness raising” tactics. Finally, stories work to establish and preserve interpersonal relationships. Empirical findings show that deliberation enables people to disagree without having to express their disagreement directly. Instead, they may say something like “I agree, but...” followed by a story that expresses an opposing point of view (Polletta and Lee 2006, 704; Ryfe 2006, 79). This tactic allows people to avoid either actually antagonizing one another or worrying about antagonizing one another, in part because stories establish “personal” truths—expressions that belong to the speaker, and cannot be refuted by someone else’s experience.

**Implications of narrative patterns for autonomy**

Considered by themselves, stories imply non-rigid forms of influence. Particularly in their premise-establishing capacity, stories are not typically arguments in themselves—although they may link up into larger arguments, filling places within rigid inferential structures. But because they do not limit choice or constrain judgment, I argue that there should be few concerns about the immediate or direct implications of stories for autonomy. But their ecological effects do have important normative implications. Stories work by providing a basis for mutual understanding. To the extent that they are relatable and resonate with people’s experiences, they create the conditions for reciprocal inferential structures, prompting others to listen empathically (Polletta and Lee 2006, 703) and to consider what is said in light of their own experiences. As Michael Morrell (2010) argues, empathy is critical to any account of deliberative democracy. The process of empathy, he argues, helps give truly equal consideration to all insofar as it enables people to overcome bias through perspective-taking, and to be attentive to a wider range of considerations—not just explicit reasons referencing a generalizable good, but to affective or particular claims (Morrell 2010, 162).
Narrative patterns of communicative influence—stories and anecdotes—are particularly well suited to facilitating such an empathic process. From an entirely different perspective, Hafer and Landa develop a model that shows how pre-decision communication has consequences for interaction insofar as it can show people how what they already know is relevant to the decision at hand (2007, 332). Their proposition represents another way of thinking about the reciprocal functions of stories: they can prompt people to retrieve relevant considerations from their own experiences, using them to process or engage the claims a narrative pattern advances.

In some instances, however, stories may themselves be rigid or argumentative. For example, tragedies or just-so stories that articulate lessons use narrative patterns to demonstrate the consequences of taking, or failing to take, some action. But to the extent that stories allow these features to remain implicit, they undermine transparency. These implicit connections may be fairly easy for the hearer to deduce; indeed, it is probably something we often do instinctively, otherwise stories would seem like random strings of facts and events. That being said, they do have the potential to be built into rigid inferential structures in a way that undermines transparency by rendering inferential connections among claims implicit. Such uses of stories are rhetorical to the extent that they work by mobilizing prior commitments. They become manipulative when they depend on implicit premises supplied by the speaker that, if made explicit, would not be acceptable on the target’s terms.

Finally, the reciprocal potential of stories may depend on their cultural status. To the extent that stories have a ‘sacred’ status, they implicitly place them beyond challenge. Invoking them can thus work to exclude countervailing considerations, compromising reciprocity. Although some stories may themselves be rigid, rigidity may not actually be the
primary issue of concern in most cases. As I suggested in Chapter 3, there are two ways for inferential structures to derive force: from their logical arrangements and from buy-in on the basis of the target’s own commitments. Stories are powerful because they can tap into a target’s commitments by invoking shared knowledge and values, and speakers can leverage reciprocal buy-in into influence using even flawed, limited, or non-transparent rigid connections—all while contributing framing effects that might discourage people from raising competing considerations. As such, while not necessarily damaging to autonomy, the influence they generate has the potential to be damaging with only a few imposed inferential connections, lending a structure force without transparency.

Testimony raises slightly different normative issues from stories and anecdotes. To the extent that a target is being asked to accept something on the basis of a speaker’s privileged position to report facts, the premise that he or she speaks with authority is working implicitly in the inferential structure. Such authority premises lend themselves well to rigid inferential structures because they compel attributions of entitlement without contestation. Typically in circumstances where testimony is taking place, that entitlement should be sufficient to compel the target to undertake the commitment themselves. That being said, this compulsion may be less, to the extent that what the speaker is asking the target to accept is steps removed from his or her privileged entitlement—for instance, where the speaker reports something that he or she thinks follows from his or her direct observation, or a claim that is slightly removed from his or her direct expertise. Rendering the sources of entitlement that qualify speech as testimony transparent ensures that the influence deriving from the speakers’ privileged entitlement to claims remains consistent with the reflexivity criteria for autonomy.
Testimony is distinct from storytelling in part because it is articulated under the assumption that it will be attributed a high truth value. Institutional circumstances may achieve this simply by inviting or prompting the kind of privileged claims that constitute speech as testimony, although they may vary in the degree to which they confine speakers to just the facts, or even a subset of the facts (excluding hearsay, for instance). The context in which a speaker testifies promotes the uptake of claims because of the speaker’s privileged entitlement. As a result, the hazards of testimony most resemble those of magnification effects. As I argue in Chapter 8, whether magnified influence is problematic for the autonomy of the judgments that follow depends primarily on whether targets have good reasons to attribute entitlement or credibility.

Both stories and testimony, considered under the model of communicative influence, raise complex normative issues. Their pragmatic properties and ecological functions cut two ways, with the potential to enable and undermine autonomous judgment. Institutional arrangements can sometimes directly address the use of narrative patterns to promote autonomous judgments. For example, legal disputes in court are often presented in terms of competing narratives that might explain a set of facts. The rules of evidence are designed to ensure that narratives cannot exert undue influence simply as a result of being presented to a jury in narrative form. As such, advocates can use narratives to attempt to exert some measure of control over judgments, but their ability to leverage the power of the narratives is counterbalanced by grounding those narratives in shared, objective facts to which all parties must accede. At the same time, strict, neutrally adjudicated procedural rules cannot achieve this effect in the uncontrolled domain of the public sphere, where advocates also use narratives to shape judgments. That quality public sources undertake fact-checking roles is
thus particularly important to protecting the conditions for autonomous judgment. Finally, institutions may push for more complete transparency in the articulation of inferential structures by establishing norms or rules against narratives, as, for instance, with the publication of scientific findings.

Table 6.2. Narrative Patterns of Communicative Influence: Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pragmatic Properties</th>
<th>Stories and Anecdotes</th>
<th>Testimony</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- leave causal connections between events implicit.</td>
<td>- distinguished by privileged sources of entitlement (expertise or first-hand experience)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- judged first in terms of coherence</td>
<td>- force derives from this entitlement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- can establish shared premises</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological Functions</td>
<td>- perpetuates frames</td>
<td>- can help establish credentials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- can establish social identities and preserve or build interpersonal relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigidity</td>
<td>- generally non-rigid, except where morals or lessons are involved</td>
<td>- consistent with relatively rigid or non-rigid structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocity</td>
<td>- can prompt reciprocity through empathy and relatability</td>
<td>- not reciprocal because sources of entitlement are unique to the speaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>- leaves many inferences implicit</td>
<td>- power derives from transparency of sources of entitlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat to Autonomy?</td>
<td>- They have the potential to be, because they generate reciprocal buy-in, typically non-transparently, that can be leveraged into rigid influence rhetorically or manipulatively.</td>
<td>- Not typically, though testimony does favour uptake, on the model of magnification effects, because speakers are treated as credible. Institutions should be sensitive to abuses of this credibility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparative Patterns: Metaphor, Analogy and Example

Influenced by Lakoff and Johnson’s book *Metaphors We Live By* (1981), scholars now recognize metaphor as a critical part of our linguistic and cognitive structures.

Metaphors are powerful linguistic moves that can have a direct effect on policy preferences.
(Bates 2009; Barry et al. 2009). Even if targets do not immediately accept a metaphor, research shows that they can nevertheless appear “downstream” in a conversation, potentially altering its course (Cameron 2007, 109). What does this mean for communicative influence? Lakoff and Johnson concluded that metaphors are significant, not for their truth value, but for the inferences that follow from them (1981, 158), making a cognitive theory of metaphor a natural fit with an inferentialist theory of discourse. I explore this overlap, but restrict its domain. Since the broader purpose of this discussion is to construct an answer to the problems posed by strategic speech, I focus on deliberate metaphors, selected and deployed consciously to induce a change in perspective through comparison (Steen 2008, 214).

For the purposes of this discussion, I define metaphor as a cross-domain comparison that is necessarily partial and highlights similarities (Barry et al. 2009). An analogy is generally viewed as a more complex version of this relationship (Musolff 2004) involving semblances of relationships: A is to B as C is to D (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 371-72). Many of the considerations I identify below that apply to metaphors and analogies also apply to examples by virtue of their similar inferential properties.

### Pragmatic properties of comparative patterns

Metaphors and analogies work by highlighting some considerations and, in the process, hiding others (Barry et al. 2009; Lakoff and Johnson 1981). Metaphors may bring

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26 Barry et al. (2009) offer a slightly different take, claiming that whereas metaphors work across domains, analogies are within the same realm of experience. I prefer Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s account, which emphasizes the resemblance of structures. Moreover, an analogy within the same realm of experience may be an illustration or an example.

27 As Doury (2009) points out, the line Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca draw between analogy and example—that the former maps across domains and the latter within them—is more of a continuum. For example, are cases of the same type, but from different historical periods—like precedents—examples or analogies (Doury, 2009, p. 145)?
about a change in perspective (Dascal and Gross 1999; Steen 2008, 2009), potentially introducing new sets of considerations to an inferential structure by getting targets to think of an issue in a different way. Both metaphors and analogies allow actors to draw inferences from situations with familiar facts to other cases in a process of cross-domain inference (Lau and Schlesing 2005). Analogies also enable hypothetical reasoning about the consequences of a course of action (Musolff 2004). They enable actors to challenge one another by rendering explicit further, untenable entailments of analogies to which speakers have committed themselves.

A key feature of both metaphors and analogies is that they have entailments. In pragmatic terms, entailments are inferences that can or must follow from endorsing a metaphorical or analogical relationship (Lakoff and Johnson 1981), with committive or “must” type inferences rendering inferential structures more rigid. At minimum, committing oneself to a metaphor commits one to the pertinence of the features being compared (Bates 2009; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 390). Entailments are interesting pragmatic properties for strategic reasons as well. Targets can refute metaphorical and analogical claims, not just on the basis of the appropriateness of the metaphor, but also by pointing out entailments that would entangle the speaker in a contradiction. According to Musolff, some analogies are grounded “source scenarios” that tend to generate many assumptions about actors’ roles and states of mind (2009, 28). Such analogies in particular lend themselves to exchanges on the basis of extended entailment. At the same time, speakers can defend challenges based on entailments by shrinking the scope of the metaphor (Musolff 2004; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 387).
Examples also fall under comparative patterns of communicative influence. They work by enabling a form of incomplete generalization among cases (Benoit 1980), allowing actors to apply previous experience to new situations (Arthos 2010). Examples can have a variety of functions in discursive exchanges, enabling generalizations, grounding analogies, adding forcefulness, or generating standards of judgment (Arthos 2010, 321). 28 According to Benoît, Aristotle thought that examples were more persuasive than deductive arguments, despite the latter’s compelling force, because of their accessibility and resonance with experience (1980, 190).

**Ecological functions of comparative patterns**

Like narratives, comparative patterns can exert powerful framing effects. Once a comparison is established, it structures the commitments around an issue, rendering certain inferences more or less likely, and certain considerations more or less salient. Analogies establish precedent and direct attention (Aronovitch 1997)—indeed, reasoning by analogy makes up much of legal dialogue. Lau and Schlesinger identify a similar structuring effect with metaphors, claiming that they set up “archetype” solutions to social problems so that people can form preferences without necessarily understanding the technical details—for instance, on how they think families, communities, or markets should work (2005, 79). 29

From the perspective of subject-based ecologies—which depend on the credibility and records of speakers—speakers must be cautious about the entailments of metaphors and analogies. Articulating a comparative pattern has consequences for the immediate context of

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28 Examples can also take the form of stories and anecdotes. As such, the latter can also serve these pragmatic functions, insofar as they are deployed as examples.

29 They also ask what the existence of these non-technical archetypes mean for quality of deliberation (Lau and Schlesinger 2005, 106), a question this framework is intended to help answer.
a discursive interaction because actors incur commitments to metaphorical and analogical entailments. Opponents can use these entailments to challenge the speaker by spelling out implications to which they take the speaker to be committed. Opponents might also challenge the speaker by constructing a parallel analogy intended to ridicule, along the lines of “that would be like saying….” (Whaley and Holloway 1997). Comparative patterns thus have implications for credibility in the short and medium-term contexts of discursive interaction because speakers may have unwanted entitlements attributed to them on the basis of the comparisons they draw.

**Implications of comparative patterns for autonomy**

Metaphors and analogies have high potential for rigidity. Because they structure inferences, they exert a powerful pull on the reasoning processes of those who hear them. For example, comparisons between the Kosovo crisis and World War II with respect to ethnic cleansing highlighted a reasoning pathway directly from a description of events to the decision to intervene (Bates 2009). Other analogies may leave more room for maneuvering, as Musolff’s example of EU negotiations demonstrates. To the analogical threat, “the European train is leaving the station,” Margaret Thatcher replied that it would be better not to be on the train if it were heading the wrong direction (Musolff 2004, 31). In this situation, an analogy that was intended to be rigid was diverted by virtue of its reciprocity, that is, its appeal to common knowledge. As such, although comparative patterns have more directive or rigidity potential than narrative patterns, the threats these features pose to autonomy can be mitigated by ensuring that comparative patterns are reciprocal and, to the extent possible, transparent. In the above EU-as-train example, the fact that it was a familiar expression meant it had entailments to which opponents could latch on—in this case, to question the
“destination.” Casting situations metaphorically in familiar terms may even be one way to enhance reciprocity, insofar as familiar metaphors enable people to bring their own knowledge and experiences to bear.

At the same time, comparative patterns can sometimes threaten autonomy. Though they depend on reciprocity for force—targets must understand a comparative pattern and follow its entailments for there to be any effect—the considerations they exclude might be those with the potential to halt or redirect the force of an inferential structure. Strategic actors can build analogies into inferential structures in a way that makes disagreement difficult or unpopular, or they can silence criticism by appealing to seemingly unproblematic source scenarios (Musolff 2004, 174). Indeed, metaphors and analogies pose risks for transparency—and thus reflexivity—in that they render inferences and assumptions implicit. Non-transparency is a risk with examples, in that they can be used highly selectively. Of course, for reasons of expediency, and because of our cognitive biases towards confirming evidence (Mercier and Sperber 2011), this risk is not necessarily malicious or even strategically deliberate. Whether deliberate or not, insofar as implicit choices govern the selection of examples, analogies, and metaphors, democratic theorists should be attentive to the ways institutions might render these implicit aspects of comparative patterns explicit and subject to evaluation.

In situations where targets have insufficient knowledge or information to weigh the suitability or accuracy of an example, its use cannot be reciprocal. In order to avoid having such practices damage autonomy, the grounds for the comparison must be either transparent,

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30 It is possible that, with an insufficient basis for understanding a metaphor or analogy, targets may simply slough off any of their effects. A more troubling possibility, though, is that they may understand a comparison sufficiently to make the inferences it prompts, without having adequate grounds to identify and evaluate the implicit basis of the comparison.
or its use must be non-rigid. Institutions might also limit the influence of some types of comparative patterns. For instance, hypothetical analogies may be useful for working out the implications of a position, but because they are hypothetical, targets may not be able to judge their validity. Hypothetical examples and analogies, then, may be limited to providing points for discussion and explanation, and not enabling directive, rigid force. I summarize comparative patterns of influence in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3. Comparative Patterns of Communicative Influence: Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pragmatic Properties</th>
<th>Metaphor, Analogy, and Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- highlight some considerations and hide others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- commit speakers to the relevance of the similarities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- generate entailments— inferences that follow from the comparison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- can introduce new considerations by shifting perspectives</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ecological Functions</th>
<th>Metaphor, Analogy, and Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- contribute to framing effects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- help people form beliefs by rendering issues in familiar terms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in using a comparative pattern, speakers may incur commitments on the basis of which others can challenge them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rigidity</th>
<th>Metaphor, Analogy, and Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- potentially high, depending on the nature of the comparison. For instance, if case x is similar to case y, and there was only one answer to case y, there may only be one answer in case x.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reciprocity</th>
<th>Metaphor, Analogy, and Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- comparative patterns can either contribute to or limit reciprocity. They can draw in new commitments by prompting people to think of an issue in different terms, but they can also exclude considerations by defining an issue as being of a certain type.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transparency</th>
<th>Metaphor, Analogy, and Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- comparative patterns work against transparency, though perhaps to a lesser extent than the other patterns, depending on the nature of the metaphor/analogy. They do generally render assumptions about the appropriateness of the comparison implicit.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threat to Autonomy?</th>
<th>Metaphor, Analogy, and Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- yes, because they have the potential to combine rigidity, non-transparency and non-reciprocity. To the extent that comparative patterns are deployed rigidly, there should be scope for targets to reflexively weigh them and consider whether the comparison is in line with the target’s own commitments.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Evocative Patterns: Persuasive Definitions and Loaded Words

Deliberative democrats have paid much attention to narrative and storytelling, while cognitive linguistics has tended to focus on metaphor and analogy. By contrast, work on persuasive definitions, along with loaded language and value-laden terms, has been fairly limited (Walton 2005, 172). Yet such persuasive structures are central and persuasive features of discursive practice. Evocative words have the potential to amplify communicative influence, extending the impact of inferential structures beyond what one might expect from their substance alone. And, of course, strategic actors fully recognize the value of well chosen words, especially in politics. For example, over the last decade, actors in the Canadian energy industry have avoided the negative image of the “tar sands” by always using the more neutral term “oil sands.” Normatively speaking, we need not have a problem with using value-laden terms (Walton 2005, 173). Indeed, we would be hard-pressed to escape them, particularly in political discourse that necessarily implicates values, stakes, and priorities.

Still, definitions can function as a powerful form of communicative influence, extending or reducing the extension of concepts that confer value on the objects to which they are applied. The term “democracy” is a case in point. Speakers often use the word “undemocratic” without necessarily intending to make reference to the process through which the decision was reached. Rather, they mean to cast the decision in a negative light, invoking public value judgments in an effort to delegitimize a decision with which they do not agree. An analogous pattern concerns what we might call unloaded words: acronyms or bureaucratic terms that replace language that might otherwise evoke strong responses, for
instance “enhanced interrogation” for torture or “collateral damage” for civilian casualties.\footnote{I thank Chris Kam for this suggestion.}

We can think of unloaded words as working in the opposite way of evocative patterns in general. They fail to evoke the relevant legal, moral, or ethical considerations that a more direct term might be expected to. While I focus primarily on loaded language and persuasive definitions here, where possible I identify theoretical similarities and dissimilarities with unloaded words.

**Pragmatic properties of evocative patterns of communicative influence**

Evocative patterns of speech like word choice or implicit definitions can also exert substantial communicative influence. Although my analysis here is grounded primarily in work on persuasive definitions, the unifying feature across evocative patterns is that words serve as implicit arguments, evoking inferences by virtue of how people understand and react to them. Macagno and Walton conceptualize a definition as “persuasive” when it leads to a commitment through either argument from classification or argument from value (2008b, 204). In evocative patterns, words function as predicates, imposing conditions on subsequent argumentation and reasoning (Macagno and Walton 2008a). For example, in US politics the Republicans’ false labeling of the end-of-life counseling provision as “death panels” in President Obama’s Affordable Healthcare Act evokes the notion that a committee decides whether patients will or will not receive care (Neblo 2012, 181). The very definition of end-of-life counseling as “death panels” evokes a chain of inferences ending in the conclusion that the bill obviously goes against common sense, ethics, and respect for the elderly.

When word choice exerts influence through classification, evaluations associated with a term in its original meaning can be applied to an object covered by a new or expanded
For instance, conservative efforts to attach the label “carbon tax” to the NDP’s proposal for an emissions trading system was based on the insistence that it was a tax based on the fact that it would lead to government revenue—and that the comparable conservative plan was not a tax, simply because it would not. They attempted this maneuver despite an earlier claim that anything establishing a price on carbon was by definition a tax (Wherry 2012). The evocative strategy was to use the label “tax” to differentiate the two plans in a way that draws on the general aversion to taxes to make one seem automatically better.

Strategic speakers thus seek to change the extension or coverage of a term, while preserving the evaluations associated with that term—and the inferences from value that follow (Macagno and Walton 2008a, 546). Pragmatically, definitions work by opening up some inferential possibilities and closing off others. For example, defining abortion as murder allows the speaker to transport judgments of severity, blame, and legitimate punishment without having to justify their application. Speaking more broadly, by selecting words, people can select premises that generate specific inferences and conclusions (Ilie 2009, 39), without explicit justification, argument, or explanation. By contrast, unloaded words suppress moral, legal, logical and ethical implications of practices by diverting attention, creating distance between how a target might understand and reason about a different practice, and the language of discourse about that practice.

Ecological functions of evocative patterns of communicative influence

Definitions, whether implicit or explicit, affect discursive ecosystems by imposing conditions and boundaries on discourse. Similar to the modifying effect of frames, widely

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32 In early work on persuasive definition, attaching old values to new terms was a result of leaving the emotional connection with the original term intact (Stevenson in Walton 2005).
accepted definitions determine the kinds of inferences actors can make about a problem (Schiappa 1993). Persuasive definitions can have several consequences for speaker-based ecological features. Speakers can engage in strategic redefinition in order to wriggle out of commitments without appearing to do so, thus preventing loss of credibility as a result of inconsistency. According to Walton, this kind of strategy is exemplified by Reagan’s promise to ensure that the social safety net remained intact for the “truly needy,” and then redefining “needy” to exclude certain groups—notably people with disabilities—to avoid breaking the original commitment when making cuts (2001, 120).

Evocative patterns can also trigger the psychological predispositions that make targets more or less likely to reach for their own commitments in reflexively evaluating an argument. Furthermore, a speaker might use one explicit set of seemingly “acceptable” claims as a code that, for specific targets, triggers inferences that the speaker cannot spell out. second argument that the speaker really means, but that he or she cannot spell out. As Warren points out, speakers used code words like “states’ rights” in the US for much of the twentieth century as a substitute for racially discriminatory state laws, and used crime as a coded substitute to refer to race in the Nixon era and beyond. With these tactics, speakers were able to attract certain voters without spelling out an offensive line of reasoning likely to garner sanction (Warren 2006, 163). Speakers might also use seemingly benign codewords in mass media to generate tension between ethnic groups and even incite violence, as happened following the 2007 election in Kenya, in which prominent figures used words like “dog,” “thief” and even seemingly innocuous “in laws” and “highlanders” to incite ethnic tension (The Economist 2013). More indirectly, using loaded words can introduce emotional content
—such as loathing or disgust—into discourse that focuses attention on a dispute, to the exclusion of more productive potential activities (Marcus 2002, 125).

**Implications of evocative patterns for autonomy**

Evocative patterns like loaded words and persuasive definitions are rigid just to the extent that the premises they embed constrain the range of further inferences and, ultimately, the conclusions that hearers can draw. The abortion-as-murder example illustrates this well. If interlocutors accept the definition, the conclusions that follow are severely constrained. In this case, adoption of the definition is by no means a certainty, since the forcefulness of the move is apparent. But it is not always so easy to recognize persuasive definitions, particularly when they are vague, as Reagan’s use of the term “truly needy” (Walton 2001). The potential force of persuasive definitions is perhaps greatest when people expect or assume a basic lexical definition and instead get a value-based definition. The latter ought to bear a burden of proof because of the inferences buried within it (Walton 2005), but as long as targets treat it as a simple definition, they will not look for justifications. Actors cannot do without definitions, and their presence in discursive processes is often benign. However, because of the taken-for-granted nature of many definitions, they are not always transparent: the defining or labeling process exposes listeners to the implicit force of evaluations embedded in terms, categories, labels and definitions. Moreover, disputes over definitions can sometimes mask disputes over values or priorities, such that even participants have a hard time identifying the sources of their disagreement (Macagno and Walton 2008b).

Of the three dimensions of communicative influence—reciprocity, rigidity, and transparency—reciprocity and non-transparency stand out in relation to persuasive definitions and loaded words. Although evocative patterns may call attention to some
meanings, their primary function is limiting the range of considerations upon which actors can draw. Much as definitions serve necessary and often inevitable function in directing attention and cognition, their pragmatic effects nevertheless limit reciprocity. Importantly, they achieve this exclusionary effect non-transparently. They enable speakers to produce pragmatic effects without having to articulate reasons a given word should be understood in a specific way, or applied to a given category of events or cases.

Evocative patterns of communicative influence have the potential to compromise autonomy because they can constrain reasoning and choice in ways that may be non-transparent and non-reciprocal. They thus risk violating the reflexivity and authenticity conditions that render rigid influence consistent with autonomous judgment. At the same time, like the more general framing effects described in the previous chapter, to some extent implicit definitions will always be doing some of the work of inferential structures, if only because they establish a shared meaning for a word. But to the extent that words themselves embody or contribute to rigid patterns by virtue of how they build value judgment into inferential structures, they should be subject to reflexive endorsement and authentic engagement. For this reason, institutional features should be designed to induce reciprocity and transparency in how words are being used. Positioning actors to offer credible challenges may be one way render persuasive definitions more transparent, thus giving targets the opportunity to give their reflexive endorsement to previously implicit premises. Institutions can also enable reciprocity by deliberately making definitions the object of deliberation and agreement prior to, or as part of, debate. For example, parliament, in 2012 parliament considered whether the Canadian government should allow the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) to take over Canadian oil company Nexen. A significant part of the
debate centered on an NDP motion to clarify the “net benefit test,” which features in the Investment Canada Act as a requirement for foreign company takeovers, but is quite vague. During the exchange, speakers called on the government to make good on its commitment to clarify this test (O'Malley 2012). Making a definition—for instance, of net benefit—explicit, and potentially having all parties agree to it, would provide a shared platform of commitments from which to engage in ongoing discussion. By establishing shared definitions that crystallize the commitments of parties to an exchange, institutions can enable greater reciprocity. By promoting transparency in word choice and definitional issues, institutional features can also make it easier for actors to hold one another to their commitments, rather than allowing them to escape them through strategic redefinition. Table 6.4 summarizes the above discussion of evocative patterns.

Table 6.4. Evocative Patterns of Communicative Influence: Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persuasive Definitions and Loaded Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pragmatic Properties</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- word choice functions as argument, establishing premises that constrain the range of possible conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- speakers can use values associated with a word to confer value on objects to which it is applied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ecological Functions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- set boundaries on reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- subjects can use redefinition to escape their commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- loaded words can trigger psychological biases and predispositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rigidity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- potentially high, but it depends on the word/definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reciprocity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- generally low because word choice establishes some considerations as relevant and others as irrelevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transparency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- low—a single word can stand in for an entire inferential structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threat to Autonomy?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- yes, because of the combination of rigidity, non-transparency and non-reciprocity. However, the threat can be easily mitigated by rendering definitions explicit—and potentially subject to discussion and explicit agreement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Deceptive Patterns: Exaggeration and Lies

The first three patterns of communicative influence covered in this chapter—narrative, comparative, and evocative—can all be characterized as necessary parts of speech and, in this sense, as not necessarily harmful. All words are potentially loaded, cognition is at least partially metaphorical, and stories help us organize and process experiences and information. But the next pattern of communicative influence, centered around deceit, lacks these benign tendencies.\(^{33}\)

In deceptive patterns of communicative influence, speakers misrepresent their own commitments, or articulate commitments they know to be misleading. Deceptive patterns of communicative influence are coercive. Like violent coercion, deceit can make people act against their will. But unlike violence, deceit works on belief as well as action (Bok 1979, 18). Exaggeration—a subtype of deceitful patterns of influence—may also be used to lend weight to claims, as when former minister Maxime Bernier, in defense of the government’s decision to abolish the long form census, claimed that his office had received thousands of emails a day complaining about it. Then-minister Tony Clement added his voice, pointing out that the penalty for failing to fill out the long form was jail. In truth, a jail term had never been imposed, and Bernier backed off his accounting of the number of complaints (Brennan 2010). Still, in this case exaggeration advanced an argument on the basis of deceitful premises: that those who continue to support the long form census are ignoring the concerns of thousands of Canadians and that long-form supporters also may want those who do not fill out the form to go to jail. When it comes to consequences, the political significance of exaggeration often lies with what Riker calls “the strategy of induced dread” (Riker 1990, 182).

\(^{33}\) White lies are a minor exception. For a more complete discussion of white lies, see Bok (1979).
63), which positions an (implied) dire risk the most salient consideration in people’s judgments. This section considers the inferential properties of deceit and lies as general patterns of communicative influence, but I shall pay specific attention to exaggeration because it is so pervasive in political speech.

**Pragmatic properties of deceptive patterns of communicative influence**

According to Bok, we deceive when we get someone to believe something we ourselves do not believe (1979, 13). To lie is to communicate deliberate untruths (Goodin 1980, 40). In pragmatic terms, speakers induce targets to undertake commitments because targets have inappropriately attributed a commitment (and perhaps entitlement) to the speaker. When successful, the speaker introduces a new belief or intention into the target’s commitment set, with potentially far reaching inferential consequences. In practical reasoning—reasoning through which actors proceed from beliefs about the world to action—speakers can distort the beliefs from which actors proceed, or, in Goodin’s terms, alter the information basis for action (Goodin 1980, 46). By altering targets’ beliefs, speakers can secure a wildly different outcome without changing actors’ preferences or the norms and principles targets would otherwise have applied.

The same is true of exaggeration. When speakers are able to modify beliefs about the likely consequences of a course of action, they can cause the same patterns of practical reasoning—the same application of preferences, norms, or moral principles—to yield different outcomes. Exaggeration changes targets’ incentives. For instance, speakers can heighten the perceived risk of using electronic medical records by pointing to potential extreme consequences from breaches in confidentiality—for instance, leaks of psychological conditions (Godin 1999). According to Riker, if a speaker predicts some disaster that could
follow from his or her opponent’s success, hearers, knowing nothing about the probability of that disaster, will make decisions by minimizing the effect of a maximally bad outcome (Riker 1990, 59). The pragmatic functions of exaggerating consequences, then, is an alteration of the hearer’s reasoning process. Without changing his or her preference—minimizing harm—a speaker is able to completely change the course of a practical reasoning process by establishing the severity of a given outcome. It promotes certain conclusions while bypassing people’s already limited capacity to reason according to probabilities. Exaggeration may be particularly effective when the nature of the consequences is unknown—or, presumably, when the speaker can make a simple causal connection, which tends to be more compelling than probable, but more complex, connections (Lombrozo 2007).

**Ecological functions of deceptive patterns of communicative influence**

Deceptive patterns shape structural/substantive ecologies in the same way as any other communicative influence, simply by altering targets’ commitments. However, this is true of any instance of communicative influence, deceptive or otherwise, and does not have any particular implications for the structural relationships among an actor’s commitments. There are more interesting ecological questions at the level of subject-based ecological features. For instance, speakers can use deceit to enhance their own appeal, or to undermine that of their opponents. But being caught out in deceit can damage credibility and thus undermine subsequent efforts to exert communicative influence. At the same time, small, well intentioned deceits—white lies—may have minimal actual effects on the hearer’s beliefs or actions, while at the same time preserving social relationships and maintaining trust (Bok 1979, 57). Even when both speaker and target know the speaker is not being fully
transparent, these small insincerities may be a minimal condition for the mutual respect necessary for meaningful exchanges (Warren 2006).

**Implications of deceptive patterns for autonomy**

Their non-transparency limits deceptive patterns of communicative influence to manipulation, rhetoric, disclosure and assertion. There is nothing necessarily rigid about deceit and exaggeration, although they may often be paired with rigid forms of speech because, in most circumstances, a speaker is exaggerating or lying for some purpose. Lies and exaggeration offer high potential for rigidity, because the speaker is not constrained by truth; he or she can say whatever will be most effective or compelling. As Hannah Arendt points out in *Lying and Politics*, lies can actually have more appeal to an audience than, say, a hard truth, because the speaker can appeal to what the audience wants to hear (1969, 7). By asserting a false but compelling premise, a speaker can construct an inferential structure in a way that drives forcefully towards their desired conclusion.

Arendt’s claim that lies work by being more appealing than truths suggests that deceptive patterns can be reciprocal. Presumably, a lie can evoke genuine responses grounded in a hearer’s own beliefs as much as can a true assertion. But this represents a corrupted form of reciprocity, one that does not link up to authenticity and thus autonomy in the ways I suggested in Chapter 5. While a target’s own commitments may be implicated in a deceptive inferential structure, as authenticity would seem to demand, they may not be the ones the target himself or herself would have chosen as reasons for his or her newly acquired commitment.

Institutional arrangements may be able to help preserve the grounds for autonomous judgment in the face of deceptive patterns of communicative influence. The simplest
response is to establish safeguards against lies by creating penalties for lying accompanied by means for verification, either by adversaries or by non-participating actors. However, these kinds of responses are likely to be most effective for outright lies, and not for instances of bending the truth, exaggeration, or the strategic omission of information. A corrective approach might start from the premise that some amount of deception is inevitable, and instead institutions create space for actors to identify and root out commitments they may have acquired as a result of deceptive influence. Discussion, in which exchanges enable a mutual exploration of commitments, can enable people to root out commitments acquired as a result of deception. This kind of approach assumes, however, that targets have other commitments on the issue in question against which to measure problematic ones and test for inconsistencies. In circumstances of low knowledge, this may not be a possibility, and it is under these circumstances that deception may be most effective. But when targets have sufficient information, they can more readily detect lies and exaggeration. Thus, ensuring the availability of explanations from which targets can build up a resilient base of knowledge and understanding should help to mitigate the autonomy-damaging effects of deception. Table 6.5 summarizes the considerations around deceptive patterns of communicative influence.
Table 6.5. Deceptive Patterns of Communicative Influence: Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lying &amp; Exaggeration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pragmatic Properties</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lying: advances commitments the speaker does not hold or knows to be misleading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Exaggeration: overestimates severity or likelihood of consequences can change outcomes without altering preferences by changing the state of affairs from which targets proceed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Exaggeration: Increases the importance or weight of claims, often by discrediting alternatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ecological Functions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- the ecological effects of deceptive patterns depend on how they are used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- though being caught in deception can damage credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rigidity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- depends on how they are built into inferential structures—whether or not they actually exert influence, although speakers even making deceptive claims available for independent uptake can still raise problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reciprocity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- deceptive patterns may be part of an inferential structure that engages some commitments, but these will not necessarily be the commitments the target would have engaged had they not been subject to deception. In other words, they may not be his or her own good reasons for undertaking a commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transparency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- no—deceptive patterns have force because keep true commitments out of the picture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threat to Autonomy?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- yes - though exactly how much depends on the kind of inferential structure lies and exaggeration are built in to. If speakers are not seeking to influence targets towards some conclusion but, for example, engaging in an insincere demonstration of respect, there is less cause for concern because the constraints on choice and judgment are less.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Avoidance Patterns: Evasion and Hedging

Speakers may avoid answering questions or stating their positions on issues with any kind of clarity when they think doing so may cause them trouble. They can change the subject (like a spokesperson reverting to a script), avoid answering a question directly by providing an answer to some other question, or only answer part of the question (as one often sees in parliamentary question period). In some cases, these kinds of avoidance strategies may be reasonable responses to an adversary’s attempts at verbal entrapment. In other cases,
speakers may offer an opinion, but hedge, downplaying their level of commitment as mere opinion or supposition.

**Pragmatic properties of avoidance patterns of communicative influence**

Broadly speaking, one can understand such practices, not as a form of influence, but as a form of influence avoidance—as a defensive posture against attempts by others to exert influence. Evasion and hedging reflect a speaker’s desire to avoid giving someone verbal leverage to maneuver him or her into taking an unpopular position. Moreover, by virtue of the incompatibility relationships within webs of inferentially linked commitments, undertaking one commitment forecloses other possibilities that the speaker may like to leave available. This strategic consideration may explain why, in parliamentary question periods, leaders’ debates, and town halls, speakers may avoid giving “straight answers,” despite interlocutors’ best efforts to pin them down. By using evasion—changing the subject, not answering a question, or even avoiding a situation in which a topic might arise—speakers also avoid the justificatory obligations that come with asserting a belief or undertaking a practical commitment.

Hedging is a moderated form of avoidance. While not avoiding it entirely, hedging lessens the burden of justification. It signals to interlocutors that the speaker is not particularly attached to the belief or commitment in question, and that they should not give it full weight in discursive practice. Misak argues that this downplaying of commitment—the “I suspect” and “it seems to me” formats—represents a degraded form of belief (2004, 12). This degrading of assertions dulls or deflects their discursive function in the ongoing process of giving and asking for reasons. This said, hedging, and to a lesser extent evasion, can also be described in the positive. Hedging can often reflect an instability in actor’s webs of
commitments that both speakers and targets use to navigate discursive exchanges. While hedging, like evasion, entails deferring or lessening the burdens that come with making commitments, it can also contribute to discussion. Formulations that reflect uncertainty can also serve the discursive function of inviting an interlocutor to respond and to help clarify or solidify the commitments in question. For both the speaker and the target, hedging and evasion can help to leave many paths open, including backtracking without losing face.

**Ecological functions of avoidance patterns of communicative influence**

Unlike the other four patterns addressed so far, hedging and evasion work preventively. Rather than (potentially) enhancing a speaker’s communicative influence, they enable speakers to avoid having influence exercised against them by those who might misuse or take their claims out of context—particularly in circumstances where the speaker anticipates no opportunity to respond or clarify. Evading a question, for instance, may be a matter of avoiding getting a commitment on the record that might invalidate or be inconsistent with other commitments, or that a speaker knows will be poorly received, twisted, or misunderstood. From the perspective of subject-based ecological features, consistency—with past positions or party platforms, for example—is key to maintaining credibility, and speakers are right to be cautious about which commitments they make explicit. Evasion represents a strategic response to adversaries who may use questions to trap speakers into unpopular statements. This kind of phenomena is pervasive in politics—indeed, it is central to the consistent messaging and building credibility that is part of a political movement, strategy, or party. The notion of evasive patterns may shed some light on Preston Manning’s keynote remarks to the Canadian conservative movement at the 2013 Manning Networking Conference. In his remarks, Manning cited both derogatory references to
homosexuals from a Wildrose candidate in Alberta’s recent provincial election and Tom Flanagan’s defense of free speech that included the claim that viewing child pornography did not have consequences. Manning argued that such remarks discredited the conservative movement as a whole. Manning claimed that the nature of such comments being the movement’s greatest weakness. These observations led him to make the following appeal:

This does not mean that we as individual conservatives on a personal level ostracize or disassociate ourselves from those who cross the line. Everyone makes honest mistakes, conservatives believe in second chances, and we need to rally around those who have been lured across the line by opponents rather than “piling on.” The Canadian public, however, has a right to say to any and all aspirants to political office and the rest of us active in the political arena: “If you can’t govern your own zeal, if you can’t govern your own prejudices, if you can’t govern your own tongue – why should we trust you to govern us?” (Manning 2013).

The strategy Manning advocate here amounts to an avoidance pattern: evade commitments that would discredit the movement, perhaps not in the eyes of those who subscribe to such hard-line positions, but certainly for the broader constituencies to whom the party hopes to appeal. A further tactical consideration may be to establish credibility by demonstrating that the party can rein in more extreme elements. In either case, these goals are achieved, not by suggesting that actors give up those problematic commitments, but instead that they hedge, equivocate or otherwise avoid articulating them.
Implications of avoidance patterns for autonomy

Evasion and hedging alter the immediate circumstances of argument, changing what speakers trying to exert influence are able to do. The first implication of hedging and evasion concerns rigidity and reciprocity together. In a discursive exchange dominated by hedging, possibilities for persuasion are limited. Reciprocity will be difficult because speakers cannot pin down one another’s commitments. Hedging and evasion also make it difficult for speakers draw on commitments they have attributed to others—whether the target is party to the exchange, or is an audience—to construct rigid structures, because avoidance patterns leave scope for reneging and reinterpreting these commitment. In this way evasion and hedging may undermine the normative equalizing function of communicative influence. If it is easy to avoid making firm commitments, marginalized groups cannot leverage communicative influence’s capacity to construct compelling inferential structures on the basis of more powerful actors’ explicit, expressed commitments.

The dominance of avoidance patterns in a discursive ecosystem may simple limit what speech can actually achieve. By making it difficult to attribute commitments, hedging and evasion undermine the grounds by which actors can make credibility judgments. In some circumstances, without credibility, actors may be left only with the less normatively desirable sources of influence such as coercion and bribery. However, avoidance patterns may be an entirely appropriate strategy to preserve discursive freedom and protect reputations in the face of an adversary’s attempt to trap someone into making a commitment. If a speaker knows he or she will have a commitment taken out of context and used to inflict damage with no chance to respond, silence is a legitimate option.
Institutional features can make avoidance easier or harder for speakers. For instance, depending on the exact format, leaders’ debates and town halls limit opportunities for follow-up, so if a speaker dodges a question, he or she has successfully avoided making a commitment. By contrast, in court or testimony before a committee—actors are empowered to persist until they get an answer deemed satisfactory, and there are penalties for failing to answer a question. Table 6.6 summarizes the findings of this section on avoidance patterns.

Table 6.6. Avoidance Patterns of Communicative Influence: Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evasion and Hedging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Pragmatic Properties** | - defer or lessen justificatory obligations  
- make it difficult for others to attribute commitments |
| **Ecological Functions** | - speakers may use evasive and hedging techniques to protect reputations from unfavorable judgments, including those that come from adversaries using speakers’ words against them. However, this also makes it difficult for subjects to maintain adequate grounds for credibility judgments. |
| **Rigidity** | - avoidance patterns are more about avoiding having rigid influence exercised against one using one’s own words. It makes the combination of rigidity and reciprocity difficult, although for non-reciprocal inferential structures like proof or explanation, it does not matter. |
| **Reciprocity** | - becomes more challenging as actors cannot pin down one another’s commitments, but it is still possible in that inferential structures can seek endorsement on the basis of targets’ external commitments; however, the speaker gives up some control over what the target will be willing to accept. |
| **Transparency** | - avoidance patterns are characterized by non-transparency. Speakers resist making commitments explicit. |
| **Threat to Autonomy** | - no immediate threat because avoidance patterns are not about force or influence.  
- however, avoidance can compromise the conditions for autonomous judgment. For instance, it can lead to unwarranted magnification elsewhere. Where influence derives from credibility or status, it may not be consistent with autonomy if targets have insufficient grounds for making judgments of credibility— for instance, determining whether trust is warranted or beliefs are shared. |
Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to account for several pervasive features of political communication in terms of the three components of the model of communicative influence: inferential structures, discursive ecosystems, and discursive democratic goods. From rhetorical tropes to outright deception, patterns of communicative influence represent repeated, generic structures of linguistic interaction that bundle and often mask the inferences speakers ask targets to make when they take up arguments and claims. Speakers can build into inferential structures the pragmatic properties of narrative, comparative, evocative, deceptive, and avoidance patterns to secure communicative influence.

By structuring commitments according to certain predictable patterns, all five patterns reduce the need for the explicit articulation of commitments and thus open up opportunities for speakers to exert non-transparent influence. The normative implications that follow from the force patterns of communicative influence generate depend on two things. The first concerns the dimensions of communicative influence. If influence is to be non-transparent, it must be either highly reciprocal—to protect autonomy through authenticity—or else non-rigid—to ensure that judgment remains relatively unconstrained. Second, the normative implications of these patterns of communicative influence also depend on their ecological consequences: do they make it more difficult for targets to pass judgment on speakers’ credibility? Do they entrench harmful frames? Do they allow speakers to avoid reciprocal engagement by triggering psychological predispositions?

Comparative and evocative patterns are noteworthy for their potential to render inferential structures more rigid, either by embedding premises that constrain inferences (in the case of evocative patterns) or by generating entailments (in the case of comparative
patterns). However, the potential damage to autonomy that comes with these mechanisms can be mitigated by ensuring reciprocity. For instance, in the case of value-laden definitions and terms, procedures that aim to identify explicit agreement on meanings help to establish a shared platform for dialogue. With metaphors, analogies, and examples, comparative patterns can make it easier for people to connect an issue or argument to their own beliefs and commitments. Narrative and deceptive patterns, by themselves, do not increase the rigidity potential of an inferential structure; rather, their force depends on how they are used—for instance, drawing lessons or morals from a story, or lying to get a target to do something.

To the extent that these patterns are deployed rigidly but manage to maintain reciprocity, they represent rhetorical forms of influence. To the extent that they work by excluding considerations rather than drawing on them, or suppress rather than engage contravening positions, they become manipulative. Although invoking patterns of communicative influence does not preclude transparency—speakers may themselves undertake to clarify the assumptions that make something an appropriate analogy or a relevant anecdote, for instance—all four of these patterns enable speakers to exert influence without having to make their claims explicit. Not having to make things explicit is the key advantage of the fifth pattern, avoidance. Hedging and evasion make it difficult for others to pin down speakers’ positions, or to determine the consistency or inconsistency among their commitments. But evasion and hedging also free the speakers from the threat of having opponents use their own words to undermine them.

Actors’ efforts to preserve reputations through avoidance points to the second central argument of this chapter. These patterns of influence have implications for structural/substantive and subject-based ecological features that condition communicative influence.
For instance, the use of narrative, comparative, and evocative patterns can all contribute to frames, by introducing, perpetuating, or reinforcing the structural relationships among widely accepted commitments. On the subject-based side, narrative patterns can establish or enhance credibility, building trust through shared identity, demonstrating an affinity for targets’ concerns, or establishing first-hand knowledge. Being caught out in deception can damage this credibility and compromise future efforts at communicative influence. On the target side, evocative patterns and comparative patterns can trigger the psychological predispositions discussed in Chapter 4, altering the way people process the reasons put to them.

Because these patterns of communicative influence have both immediate effects in terms of the force of inferential structures and lasting effects in terms of ecological consequences, their uses have implications for the democratic goods identified in the previous chapter and captured under the concept of autonomous judgment. For instance, invoking a familiar pattern might enable a speaker to exert rigid, non-transparent, and non-reciprocal force against a target—to manipulate him or her. By using a narrative or a metaphor to perpetuate a strong frame, or avoiding making commitments that audiences can track, patterns compromise the conditions for the autonomy of judgments that targets eventually make in the face of attempts at influence. Institutions—the third element of the discursive ecosystem—can help manage some of these potentially damaging effects, regardless of how strategic actors might seek to use the patterns to their advantage. For instance, generative institutional features might set agreed-upon limits on how words are to be used, or enable persistent follow-up to prevent evasion. In the next three chapters, I address more systematically the potential for institutions to ensure that communicative influence remains consistent with autonomous judgment.
Chapter 7. Institutional Responses to the Anti-Democratic Hazards of Modification Effects

Given that politics is often characterized by strategic rather than deliberative speech, deliberative democratic theory should be attentive to how political institutions can harness the deliberative potentials of strategic speech while mitigating its harms. The purpose of the remaining chapters of this dissertation is to introduce such considerations into deliberative democratic theory, thereby, I argue, restoring its character as a political theory—one that fully engages the domain of actors’ competing strategic incentives around high stakes, high uncertainty conflicts. By focusing on the pragmatics of how language produces agreement, the model of communicative influence developed in the earlier chapters allows us to conceptualize language as a strategic resource for political actors, without putting their use of this resource at odds with the normative aspirations of deliberative democratic theory.

In this chapter and the two that follow, I argue that, from a normative perspective, institutions ought to be judged in terms of their contribution to the discursive democratic goods identified in Chapter 5: underwriting, protecting, and incentivizing the motivating force of reasons and freedom in discursive opinion and will formation. Such a framework asks what institutions can do to foster or damage autonomous judgment in the face of communicative influence, rather than asking how closely an institution can replicate the conditions of ideal, rational dialogue.

I approach the problem of how to identify and design institutions that further discursive democratic goods by way of the ecological effects identified in Chapter 4. Ecological effects capture the ways that the interaction between inferential structures and the structural/substantive, subject-based, and institutional features of the discursive ecosystem
alter the nature of the communicative influence. Ecological effects can modify rigidity, reciprocity, and transparency; they can magnify a speaker’s influence; or they can select for different types of communicative influence. My approach in this chapter and the two that follow is to revisit each ecological effect in turn and identify what I call its *anti-democratic hazards*—the threats it poses to autonomous judgment, and thus to the discursive democratic goods that make speech a normatively worthwhile part of politics. I then argue that, rather than trying to make political communication more closely resemble deliberation, institutions should be designed and evaluated as interventions into discursive ecosystems that circumvent or compensate for these anti-democratic hazards.

Institutional interventions into discursive ecosystems secure the conditions for autonomous judgment either *directly* or *correctively*. *Directly,* features of institutions can be arranged to prevent the hazard. For instance, as I demonstrate below, institutional rules can limit speakers’ opportunities to rely on strong frames to replace explicit arguments. Interventions can build up targets’ knowledge and commitments in an unfamiliar area in order to open up possibilities for reciprocal engagement without which even well intentioned rhetoric risks producing manipulative effects. *Correctively,* institutions can favour autonomous judgment by counter-balancing or compensating for the effects of the anti-democratic hazards. For instance, in the case of resilient frames that may render communicative influence at once more rigid and less reciprocal, institutions can create opportunities for actors reflect on the connections and exclusions those frames establish by prompting speakers to articulate the assumptions and implications of frames.

Of the three types of ecological features, institutions are uniquely suited to prevent and correct for the anti-democratic hazards the discursive ecosystem produces—although
institutional selection effects also pose their own hazards, as I discuss in Chapter 9.

Structural/substantive features (such as frames) and subject-based features (speaker and target status, credibility and knowledge) are both self-reproducing features of the ecosystem itself. In articulating a frame, a speaker perpetuates it; in making a claim, a speaker enhances or undermines his or her credibility. These sets of features are both causes and effects of speech. By contrast, institutions are non-discursive, so they can theoretically be introduced into discursive ecosystems from without, altering communicative influence without themselves being language-based. Some institutions may be the product of a discursively reached agreement, but even these are relatively stable and exogenous to discursive practice itself. Unlike with structural/substantive and subject-based features, only in very limited circumstances do the institutional features of a discursive ecosystem follow from what is said within that ecosystem. Institutional features that might either directly prevent or indirectly correct for the anti-democratic hazards of discursive ecosystems could include expanding or limiting audiences; sanctioning violations of commitments; increasing the time, space, and resources actors have to process and convey messages; altering stakes, decision rules, and speaking rules; guiding discourse towards specific tasks; and establishing special roles for different kinds of civil society actors.

In these chapters, I pay particular attention to the example of mini-publics: small scale deliberative venues constituted around an issue or problem, from a representative sample of the relevant constituency, generally tasked with learning, deliberating, and issuing recommendations about the issue (A. Calvert and Warren 2012). Prominent examples of mini-publics include, among others, the BC Citizen’s Assembly on Electoral Reform, which, after extensive deliberation among randomly selected citizens, issued a referendum question;
the Oregon Citizens Review Initiative, in which small, deliberative groups articulate positions on ballot measures; and the larger scale AmericaSpeaks 21st Century Town Hall, in which large groups of ordinary citizens engage in the policy process by participating in facilitated discussions (Fung 2009; Richards 2012; Warren and Pearse 2008).

I attend to mini-publics for three reasons. First, they are an important and still growing area of interest in the field of deliberative democracy. Second, because they are typically not permanent, but instead constituted on an issue-by-issue basis, organizers are left with a great deal of scope for making institutional design choices, including how participants are selected, what they are tasked with, how they proceed, how extensive the learning phase is, and what kinds of recommendations they issue. Thus, mini-publics help to exemplify features of institutions that can be charged to produce “deliberative” consequences. Third, the pressing theoretical question of how mini-publics ought to relate to the political process as a whole (for which the next three chapters offer a preliminary answer) speaks to emerging interest in the field of deliberative democracy.

The deliberative system argument is that deliberative functions are distributed across institutions that exist in complex relationships with one another (Parkinson and Mansbridge 2012). Having taken this initial step, theorists are now working to make these complex relationships theoretically tractable. As I explain below, I draw a distinction between site-level and system-level interventions into discursive ecosystems. Developing this analytic distinction between site and system enables me to suggest some ways that relationships between sites can enhance discursive democratic goods by allowing one site—say, a mini-public—to shape and indirectly correct for hazards specific to the ways communicative influence unfolds at another—say, parliament, or an electoral campaign.
This chapter proceeds as follows. I begin by elaborating on the distinction between direct and corrective interventions, and between site-level and system-level interventions. These distinctions provide the framework for Chapters 8 and 9 as well. Second, I reintroduce the idea of modification effects that result from structural/substantive and target-specific features of the discursive ecosystem. Third, I consider the anti-democratic hazards resulting from structural/substantive features, specifically, and identify four types of responses: direct and indirect institutional interventions at the site level, and direct and indirect institutional interventions at the system level. Fourth, I repeat this analysis for the anti-democratic hazards associated with characteristics of influence targets.

**The Logic of Institutional Interventions: Direct, Indirect, Site-level, and System-level**

In the introduction, I argued that altering the institutional arrangements in a discursive ecosystem has the potential to secure a net-positive result for discursive democratic goods. This effect might be achieved either directly, by ensuring that ecological effects are consistent with the requirements of autonomous judgment, or indirectly, by correcting for hazards that resist direct intervention. Institutions can achieve either type of effect through a variety of measures. In addition, we can think about two levels at which direct or indirect interventions can take place. The site level concerns the rules and resources that govern an exchange. The system level has to do with how sites relate to one another.

The institutional interventions I suggest in Chapters 7 to 9 represent potential responses to the specific hazards that follow from the use, strategic or otherwise, of communicative influence in discursive ecosystems. The model of communicative influence provides new grounds for theorizing the functions and evaluating the democratic
performance of new and existing institutions. The communicative influence approach is one way of thinking about how political systems can achieve their democratic potential, to be considered alongside existing democratic principles and values, including voice, accountability, and self-determination.

**Direct vs. corrective institutional interventions**

Some interventions can target ecological effects directly, seeking to neutralize their hazardous tendencies or render them consistent with autonomous judgment. Examples of *direct* interventions include rules of evidence; rules about who gets to speak, when and to whom; limitation on the number of amendments that can be introduced to a bill; and peer review (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 12). Behavioral incentives might be changed directly by expanding or restricting the audience, or by altering voting rules to change which voter is pivotal (Landa and Meirowitz 2009), determining *whose* commitments are incorporated into inferential structures designed to elicit reciprocal buy-in. Institutions might also reduce the cost of verifying claims, undermining incentives to misrepresent, and perhaps incentivizing transparency in the first place.

System-level interventions can also be direct, as when one site sanctions or promotes certain communicative practices at another. For instance, at the system level, entities can be authorized to speak credibly on some issues, magnifying their influence ideally in ways that can themselves be subject to autonomous judgment. Similarly, within a deliberative system, *exit* from certain sites of discourse or organizations can be a way of imposing costs on an actor or entity that fails to meet certain standards—potentially including standards of appropriate communicative behavior (see Warren 2011). Alternatively, some parts of the system may control other parts more directly. For instance, agencies such as electoral
commissions and even the courts can enforce rules about communicative behavior, requiring or forbidding certain practices in campaigning and political advertisement.

But there are limits to direct interventions, and theories of deliberative democracy have so far mostly failed to acknowledge that direct rules and incentives can only achieve so much to induce deliberative behaviour. There is a great deal of scope for strategic speech that undermines autonomous judgment that falls short of deception and insincerity of the kind that rules can explicitly forbid. Furthermore, it is difficult to think of how, across all potential circumstances and venues of communication, rules about appropriate speech can overcome the often powerful incentives to use language as a tool to secure ends, often in quite subtle ways. Additionally, some ecological elements—notably analogies, metaphors, narratives and loaded language—may be both potentially damaging to autonomy and at the same time necessary for communication. In such cases, direct interventions that control speakers’ use of such patterns might do more damage by hindering cognition and conversation than permitting them would, even at the risk of their stronger forms compromising autonomous judgment. These considerations suggest the desirability of indirect institutional interventions with corrective functions.34

Indirect approaches recognize that autonomy-disabling ecological effects—those which render speech less reciprocal or less transparent, or which confer credibility where it would not reflexively be endorsed—will continue to occur. Indirectly corrective approaches may include fact-checking; providing citizens with time, space, and information for deeper reflection; or strategies that place competing claims directly in competition with one another.

34 Similarly, Mansbridge et al. (2012) suggest that the system can have a self-corrective quality if institutions are arranged properly, and not too tightly coupled (22). This chapter follows up on this intuition by specifying what it means to be corrective—that is, what institutions are correcting for, and how.
As John Stuart Mill’s original argument for the free competition of ideas—that it was the best way of getting to the truth, and ensuring that no one held beliefs on the basis merely of prejudice (1859, 21)—suggests, under the right conditions, competition can have both epistemic and autonomy benefits. In the analysis below, some of the institutional measures I suggest aim to draw out the potentials of competition, particularly its capacity to get people thinking more deeply about both sets of competing claims (Druckman and Nelson 2003; Disch 2011; Chong and Druckman 2007a).

**Site-level vs. system-level institutional interventions**

I use “sites” of deliberation or discourse to refer to individual venues or to interpersonal relationships in which communicative influence takes place. The various sites of discourse add up and overlap to produce what deliberative democratic theorists have begun to refer to as a *deliberative system*. In this section I explain the distinctions between thinking about deliberation at the site and the system levels. Though not all sites have equally malleable designs, one of the central premises for these chapters is that a site’s institutional features can be tailored so that it performs a specific function within the broader deliberative system. In my discussions of specific direct and corrective institutional features, I will, for the most part, exclude sites of internal, private, and social network discussions in favour of more institutionalized, relatively formal venues of talk—the kinds of sites in which it is possible to install (or remove) institutional features that elicit certain behaviours. With non-institutionalized discussions, there is little anyone can or should do to alter how conversations unfold, short of promoting norms of reciprocity and respect. By contrast, in more formal sites, there is more that institutional arrangements can consistently do to
produce effects at the level of communicative behaviour. I examine a range of specific possibilities in these chapters.

I theorize both direct and corrective interventions at the system level because communicative influence is not limited to the venue in which discursive interactions take place. Propositions and inferential structures articulated in one venue can be taken up and repeated elsewhere. Credibility conferred at one site can magnify influence in another. Both direct and corrective interventions need to be attentive to how communicative influence circulates system-wide, and it is here that the model of communicative influence links up with the growing body of work on deliberative systems.

The deliberative system encompasses all “talk-based approaches to political conflict and problem solving” (Mansbridge et al. 2012). It divides labors and judgments and combines them in various ways. According to a deliberative systems perspective, different deliberative virtues are upheld at different sites (Goodin 2005, 193), each of which can compensate for another’s deficiencies, allowing seemingly negative aspects of the political system to nevertheless contribute to its deliberative quality (Chambers 2012). Neblo provides a comprehensive list of the elements of the deliberative system and a general sense of how they relate to one another: inner deliberation, private discussion, informal networks, civic organizations, interest groups, parties, formal government, the media, and campaigns and elections (Neblo 2012, 20-29). Deliberative democrats have paid particular attention to mini-publics as sites of deliberation (Chambers 2009), including their design and functions (Fung 2003), and their place within democratic systems (Neblo 2012; Mackenzie and Warren 2012). Indeed, their worth—and potential harm, as Neblo points out—rests with how they are integrated into the deliberative system.
Mini-publics help illustrate the distinction between site and system-wide correctives. Within mini-publics, organizers often implement both learning phases and small group activities to help people understand the issue and its relationship to their values, before placing participants in an environment in which others exert more rigid influence as the group pushes towards agreement. As I argue in Chapter 9, these two features of mini-public processes have important balancing effects. But mini-publics can have corrective functions at the system level as well. For example, mini-publics might not issue any agreement or consensus at all. Rather, they might work to foster discussion and help people root out poorly grounded attributions of credibility. Mini-publics can also serve as sites where the stakes are sufficiently low and actors have sufficient time and information to think outside of or challenge dominant frames, and potentially to reintroduce their findings into the broader public sphere. In the remainder of this chapter, I explore some specific possibilities for the design of both mini-publics and other sites of deliberation in terms of how they might directly address or indirectly correct for some anti-democratic hazards I associate with modification effects.

The Anti-Democratic Hazards of Modification Effects

Modification effects occur when ecological features interact with the inferential structures of speech to alter the rigidity, reciprocity, and transparency of communicative influence. These modification effects derive primarily from structural-substantive features—recognizable, repeated patterns of inference that frame issues, particularly highly politicized issues. As I argued in Chapter 4, frames function to modify communicative influence. When an inferential structure triggers frame-based reasoning, the frame works in the background by
establishing the salience or weight of commitments that the target might engage. Frames embed assumptions, implicitly connect beliefs and values, and, by defining an issue as being of a certain type, downplay considerations that a target might otherwise have engaged.

The second source of modification effects are those subject-based ecological features that derive from characteristics of the target of communicative influence, including knowledge, engagement, and perceived stake in the issue. The existing commitments into which inferential structures intervene also vary in terms of the presence or absence of commitments on an issue, and the likelihood that targets will access those commitments. In an extreme example, when a target completely lacks knowledge on an issue, there can be no reciprocity, because there are no existing beliefs to engage. Similarly, along with more generic psychological biases I address in the next section, a target’s perception of his or her stake in a given issue can trigger psychological predispositions that may render communicative influence more or less reciprocal depending, not on the nature of the inferential structure itself, but on how motivated people are to actively engage their own commitments. Both sources of modification effects have the potential to render communicative influence inconsistent with discursive democratic goods. In the next two sections, I clarify these hazards and suggest four sets of potential institutional interventions for each—first, for modification effects that result from frames, and second, for those that result from target characteristics.

**Direct and Corrective Interventions for Frame-Based Modification Effects**

The modification effects of frames can pose hazards to the conditions of autonomy identified in Chapter 5. Inferential structures can build on the way frames pre-package
commitments, rendering some of these implicit and thereby compromising transparency and reflexivity. Strong frames can also compromise reciprocity—the stronger the frame, the more powerfully it can work to weigh some considerations more heavily than others that might have informed a target’s judgments in the absence of the frame. Frames that constrain reasoning—from which few conclusions can be drawn, like the well-known “welfare queen” frame used by US Republicans in the 1980s—are particularly damaging to autonomy in that they combine rigid influence with low reflexivity and low authenticity. Addressing these hazards involves direct institutional interventions and corrections, both at the site level and the system level. Of course, the extent to which institutions can actually prevent these democratic hazards will vary. For example, rules and incentives against the use and perpetuation of frames are unlikely to achieve much, particularly given how deeply ingrained dominant frames can become in people’s cognitive apparatus, and given how great the temptations are for strategic actors to use them. At the same time, there are interventions and correctives that could mitigate the autonomy-damaging effects of frames.

**Site-level direct interventions: Reducing frame reliance**

One of the central hazards of frames is that a speaker’s reliance on a frame, whether as a deliberate strategy or an unconscious crutch, compromises transparency by rendering the commitments that are actually exerting force or leveraging agreement implicit; the more an argument relies on a frame, the more this may be so. Thus, the purpose of direct interventions should be to reduce frame reliance. One way of reducing frame reliance directly would be to require actors to identify priorities and to be explicit about how they envision the trade-offs.

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35 For a more complete discussion of how mini-publics specifically might be used to respond to the democratic hazards of frames, see Calvert and Warren (2012).
among them, rather than making arguments for or against a decision, which would be a more common pattern of discourse. According to Nelson, Oxley and Clawson (1997), issue frames work by indicating how people should weigh different beliefs, rather than change them. Disembedding questions of the weight people wish to ascribe to considerations from the frame renders such implicit sources of force explicit and subject to critical reflection. Articulating priorities in this way has the added advantage of helping ensure that people are not “talking past” one another by enabling them to discuss choices apart from frame-linked positions in situations where frames reflect and perpetuate polarization (A. Calvert and Warren 2012). Assigning such discursive tasks and exercises may be particularly important for strong frames, which are difficult to neutralize merely by introducing competition.

In addition, institutions like mini-publics can reduce frame reliance by giving actors the time and space to think through an issue, reducing the need to fall back on cognitive shortcuts like familiar frames. Although the additional time and space would not guarantee that participants would resist reaching for the nearest available familiar frame, organizers could at least create conditions in which thinking through an issue without relying on a familiar frame would be possible. Moreover, by constructing a mini-public around a particular problem, issue, or task rather than an entire ideology, platform, or issue area, mini-public agendas can cut across received frames, rendering them less applicable and therefore

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36 These claims about potential institutional correctives to polarizing frames are based on theoretical assumptions about the empirical relationship between competing frames, polarization, and actors’ propensity to talk past one another. These hypothetical claims merit empirical investigation as part of a larger agenda looking into the democratic harms and potentials of frames—an agenda that a pragmatic account of communicative influence helps to advance.
less tempting (A. Calvert and Warren 2012). If a mini-public is insulated from the broader public sphere, however, these effects will be limited to those actors who actually attend and participate in the mini-public. If they are to have broader effects, mini-public outputs—even if these simply amount to summaries of the group’s deliberation—must be taken up at other sites, including informal discussion.

Institutional responses to frames must also be attentive to patterns of communicative influence, including the narratives, metaphors, and analogies that serve to perpetuate frames. There may be times, for example, when institutional rules should exclude storytelling in favour of modes of communication where the connections among claims are more explicit, in order to mitigate the development and perpetuation of frames. Such effects can be mitigated by allowing some sites to restrict speakers to concrete, verifiable claims, as happens in legal proceedings. This is not to say that the selective presentation of facts cannot exert as powerful a framing effect as a well-placed narrative, but rather to suggest that rules might make it easier to detect the threats both types of practices pose to reflexivity.

System-level direct interventions: Reducing frame reliance

At the system level, institutions may reduce frame reliance by reducing speakers’ incentives to use frames. For instance, potential influence targets could be exposed to unpacked versions of frames whose presuppositions and entailments were articulated explicitly and challenged, thus rendering the original frames less effective, or at least normatively neutral. To achieve this effect, system-level interventions might empower some sites or actors to undertake these tasks. According to Goodin’s (2005) account of system-

37 Designing minipublics around a narrow agenda may hinder participants’ ability to situate an issue in context or consider trade-offs among goods. But to the extent that the primary goal of a process is to correct for frame-based effects, organizers may prioritize design considerations I have suggested.
wide deliberation, for example, one deliberative function of political parties may be to frame issues for broader debate. But perhaps reducing frame reliance requires that a different type of actor should either share or replace this function. Because political parties have a heavy stake in the outcome of individual judgments, they might not be the best candidates for the task of framing issues for debate, parties themselves often being heavily invested in frames.

As an alternative, a site or actor without a stake in the outcome—including, but not necessarily, a mini-public—might undertake the task of setting the parameters for debate, considering the appropriate weight of different dimensions. Interested actors like political parties could then engage in communicative influence, given a set of commitments with an explicit set of dimensions and weights. For example, faced with an unexpected spending opportunity, the City of Calgary recently separated two deliberative tasks along the lines I have suggested. Through closed deliberations, actors identified five possible ways of spending the money, ranging from upgrading old neighbourhoods to tax breaks. After establishing the choices, one alderman was assigned as the “champion” of each priority for ongoing public discourse and a live debate which will, ideally, inform poll responses and face to face public engagement processes (City of Calgary 2013). In another, mini-public specific example, Citizens Initiative Review processes in Oregon deliberate about the ballot measures on which the public votes. Following learning and deliberation phases, panels issue statements that explain the arguments for and against a particular measure in order to help
voters to understand the decision they are being asked to make and the arguments for and against the measure (Richards 2012, in Participedia).  

**Site-level corrective intervention: Disaggregating frames and inducing reciprocity**

The direct interventions discussed above can, to some extent, mitigate the anti-democratic hazards of the frame-based modification of communicative influence. However, eliminating frames completely is neither possible nor desirable. Sometimes the incentives to deploy strong frames to their advantage are too powerful, or actors operate outside the rules of a given site of discourse. In addition, frames do important work in organizing cognition and helping people sort out their commitments around issues. As such, corrective interventions may do just as much or more to secure autonomous judgment in the face of frame-based communicative influence.

To achieve this corrective function with respect to frames, site and system-level institutional responses should try to induce reciprocity *despite* the presence of frames in discursive ecosystems. If frames represent bundles that structure connections among commitments and establish the boundaries of relevance, inducing reciprocity requires unpacking these bundles and getting actors to reach for considerations outside of those prompted by the frames. One way of promoting such deliberate processing and increasing the range of accessible considerations is exposing people to heterogeneous frames (Chong and Druckman 2007a, 652; Druckman 2004; Druckman and Nelson 2003). Heterogeneity can be

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38 Again, there is a potential trade-off involved here. By removing the stakes for at least some actors within part or all of a set of discursive practices, those actors may have low motivation to argue effectively or evaluate arguments carefully. However, there is also reason to think that the end goal of better discourse is sufficient to motivate some actors to fulfill specific deliberative tasks like identifying the appropriate scope for debate on an issue. By contrast, highly motivated actors like political parties have incentives to use influence in ways that damages autonomy—for instance, by framing debate in a specific way. Devolving specific tasks to actors with different incentives has the potential to create a better environment for autonomy.
achieved by orchestrating conversations that cut across frames (Druckman and Nelson 2003, 731) or through frame competition, more generally, although competition may not be enough to mitigate the effects of very strong frames (Chong and Druckman 2007b). Brewer and Gross suggest that while counter-framing may limit the direction of opinion shifts generated by strong frames, once a frame introduces a value, actors are more likely to articulate their own thoughts in terms of that value (2005, 943).

Although situations in which strong frames persist should slightly dampen our optimism about the neutralizing effects of heterogeneous frames, there are other potential sources of reciprocity-inducing corrective effects. Promoting discussion might prompt people to engage in what Neblo calls articulation (2012, 72), a process through which people work out and render more coherent their webs of commitments. In the course of discussion, actors exposed to new ways of thinking about an issue might identify frame-based inconsistencies in their own commitments or reflexively endorse frame-based connections. At the site level, then, promoting communicative influence of the discussion type, in which people help one another to articulate their own commitments, may be one way of correcting for harmful frames. It is also reasonable to assume that discussion can best generate these corrective effects when people do not already agree (in this case, subscribe to the same frame). Cass Sunstein’s research on group polarization parallels this insight. If people converse with those with whom they already agree, their opinions are likely to become more entrenched and more extreme (Sunstein 2003). Whether or not sites that bring people into contact with opposing views can actually produce discussion—rather than devolve into something more forceful or harmful (as a cursory glance at online newspaper comment threads would suggest)—is another question, although it seems more plausible in facilitated mini-publics than elsewhere.
I return to this issue in Chapter 9. Finally, to correct for frames at the site level, institutional features can give people the tools and opportunities to interrogate patterns of communicative influence that perpetuate frames—notably loaded words, analogies and narratives. In the case of facilitated processes like mini-publics, organizers and facilitators can encourage people to interrogate the assumptions behind, for instance, choices of words or analogies. In doing so, they can render frame-based inferential structures more transparent and potentially more reciprocal.

**System-level corrective interventions: Disaggregating frames and inducing reciprocity**

Can institutions induce reciprocity with respect to frames at the system level as well as the site level? Having sites generate competing frames may be one way to create this effect. Alternatively, the system as a whole can work to incentivize frame competition at a single site—as elections tend to do by creating incentives for competition in sites where adversaries engage in public, discursive interaction. In these cases, however, frame competition may not matter if a target only listens to one of the speakers for reasons of perceived credibility. Incentivizing frame competition at the system level may therefore be insufficient to correct for the autonomy damaging effects of strong frames.

Discussion, as I suggested above, is a critical component in disaggregating the inferential structures implicit in frames. However, it is difficult to envision discussion taking place across and between sites. Nevertheless, system-level interventions can enhance the positive corrective effects of discussion at a given site by denaturalizing frames, making them available as objects of discussion. Effects that can cross sites include taking apart myths, raising new issues that do not sit easily in received frames, articulating alternative ways of looking at a problem, or challenging the “factual” basis of problematic frames. For
example, Neblo identifies instances of civil society fact-checking evocative language. As he points out, Sarah Palin’s claim that the 2009 US health care reform bill included a provision for “Death Panels” deciding the rationing of care (rather than what the bill really suggested, which was providing funding to reimburse doctors for counseling around end of life care), elicited a response from two non-partisan organizations, who immediately took up the task of attempting to flag and debunk this lie: politifact.com and factcheck.org (Neblo 2012, 181). One part of the system—civil society actors—worked to shift the terms of the debate at the system-level off of a dominant frame. Such practices can generate and improve the quality of discussions at the site-level that help people engage in communicative influence that is more transparent and reciprocal to the extent that it cannot depend on frames.39

Likewise, interventions that work across sites in a system can enhance the corrective quality of discussions by ensuring that, when people are trying to discuss an issue about which they disagree, they have a sufficient grasp of the nature of their (often frame-based) disagreement. The alternative is that people may talk past one another and get frustrated, at which point cross-cutting conversations within sites cannot achieve deliberative effects.

Systems can facilitate cross-cutting discussion at a site by positioning other actors to clarify the nature of a disagreement.40 Alternatively, a single site where discussion has successfully

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39 Although transparency and loaded language are also at issue here, I focus on the framing consequences of Palin’s discursive choice. The claim about “death panels” shifted the terms of debate from whether doctors should be allowed to offer counsel about end of life care, to the rationing of health care. Had she spelled out her argument, it would have been open to easy, fact-based rebuttal that might have supported genuine debate about the policy. What is noteworthy about this example is that there are civil society actors with sufficient motivation to perform the function of attempting to prevent or correct for framing effects.

40 Clarifying a disagreement may simply lead speakers to agree to disagree. For example, for one speaker, environmental degradation may absolutely trump economic considerations in making decisions about routing a pipeline. Such a firm commitment leaves him or her with effectively nothing to talk about with someone for whom economics are the priority. In that case, though, at least whatever minimal discussion takes place will be better able to induce reflexivity on the speakers’ own preferences.
enabled people to reach outside received frames—particularly mini-publics designed with this purpose in mind—could feed into other sites, signaling new ways of thinking about issues in their capacity as information proxies (A. Calvert and Warren 2012; Cutler & Johnston, 2008; Mackenzie and Warren 2012). These sites could be a place where people look for arguments separated from an obvious strategic interest, since mini-public members are selected rather than elected. Table 7.1 summarizes the findings for institutional interventions that might prevent and correct for the autonomy-damaging effects of frames.

Table 7.1 Direct and Corrective Responses to Frame-Based Modification Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site-Level</th>
<th>System-Level</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Direct:</strong> Reduce Frame Reliance</td>
<td>- require articulation of priorities and trade-offs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- reduce cognitive demands and incentives to rely on and deploy frames (increase time, reduce stake and scope of problem)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- sometimes limit patterns of communicative influence that tend to convey inferential structures less transparently (i.e. narratives)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Corrective:</strong> Induce reciprocity</td>
<td>- empower neutral sites to challenge frames or offer counter frames</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- separate the task of determining the scope, dimensions, and nature of an issue (agenda determination) from debate and persuasion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- competition among frames</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- cross-cutting discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- facilitate interrogation of patterns of communicative influence—particularly choices of analogy and metaphor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- denaturalize frames and the patterns of communicative influence that perpetuate them.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- place mini-publics as interpretation proxies, offering points of reference for arguments not grounded in frames.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- specify the nature of disagreement that competing frames embody in order to enhance quality of discussion elsewhere.</td>
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**Direct and Corrective Interventions for Target-Based Modification Effects**

Chapter 4 introduced two types of subject-based ecological effects: those pertaining to speaker characteristics, and those pertaining to target characteristics. I argued that target characteristics exerted a modifying effect on communicative influence, conditioning
possibilities for reciprocity and transparency. Here, I argue that this sort of modification
effect can involve two anti-democratic hazards. The first is lack of knowledge. In those cases
in which the target has few or poorly-formed commitments in an issue area, influence cannot
be reciprocal. This limits the types of communicative influence a speaker can use. If speakers
seek influence through rigidity under such circumstances, there are only two options: proof or
manipulation. To the extent that rigid influence in such circumstances is transparent, as in a
proof, it is not particularly problematic, because it only exerts force on the basis of targets’
buy-in to commitments they can understand and recognize. To the extent that speakers seek
influence non-transparently in circumstances defined by low target knowledge—including
through rhetoric—inferential structures manipulate commitments. Reasoning proceeds only
on the speaker’s own terms, with no external basis on which targets can choose to agree to
those terms.

Because they do not exert force, non-rigid forms of influence such as assertions may
not raise the same concerns about modification. However, even individual assertions can
compel uptake—rather than merely being offers—if they are accompanied by the
magnification effects of a speaker’s status. As such, when credible speakers articulate even
non-rigid inferential structures like assertions, a target’s lack of commitments can pose the
same anti-democratic hazards as with more rigid forms of influence.

41 This requirement risks frustrating speakers who find they can make few or no connections with the
commitments of audiences. What recourse does a speaker have in such situation? He or she can avoid violating
autonomy by engaging in non-rigid types of influence—offering explanations for his or her choices, making
assertions that targets are free to reject or take up, or engaging in discussion in an effort to identify common
ground. To the extent that he or she wishes to influence the targets directly through rigid speech, however, he or
she must either work with some minimal common ground and construct a compelling, transparent inferential
structure—a proof, or, as common ground increases, persuasion—or he or she must operate on the basis of
existing commitments. Without any purchase in those commitments, rhetorical speech risks being manipulative.
These knowledge-related hazards demand several different types of responses, both direct and corrective, at the site and system levels. The first, direct intervention involves filling the knowledge gaps—ensuring that people have the opportunity to build up their commitments. The second type of intervention is primarily corrective. Given that people cannot become experts on every topic on which they might have a position, there should be appropriate mechanisms for deferring to the credible judgment of others rather than developing one’s own commitments. I address these two responses in this section.

The second type of anti-democratic hazard of subject-based modification effects concerns targets’ psychological biases. Some of these biases are tied to a target’s perceived stake in an issue, which determines the level of motivation he or she brings to the reasoning process (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). Other tendencies are more generic, including bias towards confirmatory evidence (Mercier and Sperber 2011), towards avoiding loss (Mercer 2005), or towards adopting simple explanations over more probable and complex ones (Lombrozo 2007). These tendencies can compromise both reflexivity and authenticity because people do not consciously process some of the implicit, sometimes automatic reasoning patterns that are exerting communicative influence. Because these psychological tendencies cannot be changed directly, they require corrective responses, primarily at the site-level.

**Site-level direct interventions: Ensuring the accessibility of information**

The purpose of direct interventions at both the site and system level should be to ensure the availability and accessibility of knowledge and information. At the site-level, institutionalizing learning phases to ensure that speakers and targets have a sufficient information basis on which to proceed partially fulfills this purpose. Learning is a particularly
critical component of mini-public design as their purpose is to elicit informed deliberation, sometimes on issues that are completely unfamiliar to participants (Mackenzie and O'Doherty 2011).42

Outside of mini-publics, ensuring that the knowledge environment enables, rather than undermines, reciprocity could entail techniques that confine discourse to shared knowledge, perhaps in the form of an officially tabled report or expert testimony. The idea behind such a direct intervention would be to enable reciprocity by limiting the basis on which speakers could construct inferential structures to those claims that targets would have sufficient grounds to understand and endorse. The effectiveness of such an intervention, however, is limited by the fact that even when those parties in an exchange may both be privy to and endorse the information around which communicative influence is meant to unfold, parties to the exchange may not actually be the intended targets of influence. For instance, in a public exchange between adversaries, even if they agree to proceed on the basis of some shared set of facts, this does nothing to enhance reciprocity with respect to the actual targets of influence—an audience or electorate—if targets do not also understand those facts. Confining speakers in this type of venue to a set of agreed-upon facts would only enhance reciprocity to the extent that audiences also understood and agreed to those facts. While such a practice is probably unrealistic, some debate or town-hall question formats appeal to something like the reciprocity available from shared premises by preceding a question by a

42 Mini-publics must also sometimes work to combat the effects of knowledge imbalances, which can lead some speakers to draw on external knowledge in a way that positions them as experts—without other participants necessarily having the grounds for making that judgment, and undermining others’ sense that they have something to contribute. The solution is sometimes to confine fact-based claims to the shared source material, although insofar as processes are also intended to elicit participants’ particular perspectives, reliance on informational materials must also be facilitated carefully.
fact: for example, “the number of people without healthcare is X: what are you going to do about it?”

System-level direct interventions: Ensuring the accessibility of information

System-level interventions can also achieve effects that mitigate the democratic hazards of lack of knowledge. Experts are an important part of any deliberative system, and well-positioned experts can also contribute to autonomous judgments by providing explanations or credible assertions. If a deliberative system makes expert information both available across sites, and accessible to non-experts, it directly works to prevent the anti-democratic hazards of low information. In doing so, the system can also lower the cost of verifying information presented as fact, to partially mitigate the effect of assertions in a low information environment. For this reason, from the perspective of securing the grounds for autonomous judgments, sites that translate technical information into something attainable for non-experts are an important systemic feature. Translation makes persuasion possible, for instance on the basis of what Lau and Schlesinger (2005) call policy metaphors—familiar tropes from the social world through which people can grasp policy options. In order for them to enhance autonomy, however, sites of translation themselves must be free of actual or perceived strategic interests—they must be trustworthy or credible.

Site-level corrective interventions: Working around psychological biases

Corrective interventions at the site level are best suited to addressing the hazards of some of the inevitable psychological tendencies identified earlier in the dissertation, which allow speech to derive force, deliberately or not, from non-transparent, non-reflexive inferences. Corrective interventions can dampen this force. For instance, sites might be
designed to present information in both positive and negative lights to correct for the fact that people respond to risk differently if they perceive that they are in a domain of potential gain or potential loss. Perceived domain is, in turn, determined by how a choice is presented. For instance, analogies and heuristics can place people in a loss-aversion stance towards a decision by making them think of similar circumstances that elicited feelings of loss, fear, or regret (Mercer 2005). Gabriel Lenz (2012) finds that when people judge a president’s economic performance, they tend to use the last year as a heuristic substitute for the whole, despite explicitly claiming that they wish to give the years equal weight. He argues that presenting the same information in a different way—for example, reporting to participants cumulative economic performance over a president’s term rather than year-over-year data—can mitigate the effects of this heuristic (Lenz 2012). Similarly, asking people to merely evaluate arguments, when they know they will not be asked to respond and make an argument of their own, mitigates confirmation bias (Mercier and Sperber 2011). Lombrozo finds that people tend to favor simpler explanations, even at the expense of an alternative being more probable (Lombrozo 2007). Site organizers might correct for this bias towards simplicity by providing information about the probability of competing hypotheses, or by revealing the complexity behind explanations purported to be simple. Lombrozo’s research shows that simple explanations will continue to hold powerful appeal. While the above suggestions may not be enough to overcome the often disproportionate influence of simple explanations, they may exert some corrective effect. Finally, insofar as some of the psychological tendencies that undermine reflexivity are connected to perceived stake, a site’s organizer should work to ensure that people understand their own stake in an issue—
particularly mini-publics, in which participants, at least in theory, represent a sample of the constituency likely to be affected by an issue.

**System-level corrective interventions: Meaningful deferral of judgment with low information**

Corrective interventions may also address the hazard of limited knowledge by trying to enable autonomy despite incomplete information, rather than trying to fill in the gaps. Corrective interventions at the system level can achieve this by creating opportunities for citizens to defer judgments. In Chapter 8, I discuss a similar system-level function, in which actors can adopt commitments on the basis of their judgments of the credibility of sources of claims. The corrective intervention I suggest here, however, is slightly different. In the case of deferring judgment—a choice actors can make when they have low knowledge or few commitments—targets actually avoid the justificatory obligations undertaking a new commitment would entail, even if that justification is simply trust in a credible source. In addition to increasing the availability of information, developing a role for credible experts enables people to commit to deferring to a trusted proxy. In lieu of deferring to experts, however, people might also defer to the considered and deliberated judgment of a sample of their fellow citizens, as can be exemplified in the outputs and recommendations of mini-publics (Mackenzie and Warren 2012). This use of mini-publics may be particularly valuable for complex science or technology issues, where people simply prefer to let others decide, rather than invest the time to gain even a cursory knowledge of the issue, let alone a more technical understanding. Table 7.2 summarizes the findings of this section on direct and corrective institutional responses to the hazards of modification.
Alternatively, mini-publics might instead offer a middle path between enabling system-wide, accessible learning, on the one hand, and deferral, on the other, by generating succinct maps of a group’s efforts to reason collectively about a problem (Neblo 2012, 224), including the reasons participants offered for and against positions, reasons people gave for changing their minds, and questions that remained unanswered. With a succinct account of the reasoning process of others who did have the time, space and resources necessary to give an issue their careful consideration, people might quickly and efficiently sort themselves according to their own values and beliefs.

**Table 7.2. Direct and Corrective Responses to Target-Based Modification Effects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Site-level</th>
<th>System-level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct:</strong></td>
<td>- institutionalize learning phase (reports, expert testimony)</td>
<td>- ensure translation points to render technical information accessible and relatable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- proceed on basis of explicitly shared and endorsed knowledge</td>
<td>- ensure access to information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- reduce costs of verifying information presented as fact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corrective:</strong></td>
<td>- present information in a variety of ways (with attention to common biases)</td>
<td>- position experts and mini-publics as potential proxies, and allow deferral of judgment on grounds that subject the deferral itself to autonomous judgment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- sometimes ask people merely to evaluate, without the pressure of having to formulate their own positions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- provide information about arguments (not just speakers), i.e. about hypothesis probability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

In these chapters, I suggest that we should judge institutions in the discursive ecosystem in terms of their ability to deliver discursive democratic goods in the face of a series of anti-democratic hazards arising from discursive ecological effects. In the current
chapter, I focused on the hazards of two ecological sources of modification effects: frames and target characteristics. Frames have the potential to render communicative influence at once more rigid, less transparent, and less reciprocal by virtue of how they establish relationships among targets’ commitments and allow speech to trigger frame based reasoning processes. In addition to frames, the presence or absence of commitments in a given issue area, as well as some general psychological biases that determine how people access those commitments, can also produce modification effects. Both frames and target characteristics can compromise the reflexivity and authenticity required for the judgments that make up actors’ reasoning processes to be considered autonomous. I have suggested that the institutional arrangements governing specific sites of discourse might alter these modification effects by reducing participants’ opportunities and incentives to rely on frames and by filling in knowledge gaps. At the system level, direct interventions might empower neutral sites to re-frame issues or set the terms for debate, and establish mechanisms for the translation of knowledge.

The task of corrective interventions is to offer countermeasures ensuring that, to the extent that these modification effects and the ecological features that generate them persist, there is still space for actors to make relatively autonomous judgments. At the site level, exposure to competing viewpoints—and the competing frames that often accompany them—can prompt influence targets to reach for a set of considerations that exceeds received frames. Presenting information in a variety of ways that may dampen the effects of psychological bias. At the system level, interventions can break frames apart and make it easier for specific sites to move actors off of frame-based reasoning. System level interventions can also create opportunities for the warranted deferral of judgments.
Chapter 8. Institutional Responses to the Anti-Democratic Hazards of Magnification Effects

A speaker’s communicative influence sometimes exceeds the potential inherent in an inferential structure alone. In such cases, communicative influence derives force from the speaker’s status, which I conceptualized in Chapter 4 in terms of credibility and the subject characteristics that confer it. A speaker’s expertise, first-hand knowledge, interest, or identity, without necessarily serving as a reason, can magnify the uptake of the claims that make up inferential structures, and thereby increase communicative influence. When magnification effects follow from warranted judgments about a speaker’s credibility, they can have important functions in the democratic system. The possibility of credible speech ensures that actors do not have to spell out the reasons, justifications and entailments as explicit inferential structures for every claim. Magnification effects enable actors to use the claims of others to make informed judgments without becoming experts themselves. And credibility ensures that those who are attributed entitlement to their claims for good reasons rightly exert greater communicative influence than those without. Yet these magnification effects also pose hazards for autonomous judgment, and thus for the discursive democratic goods theorists seek from deliberative politics.

In this chapter I consider the anti-democratic hazards of magnification effects in greater depth, and suggest some institutional responses. I argue that there are two specific types of hazards arising from magnification effects. The first is that actors may not have good reasons or grounds for their judgments of credibility. The second is that speakers might rely on credibility in ways that are inappropriate or problematic for autonomy. I explain each hazard in the first section. I then suggest institutional responses to these hazards using the
same typology of interventions as in the previous chapter, that is, direct and corrective interventions that can work at both the site and system levels.

**Anti-Democratic Hazards of Magnification Effects**

*Poorly grounded judgments of credibility*

The first type of magnification hazard arises when the judgments of credibility that magnify a speaker’s influence are poorly or insufficiently grounded. As Mackenzie and Warren point out, sometimes citizens have good reasons to trust representatives and agencies. Other times, this trust is conferred by default, and such default trusts are sometimes mistaken (2012, 96). Communicative influence is about using words and inferences to exert force. As I argued in Chapter 5, such influence should be judged in terms of how it affects autonomy, which in turn depends on its relative rigidity, transparency, and reciprocal qualities. Insofar as credibility exerts a force that *supplements* that of inferential structures, it should be subject to the same autonomy-based criteria as inferential structures. In other words, attributions of credibility, and the magnification they generate, should be underwritten by reflexive and authentic judgments.

From the perspective of autonomy, there are two ways in which the grounds for credibility judgments can be lacking or problematic. The first is related to non-transparency. The information actors need to make judgments of credibility may simply not be available. Sometimes, as in the case when targets take their cues from a speaker’s membership in a given party, actors lack the grounds to judge credibility because its sources are more heuristic than concrete. Other times there may not be a sufficient record of past actions on which to judge credibility that derives from (appeals to) consistency or trustworthiness. The second
way credibility judgments can be problematic from the perspective of autonomy is related to both non-transparency and non-reciprocity: an actor may be rightly credible in one area but he or she may attempt to exert communicative influence with another area. I call this “credibility creep” or, in pragmatic terms, the migration of entitlement. In order to illustrate the hazards of credibility creep, consider Thomas Christiano’s perspective on the ideal role of experts in the deliberative system. According to Christiano, this role should be based on a division of labour in which citizens set aims, and experts craft policy in accordance with those aims (2012, 31). But a potential democratic hazard arises when experts are attributed supplemental entitlement that extends from the choice of means to the choice of ends, contributing to the risk of “bureaucratic domination” (see Richardson 2003). I shall argue below that site and system level intervention can both contribute to underwriting good judgments of credibility, but system-wide direct interventions specifically may be most effective at preventing credibility creep.

*Over-reliance on credible assertions*

The second type of magnification hazard arises when magnification enables speakers to rely on credible assertions for force in such a way that they can avoid articulating inferential structures that should be doing the work of communicative influence. This over-reliance on credibility may be problematic for several reasons. The first reason relying on credible assertions for force may be harmful is simply that articulating more complete inferential structures helps to create positive conditions for autonomous judgment. For instance, in a mini-public, if a certain participant positions himself or herself early on as having greater knowledge on a topic, in time he or she may be less pressured to spell our his or her reasoning. Other credible actors in the broader public sphere acquire a similar status in
which they can exert communicative influence without actually making arguments. In both kinds of settings, the effects of failing to articulate inferential structures may be problematic. Avoiding discussion, persuasion, proof and explanation—transparent modes that render inferential structures explicit—robs people of opportunities to develop their own web of commitments, or to establish a set of shared understandings and commitments within a site that create the conditions for *reciprocal* engagement.

The second reason that over-reliance on credibility may be problematic derives from the unequal distributions of credibility among actors, at both sites of discourse and system wide. Although there are sometimes good reasons for some actors to have greater credibility than others—and thus magnified influence—it also creates advantages and disadvantages in access to communicative influence. In order to access the same measure of force as a well-positioned speaker who makes an assertion, a less credible speaker may have to use more elaborate inferential structures that open him or her up to criticism, co-optation, or possible rejection.

The possibility of using arguments in this way to overcome such inequality is part of what makes language a powerful resource for marginalized groups: persuasive arguments can be a source of influence regardless of status. Yet inequality that manifests itself as magnified influence may also perpetuate injustices by creating an unfair playing field, in which some actors have to expose themselves to criticism, co-optation and mis-attribution by virtue of transparency, while others do not. Interrogating the distribution of status through the lens of equality may be one way of approaching this hazard. But because of the important functions of credibility, simply calling for equal communicative influence is not the answer, since there may be good reasons for uneven distributions of credibility. Targets may be completely
justified in putting greater trust in someone who shares their interests or their identity over someone who does not. For this kind of reason, the institutional interventions I suggest for hazards that result from over-reliance on credibility are primarily corrective, whereas institutional interventions for grounding credibility judgments are more direct. Table 8.1 offers a preliminary summary four types of generic responses to the above hazards, depending on their directness and their positioning within deliberative systems.

Table 8.1. Key Functions of Institutional Interventions in Magnification Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Site-level</th>
<th>System-level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>- prevent abuses of credibility</td>
<td>- prevent credibility from exceeding its appropriate domain (“credibility creep”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- track consistency among claims, and between words and actions</td>
<td>- underwrite good credibility judgments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrective</td>
<td>- periodically require speakers to render sources of credibility explicit</td>
<td>- encourage or require speakers to articulate inferential structures rather than relying on a credible assertions for influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- underwrite good credibility judgments</td>
<td>- underwrite good credibility judgments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Direct Interventions for the Anti-Democratic Hazards of Magnification Effects

Site-level direct interventions: Underwriting good judgments of credibility

One of the reasons credibility can be hazardous to autonomous judgment is that it allows speakers to exert influence without constructing or articulating rigid or reciprocal inferential structures because speech can instead borrow force from the speaker’s status. The function of direct interventions at a specific sites should be to ensure that the additional force credibility confers is also consistent with autonomy by giving people good reasons for attributing credibility. One way giving people good reasons for their credibility judgments is by preventing abuses of credibility, ensuring that speakers are not trading on their credibility
in ways that compromise the conditions of autonomy. Proscribing and penalizing deception —as in hearings and judicial proceedings—is particularly important to ensuring that trust is well-placed in situations where credibility derives from the speaker’s privileged position with respect to his or her claims. In circumstances defined by testimony and other assertions of first-hand knowledge, targets have no grounds to challenge something the speaker reports as fact, so interventions should ensure that they have some other reason to take the claims as true. Another kind of direct intervention might involve structuring opportunities for exit from an institution or venue, thereby allowing actors to “vote with their feet” in order sanction abuses of trust by leaders (Warren 2011). In this kind of case, audiences have the power to intervene when a speaker abuses credibility by, say, withdrawing their support from a party.

**Site-level direct interventions** might also involve measures to provide sufficient grounds for credibility judgments. For instance, institutional procedures might track speakers’ records in order to help people make informed judgments where credibility depends on consistency—whether with the targets’ values and interests, or with the speaker’s earlier commitments. Institutional rules might also require periodically rendering sources of credibility explicit so that people have opportunities to reflexively and authentically endorse their reasons for attributing credibility. By altering the speakers’ incentives (an idea introduced in Chapter 4 and elaborated in Chapter 9), institutional features might motivate speakers to explain, discuss or persuade targets of their credibility. Is the source of expertise or first-hand knowledge sufficient to lend weight to the claims a speaker is making? Is a target’s trust in the speaker well-founded? According to Lupia and McCubbins (1998), citizens can reasonably rely on trusted proxies if they are convinced that those proxies have interests in common with their own, and relevant knowledge. Site level interventions could
underwrite good credibility judgments by encouraging (or requiring) speakers to render explicit those sources of warranted trust speakers think rightly lend weight to their claims, rather than, as is commonly the case when speaking strategically, trying to channel all discourse into arguments about the topic at hand while avoiding questions of credibility. For instance, processes might require that speakers first honestly articulate their credentials and identify any possible conflicts of interest prior to making claims or arguments—as, for instance, a friendly lawyer might prompt an expert witness to do in a trial.

**System-level direct interventions: Preventing the migration of entitlements**

As I suggested in table 8.1, *system-wide direct interventions* can serve discursive democratic goods in two ways. First, system level institutional interventions can help to ensure that the reasons someone might attribute credibility are related to the actual exercise of credibility, preventing what I described as the migration of entitlement or “credibility creep.” Sites might oversee one another, ensuring that members stick to messages that are within their mandate. Oversight bodies can also collect and transmit explanations and elaborations. For instance, citizen advisory panels can act as an element of administrative processes. Bureaucratic agencies may even seek out such input, rather than view it as a hindrance, in situations where they do not want to undermine their own credibility by exceeding its boundaries (see Warren 2009).

More generally, if deliberative systems empower different, or even competing, sites to verify and track one another—a function perhaps best achieved across sites so that a tit-for-tat logic does not lead to actual or perceived lenience—they can enhance the *grounds* on which actors make judgments of credibility. In other words, system level interventions can also make sure that people have good reasons for allowing those with certain statuses or
characteristics to wield magnified influence. For example, in the 2012 election, some
journalists and organizations took it upon themselves to publish running fact-checks during
the presidential debates, thus ensuring that candidates did not abuse the influence derived
from speaking for their respective parties to speak deceptively, and that audiences had
additional grounds on which to weigh the candidates’ often rhetorical, non-transparent
claims, as well as lies and inconsistencies. Indeed, this credibility checking function suggests
yet another argument in favour of a vigilant press.

At the same time, empowering speakers at one site to challenge those at another
might also become pathological if speakers never have a chance to respond across sites and
to the same audiences. Without opportunities to explain or justify themselves, actors may
become so invested in how their records look that they would be unlikely to be moved even
by persuasive reasons. Or, on the other end of the spectrum, un-met challenges may become
so pervasive that audiences become instinctively distrusting, and refuse to be moved by any
evidence of credibility. As I argued above, there are good reasons for maintaining a role for
the influence afforded by credibility. The solution, as I suggested in the previous section,
seems to be periodically rendering sources of credibility explicit and subject to considered
judgment, in ways that motivate speakers to build their reputations with multiple audiences,
over long periods of time. We see, in fact, that some of the most effective politicians have
done just that.
Corrective Interventions for Magnification Effects

Site-level corrective interventions: Preventing over-reliance on credible assertions

From the perspective of underwriting the discursive democratic goods that come with autonomous judgment, the primary function of corrective interventions at the site level is to correct for speakers’ over-reliance on credibility. As I pointed out in the section on the anti-democratic hazards of magnification effects, there are good reasons to require all speakers to spell out the logic behind, and entailments of, their claims, even if they are highly credible. For instance, preventing speakers from relying excessively on credibility can correct for inequalities in the distribution of credible statuses, ensuring that a range of voices are not just heard, but can also have influence. Second, to the extent that speakers rely on credible, non-transparent communicative influence instead of articulating more complete inferential structures, they deny others an opportunity to develop their own commitment sets as well as to compare their judgments of credibility with their judgments of arguments in order to calibrate the two. In facilitated venues like mini-publics, facilitators can introduce this correction by prompting people to elaborate on claims.

Attributions and denials of credibility are often non-reflexive, and instead grounded in heuristic cues like issue ownership (Petrocik 1996), which prevent some actors from speaking as credibly on issues targets associate with another party. In such circumstances, simply requiring that speakers articulate transparent inferential structures may be insufficient to get people to actually process the commitments they articulate, which is what makes transparency correct for the hazards of over-reliance on credible assertions. As such, achieving this corrective effect at a given site may require replacing, or at least supplementing, unreflexive judgments about the speaker with reflexive judgments about the
argument. In order to achieve this effect, site organizers may need to separate the argument from its speaker to prevent premature or non-reflexive dismissal of claims. For example, a claim about reform to the criminal code or to the justice system might be dismissed prematurely if the speaker comes from a party that cannot speak credibly on issues related to crime (see Iyengar and Valentino 2000). The corrective of dissociating speakers and arguments from one another does remove a heuristic shortcut. But it also prompts people to be more attentive to inferential structures, expanding and clarifying their own commitments on a topic.

**System-level corrective interventions: Promoting transparency in the articulation of inferential structures**

Speech contributes to the normative good of autonomous judgment by conveying inferential structures around commitments—their justifications, and what further inferences and actions for which they might serve as reasons. While credible speech also has important functions at both the site and system level, I have been arguing that over-reliance on credibility can undermine this democratic function by allowing speakers to get away with deriving communicative influence from mere assertions. As I suggested in the previous section, institutional interventions that articulate inferential structures without attributing them to a speaker may correct for the general tendency of actors not to think beyond judgments of a speaker. This kind of correction cannot simply rely on anonymizing speech at a given site. Patterns of anonymous exchanges in a single internet venue often reflect the possibility that even without biographical knowledge, targets can make inferences about the speaker from how he or she speaks, from on-record commitments, and from a sense of whether or not parties to an exchange already agree. In such cases, the speaker can still
matter for how anonymous messages are interpreted—and thus for the influence of those messages.

The idea behind corrective interventions that take the speaker out of the picture—articulated above as potential site-level interventions—is that the inferential structure itself should become the object of judgment so that people can understand the reasoning behind a claim. Had a specific speaker made the assertion, targets might have instead simply accepted or rejected it as a result of their perception of the speaker’s incentives, identity, or perceived trustworthiness, rather than engaging with the inferential structure of the speaker’s argument. System-level interventions might also achieve this effect by articulating the competing claims around an issue without attaching those claims to specific speakers. To the extent that system-level interventions can achieve this effect, targets may be more likely to develop their own resources for making meaningful judgments than when they use speaker characteristics as heuristic shortcut—though, as I suggested above, there are good reasons to maintain shortcuts, if only to enable cognitive divisions of labour that help people to extend their capacity to make good judgments.43

This kind of corrective would not replace influence deriving from credibility. Rather, it would ensure that credible, and thus magnified, assertions, disclosures, and rhetoric do not

43 Such a corrective would need to be sensitive enough to exempt situations where a speaker’s characteristics actually are relevant to their claims. For instance, a speaker with firsthand experience of a given social program might be able to offer a particular perspective to discussions about whether to defund that program. In cases where the speaker’s identity or biography adds something to discourse, the aim of a corrective may need to be rendering those identity or experience-based connections explicit so that targets might deliberately incorporate them into their own reasoning and judgment. The suggestion that arguments be de-linked from identities is also only one of a constellation of measures that serves to correct for some of the hazards of credibility-based effects in discursive ecosystems. The idea is not to deny the relevance of a speaker’s identity in making inferences from their claims, but rather to suggest ways of ensuring that people actually weigh the merits of an argument or claim, in a way that they may not do if they can easily substitute their judgments of speakers for their judgments of inferential structures.
replace reciprocal, transparent engagement with inferential structures. Table 8.2 lists the institutional interventions discussed in the preceding four sections that might potentially correct for the anti-democratic hazards of magnification effects: poorly grounded credibility judgments and over-reliance on credible speech.

**Table 8.2. Direct and Corrective Interventions for Magnification Effects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Site-Specific</th>
<th>System-Wide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct:</strong></td>
<td>- keep records of actors’ words and behaviours to provide a basis for judgment</td>
<td>- sites oversee one another to ensure they do not exceed the boundaries of credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwrite</td>
<td>- sanction abuses of trust and credibility (including through enabled exit)</td>
<td>- oversight to demand greater transparency in inferential structures (explanation, proof, persuasion or discussion, as opposed to assertion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>credibility</td>
<td>- periodically make sources of credibility explicit</td>
<td>- site tracks behaviour at another to inform judgments of credibility (i.e. fact-check)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>judgments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corrective:</strong></td>
<td>- promote moments of reflexivity on reasons for attributing credibility</td>
<td>- make sure people are not overly reliant on assertions by providing the surrounding inferential structure (justifications and entailments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgments of</td>
<td>- separate speakers from arguments, especially in situations where sources</td>
<td>- separate speakers from arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speakers</td>
<td>of credibility are unrelated to the claims being made.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>should be</td>
<td>- separate speakers and arguments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>balanced by</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>judgments of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inferential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structures (reasons)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, as in the previous one, I argued that the inevitable and sometimes helpful effects of some kinds of subject-based ecological features—those that often confer credibility for good reasons—can also damage the conditions for autonomous judgment. In the case of magnification effects resulting from attributions of credibility, these hazards include credibility judgments grounded in insufficient, incorrect, or irrelevant considerations; abuses of the opportunities for non-transparency afforded by a position of credibility; and
over-reliance on assertions for influence. I suggested a series of institutional interventions that might avoid or mitigate these hazards, and correct for some of the consequences of magnification. These include arrangements for making sources of credibility explicit and available for judgment and tracking; facilitators who prompt people to elaborate inferential structures rather than make assertions; and practices that allow people to judge arguments independently of how they judge speakers. These direct and corrective interventions ensure that magnification effects—and the potential for speakers’ taking advantage of the increased influence that results from magnification effects—remains consistent with autonomous judgment.
Chapter 9. Institutional Responses to the Anti-Democratic Hazards of Selection Effects

The third way in which the discursive ecosystem conditions communicative influence is through the selection effects that result from the incentives and constraints institutional arrangements generate. Like magnification effects (resulting from speaker characteristics conferring credibility) and modification effects (resulting from frames, or from target characteristics), the ways institutions select for different types of communicative influence also pose hazards for autonomous judgment. Institutional features of discursive ecosystems exert selection pressures by setting the stakes for communicative influence, thereby determining what a speaker stands to gain or lose by changing the commitments of others. Does he or she gain a vote in an election, a swing vote on a committee, a group’s endorsement, or a mini-public’s consensus? Transactional features of institutions determine which audiences speakers can reach, ranging from participants in a small group’s deliberation to the large scale audience of a campaign appearance. Generative features of institutions—those features that track claims and render them explicit—determine the long term effects of articulating a commitment, including whether or not it will become part of a permanent, accessible record to which future speakers can make reference. The generative consequences of speaking in institutional setting that include such features may account, for example, for the long delay in the Government of Canada’s apology to First Nations people for the harms caused by residential schools. Decision-makers had to weigh the consequences such a speech act would generate for ongoing legal disputes and negotiations. Finally, institutions determine the time, resources, and opportunities both speakers and targets can dedicate to
communicative influence, including both how they construct inferential structures and how they process them.

In Chapter 4, I argued that these and other institutional features exerted selection pressure on communicative influence. By incentivizing more or less rigidity, reciprocity, and transparency, institutional arrangements combine with actors’ preferences—what they hope to gain, and what they are willing to reveal—to select for different kinds of influence. For example, if a speaker sees an advantage in getting an adversary “on the record” for a given commitment, generative institutions that create such an opportunity select for greater rigidity. To the extent that speakers seek to avoid these generative effects by making fewer of their own commitments explicit—for instance, if they know those positions are unpopular—these same features may select against transparency. So, one hazard of selection effects is that they can produce influence types that compromise the autonomous judgment of targets, whether they are participants in or audiences to an exchange. I call this first hazard *pathological selection*, whereby institutions select for speech that is harmful, either because it is manipulative, or because it is inconsistent with the purpose of a given site of deliberation.

A second hazard concerns imbalance among communicative influence types. If a site selects for too much of one type, or too many sites select for the same type, the resulting imbalance can be a hazard in itself. As I argued in Chapter 8, too much of assertion, rhetoric, and disclosure—non-transparent types of communicative influence—deny actors the opportunities to develop their own commitments around an understanding of an issue and prevent them from engaging in future reciprocity. But at the same time, too much discussion and speech may never get anything done because speakers cannot direct their linguistic resources towards producing some end. Or, sometimes, too much reciprocity—as in
persuasion and rhetoric—risks stagnation because reciprocity involves appealing to targets on their own terms, and these terms may exclude new or updated information or perspectives. After explaining each of these hazards in greater depth, I shall suggest direct responses to pathological selection, and corrective responses to imbalances of communicative influence types. In cases in which a site fails to select for its intended purpose, the dynamics of balancing relationships among communicative influence types can also serve as a corrective.

**Anti-Democratic Hazards of Selection Effects**

**Pathological selection**

Pathological selection, as I use the term, can refer to two types of harms. The first, and more straightforward of the two, is that institutions might select for rigidity along with non-transparency and non-reciprocity—in other words, manipulative speech. Manipulative speech undermines autonomy: if the target were aware of the logical components exerting force on his or her inferences, he or she would not be able to endorse them on the grounds of his or her pre-existing commitments. Selection pressures that incentivize manipulation may arise when a speaker has an incentive to convince an actor to adopt a commitment. These incentives may be particularly pronounced when institutional practices are generative, rendering an explicit commitment part of the discursive ecosystem as, for instance, signing up a new party member or getting someone to sign a petition towards a ballot measure may be. These circumstances may select for one element of manipulative speech—rigidity—in a way that, for example, casual conversation, in which speakers may simply not care whether or not they have successfully convinced a target, would not. In such generative types of circumstances, communicative influence is manipulative if the premises (or anticipated
consequences) of, say, a request for a petition signature are left implicit (non-transparent) but would, if articulated, cause the inferential structure to be rejected (non-reciprocal).

For example, in response to a bill proposing a revision to the Canadian Human Rights Code to include protection for transgendered Canadians (Bill C-279, generally recognized as promoting transgendered rights), Member of Parliament Rob Anders collected signatures on and tabled a petition calling on MPs to reject what he called “The Bathroom Bill” (Cross 2012). The text of the preamble was as follows:

That Bill C-279, also known as the "Bathroom Bill," is a Private Member's Bill sponsored by B.C. NDP MP Randall Garrison and its goal is to give transgendered men access to women's public washroom facilities.

And that it is the duty of the House of Commons to protect and safeguard our children from any exposure and harm that will come from giving a man access to women's public washroom facilities.

Therefore your petitioners call upon the House of Commons to vote Nay on the "Bathroom Bill" (www.robanders.ca).

This structure illustrates what can happen when institutional features combine to select for manipulation. The petition format establishes a one-to-one connection between the speaker’s goal (getting signatures) and his success in convincing the targets to undertake the commitment that the House should vote Nay. This connection motivates a highly rigid structure—one that stipulates that if someone believes in protecting children, he or she must sign the petition. Had Anders referenced the true purpose of the bill—that it is an amendment to the Canadian Human Rights Code intended to protect the rights of transgendered people, and that harm to children would by no means follow from it—he would have neutralized the
logical force of the preamble’s inferential structure. Articulating the choice of whether or not to support the bill in terms of its actual intentions would disconnect Anders’s inferential structure from its reciprocal basis in the appeal to the idea that the duty of the House of Commons is to protect children from indecent exposure.

Recall that each dimension of communicative influence is a matter of degree. As such, concerns about communicative influence being manipulative can increase along all three dimensions. As rhetoric becomes less reciprocal—as it begins to rely less on resonance with what targets already believe or value for its force and more on artifacts of the inferential structure—it moves towards manipulation and tends to undermine autonomy. Likewise, when proofs become less transparent, leaving necessary assumptions implicit and perhaps making explicit only those that are most likely to garner agreement, or when disclosures become rigid in order to elicit certain responses, speech threatens autonomous judgment. It is particularly important, then, that institutions that allow non-transparency—for instance, in the form of rhetoric and assertion—should try to find ways of enhancing reciprocity in order to protect the autonomy of judgments. Institutions that encourage disclosure should seek ways to prevent rigidity, and those that select for proofs need to ensure that the inferential structures of those proofs remain transparent. These institutional interventions serve to backstop communicative influence against sliding into manipulation.

In addition to selecting for manipulation, the second way in which selection can be pathological is when it works against the purpose or function of a site of discourse. Different venues of talk-based politics serve different purposes. The US Senate is supposed to be a deliberative body, for instance, as are mini-publics. We can also conceptualize these differences in terms of types of communicative influence. A site like a truth and reconciliation
commission might be intended to produce disclosures. A site intended to facilitate greater understanding might seek discussion, while one intended to merely determine or clarify actors’ positions on a given issue might favour assertion. The purpose of a given site is a broader question for democratic theory. Below, I develop one set of considerations that might guide the distribution of democratic functions: different sites might complement one another by selecting for types of communicative influence that balance those at other sites.

Assuming a site has a clear place and definition within a deliberative system, institutional incentives should align to produce the right mix of rigidity, reciprocity and transparency required for the type of communicative influence that matches this purpose. If a site is meant to produce explanations for the purpose of deepening citizens’ understandings of a complex issue and instead selects for influence that is non-transparent—assertions, disclosures, rhetoric and manipulation—that site’s ability to perform its intended function will be compromised. Sites also become dysfunctional when behaviours appropriate to one site—for instance, partisan campaign rhetoric—appear in another (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 6), for instance, a parliamentary or committee session intended to produce discussion or persuasion falling into patterns of rhetorical debate.

Selecting for a given type of communicative influence may exacerbate the hazards I associated with modification and magnification effects in Chapters 7 and 8. For instance, it is acceptable and even desirable for speakers to use rhetoric in a campaign, but this rhetoric might also serve to entrench harmful frames and, insofar as rhetoric is non-transparent, make it difficult for targets and interlocutors to attribute commitments to the speaker. Positive responses to one hazard—in this case, designing a site to select for its intended function, even if that function is rhetorical speech—might exacerbate other hazards. Because of the
possibility that even democratically promising direct interventions into one part of the deliberative system may create harmful conditions at another, the idea of supplementing direct interventions with correctives is an important advancement in theorizing how we can tap into the democratic benefits of the many types of speech that constitute the political world—not just those types of speech with deliberative intent.

**Imbalance among communicative influence types**

If the first hazard of selection effects was pathological selection, the second hazard arises from the excess of a single type of communicative influence, unbalanced by another. As I suggested above, when non-transparent types of communicative influence like rhetoric or assertion are dominant, actors neither reflexively engage with nor expand their own commitments. Explanation might correct for these problems by introducing rhetoric’s opposites: transparency and non-reciprocity. Speakers offering explanations need not remain within the bounds of existing commitments, and, by being transparent, speakers can prompt or facilitate critical reflection on potential new commitments. Yet because explanations are non-reciprocal, an excess of explanation may make it difficult for people to relate to new information in terms of their own commitments. Explanations may not be sufficient to induce people to adopt or to abandon commitments (because they are non-rigid). As such, the two types of communicative influence—rhetoric and explanation—balance one another and ensure that both individual sites of deliberation and deliberative systems overcome the hazards excesses of one or the other type create. I make a similar argument for balancing between three other pairings of opposites: persuasion versus disclosure, proof versus assertion, and manipulation versus discussion—although I do not wish to suggest that actors should counter the effects of discussion with manipulation. Because institutions can select for
specific types of communicative influence (as the direct interventions I explore suggest), corrective interventions can harness this selection capacity to bring balancing effects. I discuss these balancing effects in greater detail below.

**Direct Interventions: Preventing Pathological Selection**

As I initially argued in Chapter 4, certain features of institutions can create incentives to engage in specific types of communicative influence. For instance, I suggested that generative features of institutions—features which embed commitments in the discursive ecosystem and make them available for future leverage—may discourage transparency because strategic actors will not want to give others the means to paint unflattering or unpopular portraits. This kind of claim is speculative and incomplete because the exact effect of institutions is likely to depend on speakers’ incentives with respect to a specific issue, and whether they relate to interlocutors as cooperators or competitors. In this section I attempt to specify the kinds of features—both of specific sites and of deliberative systems—that select for and against rigidity, reciprocity, and transparency, potentially creating combinations that produce specific types of communicative influence.

**Site-level direct interventions**

Some institutional features of sites of deliberation may select for rigidity, transparency, and reciprocity—potentially creating combinations of incentives that favour certain types of communicative influence. Institutional patterns and practices can select for rigidity in a number of ways. First, sites select for rigidity to the extent that the speaker’s preferred outcome actually depends on changing the beliefs of interlocutors or audiences. Although this selection effect may be most pronounced when the stakes are high—when
changing a target’s belief represents a significant payoff for the speaker—stakes can also be
low and yield rigid speech. For instance, in everyday exchanges, if the desired outcome is
simply a belief change—the speaker wants to convince the target of something, with no
further motives—then the one-to-one connection between influence and outcome may be
sufficient to select for rigidity. For example, if a committee is deliberating prior to a vote, the
close coupling between an individual decision and a group outcome, particularly where
consensus or near-consensus is required, selects for rigid speech. In other words, the more
immediate the connection between what a speaker is trying to achieve through language, and
a successful change in the target’s commitment, the greater the speaker’s incentives to take
advantage of the rigid qualities of speech to produce that change. Two citizens discussing
how they intend to vote in the election might elicit rigid speech to the extent that one is
invested in changing the other’s mind. By contrast, a political address to a target group that a
speaker knows already agrees (or will never agree) with him or her may be less likely to
incentivize rigidity. In a public statement, position paper, or report, whose intended audience
and likely effects are uncertain, it may be less tempting for a strategic actor to try to use
inferential structures to exert influence. Circumstances select for rigidity when speakers are
able to see that their inferential structures actually can influence the target, and that
successful influence is a condition of their success.

Institutions can also select for more or less transparency in a number of ways. First,
they can penalize non-transparency. However, penalizing may only be a feasible response to
outright deception, which is easy to define and identify. The efficacy of simply penalizing
non-transparency may be limited in cases that are less clear. Second, the possibility of cross-
examination may promote more transparent types of influence. Aside from whatever
incentives it may create, the fact that people can ask each other directly to elaborate ends up revealing more of inferential structures. Third, in cases where there are no obvious strategic incentives towards non-transparency, simply giving people the time to articulate arguments may select for greater transparency. Fourth, institutional procedures can remove incentives to be non-transparent by keeping an exchange “off the record,” allowing speakers to disclose their reasoning without fearing that their claims will be used to damage their reputations. The potential democratic advantages of keeping speech non-public recall Chambers’s argument that non-public venues may actually be more capable of producing genuine deliberation by reducing incentives for political posturing (2004, 409).

The extent to which institutions select for reciprocity, I argue, depends primarily on those transactional features of institutional ecologies that determine who speaks to whom, and with what audience in view. In one-way transactional contexts, a speaker addresses a target with no expectation that he or she will respond, and with no interlocutors to ask questions, offer prompts, or express challenges. In such situations, reciprocity will likely depend on whether the speaker can identify target commitments that will reinforce his or her inferential structure, and whether there are any that might compromise it. Particularly in one-way contexts, where there are no interlocutors to respond, reciprocity may also depend on the extent to which the speaker expects the targets to be sufficiently engaged and knowledgeable about an issue to detect efforts at non-reciprocality, or to recognize inferential structures arranged in such a way as to exclude other considerations. In contexts where targets are sufficiently knowledgeable, speakers may be less likely to try to get away with using inferential structures to impose commitments or circumvent challenges, because they expect such a strategy to be detected. Making information available and accessible may thus be a
critical ingredient for sites whose function should be to produce reciprocal forms of influence within a deliberative system.

Two-way direct transactional contexts, where parties to an exchange aim to influence at one another, may favour reciprocity insofar as one speaker can increase the force of his or her inferential structures by securing external buy-in on the basis of the other’s own commitments. Under non-rigid circumstances where speakers are not seeking to influence one another, but are instead offering explanations for their commitments, institutional features may not produce any specific incentives for or against reciprocity. At the same time, some kind of external incentive to cooperate in a way that demands knowledge of the other’s commitments may produce greater reciprocity. For Habermas, the need to secure successful coordination is sufficient for actors to adopt a stance seeking mutual understanding. The incentives to achieve successful coordination may sometimes be sufficient to produce the reciprocity and transparency that define discussion as a type of communicative influence. However, achieving mutual understanding is only one of the ways people use language to coordinate action, and we need to understand how motives besides mutual understanding might imply different means of using language to secure agreement.

To the extent that speakers do have strategic incentives to use rigidity to influence non-participating audiences, two-way indirect transactional contexts combined with generative institutional features may favour reciprocity as speakers make an effort to get others to make their commitments public, thus creating the conditions for their own future leverage. Moreover, in adversarial situations—situations in which speakers may resist articulating commitments of their own from the same concern about future leverage—any institutional feature that requires transparency in inferential structures may thereby also
select for reciprocity. The logic behind this possibility is that if transparency requires that
speakers articulate explicit inferential structures, they are better off constructing them from
the commitments of others. So, rather than the leader of a parliamentary opposition party
saying, “We should do A because we believe B, C and D” he or she might say, “We should do
A because the government believes X and Y and we believe they are wrong (Z).” In the
second formulation, the only commitment the opposition leaves on the table is Z—that they
believe the government is wrong. Both statements are transparent, in the sense that they spell
out the inferential relationships intended to produce a conclusion. But in the latter case, the
opposition have not exposed themselves, and their own commitments, to critical scrutiny, and
instead constructed an argument based primarily on the attribution of commitments to the
government.44

System-level direct interventions: Preventing pathological selection

System-level institutional arrangements can also generate selection effects across
sites, and, to the extent that these selection effects work at cross-purposes to the function of a
given site, they can also be pathological. Several institutional features at the system level
might select for and against rigidity. System level effects can increase or decrease the
consequences of failure to exert influence successfully. For example, changes in the
composition of legislatures and executives penalize failures to exert sufficient influence on
the campaign trail. In contrast, system-level interventions can create the conditions for non-

44 This is an impoverished form of reciprocity in that the speaker, in this case, is not aiming influence at the
actor whose commitments are actually making up the inferential structure (the government), but rather
attempting to influence a non-participating audience. The example is still relevant for two reasons. First, the
premise Z (that the government is wrong) might stand in for an appeal to the target audience’s doubts in the
government. Second, the overall idea might apply to two-way, direct transactional contexts in which actors are
trying to influence each other directly, without the elements of publicness and audience. A speaker may
nevertheless seek to build from an opponent’s commitments rather than reveal his or her own.
rigid speech—including discussion—by establishing insulated spaces like mini-publics, which often deliberately exclude those whose investment in a specific outcome might make rigid speech too tempting. In other system level possibilities, one site or body might penalize another for engaging in a type of influence that violates its mandate. A neutral government agency meant to provide information and explanations—say, a bureau of statistics—would certainly be disciplined if it engaged in persuasion or rhetoric.

System level interventions can select for transparency by empowering sites in the system to flag and penalize outright deception. System-level interventions can also ensure that even though some sites compress the time actors have to make claims—forcing them to leave inferential structures implicit—other sites create positive conditions for transparency by giving actors the time and space to articulate more complete inferential structures—even if these conditions come at the cost of expansiveness or exposure of that site.

System-level institutional ecologies can select for reciprocity in several ways. The most basic intervention that produces reciprocity may be to empower actors so that their judgments and choices actually matter, without which those with greater power would have no reason to engage and seek to persuade others at all. Broad distributions of empowerments to those affected by collective decisions is, of course, what makes a deliberative system democratic (Parkinson 2012). As I suggested in the previous section, establishing close connections between targets’ commitments and collective outcomes—perhaps as a consequence of empowerment—selects for rigidity. However, it does so without ruling out non-reciprocal communicative influence. As such, empowerment could lead to manipulation as well as persuasion. Reciprocity is what allows people to be self-determining at the level of discursive practice, and the empowerments that democratic institutions comprise are what
compel leaders to appeal to this self-determining capacity in the first place—but these empowerments do not themselves guarantee that such appeals will be reciprocal.

If empowerment ensures that leaders cannot simply bypass the public’s opinion and will-formation processes altogether, accompanying institutional features at the system level must select for reciprocity in other ways. One way system-level interventions might select for greater reciprocity is by making it an easier course of action by creating multiple opportunities for voice. Speakers attempting to exert influence need a sense of what commitments are held by those they seek to engage.

Third, system-level interventions can incentivize reciprocity simply by making it the most appealing, least difficult course of action towards influence by making non-reciprocal forms of influence more difficult. From the perspective of a speaker embedded within a discursive system, there are two ways of exerting communicative influence: first, by exploiting tight logical structures (through rigidity), and second, by securing agreement to premises and inferences in terms of targets’ existing beliefs (through reciprocity). Insofar as communicative influence is derived exclusively from these logical structures, it is either a proof or manipulation. Influence is achieved through a tightly, carefully constructed set of inferences that, even when transparent, work to close off any grounds for potential challenge—a highly unlikely outcome in circumstances where interlocutors and audiences are familiar with commitments that might unravel such a tight inferential structure. A system can render reciprocal inferential structures the path of least resistance to securing influence based in resonance comparable to that a speaker could get from the structure of inferences by ensuring that people have a good understanding of their own commitments and their experience in using them to make independent judgments—and potentially wielding them to neutralize the
influence of even tightly logical inferential structure. A vibrant civil society—one in which actors can become accustomed to evaluating claims and engaging in shared reasoning processes—is an important way in which a system generates such outcomes.

Table 9.2 summarizes the preceding discussion, listing the features I identified, at both the site and system level, as selecting for and against rigidity, reciprocity, and transparency. These claims represent preliminary, speculative propositions based on the internal logic of the model of communicative influence, combined with loose assumptions about the nature of cooperative and adversarial political circumstances. Table 9.2 establishes a premise of the next section: that it is indeed possible, through design choices, to combine these selection effects to produce specific types of communicative influence, and that these types might then be deployed to correct for the types of pathological selection identified above, as well as for broader harms of imbalances among communicative influence types.
Table 9.1. Selecting for (⊕) or against (⊖) Rigidity, Reciprocity, and Transparency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rigidity</td>
<td>Features that increase stakes of communicative influence (including decision rules and the scope or consequences of outcomes)</td>
<td>Features that increase stakes by establishing the costs of failures to secure influence (for instance, electoral removal) and reward success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rules and practices that establish a more direct connections between changing a target’s commitment and the speaker’s desired outcome (including direct vs. representative decision-making, “consultation” vs. empowered choice).</td>
<td>Features that insulate processes from stakes by excluding those with a strong interest in the outcome (through selection or accreditation mechanisms, for instance).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measures that make it less costly for targets to change their commitments or otherwise increase the chances of targets being convinced as a result of inferential structures, without which there would be no reason for speakers to seek influence through rigid structures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocity</td>
<td>Features that create an external impetus for cooperation—for instance, assigning a specific task to a body—that may require understanding one another’s commitments.</td>
<td>Distributions of empowerment so that target commitments actually matter and cannot simply be bypassed. While this is also consistent with non-reciprocal forms, without it there would be no need to make appeals at all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Features that establish a shared knowledge base—for instance, stipulating definitions, tabling reports, or referencing testimony.</td>
<td>Interventions that create opportunities for voice so that speakers can actually identify the commitments to which they must appeal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under generative conditions, where a speaker does not want to articulate his or her own conditions, features that create incentives towards transparency may also favour reciprocity.</td>
<td>A vibrant civil society that gives people experience in using their own commitments to make judgments in the face of influence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Features that expose speakers to targets who do not have any pre-existing commitments on a topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>Measures that penalize deceit.</td>
<td>Measures that establish accountability between sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Features that enable cross-examination and follow-up.</td>
<td>Empowered, perhaps insulated sites that make time and space for more complete articulation so that actors cannot (or do not wish to) rely on “sound bytes.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased time to articulate claims.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(In adversarial situations) generative features (i.e. a public record) that could be leveraged against the speaker.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Corrective Interventions: Balancing Communicative Influence Types

At both the site and system levels, institutional ecologies will sometimes select badly. They might select for types of communicative influence that work against the purpose of a site in the deliberative system—pathologically—or they might select for a mix of communicative influence types that is excessive on one dimension and insufficient on another. Imbalance among communicative influence types is itself a hazard to autonomous judgment. Each type of communicative influence, with the exception of manipulation, adds something to the deliberative system to create the conditions for autonomous judgment. In addition, each of the balancing relationships I identify below can also serve as correctives for instances in which pathological selection occurs at a given site, either when pathology is a consequence of a design that fails to select for the site’s purpose or function, or a consequence of a configuration of preferences that supersedes institutional efforts to select for certain types.

In situations where institutions fail to produce their intended type of communicative influence, correcting for these failures may be a more effective (or realistic) response than trying to address the problem directly. For instance, if a site is designed for persuasion and instead produces primarily rhetoric, then something about the incentives around the problem—whether those are constituted by the problem or by the institution itself—is not working. Moreover, the excess of rhetoric may actually damage the necessary conditions for persuasion. With the lack of transparency, participants may not have a sufficient sense of their own or others’ relevant commitments, and how these might connect to the issue at hand. In this kind of case, making space for explanations can correct for this gap because it renders those commitments transparent without the pressure of rigid communicative influence.
Below, I argue that in addition to explanation correcting for rhetoric, disclosure corrects for persuasion; assertion corrects for proof; and discussion corrects for manipulation. These four dynamics play out at both the site and system levels, although I show that some are perhaps best served at one or the other. I suggest that, to the extent that an influence type becomes problematic or dysfunctional, the model of communicative influence provides a useful way of thinking through how that can be corrected. Using the direct interventions suggested above, institutional rules, practices and roles can select for a type of influence that best responds to the problems caused by the excess of another. In addition, balancing communicative influence types is a good in itself. At both the site and the system level, balancing dynamics can create, protect, or improve the conditions for autonomous judgment. I now turn to each of these balancing dynamics in detail.

**Persuasion/disclosure**

Persuasion is communicative influence that is rigid, reciprocal, and transparent. It depends, for its influence, on engaging pre-existing, often agreed upon or shared commitments. But because persuasion exerts influence by leveraging existing commitments, it risks rendering those commitments stale or stagnant. To the extent that persuasive communicative influence is rigid and reciprocal, targets are not necessarily exposed to new, potentially challenging commitments. Communicative influence of the disclosure type (non-rigid, non-reciprocal, non-transparent) can correct for the potential harms of relying exclusively on persuasion because it can inject new considerations without having to conform to what is already present, and can increase potential reciprocity with those who have typically been excluded. Disclosure-based processes such as truth and reconciliation commissions may shift the broader terms of debate from beliefs that misunderstand or
misrepresent some actors’ experiences. In another kind of case, a speaker may try to persuade a target that there is no need to increase an assured income for people with disabilities program. Such an exchange could take place on highly reciprocal grounds. The speaker might, for instance, refer to a shared value of offering social supports or appeal to a shared premise that income supports should reflect the cost of living. Parties to such an exchange might together settle on an appropriate increase to a monthly payment program. But if there were no place for disclosure, they might simply continue to replicate existing commitments and miss something important. For instance, were a disability benefits recipient part of the exchange, he or she might point out that the cost of living is much higher when one needs to pay for accessible housing or access adaptive technologies (Hurlock et al. 2008)—something that the original speakers might not have considered, but that represents a source of entitlement specific to the speaker’s identity and experience. Disclosure works to introduce new considerations, which can then shift and expand the grounds on which persuasion can take place.

On the other hand, in political contexts, disclosure may itself demand the correctives of persuasion since, by itself, disclosure does not enable collective decisions and actions. In order to mobilize some kind of collective action or decision, commitments and experiences disclosed may have to be built into more rigid inferential structures that drive towards further action. In order to balance disclosure in ways consistent with autonomy, such influence would also need to be reciprocal, articulating the commitments disclosed as part of an inferential structure that includes pre-existing commitments so that people might actually be able to process how the unfamiliar commitments being put forward in disclosures relate to their existing beliefs and values. Both within particular sites and system wide, disclosure and
persuasion balance one another, particularly where exchanges revolve around a non-shared experience such as living with a severe disability. Thus, disclosure corrects for the risk that persuasion might generate a closed system, appealing to what is already acknowledged and shared. Persuasion corrects for the possibility that disclosures may stall if they are not connected to a broader argument that can at least partially resonate with the experiences of others, including possibility that some disclosures should not achieve broader uptake because they cannot find purchase with a broader array of values or beliefs.

**Rhetoric/explanation**

Rhetoric is communicative influence that is rigid and reciprocal, but not transparent. When there is too much of it in relation to other types of communicative influence, or when it takes place in a site whose function is to produce some other type of influence—perhaps discussion, proof, or persuasion—the imbalance poses a hazard to autonomous judgment. To the extent that rhetoric becomes problematic, simply seeking to prevent rhetorical speech directly may not be sufficient. Rather, underwriting autonomous judgment requires that deliberative sites and systems balance rhetoric with its opposite: namely, explanation—communicative influence that is non-rigid, non-reciprocal, and transparent. Explanation can render transparent the implicit inferences that make rhetoric work—sometimes in ways that might challenge rhetoric’s implicit inferences. In terms of reciprocity, where rhetoric trades on appeals to targets’ existing beliefs, values, and commitments, non-reciprocity (in the form of explanation) creates space to add to, challenge, or undermine these beliefs, rather than simply reinforcing them. In the case of explanation, speakers work out the logical sources of entitlement or implications of rhetorical claims, perhaps revealing where they might be problematic or incoherent. Explanation, as opposed to proof, can achieve this. On the other
hand, rhetoric may compensate for excesses of explanation. Through reciprocity, rhetoric can help targets understand their beliefs, values, and interests. By mobilizing new information towards some conclusion or action, rhetoric draws attention to the ways in which newly acquired commitments might matter for a political problem or decision.

Consider the rhetoric involved in claiming to be “tough on crime.” Such language appeals, rhetorically, to values around responsibility, punishment, and safety. Given the frequency with which political actors accuse one another of being “soft on crime,” they must see this language as effective in mobilizing support for platforms that include strengthening criminal penalties, imposing mandatory minimums, or increasing prison capacity. And yet, without explanations—for instance, about the actual efficacy of such interventions—judgments that follow from the rhetorical claims around such policies are poorly grounded. Without more transparent explanations, actors lack the opportunity to understand reasons for and against a choice of action. On the other hand, without rhetoric, it may be difficult for people to see why they should care about explanations of, for instance, the efficacy of sentencing practices or the demographics of criminal behaviour. Without some measure of reciprocity and rigidity, people may not bring this kind of information to bear on the kinds of decisions they are asked to make as democratic citizens.

**Proof/assertion**

When a site or system comes to be dominated by the proofs—the type of communicative influence that is rigid, non-reciprocal and transparent—the democratic hazard is that speech works to exclude or prevent challenge, redirection, or dispute. Indeed, the very structure of proofs seeks to preclude even the possibility of disagreement. Sites and systems can correct for the dominance of proofs by creating space for assertions. In fact, given that
the inferential structures of proofs are so closed-ended, assertions may be the only way of
directly expressing disagreement with a proof or introducing alternative considerations. For
instance, assertions can serve to challenge the correctness of the premises of a proof, or
reveal limitations in the applicability of its conclusions. The balancing function of an
assertion is not to invalidate a proof, but to reveal its limitations, or to introduce
considerations that might be considered alongside its conclusions. On the other hand, a proof
corrects for an assertion by systematically revealing its entailments or sources of entitlement
so that people can understand why they ought to agree or disagree with the assertion.
Moreover, because they are rigid, proofs can mobilize assertions—which, in the absence of
influence derived from credibility, cannot have much of an effect—into inferential structures
that leverage the power of logical inference.

Returning to the example of humanitarian intervention I introduced in Chapter 3, a
proof type inferential structure might take the following form: intervention is justified in a
given humanitarian crisis because it meets the necessary and sufficient conditions for the
principle of Responsibility to Protect to apply, and its application justifies intervention. The
inferential structure is relatively simple and bounded. It does not specify that a state must
therefore intervene, which would have introduced grounds for challenge on the basis of
considerations external to the inferential structure itself, including the validity of the
principle or a state’s capacity to contribute to an intervention. The only option that results
from this inferential structure, if one accepts the premises, is to agree with the conclusion and
to agree that the argument constitutes a proof. If one rejects the premises, the inferential
structure breaks down and the statements no longer constitute a proof, but rather a group of
assertions. Making an assertion that contests a premise—for instance, asserting that the
conditions are not met—erases the communicative influence of the proof without necessarily foreclosing further discussion in a way that an outright rejection without substance (simply refusing to accept the proof or declaring that the speaker is wrong) might do. Yet without rigid inferential structures like those afforded by proof, the assertion that “Crisis X is a genocide” cannot translate into calls for action. The corrective dynamic between proof and assertion is particularly well suited to the site level, rather than the system level. At a specific site, assertions can be quickly taken up and mobilized—and overreaching or excessive proofs can just as quickly be reined in.

**Manipulation/discussion**

Manipulation is communicative influence that is rigid, non-reciprocal and non-transparent. If someone has been manipulated, the best corrective is discussion—communicative influence that is non-rigid, reciprocal, and transparent. Discussion involves a mutual exploration of commitments that can enable people to recognize and root out commitments that have been imposed non-transparently and non-reciprocally. For discussion to balance manipulation, however, actors need space and opportunity to identify and weigh their own commitments, without being bombarded with arguments imploring them to take up new ones. In order to correct for manipulation, sites and systems should select for discussion. For an example of a manipulative inferential structure, I use Conservative Member of Parliament Mark Warawa’s recent motion (M408) condemning sex-selection abortion. One of Warawa’s arguments was that the government must support the motion because to refuse to do so would amount to a contradiction of its own position. Moreover, according to Warawa, “who could not condemn discrimination against women and girls?” (Warawa qtd. in Galloway 2012). Whether or not M408 would have enabled future speakers to attribute
support for an abortion bill to other MPs remains unanswered, as the debate came to revolve
around whether parties ought to be able to dictate what backbenchers use private members’
time to do after a parliamentary subcommittee on private members’ business determined that
the bill was “unvotable” and would not reach the house (O’Malley 2013). The strategy of
using commitments on the topic of sex-selection and appeals to the value of gender equality
to secure a commitment on the topic of abortion without engaging targets’ commitments
pertaining to abortion itself reflects non-reciprocity in the inferential structures Warawa
articulated. The structure of the argument—its emphasis on one set of considerations at the
expense of another—is non-transparent in the sense that it keeps much of the structure
implicit, and Warawa dodged questions about whether or not this bill would ultimately serve
as a back door for limiting abortion as well as whether it was an effort to force the house to
pronounce on the issue (Galloway 2012). A corrective discussion would likely pick up easily
on the excluded considerations and enable people to identify their reasons for agreeing or
disagreeing with the bill. As well, it would enable actors to put qualifications on the
commitments they might attribute to those who signed on to it.45

While this kind of balancing might conceivably correct for manipulation through
careful facilitation at the site level, it is more likely to occur at the system level is perhaps
more likely. Discovering that one has been manipulated by immediate interlocutors is
unlikely to be conducive to meaningful discussion. Moreover, the conditions that generate

45 Had Warawa formulated the argument differently would it still have been manipulative? For instance, what if
he had structured the argument as a proof: if we accept that some abortions are sex-selective, then to argue for
unrestricted abortion is to allow the practice to continue. The logical structure of this argument suggests that
there is a hard trade-off that cannot be avoided (although this argument does not necessarily directly issue in
Warawa’s conclusion of supporting the bill). The difference, and the reason the formulation here is normatively
superior, is that the potential points of departure from Warawa’s reasoning are clear. By contrast, by claiming
that support for women and girls must lead someone to support the bill and leaving the rest implicit, the
inferential structure presupposes which side of the trade-off a target is going to come down on.
manipulation in the first place are unlikely to co-exist with conditions that favour discussion. It is also possible to have too much discussion. This is not to say that manipulation is the appropriate corrective—it is not. However, at some point, in order for speech to accomplish anything by moving people towards a choice, it needs to take on rigid qualities that are lacking in discussion. Persuasion can serve as a corrective by mobilizing commitments newly identified or acquired through discussion towards collective decisions or actions. Table 9.2 summarizes the balancing dynamics between paired communicative influence types.

Table 9.2. Balancing Relationships between Communicative Influence Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balancing Relationship</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| Persuasion ↔ Disclosure      | - Disclosure corrects for the democratic hazard of persuasion becoming a closed system, appealing only to what is already shared, potentially to the exclusion of alternative commitments or beliefs.  
- Persuasion corrects for disclosed commitments stalling or receiving no broader purchase—and identifies situations where they should not alter the commitments of others. |
| (Site-Specific or System-Wide) |                                                                                                                                              |
| Rhetoric ↔ Explanation       | - Explanation corrects for the democratic hazard of rhetoric keeping potentially incoherent or problematic assumptions implicit, and helps people test those commitments explicitly in relation to the rest of their beliefs.  
- Rhetoric corrects for explanation by helping people see why new information matters, connect it to challenges (even by rendering some aspects implicit), and enabling speech to achieve things by mobilizing new beliefs into potential action, or broader change within audiences’ commitments. |
| (Site-Specific or System-Wide) |                                                                                                                                              |
| Proof ↔ Assertion            | - Assertions correct for the democratic hazard of proofs making it difficult to express opposition by enabling challenges (which nonetheless remain open to ongoing reciprocal interaction).  
- Proofs can leverage the inferential power of assertions so that they might actually have influence. |
| (Primarily Site-Specific)    |                                                                                                                                              |
| Manipulation → Discussion    | - Discussion corrects for manipulation by giving people an opportunity to cooperatively explore their own commitments, and identify what is inconsistent or what has been imposed non-transparently and non-reciprocally. |
| (Primarily System-Wide)      |                                                                                                                                              |
The corrective potentials of mini-publics

One of the critical questions for the emerging theory of deliberative systems is how sites are connected to one another. The model of communicative influence suggests that one of the functions of a site should be to balance the types of communicative influence that take place at another. However, the precise nature of the connections among sites remains un-theorized. For instance, how can systems ensure that sites of persuasion take up propositions and claims emerging from sites of disclosure? Likewise, how should systems ensure that those most likely to be manipulated have opportunities to engage in, or at least be exposed to, genuine discussion? The question of how sites might connect to one another and how they should be positioned in the deliberative system so that communication effects can pass from one to the other remains as the critical next step in developing a systems account of deliberative democracy. Some of this theorizing is now occurring, however, around the topic of mini-publics—small scale groups, often randomly selected, that are drawn from the relevant constituency around an issue or problem in order to learn and deliberate about it. Goodin and Dryzek (2006), for example, suggest a variety of ways in which deliberative outputs can have broader influence, from actual contributions to policy-making, informing public debate, and market-testing new policies to providing oversight. In addition to being specific to mini-publics, they acknowledge that this is a fairly preliminary account of the possibilities for uptake, rather than a systemic account of how and when outputs achieve influence (Goodin and Dryzek 2006, 239). Folding accounts of uptake across sites of politics into theories of deliberative systems remains an important next step.

One of the most significant implications of the analysis in this chapter concerns the roles of mini-publics. They often also issue recommendations that reflect the considered
judgment of the group. The tendency in the field of applied deliberative democracy has
generally been to treat these sites as opportunities to replicate the ideal conditions of
deliberation, treating their recommendations as legitimate to the extent that they reflect a
deliberative process, generally understood to mean an exchange of reasons under conditions
of mutual respect and equality (Abelson et al. 2003; De Vries et al. 2010; Dutwin 2003). The
analysis in this chapter suggests that focusing on measuring and replicating deliberation is
too limited, for two reasons. First, institutional choices when designing mini-publics should
reflect the balancing function identified above, with the specific mix of influence types
dependent on the mini-public’s function. Second, it suggests that mini-publics may be
constituted around functions other than deliberation (and decision).

The idea that mini-publics cannot be exclusively about the exchange of reasons is
widely recognized in practice. Scholars and practitioners designing and implementing
processes emphasize, of course, the centrality of explanation and learning as part of the
added value of mini-publics (Burgess, O’Doherty and Secko 2008; O’Doherty and Hawkins
2010). Likewise, they acknowledge the need for personal narratives and metaphorical
reasoning (Stromer-Galley 2007; Walmsley 2009). The argument in this chapter also suggests
that we should be attentive to how different types of communicative influence risk becoming
excessive and compromising the intended goals of a given mini-public. The notion of
balancing between communicative influence types also offers a systematic theoretical
justification for including different types of communicative influence in mini-publics.

With respect to their purpose or function, not all mini-publics need to issue
recommendations, or have those recommendations taken up in the same way. This insight has
also already been recognized and put into practice in the form of educative forums and
advisory panels (Fung 2003, 340-41). The model of communicative influence suggests a way of systematizing our thinking about how to design mini-publics in ways that are appropriate to particular kinds of issues or problems. For example, for issues that have been dominated by speech involving manipulation (or relatively manipulative rhetoric), processes should perhaps not be designed for collective decision-making, which raises stakes and pushes towards rigidity, but rather for conversation that achieves the balancing functions of discussion, as with the Americans Discuss Social Security town hall meetings and the National Issue Forum small group deliberation (Fung 2003, 341; Ryfe 2006). When an issue has been dominated by more benign forms of rhetoric, the key may be to emphasize explanation and education, and help people position themselves in relation to new information, as Deliberative Opinion Polls aim to do (Fishkin 2003).

In response to excessive proofs—for example, where experts begin to articulate issues in terms that make them appear self-evident or beyond challenge—mini-publics might be designed to collect assertions that challenge these assumptions from outside the domain of technical considerations. In areas where speakers typically attempt to construct persuasive arguments, there may initially appear to be little cause for concern. But if, as I suggested above, the premises and assumptions on which persuasion takes place do not resonate with, or perhaps even marginalize, some groups, one may look for elements of disclosure in mini-publics. For instance, on issues where race is a salient topic, organizers may need to build trust in quasi-therapeutic settings (Warren 2006, 169; National Issues Forum 2000). In certain particularly fraught cases, the disclosure element may need to be the primary function of some sites. In each of these cases, we can also assess their systematic functions, allowing each kind of site to specialize, contributing to system-wide deliberative outcomes.
The potential functions of mini-publics extend beyond these balancing effects to serve more specific functions in the deliberative system, including many roles I proposed for responding to the anti-democratic hazards outlined in Chapters 7 and 8. As I suggested above, the extra time, participant selection, and careful agenda-setting opportunities afforded by mini-publics enable them to unpack problematic frames that structure beliefs in the discursive ecosystem, and feed alternative, more considered interpretations of problems back into the ecosystem (see also A. Calvert and Warren 2012). Likewise, mini-publics may be well placed to make and articulate informed, considered judgments of speakers’ credibility, thus helping to address the hazard, identified in Chapter 8, of poorly-grounded credibility judgments enabling some speakers to nevertheless exert magnified influence.

**Conclusion**

Mini-publics are not the only way to mitigate anti-democratic hazards in the discursive ecosystem. The analysis in this chapter as well as Chapters 7 and 8 also suggests that deliberative democrats ought to think about new ways of theorizing the democratic functions of the media and civil society in terms of their potential functions for enhancing the autonomous quality of judgments in the face of pervasive efforts at communicative influence. For instance, media and civil society actors enhance the grounds for credibility judgments by tracking words that might build reputations against actions that might damage them; fact-checking candidate rhetoric; or separating arguments from speakers such that inferential structures—rather than speakers—become the objects of considered judgments. In Chapters 7 through 9 I also suggested some of the ways existing institutions that might be perceived as failing in some metrics of deliberation—notably the idea of a respectful exchange of reasons
—actually can prevent and even correct for harmful forms of influence. For instance, institutional interventions may be able to increase transparency and reciprocity by putting frames in competition with one another, or by cross-examining opponents and forcing them to disclose assumptions. In addition, as democratic theorists begin to develop the concept of the deliberative system, the model of communicative influence represents an important approach to theorizing what the relationships among parts of the system should achieve.

Many of the claims in this chapter are speculative and incomplete because they operate at a level of generality that cannot take account of speakers’ specific preferences around an issue—what they are trying to use speech to achieve, and what they might be willing to do to achieve it. The precise effects of the institutional features discussed in this chapter on communicative influence types will depend, for instance, on whether actors are relatively inclined to cooperate or to compete and whether their positions align with those of their targets. However, the critical point of Chapters 7 through 9 is that the answer to “failures” of deliberation is not always more deliberation, but rather interventions and correctives that address the specific dimension of failure. Moreover, some of what deliberative democrats have seen as failures may not always be as harmful as they initially appear, while other elements of communication that appear innocuous—for instance, frames that have become deeply ingrained, or analogies that limit imagination in solving problems—may be doing far more harm than they appear to be, since actors will be comfortable with their effects. The model of communicative influence suggests that deliberative democrats should be less concerned with finding or creating spaces for deliberation ideally defined, and more attentive to what the system needs from individual sites of talk-based politics to underwrite democratic autonomy in the face of pervasive strategic speech.
Chapter 10. Communicative Influence and Democratic Representation

In order to demonstrate the breadth and applicability of the model of communicative influence, I now turn to a core democratic concept: representation. Representative arrangements are part of the fundamental character of a democracy, and competition for representative roles and status generates a great deal of strategic speech. I argue that, as institutional arrangements channel this competition into different types of representation, the nature of communicative influence changes in ways that map onto the anti-democratic hazards identified in Chapters 7 through 9. Many of the corrective institutional interventions I suggested in those chapters can thus also be applied to the hazards of communicative influence produced by different types of representation. This approach yields the insight that, to the extent that we can identify institutions that favour certain types of representation, those institutions should be accompanied at the system level by those that correct for the anti-democratic hazards that are likely to result when these institutions channel competition into speech.

The concept of representation has recently garnered renewed interest on the part of political theorists, and of democratic theorists in particular (Urbinati and Warren 2008; Disch 2011; Mansbridge 2003). The channels of communication between representatives and citizens are an important part of the deliberative system (Parkinson 2012, 164), and are essential to political judgment in complex societies (Urbinati and Warren 2008, 401). The purpose of this chapter is to consider representation through the lens of communicative influence. I begin with Mansbridge’s (2003) democratic theory of representation, in which she differentiates among types of representation and articulates normative criteria proper to evaluating each type. Of Mansbridge’s four types of representation—promissory,
anticipatory, gyroscopic, and surrogate—\footnote{Like Mansbridge, I do not spend much time on the relatively straightforward, principal-agent based account of promissory representation. While promissory representation has a communicative element—representatives say what they intend to do, and then voters decide whether or not they have done it—there is no scope for representatives to exert influence on voters’ commitments.}—I use the latter three as a framework for considering how the pressures of competition for representative status of each type produce communicative influence that, by virtue of their inferential structures or its effect on the discursive ecosystem, generates hazards for autonomous judgment. The analysis in this chapter demonstrates some of the ways in which the model of communicative influence might link up with work on political institutions. Although it is not my focus here, if we could specify the mix of representative types a given electoral system might produce, then we could determine the supplementary or corrective institutions that would shore up the discursive democratic quality of that system by anticipating and combatting the hazards likely to result from the communicative influence that a given set of representative institutional arrangements favours.

**Deliberative Democracy and Representation: Mansbridge and Disch**

In *Rethinking Representation* (2003), Mansbridge develops a typology of representative relationship. The first is *promissory representation*, in which representatives simply make promises that they keep or break. In the second type, *anticipatory representation*, representatives orient themselves to the future preferences of voters, which they can, in principle, influence. The third type is *gyroscopic representation*, in which voters select representatives on the basis of characteristics that they believe will guide their behaviour. The fourth and final type is the *surrogate* representation of non-geographic identities. She claims that the democratic value of each type depends in part on the quality of
deliberation between representatives and citizens during and between elections, the mechanisms of removal, and the quality of representation of interests and perspectives.

Mansbridge argues that representatives’ ability to transform preferences is democratically acceptable if it adheres to principles of good deliberation—that is, if it works on the merits of arguments, attends to the recipients’ interest, and facilitates “retrospectively appropriate transformations” (Mansbridge 2003, 525). Lisa Disch picks up her critique here. According to Disch, the nature of the flows of communication between representatives and citizens accounts for why we cannot take citizen preferences as a bedrock for legitimate representation. Rather, representatives are in a particularly powerful position to influence citizens’ preferences and opinions through speech.

Disch argues that we ought to move away from the notion that citizen preferences are either prior to representation itself, or else the result of a legitimate learning process that reflects their underlying interests, and towards the idea that representation frames and mobilizes interests (Disch 2011). Enlisting deliberative principles to judge representative behaviour as Mansbridge does is thus not appropriate to the conditions of political competition. According to Disch, what even systemic accounts of deliberation overlook, despite their attention to the special role of representation within the system, is “that representatives and opinion shapers are not only (or even primarily) in relationship to potential voters, but in competition with one another” (Disch 2011, 106). As a critique of Mansbridge, this may not be entirely fair. Mansbridge states explicitly that her normative account of representation is not about dyadic communication between representatives and citizens, but about the overall system, including political parties, challengers, public opinion, and the media. However, there is room to expand considerably on the role of competition
within the framework of Mansbridge’s typology. Despite Mansbridge’s attention to the systemic level, the typology and accompanying deliberative criteria do not attend to the specific ways strategic incentives affect speech, and how these effects might vary across different types of representation. Disch’s argument does pick up on an important gap in deliberative theory. The problems strategic speech poses for deliberative democratic theory, which I explained in the introduction to this dissertation, also apply to attempts to extend the normative reach of principles of deliberative democracy to other democratic practices, like representation.

Where Mansbridge posits principles of good deliberation as a means of evaluating representative behaviour and relationships, Disch deals with strategic incentives by arguing that, when evaluating political communication, one should be interested in what draws out good judgment, rather than searching for and applying “an ideal model of argumentation that forces a distinction between communication and strategy” (2011, 110). She argues for the metric of reflexivity, which she defines in terms of a system’s capacity to mobilize implicit and explicit objections.

The model of communicative influence allows me to augment Disch’s argument in two ways. First, according to Disch, an Aristotelian theory of discourse like Garsten’s (2006), which asks how rhetoric can draw out good political judgments, is better positioned than a theory in the Habermasian tradition to evaluate a “mobilization” concept of representation, in which elites constitute preferences and activate constituencies through speech. The advantage lies in focusing on the kinds of activity that draw out good judgment. However, Disch claims that Garsten fails to offer specific criteria for how this activity is to be evaluated, including what does and does not draw out good judgment (Disch 2011, 110). According to Neblo,
Disch advocates abandoning any attempt to draw a distinction between normatively acceptable and unacceptable preference formation (Neblo 2012, 84). Instead, she argues that we should look for reflexivity as a quality of the system—namely, its ability to mobilize objections (Disch 2011, 111).

The model of communicative influence suggests that it is, in fact, also possible to apply normative criteria such as this one directly to speech, conceptualized as inferential structures, even if that speech is highly strategic. This is precisely because the model allows actors’ judgments in response to speech that attempts to influence them to be autonomous even when speakers are behaving strategically. Instead of focusing on how a speaker might be treating a target as a non-autonomous means rather than an end, it asks how different ways speech can influence reasoning might damage this autonomy. As such, the model allows democratic theory to continue to attend to how representatives use speech to influence, how the system conditions this influence, and how institutions can underwrite autonomous judgment, even in the face of the posturing of elites in political competition.

In addition, the model allows us to identify different ways communicative influence undermines autonomy. In Chapters 7 through 9 I was able to propose institutional responses tailored to particular threats. In contrast, Disch’s approach invokes a single function (mobilizing objections) across institutions. While this intervention might address the risk that mobilization might become manipulation, the model of communicative influence—including the theory of discursive ecosystems—recognizes that manipulation is not the only threat to the democratic quality of representation. Manipulation is perhaps the most direct way representative-to-citizen communication damages autonomy, but systems of representation can also produce harmful frames, misplaced trust, and other harmful forms of communicative
influence. The potential anti-democratic hazards of representative speech lie not only with communicative influence itself, but with the ecological features that shape it, empowering some actors and disempowering others, structuring beliefs in a way that pre-determines the outcomes of judgments, or creating incentives to misrepresent, hedge, or equivocate.

The insights that follow from the model of communicative influence suggest that, while Disch’s theoretical impulse to look at the system level and to institutions’ capacity to facilitate good judgment was the right one, there is room for more theoretical precision. In the next three sections, I consider how the strategic imperatives of three types of representation in Mansbridge’s typology—anticipatory, gyroscopic, and surrogate—pose specific anti-democratic hazards. I then suggest institutional interventions that respond to these hazards in order to secure the grounds for autonomous judgments. In suggesting potential institutional responses, I focus on correctives rather than the more direct interventions listed in the preceding chapters. The reason for this focus is that representative arrangements—including electoral systems and the structures of legislatures—are among the most historically entrenched features of modern democracy. For most established democracies, they are unlikely to change, except under the most exceptional circumstances. But they might be supplemented in ways that could change the consequences of their incentive structures for deliberative systems. Table 10.1 summarizes the arguments I shall make by suggesting the links between representation types, hazards, and the ecological effects discussed in previous chapters.
Table 10.1. Representation Types and Hazards of Communicative Influence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representation Type</th>
<th>Anti-Democratic Hazard</th>
<th>Ecological Effect</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Anticipatory</td>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td>Selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imbalance towards rhetoric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Gyroscopic</td>
<td>Insufficient or distorted grounds for judgment of claims of gyroscopic representation</td>
<td>Modification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Surrogate</td>
<td>Inappropriate magnification based on claims to representation that do not meet shared criteria; appeals false constituencies; non-transparent appeals to public opinion</td>
<td>Magnification</td>
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Anticipatory Representation

According to Mansbridge, anticipatory representation occurs when “representatives focus on what they think their constituents will approve of at the next election, not what they promised to do in the last election” (2003, 517). The concept of anticipatory representation starts from the assumption that voters are educable—that representatives can transform their preferences in advance of the next election (Mansbridge 2003, 519). The transformation of preferences also raises the risk that representatives will engage in manipulation, violating the norms of good deliberation that Mansbridge argues render anticipatory representation democratically legitimate. If, as Disch notes, representatives are in competition with one another for electoral followings, then manipulation is the primary hazard anticipatory representation creates for autonomy.

Electoral competition selects for manipulative communicative influence in several ways that recall the argument in Chapter 9. First, in the absence of recourse to bribery or coercion, arguments and claims that leverage the force of implicit or explicit logical
connections among propositions in inferential structures may be a representative’s best means to influence the preferences of voters. Electoral competition also favors rigidity by establishing a close connection between the targets’ beliefs and the actors’ desired outcome, such that changing the beliefs of at least a subset of voters is necessary for actors to achieve their goals. Incentives to construct rigid structures may be lessened if the speaker does not truly believe he or she can change targets’ minds, or heightened if targets— for instance, undecided voters who might tip the electoral balance—are particularly important. Given these dynamics, we can speculate about whether, for example, increasing the ‘distance’ between a voter’s judgment and a speaker’s desired outcome, might yield less rigid forms of communicative influence. Thus, for instance, perhaps earlier in an electoral cycle, in relatively secure districts, or when they are not eligible for or seeking re-election, speakers have less incentive to use speech rigidly—which might open up possibilities for non-rigid types. Under these circumstances, representatives may have the strategic space to explain their positions transparently rather than trying to move voters to agreement with rigid forms of communication.

Under conditions of competition, the publicity of campaigns, as well as most public speech by representatives between campaigns, may work against transparency. In a competitive environment, where most material is “on the record,” a speaker who spells out his or her logic leaves a trail of commitments others may use to inflict damage to his or her reputation. If these premises clash with the values or beliefs of voters to which a representative needs to appeal, he or she has incentive to leave them implicit. Representatives in competition with one another know their words may be taken out of context and used against them, such that it makes strategic sense to think twice about how much they wish to
articulate. Electoral competition considered alone, then, selects for manipulation on two of the three dimensions of communicative influence: rigidity and non-transparency. These conditions also favour patterns of communicative influence that tend to be rigid and non-transparent: metaphors, analogies, narratives, deceit, and exaggeration.

Variation on the third dimension, reciprocity—which determines whether communicative influence will be manipulative or rhetorical—results more from the alignment or misalignment of beliefs and preferences than from the conditions of electoral competition themselves. In other words, in the absence of other institutional constraints, electoral competition may produce either rhetoric or manipulation, and movement from one to the other depends on the particular issue at stake. A speaker can only rely on reciprocity (and thus on rhetorical influence) if targets’ existing commitments can be used or invoked in ways that support his or her claim. To the extent that a speaker needs to surreptitiously rely on assumptions not drawn from a target’s existing commitments, speech tends to be manipulative. However, as I suggest below, if targets are sufficiently knowledgeable and engaged with these commitments and with the topic, the speaker will be less able to manipulate, and will be pushed towards less objectionable strategies if he or she hopes to be effective.

Anticipatory representation thus raises the hazards that electoral competition will select for manipulation, or rhetoric unbalanced with explanation. Institutional arrangements could mitigate these selection hazards by incentivizing types of communicative influence that balance or correct, both within a site and elsewhere in the deliberative system. The competitive and public nature of representative arrangements, and the direct connection they establish between influence and outcome by way of voter choice mean there is little room for
a representative to maneuver on the dimensions of rigidity and transparency. However, because reciprocity does not follow directly from the institutional arrangement, some features of the discursive ecosystem may tip the balance in favour of rhetoric over manipulation. Making information around an issue available and accessible, or promoting civil society participation that gives people experience making judgments informed by their personal commitments, may favour reciprocity in two ways. First, enhancing targets’ knowledge base ensures that there are commitments for speakers to engage. Without any pre-existing commitments, even speech structured to be rhetorical can become manipulative because the implicit commitments that make up the inferential structure are non-transparently imposed rather than drawn from existing commitments. Second, people may be more likely to detect and reject efforts at manipulation if they have a greater knowledge base on a given issue.

In addition to promoting reciprocity over manipulation, it may also be necessary to correct for manipulation. In Chapter 9, I argued that building sites into the deliberative system designed to produce discussion could perform this function by helping actors identify non-reflexively and non-authentically acquired commitments. Discussion, I argued, enables actors to help one another explore their webs of commitments, identifying commitments they may have acquired as a result of inferential structures that were rigid, non-reciprocal and non-transparent. Discussion can help people to locate these commitments by allowing actors to prompt one another to render their commitments explicit. To produce discussion, sites might select for non-rigidity by lowering the stakes. They might select for reciprocity by helping people get started with a set of shared commitments on which they can build. And they could select for transparency by setting up discursive exchanges. Institutional features that select for discussion may be more feasible to design into mini-publics than other venues.
Organizers must be attentive, however, to an inherent difficulty in tapping into the corrective capacity of discussion. It is reasonable to assume that the power of discussion to reveal to actors parts of their webs of commitments of which they might not have been aware may be most feasible if participants do not start with the same commitments. The inherent challenge, then, is how to maintain discussion once people become invested in changing one another’s minds, which may push them towards. This difficulty suggests the importance of careful facilitation, which may be able to limit the consequences of this pull towards rigidity by directing speech toward persuasion, and away from proof or rhetoric—forms of communicative influence that provide less effective correctives to manipulation.

As I suggested above, the institutional selection effects of electoral competition by themselves select neither for nor against reciprocity. Rather, reciprocity depends on whether speakers can identify commitments that will support their claims. Because reciprocal influence is a possibility, anticipatory representation may select for rhetoric. While preferable to manipulation, rhetoric raises its own problems. Excessive rhetoric, by being non-transparent, prevents speech from engaging targets’ reflexive capacities. Its very reciprocity may actually prevent actors from testing and expanding their commitments through new perspectives or ideas. I argued in Chapter 9 that explanation is the antidote to excessive rhetoric, because it lays bare justificatory inferential relationships and necessary assumptions on which rhetorical claims rest, giving targets opportunities to weigh claims reflexively without the additional pressure of a speaker trying to influence them. Specific explanatory correctives might, for example, prompt people to explain or unpack the grounds of a non-transparent pattern of communicative influence—for instance, by showing why an analogy between two cases is accurate or relevant to a decision at hand. On the one hand, the need for
explanations to balance rhetorical speech is an argument for careful, detailed media reporting. On the other hand, we might also want to hear explanations and justifications directly from representatives. To correct for the effects of non-transparent rhetoric, we may want them to make their reasons explicit so that we can know whether their decisions are based on good reasons, insofar as we take this to define the normative obligations of a good representative. Citizens may only receive such accounts in a non-generative environment (to select for transparency) insulated from electoral consequences (to select for non-rigidity). We need to think about how to supplement representative institutions with sites that meet these criteria.

**Gyroscopic Representation**

Gyroscopic representatives are selected on the basis of characteristics citizens judge will enable them to “look within” as a basis for decisions (Mansbridge 2003, 515). Insofar as gyroscopic representation involves a candidate making appeals (claims and arguments) to voters about his or her suitability, it is subject to the same hazards and potential correctives as anticipatory representation. However, the conditions of electoral competition pose an additional set of hazards specific to gyroscopic representation, and the salience of these hazards depends on the extent to which institutional arrangements favour gyroscopic representation. Strategic actors may recognize that the best way of ensuring their success may not be to convince voters that they possess a certain characteristic, but to shift the terms of evaluation onto characteristics where they know they perform well, while avoiding or obscuring those on which they do badly.
The first hazard that derives from such a strategy is that targets of influence will have insufficient grounds to judge the traits they may look for in a gyroscopic representative. As I suggested in Chapter 9, the conditions of institutionalized competition create the risk that a candidate’s words will be used against him or her. Actors need to protect their reputations from their own words taken out of context, and this strategic consideration works against complete transparency in inferential structures. On divisive or controversial issues that may compromise fragile electoral coalitions, avoiding making an explicit commitment on that issue may enable a speaker to maintain broad appeal. Because of that non-transparency—which may include hedging, evasion, and equivocation—voters cannot anticipate the kinds of reasons that will guide representatives’ decision-making. Some institutional possibilities for reform may follow. For instance, when representatives abstain from parliamentary votes, they remove a possibility for voters to determine the representative’s commitments on that issue. This may undermine voters’ capacity to make informed judgments about the representative’s disposition and ability to act in a principled manner around issues of importance to the voter. Although missing a vote is often minor, we might begin to be concerned to the extent that abstention damages the grounds on which voters might judge whether a representative possesses gyroscopic trustworthiness.

The second hazard that follows from the mix of gyroscopic representation and communicative influence concerns not the absence of grounds for judgment, but their distortion. Speech can distort the grounds on which voters judge gyroscopic representatives when candidates skew the playing field, rendering some considerations more salient and others less. In some cases, a representative may try to bring a certain set of characteristics to the fore—strategically, those on which they are likely to be judged most favourably—and
push others into the background. This may be one instance in which the narrative mechanism—particularly personal anecdotes—becomes strategically useful. Stories serve to highlight and lend weight to a certain set of characteristics without explicitly linking them to the choice voters are being asked to make.

The prominence that military service records assume in US elections is an example of such a process. Speakers may also imply that a set of characteristics—for instance, those one might acquire through military service—predicts their performance. Sometimes, speakers may make a connection explicit: for example, pointing to a history of success in business as evidence of having the necessary characteristics to run a government effectively. In other cases, the connection may remain implicit; for instance, highlighting a successful family life without making claims (which would likely not stand up) connecting these biographical facts to effective leadership. Similarly, there may be instances in which the strategy of undermining perceptions of a representative’s gyroscopic suitability—for instance, “birther” attacks accusing Obama of lying about where he was born—can corrode even warranted trust.

Depriving or distorting the grounds for judgments of gyroscopic representatives’ suitability poses an anti-democratic hazard roughly similar to that of the modification effects that I argued result from frames. Competition over gyroscopic representation might alter the structure of target commitments, by rendering considerations more or less salient, thus (like frames) determining how competing considerations are weighed in a judgment. As with frames, the structural relationships among commitments may make a representative’s gyroscopic qualities more appealing to voters while leaving reasons for assigning greater or lesser weight to those qualities implicit.
Though the strategy of trying to render a certain metric for character judgment salient may create more fleeting ecological effects than a deeply entrenched frame, it can also reduce reciprocity and transparency in many of the same ways. For this reason, the interventions I suggested for modification effects in Chapter 7 might apply to the hazards of communication surrounding gyroscopic representation as well. As with frames, encouraging competition and cross-cutting conversation may prompt people to interrogate whether or not implicit assumptions—for instance, that a record in business or the military might predict success in a presidency—are distorting their judgment. Even encouraging voters to think in terms of priorities—here, what they think is most important for selecting a gyroscopic representative—may dissipate some of the effects by which emphasis on one dimension of character evaluation occurs at the expense of other relevant considerations. Moreover, sites that promote discussion may facilitate the interrogation of patterns of communicative influence that enable this distortion—in this case, prompting voters to reflect explicitly on the significance they ought to ascribe to personal stories and anecdotes, or perhaps demanding, through cross-examination, that speakers themselves articulate the connection.

The other hazard suggested above—insufficient grounds for judgment—is most similar to the modification hazards that result from lack of knowledge on the part of targets. Without grounds for anticipating how a representative is likely to behave—perhaps in the form of a track record of similar choices—it will be difficult for voters to make reflexive, authentic judgments. Correcting for absent grounds of judgment by making available an accurate record of votes, commitments, and claims might help people infer characteristics. However, such an intervention also risks exacerbating the problem of avoidance patterns by increasing representatives’ incentives to hedge in the first place. As an alternative, the
presence of explicit evidence of their past commitments could prompt representatives to offer justifications for them, rather than merely attempting to avoid or to gloss over them. The choice between avoiding articulating a commitment entirely or articulating it and offering a justification may depend on whether the speaker thinks that justification is likely to be heard, and to mitigate any fall-out from the original claim. Institutional ecologies can favour the second option by ensuring that speakers have opportunities to offer justifications and respond to challenges. Democracies ought not to require that speakers make all of their commitments explicit. Indeed, in political systems where taking the “wrong” position on a single issue is sufficient to derail an entire campaign, removing avoidance patterns from the set of linguistic strategies available to representatives—assuming that could even be done—would quickly cause the system to become dysfunctional. As an alternative to revealing commitments on an issue, system level interventions might correct for this hazard of insufficient grounds for judgment by encouraging voters to identify multiple issues that matter to them. Voters might then triangulate judgments of gyroscopic representatives despite incomplete information, and develop a sensitivity to which dimension they are treating as salient at a given time.

**Surrogate Representation**

In surrogate representation, actors represent perspectives and groups in ways that go beyond their formal constituencies—for example, Barney Frank’s conscious representation of gays and lesbians outside of his own district (Mansbridge 2003, 523). This form of representation can be particularly strong when it reflects shared experience. For Mansbridge, surrogate representation can be judged according to whether it meets the normative demand that systems attend to the proportional representation of conflicting interests (2003, 525).
However, viewed through the lens of competition for communicative influence, surrogate representation raises another set of normative issues. Anti-democratic hazards arise when claims of surrogacy may be oriented, not to meaningful representation of a diffuse constituency, but to a magnification of the kind of influence that might derive from “speaking for” others. The hazards here are that this “speaking for” may not be justified, and the magnified influence successful claims to surrogacy generate would not be subject to autonomous judgment, either by those a speaker purports to represent, or by those whom they are trying to influence. Although Mansbridge’s surrogate representatives are elected, the category is more general and extends to prominent individuals and civil society actors who take on the role of “speaking for” others in the absence of any formal electoral authorization (Urbinati and Warren 2008).

The key issue with surrogate representation, from the perspective of weighing the democratic implications of communicative influence, are the magnifying effects that can accrue from a claim to representative status. The democratic acceptability of the increased influence such surrogacy claims confer depends on whether others—particularly those a speaker claims to represent—can make autonomous judgments about those claims. Otherwise, the surrounding communicative influence becomes inconsistent with discursive democratic goods. There are two ways in which surrogacy claims may be hazardous. The first is the claim to surrogate status itself. When surrogacy generates a form of credible influence—others should listen because someone is speaking for a broader constituency—the reasons that surrogacy claim is legitimate, acceptable, or accurate should also be subject to reflexive, authentic endorsement. For instance, is a shared experience, perhaps conveyed in the form of a personal anecdote about motherhood, an adequate basis for claiming to
represent the perspective of mothers? Is a speaker claiming to represent a set of interests in a way that those represented would reflexively endorse?

The second way in which surrogacy claims may pose democratic hazards is if the magnification itself is inappropriate. In Chapter 8, I argued that influence deriving from credibility should not exceed the topic on which the speaker is credible. In the case of surrogacy claims, the parallel question is whether there are good reasons that speaking for a certain group should amplify one speaker’s voice around a given issue. We might ask, for instance, whether in claiming surrogate status a speaker is drowning out some other, more directly affected, constituency?

In terms of representation, these hazards of magnification are most likely to involve implicit or explicit claims that the speaker represents the interests or the identity of the group, and thus his or her claims should hold greater weight than another’s. Site and system level institutional interventions could enhance the autonomous quality of judgments about these types of claims by making the grounds for surrogacy claims explicit. Of course, this possibility assumes that actors might be able to identify some principle or principles to adjudicate among claims to surrogacy, besides electoral authorization. Laura Montanaro (2013) suggests that such principles do exist. She argues that when people make claims to representative status in the absence of formal authorization and accountability, the legitimacy of their claims to representation can be grounded in principles of responsiveness and empowered inclusion, where responsiveness is understood as fostering the self-development and self-determination of affected groups (Montanaro 2013, 5). Insofar as magnification derives from claims to the legitimacy of “speaking for,” the deliberative system needs
somehow to make information about the legitimacy of such claims explicit in order for people to ground their judgment so that voices are not inappropriately magnified.

In a formulation more in line with traditional accounts of representation, claims to surrogacy may also appeal to identity-based, rather than geographical, features of potential constituencies. In cases where surrogacy-based magnification of communicative influence is grounded in descriptive representation, the corrective should aim to create opportunities and capacity to reflectively weigh appeals to shared identity, enabling constituencies to ask how well the representative actually “reflects.” According to Hanna Pitkin, the value of descriptive representation lies with making something absent present, thereby supplying information about the represented (Pitkin 1967, 81). Competition produces specious or unsupportable versions of representative claims that fail on this criteria, and typically do so in a non-transparent way so they cannot be rejected. Appeals to surrogacy by way of descriptive representation are particularly hard to evaluate when they appeal to non-existent or vague constituencies, as when a representative claims that he or she is acting according to the preferences of the majority, without providing evidence—for instance, poll results—for this claim. For example, in a recent parliamentary exchange, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, responding to criticism from the leader of the opposition, asserted that his decision to approve the CNOOC take-over of Canadian oil company Nexen had the support of a majority of Canadians, when in fact, a poll conducted days before showed exactly the opposite (Horgan 2012). The grounds for evaluating appeals to public opinion are relatively easy to access, at least on sufficiently prominent issues, although this type of argument might also include a rarely interrogated premise that majority public opinion should be relevant to the decision. In other cases, even the appeal to majority opinion is non-transparent because
there are no identifiable sources for the claim, as might happen when the mayor of a small town articulates an argument against a nearby development by claiming that the majority of local residents are opposed to it. Nixon’s appeal to the “silent majority” of American citizens against a vocal minority exemplifies this strategy.

Despite the potential hazards of magnification that accompany surrogate representation, democratic systems also cannot do without the increased cognitive and deliberative efficiency afforded by practices of *speaking for* others. Subjecting each instance of surrogate representation to critical reflection any time someone’s claims are magnified by the explicit or implicit claim that they are speaking for some represented group would undermine this efficiency. Nevertheless, competition increases the strategic incentives to make such claims, and often increases incentives to mask or obscure the bases for these claims because they rely on tenuous connections or vaguely defined constituencies.

As such, a deliberative system should offer means of periodically checking in on claims, enabling informed judgment of their legitimacy and representativeness. Much like the correctives for magnification-based hazards discussed in Chapter 8, correcting for magnification resulting from a surrogacy claim involves making the inferential structures around that claim transparent—both the surrogate status and the inferences to which it is meant to lend weight. One important way of rendering the grounds for surrogacy claims explicit—and perhaps curbing the more questionable deployments of them—is to provide alternative pathways to voice for constituencies claimed by surrogates. Although this corrective mechanism would yield more voices by those claiming to represent the same constituencies, multiple strategic actors making such claims might actually force each surrogate to be more transparent, inducing them to offer justifications for their claims of
representation. While every claim to surrogate representation need not require rigorous
testing, the democratic quality of discourse in the face of competition among representatives
improves to the extent that we are able to create opportunities to examine the basis of a
speaker’s claim to represent a group as its surrogate. Table 10.2 summarizes the results of the
preceding discussion.

Table 10.2. Representation Types, Democratic Hazards and Correctives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Democratic Hazards</th>
<th>Correctives</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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| Anticipatory | - Selection, resulting in:  
- manipulation  
- excessive rhetoric | - Discussion, achieved by lowering stakes, establishing shared grounds, and dialogic arrangements.  
- Explanation, including the unpacking of rigid, non-transparent patterns of influence like analogies. | - Mark Warawa’s motion condemning sex-selective abortion (Chapter 9)  
- “Bathroom Bill” C279 petition (Chapter 9) |
| Gyroscopic | - Insufficient grounds for judgment  
- Distorted grounds for judgment | - Identifying priority characteristics on which to judge, and interrogating their appropriateness.  
- Encouraging people to develop multiple metrics (discouraging single issue voting).  
- Examining connections between (implicit) metric and representative’s role | - Military service/ business records as election issues |
| Surrogate | - Insufficient grounds for judgments of surrogacy claims  
- Surrogacy claims should not have magnifying effects in situations where they do | - Making information available about the basis of representative claims  
- Providing alternative pathways to voice for represented. | - Appeals to “majority opinion”  
- Tabling (questionably framed) petitions |

To the extent that different electoral regimes or party systems produce different mixes
of anticipatory, gyroscopic, and surrogate representation, institutions should respond to
different hazards inherent in communicative influence incentivized by these mixes. For
instance, insofar as proportional representation systems tend to include a broader range of
constituencies, and are less tied to geography (Urbinati and Warren 2008, 399), they might,
on balance, generate a greater tendency towards surrogate representation and its accompanying hazards. Correcting for these specific hazards would require sites that help to make explicit the reasons for a surrogacy claim and subject it to critical reflection. For instance, if a speaker tables a petition and claims to speak for its signatories, such an act should be accompanied by transparency on the subject of how people were convinced to sign. Electoral systems might also favour different types of representation. For example, as Carey and Shugart (1995) demonstrate, different formula for allocating legislative seats to candidates within parties can affect whether candidates are better off cultivating personal or party-based votes. If, for example, candidates are running in open list systems in which party leaders have less control, they have an incentive to build personal reputations even if those go against the party line (Carey and Shugart 1995, 418). Insofar as a given electoral system tends to cultivate appeals to the electorate on the basis of gyroscopic suitability, then, these systems should be accompanied by institutions that correct for insufficient or distorted grounds for judgment.

Representation is just one among a number of generic features of the deliberative system—and political systems in general—that might be subjected to analysis in terms of its consequences for communicative influence and, by extension, for the autonomy of the judgments and choices citizens are asked to make. One might consider, among other things, aggregation, accountability, exit, referendums, and the role of interest groups. For now, however, the previous discussion of representation should have illustrated how the model of communicative influence, combined with a deliberative systems theory, can respond to the potential pathologies of strategic speech inherent in competitive political systems with high stakes, uncertainty, and divergent interests. The model of communicative influence allows us
to characterize strategic (and other) forms of speech without merely labeling them in order to
dismiss them, and it allows us to consider the importance of multiple types of communication
to the deliberative system, rather than seeking democratic goods only where speech
resembles ideal dialogue.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to bring together the model of communicative
influence with a concrete and pervasive feature of democratic political systems:
representation. I asked what competition over communicative influence as a means to secure
votes does for autonomous judgment under conditions favoring three of the four different
types of representation in Mansbridge’s typology: anticipatory, gyroscopic, and surrogate.
Like Disch, I am interested in the conditions that can ensure good judgment in the face of
representative claims that seek to mobilize support, often by whatever strategic means of
communicative influence are available. In contrast to Disch, however, I define good judgment
in terms of the criteria of autonomy developed in Chapter 5, and I use the framework of the
model of communicative influence to connect the conditions for autonomous judgment to the
ecological conditions under which speech takes place.

Using these approaches, I found that each type of representation generates slightly
different hazards for communicative influence and the discursive ecosystem. These hazards
closely resemble those elaborated in Chapters 7 to 9, and thus might benefit from similar
institutional interventions. Insofar as institutions channel competition into anticipatory
representation, the system may select for rigidity and non-transparency. The hazards of
manipulation and excessive rhetoric that accompany anticipatory representation under
conditions of institutionalized competition are general to all three types of representation, since authorizing a representative is preceded by communication. At the same time, gyroscopic representation poses the additional hazard of incentivizing kinds of communicative influence that also distort or muddy the grounds for judgment. Strategies by which speakers position themselves as appealing gyroscopic representatives can work non-transparently—by lending greater weight to some characteristics over others—or implicitly (and perhaps spuriously)—by connecting characteristics on which they are positively perceived to the decision citizens and representatives are asked to make. Finally, surrogate representation raises hazards associated with the magnification of some voices over others, especially within contexts in which claims cannot be tested by those for whom surrogates claim to speak.

This analysis demonstrates the potential value of the model of communicative influence in helping to tackle the problem of strategic speech head on. Using this model, we can ask how speakers respond to incentives—many of which are unchangeable—and what problems these circumstances pose for the normative goods associated with talk-based politics. A key payoff is that the model suggests ways of working with, rather than eliminating, strategic elements of speech prompted by the high stakes of electoral competition.
Chapter 11: Conclusion

Uses of language in politics are usually highly strategic. The aim of this dissertation has been to develop a theory of the democratic potentials of language use that aligns with, rather than sidesteps, this reality. Currently, deliberative democratic theory—the most well-developed body of work on the normative value of talk-based politics—treats strategic speech as deviant and necessarily detracting from this normative potential. As such, deliberative democratic theorists typically look for the democratic benefits of speech only where it is oriented to articulating reasons and considerations others might potentially accept. The guiding assumption in deliberative democratic theory has been that speech used strategically amounts to using the force of language upon others, rather than drawing force from language’s capacity to build up a shared set of agreements grounded in the validity of reasons. This dismissal of strategic speech has depoliticized deliberative democracy, and it has done so at the very high cost of rendering its prescriptions irrelevant to most kinds of political speech.

In this dissertation, I sought to develop a politicized theory of deliberative democracy by combining the normative principles behind deliberative ideals with an alternative analytic framework for understanding the force of language. The normative argument is that speech is good for democracy insofar as it engages and develops, or at least does not undermine or circumvent, citizens’ capacity for autonomous judgment, whether or not it has strategic intent. To make this argument, I develop an analytic framework for understanding the force of language—the model of communicative influence—built on the idea that speech produces pragmatic consequences that influence how actors engage, challenge, reinforce, abandon, update or acquire their commitments through reasoning processes. This influence is
communicative because it depends on actors taking up the arguments and propositions others articulate. To the extent that democratic institutions channel political competition into speech, speakers will try to use language to exert communicative influence over the commitments of others.

The goal of a politicized theory of deliberative democracy is to identify the different ways speakers can exert communicative influence, and determine the implications of communicative influence for autonomous judgment. On the basis of these determinations, we can identify better and worse practical and institutional interventions that might turn communicative influence towards deliberative democratic ends. The model comprises three core concepts—inferential structures, discursive ecosystems, and autonomous judgment—that each achieve theoretical tasks necessary to the development of a politicized theory of deliberative democracy.

The first theoretical task was to explain communicative influence and ensure that it captured variation in how speech might exert influence. I developed an account of communicative influence by stylizing reasoning processes in term of commitments and inferences in order to specify how speakers can intervene in these processes. Speakers shape reasoning processes—and thus influence the commitments of others—by articulating inferential structures that integrate with, latch on to, or even hijack reasoning processes as target actors agree to the commitments and inferences that make up the inferential structure. Inferential structures arrange commitments to generate force from the logical relationships among them (rigidity), from leveraging buy-in on the basis of actors pre-existing commitments (reciprocity), or both—all the while making the commitments and inferential relationships that produce these effects relatively explicit (transparency). The rigidity,
reciprocity, and transparency of an inferential structure capture variation in how speech produces pragmatic consequences, thus opening communicative influence up to normative evaluation and, ultimately, institutional intervention—without implicating speakers intentions, strategic or otherwise. This three dimensional conceptualization of communicative influence yields a typology of eight types of communicative influence: discussion, explanation, disclosure, assertion, persuasion, proof, manipulation and rhetoric.

Building on the concept of communicative influence, my second theoretical task for the model was to systematize context dependency of the force of language: communicative influence depends not just on what is said, but who says it to whom, and under what circumstances—that is, the impact of speech occurs within a discursive ecosystem. I identified three types of ecological features that condition communicative influence. The first type of ecological feature concerns the nature of the pre-existing webs of commitments that speakers target and engage. The basic inferential links among these commitments are often overlaid with residual structures that reinforce some connections over others and render some commitments more salient than others. I theorize these structures in terms of frames, a concept familiar in political psychology though not in democratic theory. These structural/substantive ecologies can modify communicative influence. For instance, a claim that triggers frame-based reasoning can render influence more rigid—inducing a specific conclusion—and less transparent or reciprocal by making implicit connections and excluding potential challenges. The second type of ecological feature of discursive ecosystems is subject-based. The characteristics of speakers and targets—their credibility, on the speaker side, and their knowledge and psychological tendencies on the target side—alter their respective abilities to exert and to resist communicative influence. Like frames, target characteristics modify
influence, for example rendering it less reciprocal in situations where limited knowledge or attention makes it difficult for speakers to engage target commitments. By contrast, speaker characteristics like expertise, trustworthiness, or first-hand knowledge can magnify communicative influence. Third, communicative influence takes place in institutional ecologies that determine, for a given exchange, the stakes, the parties, the exposure, and the consequences of altering one’s commitments. These institutional features create incentives towards (or away from) rigid, reciprocal, and transparent speech, combining to select for different types of communicative influence.

My third theoretical task was to bring deliberative democratic theory back in by connecting this conceptualization of the pragmatic force of language—communicative influence in discursive ecosystems—to the normative potentials theorists attribute to talk-based politics. The fundamental argument for the democratic benefits of coordinating social action through language comes down to actors’ capacity to impose rational obligations on themselves by accepting the claims others make, on the grounds that claims can be redeemed discursively in terms of their validity. Because these obligations are grounded in freely accepting the reasons for a claim, the argument goes, they are consistent with and express autonomy. Thus, the third core component of the model of communicative influence is a specific account of what autonomy entails in light of the model of communicative influence. Following this model, my argument is that we should be less concerned with whether a speaker treats someone as a means or an end—that is, strategically as opposed to communicatively, in Habermas’s terms—and more concerned with what it means for the judgments that people make in response to communicative influence to be autonomous.
Taken together, these three components of the model of communicative influence—inferential structures, discursive ecosystems, and autonomous judgment—provide a conceptual framework both for theorizing the way political actors can and do use language strategically, and for determining the democratic consequences of strategic uses of language. The primary payoffs of the model of communicative influence, which I develop in the later chapters of the dissertation, are institutional interventions that can secure the democratic benefits derived from conducting politics through strategic speech, while mitigating potential harms. I propose institutional interventions into the discursive ecosystem that target the ways modification, magnification and selection effects can pose hazards to autonomous judgment, either by preventing such hazards or by compensating for their effects, with the goal of underwriting rather than compromising autonomous judgment.

Democracies empower citizens to make meaningful political judgments and have a say over issues that affect them. In doing so, however, democratic empowerments also position citizens’ judgments between political actors and their desired outcomes, thus exposing citizens to strategic efforts to shape their judgments. Language is perhaps the most important tool with which strategic political actors attempt to shape those judgments and choices in ways that align with their purposes, whether that purpose is to win an argument, to mold public opinion, or win an election. Empowering individual judgments is normatively empty if speakers can use language to dictate what those judgments will be. Exposing people to reasons and arguments only contributes to self-determination insofar as the force behind those reasons and arguments engages, rather than compromises, our capacities for autonomous judgment.
For this reason, understanding and responding to communicative influence should be at the heart of efforts to enhance, deepen, or supplement democracy. These efforts are central to much of the contemporary work in deliberative democratic theory, and are becoming increasingly critical as established democracies struggle to manage deep, polarizing conflicts and widespread disaffection with politics. The model of communicative influence advances these efforts. It does so by offering democratic theorists the conceptual and analytic resources to answer the question: given that in democratic politics actors are continually motivated to use speech as a strategic tool for political ends, how can we create the conditions under which strategic speech can contribute to autonomous political judgment. This dissertation has laid the necessary groundwork for developing systematic answers to this question, and does so in ways that build on existing insights in both deliberative democratic theory and empirical political science research. It also offered a wide range of preliminary suggestions that follow from the model. Here, I specify five further implications.

Connecting democratic theory to empirical research on reasoning and on political strategy

Empirical research in political psychology offers considerable insight into into the factors that shape how actors reason about politics. In the dissertation I sought to identify the democratic implications of a tiny sample of these findings by identifying their consequences for communicative influence, and, by extension, autonomous judgment. The implications I note in this dissertation just scratch the surface. Using the model of communicative influence, democratic theorists could engage with the full range of empirical work on heuristics, biases, framing effects, and affect, all of which shape the ways people make political judgments. Likewise, the model should enable empirical researchers might more easily identify and articulate the democratic implications of their findings. Empirical and formal research also
documents a range of speech-based tactics and theorize the strategic calculations that guide them: negative campaigning, agenda-setting, parliamentary posturing, manipulating issue dimensionality, and withholding information. Most of existing work in deliberative democracy has limited capacity to engage with this type of research, simply because these theories view strategic intentions as disqualifying speech from having democratic potentials. In contrast, the model of communicative influence’s theoretical framework offers a platform for democratic theorists to engage with these findings on the common ground afforded by a more fine-grained account of the force of language that admit strategic intent. These findings might then inform prescriptive claims about enhancing the democratic qualities and consequences of political communication.

*Empirical research structured by the model of communicative influence*

In addition to drawing a broader circle of empirical research into democratic theorizing, the framework I have developed in this dissertation is sufficiently systematic and precise to generate testable hypotheses from its key propositions. An empirical research program might start by operationalizing the three dimensions of inferential structures—rigidity, reciprocity, and transparency—and testing whether the typology of communicative influence they generate is an adequate way of describing different forms of political communication. In addition, one set of questions with which I did not engage with specifically, but would be interesting to consider, is this. How do the underlying configurations of preferences and information that characterize a given political problem yield different types of communicative influence, independently or in interaction with institutional conditions? Research into specific propositions about institutional selection effects—as well as modification and magnification effects—would also serve to confirm,
qualify, or refute the model’s claims about the anti-democratic hazards of each type of effect, and identify new possibilities for responding to these hazards.

**Supplementary democracy**

Many of deliberative democracy’s practical institutional innovations—most notably mini-publics—are designed with an eye to supplementing traditional institutions of democratic governance where they fall short of deliberative standards. Mini-publics can offer a democratic response to complex new technologies, ethical quandaries, sensitive inter-cultural issues, or no-win scenarios in which politicians do not want to get involved. Organizers and theorists see such processes as democratizing political processes by introducing into decision-making a wider range of claims, reasons, and arguments, and opportunities for actors to give them due consideration. The notion of supplementary democracy suggests that democratic systems can harness the deliberative capacities of such democratic innovations to improve the epistemic, ethical and legitimate quality of public decisions. The model of communicative influence I have developed here can guide theoretical and applied work in the area of supplementary democracy, but it also suggests a slight re-orientation from the attention to mini-publics as enclaves of reason-giving. In contrast, I am suggesting that we think of democratic supplements primarily in terms of the kinds of interventions can create positive conditions for autonomous judgment. It follows that different measures (and different institutional designs) will be effective for different context specific democratic challenges—for instance, moving people off of frame-based reasoning, providing information to underwrite good judgments of credibility, or creating space for disclosures that might expand and revitalize the shared commitments to which reciprocal speech can make reference.
A strategy for theorizing deliberative systems

The idea that different venues and institutions can supplement one another’s deliberative shortcomings is also the key implication of the emerging theory of deliberative systems. The deliberative systems agenda considers how the interconnections, overlaps, tensions and complementarities among all forms of talk-based politics add up to produce a system that serves well (or poorly) several deliberative functions—creating epistemically sound views and opinions, respecting the agency of citizens in their capacity as authors of claims, and including a wide range of perspectives (Mansbridge et al. 2012). Theorizing deliberative systems is still in its early stages, particularly where it comes to specifying how sites ought to relate to one another. This dissertation advances the deliberative systems agenda by theorizing the effects of context on communicative influence in ecological terms, specifying how the parts of the system interact with one another, and specifying how institutional interventions might actually harness these system-level interaction effects in ways that support autonomous judgment. It helps identify the democratic potentials of sites of discourse that might, if assessed solely on the metric of deliberation, be perceived as failures, and it suggests ways that communicative influence emanating from one site can correct for the potential hazards of communicative influence at another. In particular, the balancing relationships I theorized in Chapter 9 offer a specific way of thinking about what it might mean for sites to complement one another at the system level.

A politicized theory of deliberative democracy

Making political judgments is fundamental to democratic citizenship. If those judgments are simply the effects of the wills of speakers using language to secure strategic advantage, then we would have to conclude that most political speech harms democratic
autonomy. Deliberative democratic theory has sought to prevent this harm by demanding that appeals to citizens remain within the bounds of “deliberative” speech—speech that is well-intentioned, respectful, and which produces agreement exclusively on the basis of reasons an actor takes to be valid. But the deliberative democratic demand is unrealistic: it fails to engage, except by condemning, most of the domain of political speech. Yet the moral point remains: strategic speech can be manipulative and deceitful, appeal to ugly emotions, dissemble and otherwise harm deliberative interactions and undermine autonomous judgment. How, then, are we to understand and evaluate differences among the threats strategic speech poses to autonomous judgment? Intuitively, deceit seems different from rhetoric, and personal attacks from personal appeals. Likewise, analogies, stories, and loaded words may each be uttered with an orientation to winning. Each may also derive force from sources other than the acceptability or validity of whatever reasons they serve to convey. And yet each probably also makes important contributions to political discourse. In this dissertation I have sought to develop a political theory of democracy—a theory that asks how language use can be democratic in circumstances defined by conflict and competition, in which some actors use language as a tool to secure their political ends, often with motivations that are purely strategic, and which bypass rather than engage capacities for autonomous judgment. By theorizing language use in terms of its pragmatic consequences at the level of reasoning, the model of communicative influence offers a new way of thinking about how all forms of speech, even speech that is highly strategic, can help deliberative systems reach their democratic potential.
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