THE RELATIONAL BASIS OF DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY

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by
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ABSTRACT

The democratic quality of a state relies in part upon its citizens’ ability to freely reason on public policy questions (Bohman & Rehg, 1997). Some scholars are concerned that modern societies lack the institutional and civic capacity necessary to become sufficiently deliberative democracies (Nabatchi, 2010). University-based scholars and public-interest organizations have responded by organizing procedural mini-publics, a type of public forum designed to enhance the quality and efficacy of political discourse (Fung, 2003). These deliberative processes differ from informal political conversation by systematically selecting participants and by constraining discourse to achieve normatively desirable outcomes (Bohman & Rehg, 1997, p. xvi).

In this dissertation, I use communication theory to explain how participants in deliberative processes manage to cooperate even in manifestly adversarial political contexts. I argue that interactions within mini-publics involve an understudied but crucial relational component. Using Relational Framing Theory (Dillard, Solomon, & Samp, 1996) to inform my investigation, I measure participants’ relational perceptions during a small-group deliberative interaction. I use those data to examine the effect of differential relational judgments on participants’ interactive experiences, reasoning, and legitimacy assessments.

In Chapter 1, I outline deliberation as a political practice and as a subject of scholarly inquiry. I discuss deliberative democracy as a theory of legitimate government. I then examine why some empirical social scientists embrace its tenets to guide academic studies of mini-publics as democratic interventions. I describe their features and give examples of the specific problems mini-public organizers intend to solve. I conclude by arguing that the development of procedural democratic deliberation is an attempt to increase political legitimacy.

In Chapter 2, I discuss political legitimacy as the focal concern of deliberative democratic theory. I define the concept of democratic legitimacy and differentiate four types of deliberative
legitimacy. A central feature of deliberative legitimacy is that it links citizens’ expectations about democratic norms with their experiences of communicative interaction. My central argument is that deliberative theory implies that legitimacy has a communicative basis. Thus, in Chapter 3, I consider how communication theory may inform deliberation theory.

In Chapter 3, I argue that the communicative aspect of small-group deliberation is under-theorized. Communication scholars have described this problem as the “black box” of deliberation,” in which scholars assume without evidence that dialogue under conditions of deliberative interaction produces democratically desirable outcomes (Mutz, 2008, p. 530; Stromer-Galley & Muhlberger, 2009, p. 174). Solving this problem requires theorizing based on foundational understandings of human communication. Thus, I draw on the concept of relational information processing, as articulated through Relational Framing Theory (Dillard, Solomon, & Samp, 1996), as a grounds for explaining how deliberative mini-publics legitimize collective self-governance through communicative interaction. This concept links Chapters 1 and 2 by explaining how the unique environment of a mini-public invites participants to maintain interpersonal relationships. These relationships are integral to the process of reasoning on policy arguments because they give participants a basis for differentiating between enactment of strategic (i.e. persuasion-oriented) and cooperative (i.e. understanding-oriented) goals.

In Chapter 4, I present four theoretical models that relate causal forces (e.g., process design and norm enactment) to democratic legitimacy outcomes. The first two models are attitudinal (influences on participants’ legitimacy-salient judgements), and the second two are behavioral (influences on participants’ legitimacy-salient actions).

I augment these models by theorizing about how variance in relational frame salience acts as a conditional effect within each of them. I hypothesize that relational frame salience is an outcome of the process design choices from Chapter 1. I argue that participants’ differential perceptions of frame salience explains variation in participants’ attitudinal perceptions of
teleological and procedural legitimacy. Based on my theorizing in Chapter 3, I argue that interactions characterized by cooperative relationships allow participants to engage with reasons rather than compete over contested positions. Finally, I argue that participants are more likely to give symbolic consent when deliberation is teleologically and procedurally legitimate.

In Chapter 5, I describe my empirical methodology for collecting data to assess the plausibility of my hypotheses. I discuss my recruiting method, the design of my participatory mini-public, and the instruments I used for measuring variables of interest. I also report the measurement properties of my data. This section includes manipulation-checks of the experimental component and factor analyses to establish reliable measures.

In Chapter 6, I discuss my data analysis. I use structural equation modeling to test my hypotheses. The data support several of the hypothesized conditional effects that flow from relational framing. One key finding is that enactment of deliberative norms primes an affiliation/disaffiliation-salient interpretation of the interaction episode. The data also confirm my hypothesis that interaction framing is important for policy reasoning by reducing the role of prior commitment and increasing the role of argument-specific judgements.

In Chapter 7, I draw conclusions from my study for the theory and practice of deliberation. I also note limitations on my claims and future research avenues to address them. From my analysis, I draw the conclusion that relational frame salience is a conditional effect that partially explains why mini-public participants adopt deliberative norms, and when prior attitudes act as independent influences on participants’ evaluations of issue-relevant argument quality.
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Chapter 1

Empirical Investigations of Democratic Deliberation

A fundamental principle of democracy is that policy actions are most justifiable when taken in the “common good,” rather than in the interest of majorities or powerful elites. Quasi-democratic governments should aim to represent the public’s interests in policy decisions (Rousseau, 2002) by ensuring that citizens have an active role in governance (Pateman, 1970). Furthermore, these empowered citizens ideally recognize that securing the public good “requires some sacrifices and demands some disciplines from its members” (Taylor, 2003, p. 198). Yet even if citizens are willing to attempt to live up to this ideal, they will need to contend with plural experiences, values, and aspirations. It remains unclear what specific means governments should use to reliably translate public participation into action.

Dahl (1989, p. 306) specified this problem with three questions. First, “whose good ought to be taken into account?” Second, “How can it best be determined in collective decisions?” Third, “What, substantively speaking, is the common good?” To the first question, Dahl offered an uncontroversial answer: A government’s policy calculus should consider the interests of all whom the decision will effect (p. 306). The latter two questions are more daunting. As it makes decisions, how can civil society attend both to procedural fairness (the “how”), and to substantial disagreements about belief, value, and moral claims (the “what”)? Democratic deliberation theory offers one approach to answering these questions (Cohen, 1989; Dryzek, 1994; Gastil, 1993).

In the deliberative view, social power is an emergent property of communication (Habermas, 1984; Habermas, 1990). One of the core implications of this discourse-centric theory is the conviction that citizens should publically reason together about political problems (Gastil, 1993; Mercier & Sperber, 2011). Proponents of deliberation claim that interactions between
citizens who disagree serve to legitimize government, because their participation may “have substantial impact on the content of (a) decision” in ways that make it more representative of the general will (Dryzek, 2012, p. 21). Citizens may introduce novel information, priorities, and solutions that governing elites may not consider (Pateman, 1970). Further, when citizens must articulate and justify their reasons to one another, they have cause to expose bad reasons and revise their preferences (Mercier & Sperber, 2011). Deliberative theory thus speaks to the questions Dahl (1989) raised about the epistemic problems of the public good.

In answer to Dahl’s second question about the common good, deliberative theory contends that governments should provide opportunities for citizens to collectively reflect on, argue, and render decisions about problems of public policy. As Dryzek argued, “Political systems are deliberatively undemocratic to the extent that they minimize opportunities for individuals to reflect freely on their political preferences” (Dryzek, 2009, p. 1381). Deliberative theory also attempts to answer Dahl’s third question – how to go about discovering the common good – by defining the ethics of government in terms of discourse. Among these ethics are freedom from coercive influence, a commitment to reason-based argument, equality between participants, and agreement to base decisions upon “reasons that are persuasive to all” (a soft form of consensus) (Cohen, 1989, pp. 347-348).

These ideas about how a public ought to govern itself are not restricted to political philosophy. Empirical social scientists have taken interest in validating deliberative democratic theory’s hypothesized effects. As Goodin (2008) observed, “What especially distinguishes the deliberative democracy movement is its concern with finding ways of putting the theory into practice. A host of micro-deliberative innovations … show us what deliberative democracy might look like in miniature” (p.2).

In this chapter, I describe why democratic deliberation appeals to empirical social scientists interested in modeling the dynamics of civil society. I begin by identifying the key
elements of deliberative democracy. I discuss how empiricists adopted those ideas to address problematic patterns of citizen behavior. I then argue that the empirical project should become more specific with respect to the communicative phenomena that explain why deliberation produces public legitimacy.

**Normative Foundations**

There are several sensible places to locate the historical merger of deliberative commitments and democratic theory. In the fourth century B.C.E, Aristotle argued that a government’s actions are legitimate when it publically communicates reasons that justify them (Yack, 2006). This democratic ideal emphasized an open rhetorical reason-giving environment, in which citizens relate to government as attentive audiences to persuasive rhetors.

In the eighteenth century C.E., enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau envisioned an active citizenry that learns to value participation in civic life (Rousseau, 2002; Pateman, Participation and Democratic Theory, 1970). Rousseau argued that citizens require education to reason about politics with a bias toward the common interest rather than self-interest. Yet Rousseau’s emphasis was not on discursive action – reasoning together - so much as on the necessity of institutions that are “self-enforcing” to sustain democratic popular sovereignty (e.g. an elected representative body) (Przeworski, 2004, p. 529). The ideas behind deliberative democracy appeared in some sense throughout the history of democratic theory. The earliest clearly identifiable first expression of modern deliberative democratic theory occurred in the twentieth century. Modern public deliberation scholarship derives its core frameworks from the dialogue between Habermas’ theory of communicative action and Rawls’ theory of justice (Yack, 2006, p. 434; Rosenberg, 2007, pp. 336-337).

Habermas and Rawls espoused competing ideas about two focal concerns of democracy: proceduralism and substantivism (Gutmann & Thompson, 2009, p. 26). Proceduralism –
sometimes called formalism (Gilabert, 2005) – emphasizes the structural form of public decisions made in the public sphere. This idealized space for public decision making requires no substantive commitments to particular beliefs or values, except for agreement among citizens about the procedural norms that govern discourse processes. These norms define the deliberative environment. Specifically, citizens should have perfect access to giving and receiving justifications for policies, be free from coercion as they argue, and actively differentiate reasons from opinions – favoring the former (Habermas, 1990).

In the purely procedural conception of deliberation, citizens are not obligated to use their political influence in the interest of others’ wellbeing. Government exists to enforce fairness under the law. By Taylor’s (2003) description, this perspective “sees society as an association of individuals, each of whom has his or her conception of a good or worthwhile life … The function of society ought to be to facilitate these life plans” within the confines of “some principle of equality” (p. 197). Proceduralism is thus an ethic of government that is external to the actual process of justifying public policies. It suggests that fair processes are essential to democracy and that the primary ethic of citizenship is to adhere to these rules.

The alternative view – substantivism – is the idea that democratic citizens should commit to particular ethics internal to their reasoning on public questions. According to Gilabert, “the substantivist construal says that we should see our engagement in public deliberation as expressing and elaborating a substantive commitment to basic moral ideas of solidarity, equality, and freedom” (Gilabert, 2005, p. 405). From this perspective, a democratic citizenry ought to privilege certain moral claims as it argues about the merits of policy questions.

As Gutmann and Thompson (2009) observed, the commitments of proceduralism and substantivism are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Civil society may be both rigorously fair in structure and vigilantly protective of specific privileged values (e.g., protection of individual speech rights). Cohen (1996) likewise rejected the idea that the only way to accommodate
reasonable pluralism is by reducing the plausible set of universal commitments to matters of procedural fairness. He counted among the substantive commitments “principles of deliberative inclusion, the common good, and participation.” These norms allow a polity to be divided with respect to core policy-relevant values but unified with respect to core values underpinning the functional “political community” (e.g. liberalism) (Cohen, 1996, p. 113).

Deliberation embraces both proceduralist and substantivist perspectives. It requires rule-constrained processes to ensure fairness a-priori. Likewise, moral principles substantively constrain public argumentation. Democratic deliberation is, for most of its adherents, a summary term for two complementary commitments (Pateman, 2012, p. 8). The first is to the democratic imperative of rule-based procedural citizen participation. The second is to the moral idea that the common good emerges from collective communication; political power ought to originate with citizens reasoning together about political questions. Deliberation thus blends the political “how” (i.e. process) and “what” (i.e. substance) (Dahl, 1989, p. 306), at least in theory.

Social scientific empiricists adopted deliberation as a normative starting point for investigating political communication among democratic citizens, particularly in the United States. In the next section, I briefly describe an exigence for this interest with the idea that the constitutional design of the U.S. political system is an incomplete foundation for democratic citizenship. Then, I outline how the idea of democratic deliberation rose to prominence among social scientists who sought to remedy this conception of public participation in government.

From Philosophy to Empiricism:

Shifts in Scholarly Approach and Phenomenological Emphasis

U.S. citizens receive no standardized guidance on how they ought to participate in government. The idea that democratic citizenship is a central feature of the American democracy is hardly evident from the text of the country’s founding document. As early American elites
(reluctantly) envisioned the form of a post-war government, they emphasized its most identifiable feature: popular sovereignty secured by the procedural election of heads of state. Yet as Engels (2008) argued, elections hardly empower citizens: “Americans (are) alienated from the products of their popular will—from the laws, rules, and other dictates of the representatives they elect and infuse with the authority of popular sovereignty” (p.475).

The authors of the Constitution of the United States did not intend it to facilitate a richer, more active civic life. They largely designed it to prevent the government from tyrannizing citizens (Akhil Reed, 1992, p. 1133) and to prevent majorities of citizens from tyrannizing minorities (Hamilton, Madison, & Jay, 2009, p. 48). James Madison worried that advocates of democratic government had “erroneously supposed that by reducing mankind to a perfect equality in their political rights, they would, at the same time, be perfectly equalized and assimilated in their possessions, their opinions, and their passions” (Hamilton, Madison, & Jay, 2009, p. 51).

With these concerns in mind, the designers of the American republic explicitly intended to insulate public policy from the public itself.

The Constitution affords these protections primarily in the form of negative liberties – restrictions imposed on the state’s actions toward citizens. The Bill of Rights frames liberties as actions the state shall not take (e.g., the state “shall make no law,” rights “shall not be infringed”) (U.S. Constitution). But democratic citizenship involves positive rights as well, “preeminently rights of political participation and communication” (Habermas, 1994, p. 2). The state does affirmatively provide some opportunities for citizens to participate in decision making. At the federal level, the primary Constitutional means for active participation are the jury, the election of Congressional representatives, and participation in the Electoral College. Advocates of deliberative democracy, like other participatory theories, express a dissatisfaction with the limited scope of this affirmative component of public participation in government (e.g. Gutmann & Thompson, 2009; Mansbridge, 1983).
Deliberation’s proponents envision a more direct role for citizens in government. Fishkin and colleagues observed, “At the heart of any notion of democracy is some element of public input into the policy-making process” (Fishkin, Luskin, & Jowell, 2000, p. 657). It is not obvious what this element should look like, and deliberation implies a substantial revisiting of conventional assumptions about how government should operate. For instance, some conceptions of democracy consider public opinion as exogenous to the political process; consequently, the business of politics is in aggregating opinion rather than collectively creating it (Piketty, 1999). Yet the process of public-will formation could instead be endogenous to the decision-making process, such that preference articulation is part of the policymaking process. For example, federal agencies open public comments periods following notices of proposed rulemaking. The agency is generally obligated to consider these comments, but they are not integral to the policy process. Likewise, citizens expect to vet policies indirectly by monitoring elected officials, but they could directly participate alongside officials in the process of crafting of policy (Bishop & Davis, 2002). These examples illustrate how deliberation suggests an affirmative role for citizens in already existing government institutions.

Democratic deliberation has garnered attention largely because it appeals to both liberal (negative-liberties) and republican (positive-liberties) schools of thought about the norms of citizenship and the ideal role of government (Habermas, 1994). Its advocates have positioned it as a more philosophically satisfying expectation about civic life. These claims found traction among political empiricists interested in developing and testing systematic approaches to revitalizing democratic participation.

**The empirical turn**

The early applications of deliberative theory expanded existing democratic practices. For example, early experiments adapted the familiar concept of the jury from the judicial system to fit
the legislative arena. These experiments in deliberative democracy germinated in the 1970’s with Ned Crosby’s Citizen’s Jury in the United States (Crosby, Kelly, & Schaefer, 1986) and Peter Dienel’s planning cells in Germany (Gastil & Levine, 2005). Another deliberative experiment formalized public opinion polls with procedural deliberation prior to polling. James Fishkin’s Deliberative Polling in the 1980’s demonstrated the potentially large scale of deliberative intervention, and was one of the first deliberative procedures to include regular rigorous empirical investigation (Fishkin J. S., 1991). The empirical shift became more visible in the late 1990s and early 2000’s as scholarly attention to empirical questions increasingly populated research journals (Delli Carpini, Cook, & Jacobs, 2004, p. 316). Dryzek (2012) called this the “empirical turn” (p. 9).

These researchers’ enthusiasm for deliberative democracy came as political scientists found reasons for skepticism about the American public’s civic capacity. Mounting evidence challenged “the model of the informed citizen,” disrupting the assumption that citizens actually monitor public officials and respond to their decisions at the voting booth (Delli Carpini, 2000, p. 547). Converse’s 1964 article “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics” (Converse, 1964), provided particularly damning evidence that Americans were engaging in ideologically inconsistent voting behavior with alarming regularity (Bennett, 2006, p. 105). This observation quickly escalated to an overwhelmingly pessimistic view of civic health in general (Miller, 1974). By the end of the 1980’s, the American public shared this sense of waning confidence that courts and elections were sufficient intuitions for democracy. Sandel (1998) observed, “As the reigning political agenda lost energy in the 1980s and 1990s… Americans of various ideological persuasions groped to articulate a politics that reached beyond the terms of the procedural republic and spoke to the anxieties of the time” (p. 324).

Deliberative political theory formed the basis of a broad project exploring the potential for discourse-centered interventions to overcome challenges to democracy. Citing, among others,
Putnam’s (1995) work on the collapse of informal but politically salient social structures, Abelson and colleagues (2003) noted, “Widespread calls for increased civic participation, capacity-building and the creation of social capital are the proposed antidote to the rise of individualism of the 1980s and view a re-created community as the cornerstone to improvements in social and economic conditions” (p. 240). Deliberation was one promising answer to this call; it offered a means for revitalizing democratic institutions and reenergizing citizens (Nabatchi, 2010). Perhaps it is not by coincidence that the proliferation of empirical studies of deliberation followed shortly after Amy Gutmann admonished political philosophers (most pointedly, Robert Dahl) in 1996 to “stop metatheorizing and start arguing about the substantive problems that animate contemporary politics, including the continually contested question of what kind of democracy is most defensible” (Gutmann, 1996, p. 347).

From a social-scientific standpoint, a discourse-oriented theory of politics might seem an odd place to turn for satisfying civic revitalization. Research on informal political conversation has suggested that it is not a naturally occurring avenue for active citizenship. As Schudson (1997) observed, democratic ends are not equally served by “sociable conversation” and “problem-solving conversation,” nor is the former necessarily a useful basis for civic society (p. 308). People tend not to engage in deliberative political talk with others, due in large part to conflict aversion (Neblo, Esterling, Kennedy, Lazer, & Sokhey, 2010, p. 581). Even when they do engage in it, casual political talk is not a means by which people produce strong reasons for preferences or encounter diverse viewpoints (Mutz & Martin, 2001, p. 101). However, informal political conversation is associated with other civically beneficial outcomes. Increased discussion frequency corresponds to higher levels of political knowledge (Eveland & Hively, 2009) and higher political engagement (McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999). People with more diverse discourse networks tend to have clearer opinions and better comprehension of competing views.
(Moy & Gastil, 2006). The evidence for informal political conversation as a useful civic practice is thus somewhat mixed.

Cramer Walsh (2004) made a useful distinction to separate the perspectives on informal political interaction. Political scientists have dismissed informal talk as a serious political activity because it is generally not an effective means of “evaluating or making political choices” (Cramer Walsh, 2004, p. 2). But the positive effects of discourse when it occurs are consistent with understanding conversation as “the act of interpreting or making sense of politics” (Cramer Walsh, 2004, p. 2). The way people structure their political talk – how frequently and with whom – is not useful for dealing with political pluralism. However, the way people conduct their political talk is useful for strengthening some civic skills. Thus, one approach to improving communication between citizens is to impose a structure on political talk in formal settings. This is the central idea behind deliberative mini-publics.

**Enter the mini-publics**

Deliberative mini-publics promise to remedy the shortcomings of dialogue (van de Kerkhof, 2006, p. 282), such as behavioral aversion to heterogeneous networks (Mutz, 2006) and conflict-avoidant tendencies (Mansbridge, 2010, p. 56). The term “mini-publics” describes organized processes that select citizens on a random or quasi-randomized basis to represent a broader public as they deliberate on a public policy question.

The deliberative mini-public fills a gap between the “thoughtful but antidemocratic competence of elites … and the superficialities of mass democracy” (Fishkin, 1991, p. 3). In other words, formal deliberative procedures represent opportunities for citizens to serve in focused political groups convened around concrete issues rather than loose party-defined ideological camps. The norms of respectful and unconstrained communication represent a commitment to mutual understanding among citizens rather than strategic argumentation among elites. Mini-
publics are civic interventions intended to construct political consent in the face of disagreement using constrained dialogue.

Much of the research on deliberative democracy focuses on how to constrain talk to harness the benefits of dialogue. In particular, many researchers focus on implementing procedural discourse that is accessible to citizens. These projects propose standardized dialogue-focused practices as institutions that expand opportunities to practice meaningful citizenship. During the empirical turn, researchers have identified specific governance problems that deliberative procedures – discursive interventions defined by designed constraints – might reasonably be expected to remedy. For example, the Oregon Citizens Initiative Review was designed to remedy substandard information environments for voting on ballot initiatives (Knobloch, Gastil, Reedy, & Cramer Walsh, 2013). Likewise, Deliberative Polling was intended to address discrepancies between public polls and reflective public preferences (Fishkin, 2009).

These efforts to put deliberation into practice focus on features of deliberative interventions that correct shortcomings of natural political discourse. For example, interventions intentionally select participant groups to counteract homogeneous network tendencies. They often establish interaction norms (e.g. discussion ground rules) and enforcement them through facilitation. Their goals are defined by general problems of citizenship (e.g. low internal political efficacy), local issues (e.g. insufficient issue-specific information environment), desired general outcomes (e.g. accountability for public officials), and desired local outcomes (e.g. production of well-vetted arguments for public consideration) (Fung, 2003).

Researchers study these practices for their efficacy as means for solving particular problems. Building evidence suggests that these experimental innovations are successfully supplementing practices of citizenship (i.e. voting) and governance (e.g. legislation) (Delli Carpini, Cook, & Jacobs, 2004). Mini-publics promote public reason by increasing citizens’ understand of the relationship between political subjectivity and specific policy preferences
Minipublics also help decision makers to identify the public will (Fishkin, Luskin, & Jowell, 2000) and discover underappreciated perspectives in a community (Fishkin, He, Luskin, & Siu, 2010). Finally, all deliberative practices share the goal of legitimizing government (Dryzek, 2012; Cohen, 1989). As I argue in Chapter 2, a fundamental task for empirical deliberative democratic research is tracing how mini-publics enhance system-wide deliberative legitimacy.

**Overview of Dissertation**

This dissertation aims to contribute a more explicitly communicative component to studies of deliberation’s impacts. I propose a specific communicative mechanism that clarifies why deliberative discourse differs from any form of political discussion. To test my general theoretical proposition, I relate four models of deliberative legitimacy to the communicative concept of relational framing.

In Chapter 2, I discuss legitimacy as a focal outcome of deliberation. I argue that deliberation is a paradigm for how citizens should express political power. I specify four types of legitimacy, which correspond to the four principal phases of deliberation. Indicators of these legitimacy ends serve as the focal outcomes for my analyses.

In Chapter 3, I argue that attending to variation in the experience of deliberative discourse itself clarifies conventional models of deliberative legitimacy. Empirical work on the discourse-oriented theory of public deliberation – where the central act of citizenship is communicating about reasons for collective action – has attended relatively little to how deliberative communication differs from other forms of political communication. I offer a fundamental theory of communicative interaction – Relational Framing Theory – as a framework for understanding how deliberative design might affect participants’ relational inferences, and
why those inferences affect legitimacy outcomes. Thus, Chapter 3 highlights a communicative concept that may help explain empirical explanations for the functioning of deliberation.

In Chapter 4, I articulate four models based on prior claims from empirical work on small-group deliberation. I then propose modifications to these “baseline models” by considering the role of relational framing. There are many more claims that I could address in this manner, but my selections allow for conceptual continuity in two ways. First, these models each invoke a particular type of deliberative legitimacy, which track the deliberative sequence (design, process, and outcome). The sequential models allow me to examine the role of relational information across the deliberative timeline. Second, this approach allows me to integrate all four models into a single research design. I then pose hypotheses about how Relational Framing Theory’s concept of differential frame salience operates within the revised models to clarify the baseline model effects.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the research design and describe the experimental method designed to test the hypotheses. In Chapter 6, I describe the execution of these analyses, and in Chapter 7 I interpret my findings in terms of the broader deliberative democratic project.
Chapter 2

Legitimacy as a Focal Outcome of Democratic Deliberation

Power is a fundamental aspect of the human experience. Individuals inevitably discover that other people obstruct their efforts to achieve goals (Roloff & Jordan, 1992, p. 22) and that their own social groups compete with others (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 38). Two fundamental means of exercising power are available to people in conflict: contestation by physical violence or by social influence.

Social influence refers to the effects of communicative interaction on the attitudes or behaviors of others. Social influence encompasses all goal-directed messages that produce these effects, even if they are not the sender’s primary intention (e.g. transmitting norms, promoting conformity) (Wood, 2000, p. 540). The latter form of power is more desirable in principle, but it is subject to constraints. I examine three forces that constrain an individual’s ability to exert power through social influence: linguistic, interpersonal, and socio-normative. This typology resembles Giddens’ typology of constraints on action, generally: material, sanction, and structural (Giddens, 1984, p. 176). I intended my terminology to fall more squarely in-line with the terminology of human communication.

As with any speech act, social influence is constrained by limitations inherent to the structure of language. As Grice (1975) observed, “Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks … They are characteristically … cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them… a common purpose or set of purposes… (p. 45). Grice did not use the term “cooperative” to mean “pro social.” Rather, language is cooperative because it conveys meaning on the basis of shared assumptions about the conventions governing speech acts. These assumptions, known popularly as Gricean Maxims, may be violated – but those
violations in themselves are meaningful (Grice, 1975, p. 50). Thus, social influence is powerful within the confines of shared expectations about how language conveys meaning.

A second constraint on social influence is how it is perceived during interpersonal communication. Persuasive attempts are not always welcome in conversation. Psychological reactance (Brehm, 1966) is a prominent framework for explaining resistance influence attempts. According to Quick and Stephenson (2007), the underlying assumption of psychological reactance research is that “individuals believe it is their inherent right to be autonomous agents” (p. 256), or to be free to believe and behave as they choose. Upon the perception of a threat to autonomy (of action or judgment), people attempt to restore their decisional freedom by resisting the persuasive attempt. Dillard and Shen (2005) specified the relevant perceptual “antecedents of reactance … which, in turn, prompts efforts to restore the threatened freedom” (p. 149). They found that reactance – a combination of negative affective response and negative evaluations of the message and its sender - is precipitated by threat perception, particularly among individuals with high trait propensity toward reactance (Dillard & Shen, 2005, p. 159). Thus, the efficacy of social influence is constrained as a class of interpersonal message to which individuals may be uniquely resistant. There are, however, conditions under which social influence may be welcome. These conditions are negotiable among individuals and within societies.

The third source of constraint on social influence is agreed-upon norms about the “proper” uses of social influence. Plato’s Gorgias is broadly cited as the grounding text for thinking about ethical persuasion, as opposed to effective persuasion (Hogan, 2013, p. 4; Morrow, 1953, p. 236). Plato rebuked purely strategic and largely performative rhetorical persuasion. He applied this criticism to civic exigencies in the Laws and the Republic. According to Bobonich’s analysis, “when Plato in the Laws insists that the laws try to persuade the citizens what he has in mind is rational persuasion: the citizens are to be given good epistemic reasons for the true beliefs that they are to adopt and for the course of action they are to follow” (Bobonich, 1991, p. 369).
Inherent in this conception of law is the foundational principle for political legitimacy: Governments are obligated to present arguments for their actions. When citizens themselves constitute the government – as in a democracy – they are themselves obligated to engage in argumentation. Thus, one component of democratic citizenship is exchanging and criticizing reasons for public policy with other citizens. Adherents of “discursive” or “deliberative” democracy (Bohman & Rehg, 1997; Dryzek, 1994) advance ethical expectations for using social influence in democratic contexts. Deliberation, then, serves as an ethically grounded set of constraints on expressions of power through social influence. Thus, deliberation is most explicitly a set of principles for imposing socio-normative constraints on social influence. In this dissertation, I argue that these formal norms of deliberation have implications for the interpersonal communicative experience of deliberation.

The manner in which citizens reason together is a central concern for deliberative democratic societies (Cohen, 1989). High-quality deliberation ensures citizens have an opportunity to contribute to and monitor the process of generating and vetting arguments about the merits of public decisions. Jacobs, Cook, and Carpini (2009) characterized public deliberation as an effort to replace “consent derived from elections and interest-group bargaining” with “a process of ‘reason-giving’ that would elevate public understanding and encourage government officials to explain their actions in ways that citizens would be more likely to accept as legitimate” (p. 9). This contrast highlights two different ways citizens may experience power through communication: as an adversarial contest or cooperative exercise. As I will discuss in the following section, this difference is not a matter of how people express power, but rather how people create and manage it.
Communication and Political Legitimacy

The norms of deliberative democracy focus on the properties of the public sphere – a conceptual arena where the public exchange of political reasons takes place between citizens regarded as equals, at liberty to raise and rebut arguments at will. Scholars at the neo-Marxist Frankfurt School (Institut für Sozialforschung) publically challenged entrenched hegemony in “institutions,” their manifestations in “material capabilities,” and social “ideas” that reaffirm those structures (Bieler & Morton, 2004, p. 88). This focus of the Frankfurt School arose from the class conditions highlighted by the industrial revolution, and lasted through the German political restructuring following the First World War.

During that period, the economics of Max Weber and later (but in much the same vein) Joseph Schumpeter focused on the behaviors of groups of people structured by institutions including the state and religion. Developments during and immediately after the Second World War highlighted a need to rethink the socio-economic approach to characterizing how citizens interact with institutional power. Institutionalized power appeared prone to irrational decision-making. Arendt, in particular, argued that Western political leaders were incapable of producing rhetorical power that would avert further conflict (Arendt, 1958, p. vii). The Truman administration, for example, publically argued that the use of atomic weapons could be justified as “a powerful and forceful influence towards the maintenance of world peace” (Truman, 1945). Arendt claimed that “human dignity needs a new guarantee which can be found only in a new political principle…” (Arendt, 1958, p. ix). The central proponent of that new principle was Jürgen Habermas.

Habermas advanced the notion of the public sphere (Benhabib, 2003, p. 199) – a theoretical set of norms for communicative interaction. Praxis – “the speaking and acting together of individuals” – described the interaction of individual-level behaviors that create and support
aggregate practices of power (Habermas & McCarthy, 1977, p. 15). Habermas differentiated strategic action as the *exercise* of power, and communicative action as a *source* of power. The ethical problems of power, he argued, lie as much in how power is produced as how it is practiced: “Legitimate power *arises* only among those who form common convictions in unconstrained communication” (Habermas & McCarthy, 1977, p. 18). This idea that political legitimacy has a communicative basis – specifically in the public exchange of reasons – is the essential claim of deliberative democratic theory.

By communication, people negotiate, challenge, and consent to power. Deliberative democracy departs from the axiom that power’s legitimacy reduces to communicative experiences. Its adherents further assume that because communication between citizens is a means of legitimizing democracy, citizens should have access to an immediate and personal experience of power (Bohman & Richardson, 2009, p. 265). Proponents of ‘deliberativeness’ as a standard for politics argue that through discourse, citizens can directly vet their political circumstances as they determine their willingness to give consent.

This idea translates into an implicit empirical model of political behavior. Citizens’ preferences, group affiliations, and beliefs are salient to political legitimization because they affect how citizens produce and receive policy arguments. Habermas’ theory of communicative action laid the necessary groundwork for taking this idea seriously (Habermas J., 1984; Kim & Kim, 2008). Yet there is little empirical evidence linking democratic legitimacy to any specific understanding of communicative production and processing during interaction.

To set the stage for an empirical account of the interactive mechanism that produces discursive legitimization of government, I first begin by specifying the principles of democratic legitimacy. I then identify three distinct types of legitimacy that are essential for democratic consent, which will become the focal outcomes of my empirical investigation.
Deliberative Democratic Legitimacy

Democratic Legitimacy

Political legitimacy is an attitude about the moral correctness of an act or object of government. Political legitimacy is not inherently democratic. For instance, a population might believe that a divine creator ordains a leader’s position. The claim that a government is democratically legitimate generally involves evidence that its citizens accept it as a vested proxy to exercise their collective power.

Max Weber offered a typology of “legitimate domination,” which describes the bases for “the validity of the claims to legitimacy,” under which an authority might justify its exercise of authority (Weber, 1968, p. 215). Authority is justified on the basis of worthy qualities of a leader (“charismatic grounds”), consistency with historically entrenched practices (“traditional authority”), and the rightness of the rules that govern the promotion of exercise of authority (“legal authority”) (Weber, 1968, p. 215). The latter of these is the central concern of justification of power in democratic societies. Democratic legitimacy emphasizes legal claims to authority, particularly by defining a view of publics as constituted by right-bearing citizens whose interactions with power are represented by pliable (i.e. changeable by defined legal means) institutions (e.g. President of the United States as an office, rather than a specific charismatic leader).

This minimally procedural liberal view of democratic legitimacy amounts to a requirement that citizens consent to the procedural means of forming a government (but see Dahl (1989, p. 196) on the problematic conceptions of consent). It does not, however, imply that it is necessary for citizens to take a direct role in government. Legitimacy from the standpoint of political liberalism occurs when “social cooperation … (is) conducted so far as possible on terms both intelligible and acceptable to all citizens as reasonable and rational” (Rawls, 1989, pp. 249-
250). Similarly, Benhabib (1994) defines legitimacy as “the belief on the part of the citizens that the major institutions of a society and the decisions reached by them on behalf of the public are worthy of being obeyed” (p. 27). These accounts of legitimacy are passive; they may be manifest without any positive action from citizens. Discourse-centric conceptions of democracy demand an active view of legitimacy, because they require citizens to not only understand and accept reasons but to be able and willing to participate in their public articulation.

**Deliberative Legitimacy**

Proponents of deliberative democracy articulate a more stringent set of requirements for democratic legitimacy than do liberal (proceduralist) proponents (Dryzek, 2012; Cohen, 1989). In particular, citizens should play an active role in exercised of authority by producing or vetting the reasons that justify policy decisions. For a democracy to be legitimate in this sense, citizens should have opportunities to engage in impactful procedural dialogic reasoning with other citizens (Dryzek, 2012).

Richards and Gastil (2015) compared various theoretical conceptions of democratic deliberative legitimacy and advocated a model they called “symbolic-cognitive proceduralism”. This framework unified the traditional “cognitive” conception of legitimacy with the expectation that “participants and in-person citizen-observers witness deliberative procedures’ value-expression” as an affirmative means of participatory consent (Richards & Gastil, 2015, p. 6). Citizens who are party to deliberation can recognize its pro-democratic features, and thus experience firsthand otherwise abstract principles of self governance. The framework also emphasized the “procedural integrity” of manifest deliberative events. Richards and Gastil argued that specific designed and replicable features of procedural deliberation (they mention participant selection, rules governing how information is admitted to the process, and the expectation of evidence-based reasons in dialogue) constitute the causal factors producing legitimacy in its
symbolic and cognitive senses (Richards & Gastil, 2015, p. 14). Legitimacy in this procedural sense may be decomposed into discrete types, organized by phase of deliberation.

A standardized deliberative procedure consists of three general phases: design, interaction, and output. During the design phase prior to deliberation, organizers set goals and establish specific procedures (Fung, 2003). During the interactive phase, participants execute the procedures by expressing perspectives, weighing evidence, and considering alternatives (Gastil & Black, 2008). During the outcomes phase, the participants render a final output that captures their labor in a useful form. In some processes, this product might be a decision (e.g. a jury’s verdict) or a recommendation to officials or to the public (Knobloch, Gastil, Reedy, & Cramer Walsh, 2013, p. 108).

Different types of legitimacy apply to each phase. I refer to these as teleological legitimacy, procedural legitimacy, and decisional legitimacy. This nomenclature is a purposeful departure from prior labels. My approach is to identify the sources of legitimacy by the stage of deliberation in which they are apparent to deliberative participants. In doing so, I am arguing that participants form perceptions of specific types of legitimacy, which relate to their understanding of the design, execution, and outcome of the process.

**Teleological Legitimacy**

*Teleological Legitimacy* describes the perception that an exercise of power is both a viable and a desirable means of acting on behalf of the broader public. Buchanan described this type of legitimacy judgement as “reasoning about how institutions ought morally to be… [including] a consideration of what the goals of institutions are and of which institutional arrangements are most likely to facilitate their achievement” (Buchanan, 1999, p. 47). The trial jury system in the United States, for example, is included in U.S. Constitution as a justifiable means of ensuring justice in the United States (Landsman, 1999, p. 289), but not all countries
have found the “jury of peers” essential to a functional justice system (Strauss, 1973, p. 135).
Likewise, election – the casting of ballots – is broadly considered more legitimate than sortition – the random drawing of lots – to produce representative political bodies, despite the latter’s substantial promise (Dowlen, 2015; Bouricius, 2013).

Citizens may perceive any particular deliberative process appropriate, inappropriate, or merely impotent as a means for achieving civic goals. Burkhalter, Gastil, and Kelshaw expected “that deliberation is more likely to occur if discussion participants perceive it as an appropriate mode of political discourse in a given social situation,” and that deliberative participation reinforces this perception of appropriateness (Burkhalter, Gastil, & Kelshaw, 2002, p. 415). For proponents of deliberative deliberation, teleological legitimacy is a measure of the degree to which deliberation is seen as a desirable alternative or augmentation to existing political systems.

The public’s unfamiliarity with deliberative practices inhibits general public support for them (Gastil, Rosenzweig, Knobloch, & Brinker, 2016). Scarce opportunity for participation may explain low general interest in participatory methods; thus, observing teleological legitimacy judgements among those who have participated should be a central interest for scholars looking to build the case for their widespread adoption. By providing a desirable means for resolving political disputes (compared to alternatives ranging from protest to direct voting to negotiation between political parties), deliberation promises to enhance the teleological legitimacy of democratic governance.

**Procedural Legitimacy**

*Procedural Legitimacy* describes the perception that government processes adhere to democratic norms. Whereas teleological legitimacy is a judgement about the appropriateness of deliberation to achieve political outcomes, procedural legitimacy is a judgement about the fidelity of enactment of democratic norms. Elections, for instance, enact democratic norms under the
assurance of procedural rules. Individual satisfaction that the election outcome’s legitimacy is linked to perception that the process was true to democratic norms – most notably the concept of ‘one person, one vote.’ It could be the case that those who view elections as more legitimate are more likely to vote. Nevertheless, empirical evidence links participation in democratic processes and perception of procedural legitimacy. For example, Nadeau and Blais (1993) found that among citizens who supported a losing candidate, participation in the election (those that actually voted) predicted increased consent to the outcome.

Deliberative process legitimacy is related to the experience of a small group interaction. Because the same design can yield very different interactions and experiences, process legitimacy is conceptually either a between- or within-designs outcome. Smith and Wales (1999), for example, noted that both the design and execution of citizens juries are variable and potentially substantively impactful on democratically-relevant outcomes. These features are not independent of one another, and deliberation scholars generally hold that prior designs may influence post-process legitimacy; as Caluwaerts and Reuchamps (2015) observed, “…deliberative processes have to reflect the principles of legitimacy in their own functioning before their outcomes can increase the legitimacy of formal political decision-making procedures” (p. 2). Thus, the dominant empirical approach to test this expectation is to assess the degree to which norms of deliberation manifest via in-process talk. For example, Gastil, Black and Moscovitz found that jurors’ satisfaction with the final verdict was dependent on their perception that their treatment by fellow jurors was consistent with deliberative norms (2008, p. 152).

Practitioners of deliberation ‘on the ground’ emphasize group facilitation as a remedy to the hazards of natural political discussion. Dillard characterized this “talk over contentious issues” as “unstructured, spontaneous, and lacks clear objectives” (Dillard, 2013, p. 217). Facilitation is useful for both promoting more disciplined discourse and for warding off the hazards of unorganized political talk. Ryfe (2006) noticed that “given little direction from a
facilitator, participants in small group deliberation are most likely to produce a set of competing narratives” rather than analytically useful convergent talk (p. 81).

Deliberation researchers should attend to perceptions of procedural legitimacy because deliberation’s procedural element marks it as an alternative to suboptimal natural political talk. Deliberation provides citizens an opportunity to observe and practice pro-democratic interaction norms, and thus enhances procedural legitimacy.

**Decisional Legitimacy**

*Decisional Legitimacy* describes the degree to which policy decisions reflect judgements made in the public interest. Whereas teleological legitimacy is an abstract judgement of how reliably a particular process might produce judgements in the public interest, decisional legitimacy is a more specific judgement about the consistency of a specific decision with the public-interest. Specifically, deliberating participants distinguish public-minded decisions from decisions made in the service of factional or private interests. As Goodnight (2012) put it, “an appropriately designed public forum would provide a tradition of argument such that its speakers would employ common language, values, and reasoning so that the disagreement could be settled to the satisfaction of all concerned” (p. 202). The norms of deliberative democracy clearly reject the idea that citizens should reason upon purely private interest. Deliberating citizens are obligated to orient their reasons toward a public set of costs and benefits. To some degree, then, deliberative rationality privileges arguments that maximize the common good, or are at least publically-minded.

Bessette’s (1994) influential discussion of deliberation in Congress explicitly related deliberation to a concept of the public good. He argued that if Congresspeople view their task as maximizing particular groups’ interests, they need simply consult that group and try to affect their requested agenda. Bessette (1994) contrasted this to the public-minded legislator:
“However, as the scope of the legislator’s concerns widens, to encompass more or broader interests, the more difficult it will become to defer to the interests themselves for guidance. A variety of differing and often conflicting opinions will highlight the complexity of the issues at stake… For the legislator who seeks to promote the national interest, personal deliberation will be essential; insofar as other legislators share the same goal, collective deliberation will be pervasive” (p. 47).

One way to view the principle of deliberative public-mindedness is that policy preferences ought to be produced by the weighing of competing arguments. In the Congressional context, this reasoning manifests in support for particular policies. Small-group deliberation among citizens may vary in how reasoning is expressed, but the idea of public judgement is still central.

Any particular deliberative process has an esoteric final product; for example, the Citizen’s Initiative Review produces a “citizens statement,” the Deliberative Poll produces an informed vote, and Participatory Budgeting produces an ordered list of expenditure priorities. These outcomes may be assessed under a common set of evaluative criteria.

Niemeyer and Dryzek (2007) identified intersubjective agreement as a common criterion. They argued that even when agreement on particular questions of fact, value, and preference is not feasible, agreement may be reached on the fundamental premises of an issue should be agreed upon. Participants need not agree on the prime value, priority empirical information, or preferred outcome, but rather come to “meta-consensus” on which values are actually implicated, credibility standards for empirical evidence supporting beliefs, and the logical combinations of values and beliefs that would genuinely yield differential policy preferences (Niemeyer & Dryzek, 2007, p. 503).

By analogy, jurors might disagree on the ultimate verdict, but share common understanding of justice under the law, standards of evidence, and the range of viable judgements.
When these points of disagreement are resolved, participants with particular subjective commitments should agree on their outcome preferences. This alignment is not necessarily found among normal citizens; Niemeyer & Dryzek (2007) found that deliberation affects consistency between value/belief commitments and policy positions: “After deliberation, 56% (R2) of variation in preferences can be explained by variation in subjectivity, up from 1%” (p. 516).

One way to understand this finding is that deliberation reduces the influence of intervening variation from heuristic decisional sources – misinformation and partisanship. Thus, one of the advantages of a deliberative democracy is that it refocuses political reasoning. This improved reasoning – an emergent quality of strong links between facts, values, and preferences, is a primary means by which deliberation increases decisional legitimacy.

**Consent Legitimacy**

Consent describes participants’ expression of willingness to lend their personal credibility to authorize its purpose, practice, and outcome. The final achievement of a deliberative decision is when citizens agree that it should have power on the basis that it is legitimate (rather than, for example, personally goal-consistent). Mini-publics theory generally holds that participants represent of a larger portion of the public, either by random chance or explicit selection (Fung, 2003). These participants, then, are the best positioned citizens to judge the overall correctness of the design, process, and outcome of a procedure. When participants express this net judgment in the affirmative, they give consent as an affirmation of legitimacy.

In Chapter 1, I describe the concept of legitimacy as “an attitude about the moral correctness of an act or object of government.” This attitude is a global judgement, and may apply to any abstract object. Greene described law, for instance, as “legitimate only if it justifiably claims to impose moral obligations or duties on its subjects” (Green, 1989, p. 797). Political philosophers have challenged the idea that the judge of “justifiability” needs to be citizens, but as
Green argued, “The democratic tradition has long maintained that the legitimacy of political authority depends on the consent of the governed” (Green, 1989, p. 795). At the level of democratic citizenship, the meaning and necessity of citizen consent is not settled.

Scholars have attended to individual participants’ global satisfaction in the form of omnibus self-reports. For example, Stromer-Galley and Muhlberger found that “satisfaction with the current deliberation substantially increases decision legitimacy,” defined as agreement to the idea that the final decision of the deliberation should influence public policy (Stromer-Galley & Muhlberger, 2009, p. 186). Participants sometimes express their understanding of this concept during meta-talk about the procedure.

By the conclusion of a deliberative interaction, participants generally judge the merits of the overall procedure. For example, one participation during a 2012 Citizen’s Initiative Review of Oregon Measure 92 endorsed the process by saying “I’m happy that I volunteered, … and I believe that … we came out with a good product we are proud of… and I’m hopeful that this process will continue because I think it is a good one.” By affirming the process and expressing a desire for it to continue, the participant gave global consent to the legitimacy of the deliberation. Another participant at the conclusion of a 2010 Citizen’s Initiative Review of Oregon Measure 90 explicitly endorsed the process by saying “I’m proud to be on the cutting edge of Oregon’s voting process. I think that we’re going to be setting something for other states to follow.”

Practitioners of deliberation should take particular note of the sorts of summary comments that participants make to assess deliberative procedures. While I argue that deliberative legitimacy is multifaceted, global judgements may alert practitioners to the degree that a process is achieving its ultimate purpose as a pro-democratic intervention. Citizens are not oblivious to the need for legitimacy-enhancing opportunities for participation. For example, on participation during a 2014 Citizen’s Initiative Review of Colorado Proposition 103 concluded that, “We’re so blessed to have this opportunity just for us, but if our whole country, everyone had this
opportunity on a regular basis to participate, it just would make our system so much better.”

Participants view discursive deliberative procedures as fundamentally linked to the legitimacy of government. Thus, I expect three types of legitimacy to contribute to an important overall legitimacy judgement in the form of consent.

**Summary of the Four Types of Legitimacy**

Four types of legitimacy – Teleological, Procedural, Decisional, and Consent – form the basis for this study. I have reviewed reasons why public deliberation involves these forms of political legitimacy. This basis is, at least for those interested in the socio-communicative aspects of deliberation, grounded in ethical propositions about how social influence should be used in the production of public policy. Teleological legitimacy is the idea that the venue for social influence ought to have certain characteristics to enhance the representativeness of a mini-public, while downplaying group identity salience and power role prominence. Procedural legitimacy is the idea that in-process discourse ought to be characterized by norms like respect and open-mindedness, in lieu of strategic communication behaviors wherein arguing is winning-oriented rather than reason-oriented. Decisional legitimacy is the idea that the ultimate deliberative outcome (e.g. a recommendation, a public statement, a vote) ought to reflect the participants’ efforts to identify accurate information, reflect on plural values and experiences, and clearly understand the implications of policy choices. If contentious outcomes are selected on the basis of their merits in light of these considerations, they are more decisionally legitimate. Finally, consent legitimacy is the idea that participants in a deliberative decision voluntarily subscribe to it irrespective of their personal positions because the procedure (design, throughput, and outcome) is legitimate.

I have not yet discussed how these forms of legitimacy relate to communication, and the following chapter will do so. In brief, I contend that relational communication gives rise to
democratic legitimacy, and that the legitimizing potential of those communications are inherently contingent on interpersonal relational communication. Empirical research has not explicitly made this connection, but deliberative theory clearly assumes it. Habermas (1976) claimed, “Linguistic communication has a double structure, for communication about propositional content may take place only with simultaneous metacommunication about interpersonal relations” (p. 10). Cognitive and motivational information are embedded in symbolic language that allows intersubjective understanding. I will show how one communicative concept – relational framing – is helps specify the nature of that ‘metacommunication’ by explaining why and how individuals relate judgements about their interpersonal relationships to inferences about the meaning of messages and interactions. Thus, how one frames an interaction’s relational dimension influences the legitimacy judgments that flow from it.
Chapter 3

The ‘Magic Middle’ Problem

In Chapter 1, I argued that empirical investigations into deliberative democracy have focused on remedying shortcomings of natural political discourse by imposing constraints (e.g., on the homogeneity of the participant pool, the norms of conversation). In Chapter 2, I discussed four legitimacy goals and their relevance to deliberative procedures. In this chapter, I argue a theoretical relationship between socio-cognitive communication, deliberative procedural designs and, ultimately, legitimacy outcomes.

Thompson’s (2008) model of deliberation is useful for demonstrating how my claim diverges from existing research. In a review of the empirical agenda for deliberation, Thompson identified three major elements, each of which is a “necessary requirement of deliberation” (p. 501):

- Conceptual criteria stipulate what is necessary for a practice to count as deliberation. Evaluative standards specify what counts as good (or better) deliberation. Empirical conditions indicate what is necessary for producing good deliberation (or less strongly, what may contribute to producing good deliberation). Each is subject to empirical inquiry, but in different ways.

Thompson located the question of legitimacy within the “conceptual criteria” element: “the primary conceptual criterion for legitimacy, and the most important distinguishing characteristic of deliberation, is mutual justification—presenting and responding to reasons intended to justify a political decision” (Thompson, 2008, p. 504). He bounded reason giving with the standard list of social constraints (public-spiritedness, respectfulness, accommodation, and equal participation), without undifferentiating them as causes or effects. But he made a more
pointed observation. He noted that critics sometimes assert that deliberative theorists are guilty of “assuming that only the message should matter in deliberation, not the characteristics of the speaker and the listener or the context in which the communication occurs,” even though “no major theorist makes such an assumption. Many explicitly address how factors other than argument quality can (and should) bring about opinion change” (Thompson, 2008, p. 505). In other words, no serious account of deliberation assumes that reasoning exists apart from the intersubjective communications that produce it. This observation is applicable to deliberation’s end goal – legitimacy. Deliberative interaction does not produce political legitimacy merely by the free exchange of mutually acceptable reasons because the outcomes of any communicative process are only partially message dependent.

Given this crucial link between holistic communicative practices and legitimacy, surprisingly little attention has been paid to empirically hypothesizing, operationalizing, and testing communication-related expectations. Consequently, the dominant research paradigm focuses on features and procedures competing to maximize pro-democratic outcomes. The case that deliberation should be a governing set of norms for participatory democratic institutions demands the support of a focused research agenda organized around a more specific understanding of the communicative mechanism by which deliberative processes produce particular outcomes.

**Deliberation as Exceptional Political Communication**

Empirical research has supported many of deliberative theory’s claims. For instance, adhering to the norms of deliberation leads to pro-democratic changes among participants (e.g. better-informed and more engaged citizens) (Delli Carpini, Cook, & Jacobs, 2004) and to decisions that look more like collective problem solving than power politics.
Although such findings are encouraging, they run contrary to the expectations of political psychology and general communication theories, which focus not on rarefied deliberative settings but on everyday talk and mediated politics. Typically, unstructured political conversation is characterized by cognitive and social biases toward interlocutors (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015), information (Kahan & Braman, 2006), and arguments (Taber & Lodge, 2006) that affirm existing preferences and values.

Organized public deliberation, however, appears capable of overcoming these social and cognitive biases (Ryfe, 2005). Deliberation in small groups represents an alternative to natural political discourse networks. As Huckfeldt and Sprague (1991) concluded about such networks, “People exercise discretion in the choice of a discussion partner, but that choice is circumscribed by the structurally determined availability of like-minded individuals” (p. 156). Some researchers have thus postulated that deliberation is principally characterized by a heterogeneity of viewpoints that would not otherwise occur. This expanded network model creates circumstances where “cross-cutting exposure” (Mutz, 2002, p. 111) can occur. Diverse networks produce pro-democratic outcomes, such as motivation to participate in public discourse (McLeod et al., 1999), an enhanced argument repertoire (Price, Cappella, & Nir, 2002), and a broader perspective on viewpoint diversity (Wojcieszak, Baek, & Delli Carpini, 2010). These benefits are not unequivocal. For example, deliberation across differences still requires participants to discover “common ground” to reap the benefits of their diversity (Burkhalter, Gastil, & Kelshaw, 2002, p. 415). But even if the expanded networks explanation predicts these outcomes, it only superficially addresses why they occur. Within a more diverse network, interpersonal communication must still serve as the medium by which perspectives, arguments, and solutions are advanced, vetted, and agreed upon.

An alternative interaction-oriented explanation posits that deliberation shapes participants’ personal relationships in a way that encourages communicative behaviors conducive
to pro-deliberative interaction. Morrell (2010), for example, made a compelling case that exposing participants to a cross-cutting discussion network fosters interpersonal empathy, which in turn promotes trust and enables participants to work cooperatively. But social and political trust are conceptually and operationally elusive (Newton, 2001), and there is room for further articulation of precisely what role social relationships play in the behaviors of citizenship (Mutz, 2006, p. 147).

**Communicative Throughput**

Political pluralism presents a challenge not only because reconciling a diversity of beliefs and preferences makes for complex policy, but also because it interferes ex-ante with the process of collective reasoning. Citizens have difficulty differentiating arguments from their advocates. Mercier & Sperber (2011) argued that interactive communicative reasoning solves this problem, as a mechanism for communicating “arguments to convince addressees who would not accept what they say on trust” (p. 72). The deliberative mini-public is a context where citizens can focus on producing their own policy arguments and evaluating those of others. Thus, “in group settings, reasoning biases can become a positive force and contribute to a kind of division of cognitive labor” (Mercier & Sperber, 2011, p. 73). In this view, two conditions are necessary for reasoning to yield beneficial results: group members must desire achieving collective rationality by identifying the strongest arguments, and they must acknowledge and temper their own cognitive biases.

Deliberation describes an effort to create these conditions by requiring participants to both produce strong persuasive arguments in defense of preexisting viewpoints, and to remain open to attitude revision by analyzing others’ arguments. The designs of particular deliberative programs seek to minimize obstacles to effective group decision-making, including incomplete
information, social conformity pressures, and information processing biases (Gouran & Hirokawa, 1996, pp. 60-61).

Appealing as this sort of non-strategic behavior may sound, it runs counter to the normal behaviors that social scientists observe under adversarial conditions. To follow the norms of public deliberation, participants must suspend their personal interests in favor of a generalized public good. Although deliberation may empower citizens as agents of public rationality, they assume this authority at the cost of their liberty to consider only their own values and, to the extent there is utility in group membership, to ignore the needs of people beyond their salient in-groups. This amounts to a confluence of loss of decisional liberty and exposure to potentially strong counter-argument. Prior research on resistance to persuasion is largely based on the tendency for people to reject a loss of freedom and control when it comes to their beliefs (Quick & Stephenson, 2007, p. 256). Given this research, deliberation yields a seemingly unlikely outcome. Rather than intensifying challenged prior beliefs, as research on resistance to persuasion predicts (Fransen, Smit, & Verlegh, 2015), deliberative participants are willing to revise attitudes such that they collectively approach consensus when the balance of evidence and argument swings in one direction or another.

Parkinson (2003) observed that despite the diffuse traditions linked to the concept of democratic deliberation, all share an “insistence on some form of inter-personal reasoning as the guiding political procedure, rather than bargaining between competing interests” (Parkinson, 2003). The interpersonal communication-centric account of deliberation’s positive outcomes suggests that a deliberative framing of the nature of a political interaction reforms interaction norms and outcomes; participants engage with each other as collective decision makers rather than as strategic actors. At organized deliberative events, framing political disagreement as dialogue-based decision making is common, but it is unclear what mechanism triggers acceptance of this frame.
The Relevance of Interpersonal Relationships to Democratic Deliberation

The idea I set out to test is that political deliberation enhances democratic legitimacy because it is a unique communication context. Political issues are divisive, by definition. As a communicative exigency, they lend themselves to adversarial interaction. Yet people recognize that cooperating to resolve these conflicts is necessary in a civil society. Deliberative mini-publics allow people to cooperate while competing by redefining the interpersonal relational framing of the interaction.

Relational communication is an underlying dimension of communication that can be observed during deliberative interaction (Gastil, 1993, p. 73). As Estlund (1993) observed, “A theory of democracy is not essentially deliberative unless it makes essential reference to processes of interpersonal deliberation” (p. 1455). Likewise, Bohman (1996) argued that legitimacy is not derived solely from argumentative validity. By “conceptualizing public deliberation as an interpersonal dialogue” (Ivie, 1998, p. 498), reasons may be legitimized by virtues other than their argumentative soundness. Bohman argued that “public interaction produces those practical effects on participants that make reasons ‘convincing’” (Bohman, 1996, pp. 33-34). Motivated by Habermasian and Rawlsian notions of inclusiveness as a prerequisite of legitimacy, deliberative processes justify collective decisions by compelling citizens to consider each other’s values and interests in the full context of their embedded social reality.

Participants in a deliberative session must have some means of mutually expressing that the moment constitutes genuine communicative action, as opposed to strategic action characterized “by way of a reciprocal exertion of influence” (Habermas, 1998, p. 326). If communicative action is a marker of legitimate public action, it must itself be communicable.
In my view, relational information is the communicative carrier for the argumentative force that defines the nature of the interaction. Relationships between citizens, even on a short-term basis, underpin my theory of deliberative legitimacy.

In developing my theoretical account, I aim to unite a process-linked conception of democratic legitimacy judgements with an interpersonal theory of how participants perceive communicative action throughout a deliberative interaction. This approach foregrounds the interpersonal processes embedded in deliberative communication (Estlund, 1993, p. 1455) as the means by which citizens experience and negotiate individual and group-level differences. A conversation’s decisional outcome may be sound if only the analytic norms of deliberation are met, but the communicative process itself is legitimimized by satisfying the plurality of group-salient norms and expectations. Interactive processes may produce adherence to discourse norms, but they are symptomatic. Legitimacy arises from the interaction between citizens. The process of values sharing, reason giving and taking, and prioritizing together, which takes place within a relational framework amenable to consensus, constitutes a relational basis for democratic legitimacy. I turn now to a more detailed theoretical discussion of relational information and how it relates to deliberation.

**Relational Information as a Focal Deliberative Concept**

One foundational principle of human communication is that interlocutors’ perceptions about their relationships shape the character of communicative interactions (Burgoon & Hale, 1984). People use information to make inferences about each other’s motivations and expectations. These inferences, in turn, guide the production of messages that interact with these characterizations. For example, Communication Accommodation Theory posits that people may use speech rate, specific vocabulary, or regional dialects to signal expectations about their social distance with others (Giles, Taylor, & Bourhis, 1973). In turn, recipients of those messages may
modify the characteristics of their own speech in response. The net effect of these speech moves is that both partners make judgements about the other and their relationship (for example, their intelligence and trustworthiness) (Bourhis, Giles, & Lambert, 1975). Scholars of human communication have theorized several means by which people construct their relationships communicatively.

I contend that specific socio-communicative elements are active phenomena in deliberative settings. In particular, antecedents of relational information are present in the structure of deliberative processes. Individuals use that information as they negotiate their relationships as political communicators. In turn, these judgements prime expectations that others will enact control-oriented goals or cooperation-oriented goals. I argue that some deliberative legitimacy outcomes are contingent upon deliberative participants making the latter inference.

Relational framing theory

The information that people rely upon to make such judgements is subjective and variable. For example, Dillard (1987) found that the reported motivations of participants in workplace romantic relationships systematically differ from the attributed motivations of observers of these relationships: ego-motivated, job/success-motivated, or love-motivated. He also found that perceived motivation influenced the type of talk that observers engaged in with their peers about that workplace relationship (Dillard, 1987, p. 188). This model describes a process of perceiving relationally-relevant information, using that information to make attributions, and using those inferences to make sense of received messages and to guide message production. Relational Framing Theory (RFT) specified the components of this model (Dillard, Solomon, & Samp, 1996; McLaren & Solomon, 2015).

RFT contends that individuals make inferences about one another’s messages by applying one of two conceptually orthogonal relational frames to the interaction. The first is a
dominance/submission frame, for which behavioral or cognitive control dynamics (e.g., compliance seeking) between partners is salient. The second is an affiliative/disaffiliative frame, for which the social distancing between sender and receiver is salient. Tusing and Dillard (2000) noted that these relational constructs are considered foundational across the social sciences (p. 149); in their words, “These two dimensions are fundamental in that they reflect the two essential problems entailed by group living, that is, how to get ahead (i.e., dominance) and how to get along (i.e., affiliation)” (p. 149). Communication scholars have found the concept interesting specifically because it has consequences for message interpretation and production (Burgoon & Dunbar, 2000).

Enactment of dominance-salience behaviors in particular has garnered attention from researcher interested in interpersonal communication. Burgoon, Johnson, and Koch (1998) noted that dominance-enactment is not inherently deleterious to relationships. While “aggressiveness” is a key feature of dominance behavior, it is not necessarily interchangeable with the concept of threateningness. Indeed, dominance may be “socially acceptable and desirable” as a marker of desirable influence common to leaders and those with “panache” (p. 317).

Thus, enacting dominance/submission behaviors is neither inherently more or less appropriate or desirable across all contexts. As Burgoon and Dunbar (2000) observed, “Although it may be politically correct to wage campaigns against oppression and to encourage empowerment of the “powerless,” our sociopolitical ideologies must not blind us to the recognition that dominant communication is not only efficacious but also positively valued. … we need to pursue more vigorously the consequences of displaying various forms of dominance and submission” (p. 116).

Deliberation scholarship tends to use an alternate explication of the term “dominance,” privileging non-dominance as an explicit interactive virtue (Moy & Gastil, 2006, p. 445). But Burgoon and colleagues’ discussion of the utility of “benign” dominance (Burgoon, Johnson, &
Koch, 1998, p. 317) as a reflection of positive “social skills” resembles the way that deliberation scholars talk about the way citizens should interact in the political arena.

Relational framing theory is relevant in the deliberative context for at least two reasons. First, relational framing is useful in contexts where meaning changes depending upon participants’ perceptions that it is a power-salient or affiliation-salient interaction episode. As I will discuss, deliberative interactions have this quality. Second, the disambiguation function of relational framing has implications for message production and receipt. Thus, experiences of political interaction may qualitatively differ under each paradigm.

**Deliberative message production and interpretation**

The ideas behind relational information are not context-specific (Burgoon & Hale, 1984; Burgoon & Dunbar, 2000), but scholars focusing on relational framing have primarily emphasized interpersonal relationships (Dillard, Solomon, & Samp, 1996; Solomon, Dillard, & Anderson, 2002; Solomon, 2006). Relational framing is applicable when interaction episodes contain cues for interpreting specific messages; Dillard, Solomon and Samp (1996), for instance, asked participants to attribute dominance/submission and affiliation/disaffiliation judgements to scenarios (albeit narrowly tailored ones). In this section, I argue that the constrained communication environment of deliberation forces participants to attend to their interpersonal relationships as they communicate about their reasoning on policy-salient arguments.

Deliberative communication is a type of interaction that encourages the co-production of rationality (Mercier & Landemore, 2012). Because this conception of rationality is an interactive process that conditions reason on attentiveness to social context (Gastil & Black, 2007), deliberation is an exercise in interpersonal relationship. RFT applied to the context of discursive co-legitimization offers a useful language for noticing that a communicative interaction may be manifestly neutral in its ‘deliberativeness’ (i.e. the degree to which it objectively carries markers
of normative deliberative exchange), but subjectively experienced as either ‘deliberative’ or ‘strategic.’

Relational frames are useful for quickly disambiguating messages that carry an equivocal threat component. For instance, Solomon (2006) demonstrated that frame activation cues disambiguate workplace sexual communication. These interactions can be characterized either as sexual harassment or flirtation by the degree to which recipients contextualize them as dominance- or affiliation-salient. Individuals in political discussions likewise encounter interpretive ambiguity; indeed Habermas held that, “… the literal meaning of a sentence cannot be explained at all independently of the standard conditions of its communicative employment” (Habermas, 1984, p. 297).

In some political communicative contexts, relational meaning is not ambiguous. Televised presidential debates, for example, are surely pure exercises in persuasion and ideological contention, whereas livingroom discussions between politically likeminded friends articulating their agreement involve less power influence but serve a social closeness function.

Deliberation, by contrast, is a call to the ambiguous in-between. Citizens with dissimilar backgrounds and opinions are invited to a dialogic process that simultaneously values the production of reason through aggressive argumentation and civic unity through respectful cooperation. Like social-sexual communication, it is easy to see why participants need relational information to disambiguate their ostensibly “deliberative” exchanges.

The ambiguity of deliberation is clear from research on storytelling moments. Storytelling is a discursive strategy that has received attention because it promises to have deliberative utility under specific and relationally-relevant circumstances. Deliberative processes often include time to invite participants to tell stories to demonstrate how an issue affects them personally. Black (2008) illustrated how storytelling during deliberation serves a crucial function supporting perspective taking:
Part of what makes stories powerful is that they are able to display values and
worldviews that are typically not talked about explicitly. … Thus, hearing stories from
others who hold different values may make it easier for deliberative participants to
understand the reasonableness of positions and interests that are different from their own.
(p. 105)

Storytelling is thus one avenue by which individuals use dialogue to convey personal experiences
and realize mutual understanding, for example by encouraging convergent perceptions of risk (So
& Shen, 2015). However, the usefulness of storytelling has limitations.

Stories make for compelling means of expression but are also appeals to a mode of
reasoning not entirely native to policy discourse. Polletta and Lee (2006) observed that while
“Stories’ openness to interpretation encourages tellers and listeners to collaborate in drawing
lessons from personal experiences” (p. 718) but this potential is limited by “tensions between
[perceptions of] storytelling as serious and unserious, powerful and powerless, authentic and
deceptive” (p. 717). People more readily accept stories as means for revealing new perspectives
and as supporting evidence for personal accounts than as vehicles for articulating self-justifying
argued that deliberative participants hearing a minority viewpoint might be skeptical of the claim
by virtue of the form:

What this means for deliberation is that when disadvantaged groups use narrative to
challenge the status quo, they may be especially vulnerable to skepticism about the
veracity, authority, or generalizability of the form. … If personal stories are commonly
seen as appropriate during discussions that are personal, casual, and social, they may
raise such doubts during discussions that are public, policy-oriented, or technical. (p. 705)
One of the defining characteristics of a story with an implicit argument compared to an explicit reasoned argument is that it cannot be entirely rebutted, sort of accusing the teller of outright lying. A person hearing a story that contradicts his or her own worldview must necessarily interpret it as either an effort to circumvent logical reasoning and the validity tests they require (i.e. a domination act) or as a genuine invitation to share a personal perspective (i.e. an affiliative act). Thus, acceptance of viewpoints and implicit arguments delivered by narrative is contingent on participants’ trust in the authenticity of the storyteller’s purpose. The following hypothetical storytelling moment illustrates how the concept of relational inference clarifies the mechanism by which people distinguish legitimate from illegitimate storytelling.

Imagine a community deliberation convened to consider expanding a dead-end neighborhood road. The proposal would be connect the street to an arterial road, making it in all likelihood a substantial thoroughfare. During the discussion, a participant tells a story about how as a young child she lived on a busy four-lane road. One day, her dog slipped its leash, ran out into the road, and her little brother ran after him. She could only catch one or the other, so she naturally grabbed her brother. A car struck and killed the dog. It was so traumatic that when she grew older and bought a house, she specifically chose one at the end of a sleepy neighborhood road. Now, this proposal threatens her peace of mind and may effectively force her to sell her house if she is forced to confront this trauma-inducing traffic.

The normatively desirable force of this story is that it legitimizes the process. The story advances a relevant set of values for consideration—namely, neighborhood safety and the potential unfairness of radically transforming a neighborhood. In the absence of information about frame salience, however, the story’s meaning remains ambiguous. A person who frames this message as affiliative may see the story as an attempt to express the concerns of a neighbor. It is, under this interpretation, a moment of self-disclosure that fosters relational closeness with fellow participants. By contrast, a person who frames this message as dominance assertion may
see the story as an attempt to distract from the facts and arguments at hand and curry favor among undecided participants. It is, under this alternative interpretation, an attempt at disingenuous – or “untrustworthy” (Hinyard & Kreuter, 2007, p. 795) – narrative persuasion. The factual veracity of the story is, ultimately, unimportant – but the attributed motive for telling it is noticeably differentiated by framing the message as enacted affiliation-disaffiliation or dominance-submission.

While neither frame is inherently more desirable for public deliberation, this example demonstrates how interpersonal communication is relevant to deliberative democratic discourse principles. Deliberative interactions unfold in two broad stages. First, the participants assemble the full breadth of facts, values, and perspectives implicated by an issue. Second, they use that information base to identify final decisional parameters. Stories tend to occur in the first stage, while the participants are determining the scope of the issue. If a potentially impactful story is told in the early stage, and an opposed participant interprets it using a dominance frame, they are likely to attribute dominance-related goals to the speaker. These goals generally have to do with advancing position, or gaining influence (Dillard, 1987).

Consequently, the listener will seek either to discredit the story or to prevent it from being accepted into the body of acceptable testimony because he or she believes it was advanced strategically. By contrast, a participant who understands the story as situated in an affiliation-salient interaction may attribute solidarity motivations to the speaker (e.g. to garner respect or foster shared context) (Dillard, Solomon, & Samp, 1996, p. 705). In response, he or she might find the story less threatening, and respond with messages that express his or he own affiliative goals (e.g. to show appreciation). These different potential responses highlight the ambiguity of deliberation.
Five Determinants of Relational Frames

As the storytelling example illustrates, frame salience disambiguates messages that might either be interpreted as threatening or as edifying. By quickly reducing many sources of relational information to a manageable decisional binary, individuals craft a situationally appropriate response (Dillard, Solomon, & Samp, 1996, p. 706). This response is of importance to the practice of public deliberation, because messages produced based on an assumption of dominance-submission are normatively less desirable than messages based on affiliation-disaffiliation.

A single communicative act may be manifestly neutral in the degree to which it is achieving deliberative norms, but subjectively experienced as either ‘deliberative’ or ‘strategic.’ The theory specifies five types of information that affect frame salience judgements: message characteristics, purpose of the interaction, relational history, individual traits, and social/cultural norms (Solomon, 2006). Below, I describe each factor as it relates to a typical deliberative setting.

**Message characteristics.** Message-level frame cues occur both nonverbally and verbally. Nonverbal and paralinguistic dominance cues include increased vocal amplitude (Tusing & Dillard, 2000), kinesics displays such as using eye contact during speaking turns and eye aversion during listening turns (Burgoon, Dunbar, & Segrin, 2002, p. 449), and facial animation (Burgoon, Birk, & Pfau, 1990, p. 150). Verbal dominance cues include higher levels of affective language and increased definitiveness (Zhou, Burgoon, Zhang, & Nunamaker, 2004, p. 390). In the context of social-sexual communication, Solomon (2006) manipulated sexual explicitness (versus innuendo) as a content-level signal of dominance (p. 279).

Discussants in a deliberative process encounter messages during discussions, and potentially from non-participant sources, such as expert testimony. These messages are likely to contain potentially threatening content; for example, they may advance contentious arguments, or
implies strategic political goals. Message content is thus a factor for determining the affiliative or dominance salience of the message. They may also reflect participants’ perceptions about the nature of their broader interaction.

**Purpose of the interaction.** Beliefs about the purpose of the interaction may influence relational frame salience. Solomon (2006) used workplace formality (e.g. a meeting versus an after-work offsite gathering) to cue differential salience. People expect different situations to be more or less dominance- or affiliation- salient. These expectations define the “normal” relational mode for a given social context.

Deliberative democratic events represent an alternative to the familiar conventions of political discourse. The American “civility crisis” describes a trend relating declining civic faith to less civil interpersonal political talk (Mutz & Reeves, 2005). In part, this trend is attributable to the increasing dominance-oriented nature of political interaction in public forums between officials (Uslaner, 1993). Tannen (1998), as cited by Mutz & Reeves (2005), argued that the result is a tendency for American politics to enact “‘a culture of argument’ that encourages ‘a pervasive warlike atmosphere’” (p. 1). Thus, inviting participants to talk about politics could prime the dominance frame. For this reason, deliberation practitioners attempt to affect perceptions of the purpose of the deliberative procedure. They often position the discussion as an effort to seek the best-possible collective decision, rather than to determine which of two or more opposing positions will prevail.

**Relational history.** People often call for public deliberative processes to solve problems in a community composed of divided factions. Consequently, participant selection in these situations is based on naming representatives of those factions. Thus, in one variety of public deliberation, past relational history may lead participants to a very strong inclination to frame interactions as dominance-relevant. It is in fact quite common to see processes begin with an ‘icebreaker,’ the purpose of which is to “promote group convergence” on cooperative norms
(Gastil & Black, 2008, p. 39). One of the appeals of the randomly selected participant pool is that the resulting body has no personal prior relational history.

**Individual traits.** Internal political efficacy (Niemi, Craig, & Mattei, 1991) may predispose people to assume dominance frames because they are more highly aware of group interests at play with political issues. A person who believes that discourse is an efficacious option for resolving disagreements about conflicting policy preferences is more likely to be willing to frame interactions as affiliative, whereas people do not have faith that discourse is a useful step in resolving political differences may not perceive political talk as anything but strategic.

**Social and cultural norms.** Social propensities and norms (e.g. toward collectivism or individualism) may influence the relational frame a person employs to interpret political messages. Gastil and colleagues argued that cultural orientation influences both information processing and relational expectations. For example, knowledge of partisan alignment has a biasing influence on “social association” expectations (Gastil, Reedy, Braman, & Kahan, 2007, p. 1777).

**Summary of Relational Framing and Deliberation**

Mini-publics legitimize government by affording citizens an opportunity to exert communicative power as they reason about a collective problem (e.g. a proposed policy). Yet despite a considerable empirical literature devoted to studying the outcomes of deliberation, the precise reason that communication in mini-publics uniquely empowers citizens to reason together is under-theorized.

I argue that Relational Framing Theory suggests a way this political communication context is unique; by constraining communication, mini-publics create environments with clearer relational frame salience. I make this general case in Chapter 4 by reviewing the causes and
consequences of frame salience judgements, and an explanation of how relational framing concepts are relevant to deliberative communication. This is an explanation of the conceptual overlap between the two sets of ideas. Chapter 4 adds specificity to my argument.

In Chapter 4, I pose hypotheses that draw testable connections between the concepts in Chapters 1-3. First, I articulate expectations about how specific mini-public features activate relational salience cues that predict differential salience judgements. Second, I draw causal connections between the frame salience dimensions and perceptions of deliberative legitimacy. Third, I offer reasons to anticipate that relational frames act as conditional effects for predicting participant behaviors. Arguments to support these expectations drive the logic for the four models in Chapter 4.
Chapter 4

Four Models of Democratic Legitimacy

In this dissertation, I propose conceptual linkages between relational framing and mini-public deliberation. In the preceding chapter, I offered examples of how participants might use cues in a deliberative interaction to determine if it is more likely Dominance/Submission-salient or Affiliation/Disaffiliation-salient. I also argued these perceptions might be consequential for interpretation of messages – for example, of the sincerity of a personal story offered as evidence during discussion. These different interpretations of the interaction may be relevant to how a deliberative interaction produces the four types of legitimacy I discussed. I use the present chapter to narrow the focus to specific testable relationships among these concepts.

To set the stage for an empirical investigation, I propose several four specific models of legitimacy. Each model draws from prior research to articulate an expectation about how each type of legitimacy might manifest in a mini-public interaction. For each model, I also propose an additional relational framing component as a conditional effect that clarifies the significance of relational framing for the variation in each model.

The first two models relate predictors of participant legitimacy attitudes that matter to deliberation theorists. In Model 1, I describe mini-public design features and their implications for relational frame salience perceptions. I argue that these perceptions mediate the influence of design on the teleological legitimacy of the interaction. In Model 2, I describe the relationship between deliberative norm enactment (e.g. respectfulness, mutuality) and participants’ appreciation for those norms as characteristics of political discourse.

I argue that participants embrace these norms not because they are self-evidently beneficial, but because they signal an alternative type of political interaction characterized by affiliation-salient interpersonal goals. In Model 3, I consider how participants determine the
quality of particular deliberative arguments. I describe a model whereby participants endorse or decline to endorse arguments as both a function of their prior affiliations and their assessment of argument quality. I propose a relational framing effect whereby the Affiliation/Disaffiliation-salience reduces the magnitude of the direct influence of prior commitments. In Model 4, I describe acts of symbolic consent as outcomes of prior legitimacy perceptions. To the extent that relational salience induces these perceptions, I expect that when then interaction is Affiliation/Disaffiliation-salient, symbolic consent is more likely.

The four models proceed in order corresponding to the legitimacy types introduced in Chapter 2. The first two models describe teleological and procedural legitimacy as participant perception outcomes. The third model positions decisional legitimacy as a behavioral difference between voting based on consistency with prior attitude or based on an argument’s merits. The final model examines symbolic consent, which is a behavioral outcome that generally occurs at the end of a deliberation. I might have drawn on any number of relationships that researchers have empirically examined, but I selected these models as instances of each type of legitimacy in the context of a mini-public interaction.

Model 1: Process Design and Teleological Legitimacy

In Chapter 1, I argued that deliberative methods are alternative methods of citizenship, cast most directly “as a response to the ‘aggregative’ view of democracy” popularized in the 1970s and 80s (Rosenberg, 2007, p. 337). The view that citizens should act upon self-interest privileged the logics of procedural legitimacy; the state’s obligation is to enforce procedural rules and individual citizen’s obligation is to comply with them. Buchanan (2002) described the logic of this view: “the inequality that political power inevitably involves is justifiable if every citizen has ‘an equal say’ in determining who will wield the power and how it will be wielded.” The teleology of voting is thus procedural; an election is legitimate to the extent that it upholds
aggregative principles (‘one person one vote’). Deliberation includes this procedural component, but its teleological purpose is to produce reasonable decisions rather than popular ones.

Despite evidence that citizens are uninterested in more direct participation (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002), Neblo and colleagues (2010) demonstrate that this aversion to deliberation is not a matter of principle (e.g. a preference for authoritarianism). Instead, it comes from low expectations about the potential for deliberation to embody “both rational debate and republican consultation at the same time” (Neblo, Esterling, Kennedy, Lazer, & Sokhey, 2010, p. 580). Among those citing low or no interest in participating in deliberative processes, one-third of the participants Neblo et al. (2010) surveyed cited skepticism that deliberation would “lead to (a) binding decision.” (p. 581). As Mansbridge (1983) put it, Americans are “starved for unitary democracy… but our adversary training has also made us cynical about such appeals” (p. 301). Because of this reluctance, proponents of deliberative democracy have recognized that one goal of deliberative intervention should be to provide citizens with opportunities to assess deliberation’s usefulness in government. However, not all participants in ostensibly deliberative processes leave with pro-deliberative attitudes. For example, Gastil’s (2004) investigation of the civic educative effects of National Issues Forums revealed that its participants were more willing to discuss politics with a broader range of people, but were “more skeptical about the effectiveness of group-based political discussion and action” (p. 326). One remedy, Gastil (2004) suggested, is “devoting sustained attention to improving their quality” (p. 327). How to accomplish this is a challenge for deliberative designers.

**Procedural Designs**

Constructing deliberation involves an array of choices during the procedural design phase. Different choices operationalize the criteria for ‘deliberativeness’ (Gastil & Black, 2007). For example, all deliberative procedures share a commitment to a high-quality information
environment but go about achieving it differently. Organizers of a Deliberative Poll populate their factual environment with ‘balanced’ materials produced by a university research team. But the same commitment led the designers of the Citizens’ Initiative Review to focus the early stages of their process on invited ‘neutral’ and ‘advocate’ testimony. These variations have become more pronounced as practitioners and researchers have attempted to use “democratic innovations” (Smith, 2009) to solve governance problems.

Differences in design choices are not accidental. Experiments in deliberation typically begin by identifying specific problem contexts and specific outcome goals. Different process design choices arise from these different circumstances. Fung (2003; 2006; 2015) has been the most influential academic voice in the systematic explication of these relationships. His concept of the “democracy cube” (Fung, 2006) is widely cited and relied on by deliberation practitioners. The most widely varying questions of design apply to three components. Practitioners attempt to optimize mini-public composition through systematic participant selection. They influence interaction modality by introducing and enforcing ground rules for discussions. Finally, they frame the purpose of the interaction by characterizing the process outcome through outcome tasking. I argue that these process design features are related to the teleological value of deliberation (see Figure 4-1).

**Participant Selection** is the method of selecting deliberative participants. Fung identified five such methods: self-selection, selective recruitment, random selection, lay stakeholder, and professional stakeholder (2006, p. 67). Fung considers the variation in these approaches as a matter of identifying a group that is collectively suited to compensate for the deficiencies of government administrators and elected officials who might otherwise serve as decision makers (e.g. technical expertise, intimate familiarity with a community, a deep personal stake).

Participants are often aware of the selection methodology because organizers often highlight it during session orientation. A randomly selected body is a striking alternative to
standard political interactions, which are typically explicitly partisan. Selecting participants based on their representativeness as members of an affected population rather than an opinionated interest increases deliberative legitimacy because it changes the basis for political judgement from contestation to cooperation. Thus I hypothesize that:

\[ H1a: \text{Teleological desirability ratings will be higher when the group is composed of randomly selected members of a public and lower when the composition is based on prior interest.} \]

**Ground Rules** are established in an attempt to affect interaction to achieve deliberative discourse norms. These rules and the norms they promote can be classified into two fundamental deliberative components: social interaction and issue analysis (Gastil & Black, 2008, p.16). Pro-social ground rules tend to constrain interactive tone (e.g. respectful interaction) and equitability (e.g. shared speaking time). Pro-analytic ground rules tend to constrain speech to enhance productivity (e.g. prohibiting excessive tangent) and promote analytic focus (e.g. requiring resolution of discrepant claims).

Ground rules serve to set norms for an interaction. Political theorists explicitly contend that uniquely deliberative norms increase the rationality of a decision by reducing coerciveness and exclusion. Decisions made under conditions that are “more inclusive, more comprehensive, more careful to avoid deception, suppression and coercion” constitute superior grounds – in theory – for reasoning on political decisions (Moore, 2012, p. 184). Thus, I hypothesize that:

\[ H1b: \text{Teleological desirability ratings will be higher when the process emphasizes interaction standards that favor attention to social aspects of discourse (e.g. respect, open-mindedness), versus purely analytic aspects (e.g. critical analysis, high evidentiary requirements).} \]

**Outcome Tasking** is the ultimate product participants are asked to produce. There are a variety of deliberative outcomes, for example a statement of findings intended for the public (e.g. CIR), a formal recommendation on behalf of the public to lawmakers (e.g. 21st Century Town Hall), or an authoritative decision (e.g. Participatory Budgeting). These can generally be arrayed
by a distinction between provisional and final authority (Johnson & Gastil, 2015, p. 13). To my knowledge, there has been no empirical research on the legitimacy consequences of task framing. However, some tasks are more cooperative because they can accommodate an integrative approach (e.g. a letter that expresses many points of view), and some are more adversarial because they require a distributive solution (e.g. a yes/no recommendation). Given Habermas’ (1976) argument that communicative action is preferable to strategic action as the basis for political action, I tentatively hypothesize that:

\[ H1_c: \text{Teleological desirability ratings will be higher when the interaction task is framed as cooperative (e.g. to co-create a set of recommendations), versus those framed as adversarial (e.g. to determine which side of an issue has superior reasons).} \]

Overall, these hypotheses suggest that variation in Mini-public design is related to the teleological value of deliberation because these features are novel and favor cooperation. Thus, they may be perceived as better suited to political problem-solving than conventional means (i.e. referendums, elections).

Figure 4-1 Process design choices affect teleological desirability.

**Relational Framing and Teleological Legitimacy**

Prior research has not tied the relationships hypothesized in H1a-c to communication. Relational frames may have pragmatic implications for how well a deliberative group functions as a decision-making body (Miller Henningsen, Henningsen, Cruz, & Morrill, 2003). Relational Framing Theory specifies five types of information that affect which frame is salient to the meaning of a message and should be activated: message characteristics, purpose of the
interaction, relational history, individual traits, and social/cultural norms (Solomon, 2006). I argue that the key elements of deliberative design may act as cues for participants as they determine frame salience.

**Participant Selection** – particularly stakeholder versus random participant selection – is a “relational history” signal because participants are assigned a-priori relationships as members of competing factions. With random participant selection, no such inference about the ‘baseline’ for relational history is possible.

As Gastil and Richards observed, the usefulness of random selection of individuals for governance could be realized across most levels of government currently relegated to elected bodies (2013, p. 267). The desirability of randomness is generally defended on the grounds that it makes for desirable institutions, for example by arguing that they are more robust against corruption by strategic motivations (Gregory, Hartz-Karp, & Watson, 2008) and epistemically superior by virtue of their inclusiveness (Landemore, 2013). These justifications are surely sound, but the analyses that produce them tend to look directly toward democratic legitimization without the crucial intermediary. Knowing that participants are selected at random is useful for understanding the nature of the interaction those people are likely to have. It is little wonder that Gastil and colleagues found that the public’s judgement of the trustworthyness of the Citizens’ Initiative Review was concerned with how participants were recruited (2016, p. 185). Finally, Gregory, Hartz-Karp, and Watson (2008) noticed the implication of stakeholder involvement at an interaction level:

The recruitment formula … combined random selection with some purposive selection to ensure that key stakeholders and the broader community voice were included. … in some instances it created problems – particularly for controversial issues that involved divided community opinions and single-issue lobby groups. In these instances,
lobby group invitees often tried to *dominate* the proceedings rather than share the deliberative space. To counteract this, rather than involving lobby groups and other stakeholder groups as invited participants at events, the agencies in WA moved towards full random selection of participants and involved these groups in other ways – such as expert witnesses, steering team representatives, and observers of the proceedings. (pp. 4-5, emphasis mine)

These observations suggest that the method of participant selection has an influence on interactions. The implication, however, is not limited to the obvious comparison of stakeholders and citizens; even among randomly selected citizens, emphasizing their randomness (versus emphasizing their representativeness of various strata) may invite affiliative behaviors based on the information available to suggest relational histories. Thus, I hypothesize that:

\[ H2a: \text{Increased affiliation/disaffiliation-salience of the interaction will mediate the positive relationship between random participant selection and teleological legitimacy.} \]

*Ground Rules* serve as “social norms,” which set expectations about how the power/affiliation potential of particular interaction types. The participants’ own a-priori expectations for the social norms of political interaction are also likely existent, but the practice of setting interaction norms suggests that these expectations can be modified, or at least safely (if provisionally) suspended.

Ground rules are rarely a focal point for researchers, but Mansbridge and colleagues (2006) noted that ambiguous ground rules can be a liability for groups, and that collaboratively created rules serve a more obviously beneficial purpose than rules facilitators enforce unilaterally. Gastil (2004) found that verbal instructions from moderators corresponded to a decrease in “participants’ conversation dominance” (p. 324). Ryfe (2002) noted several contexts in which
rules were necessary to meter conflict, as well as cases when civility deteriorated because such interaction norms were unenforceable (p. 368). The relationship between rules and social norms is most obvious when rules are used as a counterfactual norm to address a dominance-related threat to deliberation. During their observations of League of Women Voters meetings, for instance, Button and Mattson (1999) noted:

...organizers also set up ground rules to block hierarchical discursive relations from forming between elected officials and citizens. ... They set as their goal a "give and take conversation-there should be no 'lecture' from either citizens or office holders." Organizers made clear that without sufficient preparation, politicians could dominate the discussion or bowl over citizens with their technical knowledge of political matters. (p. 626, emphasis mine)

Rules thus serve to establish local discourse norms, attempting to override other conventions that might predispose participants to activate a dominance-oriented interpretation of the interaction. Thus, I hypothesize that:

\[ H2b: \text{Increased affiliation/disaffiliation-salience of the interaction will mediate the positive relationship between pro-social (versus pro-analytic) ground rules and teleological legitimacy.} \]

**Outcome Tasking** is the ultimate ‘product’ participants are asked to produce. There are a variety of deliberative outcomes, for example a statement of findings intended for the public (e.g. Citizens’ Initiative Review), a formal recommendation on behalf of the public to lawmakers (e.g. 21st Century Town Hall), or an authoritative decision (e.g. Participatory Budgeting). Task
outcomes can generally be arrayed by a distinction between provisional and final authority (Johnson & Gastil, 2015, p. 13).

Deliberative procedures typically choose a consensus-based tasks rather than mere preference articulation or aggregation tasks. I expect this framing to serve as a “purpose of the interaction” signal, because in the former task pluralism needs to be resolved through the challenging of beliefs, values, or preferences whereas the latter task does not necessarily demand genuine argumentation.

Fung’s (2006) discussed two aspects of outcome tasking. He conceptualized variation in “Authority and Power” of a deliberative group (including ‘individual education,’ advisory consultation, and ‘direct authority’ ) and “Communication and Decision Mode” (including preference expression, bargaining, and negotiating) (p. 71). Participants must figure out what is being asked of them during deliberation, so framing is often an explicit part of deliberative procedures. I expect that as vested authority and personal involvement increase, the propensity to view the process as dominance-relevant increases as well. By contrast, a cooperative task reduces the competitive imperative. Thus, I hypothesize that:

\[ H2c: \text{Increased affiliation/disaffiliation-salience of the interaction will mediate the positive relationship between cooperative task framing and teleological legitimacy.} \]
\[ \text{Increased dominance/submission-salience of the interaction will mediate the negative relationship between competitive task framing and teleological legitimacy.} \]

The concept of relational framing clarifies the effects hypothesized in the ‘direct’ models of differential process design by suggesting that designs that increase teleological desirability will do so because of an indirect effect via relational-frame salience (see Figure 4-2).
Figure 4-2 The influence of process design on teleological desirability is mediated by its influence on relational frame salience.
Model 2: Deliberative Norms and Procedural Legitimacy

Model 1 presented the idea that teleological legitimacy – appropriateness for the purpose for which the deliberation is convened – is an outcome of its structural design. In contrast to these pre-deliberative judgements, procedural legitimacy is determined by the actual function of the interaction – specifically how well the interaction adheres to desirable norms. Thus, whereas the desirability of deliberation is a comparison to other deliberative designs or to deliberation’s alternatives, the experience of norms is conceivably a within-design judgement; even with all design features held constant, a process might be more or less defined by respect, mutual understanding, and openness to competing perspectives. Deliberative practitioners aim to magnify these experiences because they believe these discussion qualities reflect civic skills that participants must develop and come to value through experience.

Despite evidence that citizens would like to deliberate (Neblo, Esterling, Kennedy, Lazer, & Sokhey, 2010), they have few opportunities for formally participating in formal and impactful moments of interactive citizenship. Mansbridge (1983) argued that because voting is often considered the core act of citizenship, and because it is a relatively solitary activity, citizenship is consequently thought of as primarily personal and solitary (p. 301). Communicative citizenship is thus a counter-experiential concept for many individuals.

In lieu of unexperienced deliberative norms, participants coming to deliberation initially participate by invoking the norms of other discourse-based political encounters; Polletta’s (2008) examples of this included invoking a “coffee-klatch” to connote an “easygoing, informal” set of norms, and a “mini-UN” to connote norms like inviting “a diversity of viewpoints and an orientation to negotiation” (p. 4). Even as opportunities for discursive citizenship arise, direct participation is required for citizens to adopt deliberative interaction norms.
In the deliberative account, participants notice the exercise (or absence) of deliberative norms, observe their benefits, and then value them as traits of political discourse. Advocates of deliberation suggest participants learn to value deliberative norms as fundamental to the structure of socio-political interactions (Burkhalter, Gastil, & Kelshaw, 2002, p. 401). Adoption of pro-deliberative norms is part of the deliberative “habituation” that theorists and practitioners believe results from participation (Burkhalter, Gastil, & Kelshaw, 2002, p. 414) (see Figure 4-3).

![Diagram](image)

Figure 4-3 Experiences of deliberative norms increase participants’ valuation of them.

On the basis of past research suggesting that participation in deliberation encourages citizens to value deliberative norms, I hypothesize that:

**H3: Participation in deliberative processes that exhibit more adherence to deliberative norms will correspond to higher post-deliberation evaluations of the importance of those norms.**

**Relational Framing and Procedural Legitimacy**

Participants in small-group deliberation learn deliberative norms during the process. For example, Gastil (2004) reported that participants in National Issues Forums processes were more likely to indicate shifts toward pro-deliberative conversation qualities (e.g. non-dominance) when those qualities were modeled during the face-to-face discussion (p. 326). Although I argued that the design phase of deliberation sets expectations for social norms (specifically during ground-
rules construction), I did not specify the reason they should be transmitted during the period of
the interaction, rather than – for example – from reading orienting materials.

I argued that deliberation is the practice of exercising power through social influence in a
way that meets certain ethical criteria, and to which the participants themselves consent. This
consent is a major obstacle for successful deliberations. In general, individuals tend to resist
voluntarily subjecting themselves to situations in which they may be influenced. A number of
mechanisms explain why people might not want to have this experience.

First, people expect that contentious political discourse might involve identity-threatening
challenges to their views (Conover, Searing, and Crewe 2002). Second, persuasive messages from
other participants may conflict with the need for cognitive consistency (McGuire, 1964; Cialdini,
Trost, & Newsom, 1995). This need for consistency is particularly strong when those challenged
views have been articulated publically (Dellande & Nyer, 2007), and people will avoid situations
that will require them to reconsider commitments they have articulated publically (Kiesler, Roth,
&Pallak, 1974). Third, people generally resist persuasive attempts when they believe their
autonomy to make decisions is threatened (Quick & Stephenson, 2007, p. 256), which may occur
when credentialed experts give argumentative testimony or when information (e.g. scientific
reports) are presented as authoritative. Socio-cognitive mechanisms like these explain why people
might be reluctant to embrace deliberative norms that potentially expose vulnerabilities in beliefs,
attitudes, or arguments. Relational Framing Theory explains how people overcome this aversion
to confrontation.

The threatening potential of political talk is dependent on perceptions that the interaction-
salient relational frame is dominance-submission. With this operative interpretation, participants
attend to dominance/submission-relevant goals of others. Past RFT studies employed vignettes
crafted to reflect dominance/submission-salient “compliance goals” and affiliation/disaffiliation-
salient “affinity goals” (Dillard, Solomon, & Samp, 1996; Solomon, Dillard, & Anderson, 2002).
The compliance goals – gaining assistance, giving advice, and changing orientation (Solomon, Dillard, & Anderson, 2002, p. 141) resemble strategic forms of political communication with threat potential. By contrast, the affinity goals Dillard et al. (1996) presented – evaluation, disclosure, and inclusion – strongly resemble activities consistent with pro-deliberative values. Thus, to the extent that participants enact these throughout a deliberative episode, they should active affiliative framing salience (see Figure 4-4).

Figure 4-4 Participants’ judgements of dominance and affiliation salience for the interaction episode mediate the relationship between experienced and valued norms.

Because these norms of political communication are a desirable alternative to dominance/submission-related norms, and affiliative/disaffiliative interaction episodes are less threatening (Solomon, 2006), I expect citizens to learn to value those norms in political communication, as expressed in Hypothesis 3.

*H4: Increased perceived affiliation-salience and decreases in dominance/submission-salience of an interaction episode will mediate the positive relationship between experienced pro-deliberative norms and increased the valuation of those norms.*
Model 3: Prior Commitments, Reasoning, and Decisional Legitimacy

Whereas Models 1 and 2 articulated the role of relational framing in defining participants’ pro-deliberative attitudes, Model 3 investigates a behavior that reflects legitimate exercises of social influence. In the deliberative account, social influence is legitimate to the extent that participants reason and render decisions in a manner consistent with the “common good,” as opposed to basing them on personal or group interests. This conception of decisional legitimacy is among the most contested claims advanced by deliberation scholars. It contradicts foundational social-psychological ideas about how humans think in conflicting groups, and faces challenges from empirical studies that have demonstrated deliberative methods produce inconsistent results.

Political conflict occurs when preferences for government action differ systematically across identifiable groups. Substantial sociological research suggests that individuals exhibit biased information processing when issues are group-salient. For example, research stemming from the minimal group paradigm has demonstrated a bias to evaluate in-group members favorably (Otten & Moskowitz, 2000; Diehl, 1990). As citizens become more familiar with an issue and its implied group salience, they become “resolutely partisan” through reduced information-seeking behaviors and interest in cooperation and compromise (MacKuen, Wolak, Keele, & Marcus, 2010). Thus, the most entrenched political disagreements are some of the hardest to deliberate. Empirical evidence also suggests that deliberation’s de-biasing effects are tenuous. Sunstein (2000; 2002), in particular, has discussed several conditions (e.g. enclave deliberation) under which deliberation results in the same natural tendencies toward polarization that social scientists expect in other non-deliberative political communicative contexts.

Political group affiliation – particularly in the case of parties – is related to particular values; the same values that cause a person to identify as a Republican or a Democrat may
influence their views on particular issues. However, this association is empirically very weak (Converse, 1964). Thus, with respect to any particular issue, the role of group affiliation is at least partially external to an individual’s judgement about the arguments relevant to a particular issue. During deliberation, participants are asked to reason together on the merits of particular arguments to in support of or opposition to a matter of public policy. Insofar as the reasons for group membership are associated with specific beliefs and values, that group affiliation should correspond to assessments of the merits of those arguments. However, prior research has shown that those group affiliations also have an independent direct effect on preferences. Thus, I hypothesize that:

\( H5a \): Participants’ judgements about specific arguments during deliberation are related to their prior issue commitment, and

\( H5b \): Participants’ assessments of the strength of specific arguments partially mediates the relationship between prior issue commitment and argument endorsement.

Figure 4-5. Prior commitment directly predicts argument quality assessment and endorsement of an argument. Argument quality assessment partially mediates the relationship.

**Relational Framing and Decisional Legitimacy**

It is not clear that individuals necessarily reason during deliberation. In some instances, strong ties between in-group polarity and policy preference persist. In other studies, groups of individuals simply fail to demonstrate compelling independent judgement. There is thus a substantial question about how well deliberation actually produces better judgements on matters
of public policy (Landemore & Mercier, 2012, p. 912). Landemore & Mercier (2012) attribute this to the persistent finding that even “participants in the deliberation animated by a sincere desire to figure out the truth … in contrast to partisans, ideologues, or strategic rhetoricians—will have a hard time fighting their hard-wired confirmation bias” (p. 919). However, as those authors argued elsewhere (Landemore & Mercier, 2011), failures in human reasoning like confirmation bias are discoverable and correctable through argumentation. Even if deliberative participants are constrained in their own ability to reason on policy issues, they are not constrained in their ability to criticize the flawed reasoning of others (Landemore & Mercier, 2011).

According to the view that Landemore and Mercier (2012) advanced, collective reasoning is possible, on the condition that participants in the discussion understand that they have biases (even if they cannot internally correct for them), and are willing to revise their own attitudes if they prove erroneous. As I argue in Chapter 3, the obstacles to these commitments lie in the natural human tendencies toward ego-defensiveness and attitudinal consistency. These motivations cause people to resist attitudinal influence (Fransen, Smit, & Verlegh, 2015). RFT posits that direct attempts to “change orientation(s)” are dominance-salient goals (Dillard, Solomon, & Samp, 1996, p. 711). Thus, perceptions of an interaction episode as dominance-salient increase the likelihood of resistance to persuasion – thus foreclosing on the cognitive conditions necessary for deliberation.

When participants in a political interaction perceive it as dominance-salient, they are likely to resist new information from attitudinally opposed peers. In lieu of reflection on arguments and their justifications, stable group affiliations may play a larger role in determining the arguments they endorse. However, when the interaction is affiliation-salient, participants may be more willing to pursue cooperative goals such as giving disclosure, establishing common ground, or creating mutual understanding (Dillard, Solomon, & Samp, 1996, p. 711). Even if participants do not pursue cooperative (pro-affinity) goals, disaffiliation-salience may produce
better reasoning than dominance-salience. Disaffilative goals such as “offering negative
evaluation(s)” or “seeking disclosure,” are less compliance-oriented goals, and as such may not
carry the same influence-resistance reactions.

This reasoning does deviate from RFT theorizing to date. These studies have manipulated
contextual cues to demonstrate that they cause differential salience perceptions. In the present
formulation, I expect that while participants bring initial expectations to the discussion about
which frame will be salient, they can also revise that judgement during the process. Thus, I
hypothesize that:

*H6: The positive relationship between group affinity and endorsement of an argument is
attenuated by participants’ judgements of affiliation salience and strengthened by
judgements of dominance salience for the interaction episode.*

Figure 4-6. The relationship between group affinity and argument endorsement is
mediated by relational frame salience.
Model 4: Deliberative Legitimacy and Consent

I have argued that participants make discrete judgements of legitimacy during three stages of a deliberative process. I also argued that an omnibus legitimacy judgement – consent – is a summary attitude functioning as a combinatorial outcome of other legitimacy judgements.

As I discuss in chapter 3, participants in the minority opinion can nevertheless consent to a fair process. As Knobloch and colleagues (2013) noted, higher quality deliberative processes may “provide space for opposing or minority opinions” to demonstrate that they were valuable contributors to the reasoning process (p. 108). This argument that citizens should endorse procedural governance practices regardless of the outcomes is common in scholarship about aggregative democracy. However, as Dryzek (2005) demonstrated, it is difficult for citizens to arrive at “mutual acceptance of reasonableness,” (p. 219) perhaps particularly so compared to reaching agreement about what constitutes a fair election.

I have identified two legitimacy-relevant attitudes (Models 1 and 2) and argued that their legitimizing effect is conditional on relational frame salience. I expect these that a more legitimate deliberation will correspond to consent behavior. While I conceptualize consent as a summary attitude, it is practical to measure its observable behavioral consequences. These behaviors are often symbolic; for example, participants may choose to sign their names to an authorizing document, participate in post-deliberative celebrations, or give favorable testimony to media outlets. I expect that higher legitimacy attitudes resulting from the interaction will correspond to a higher probability of symbolic consent. Thus, I hypothesize that:

\[ H7a: \text{The likelihood of Symbolic Consent will increase as the interaction is perceived as more affiliation-salient;} \]
\[ H7b: \text{Dominance-salience, by contrast, will negatively influence those perceptions;} \]
\[ H7c: \text{These effects will be mediated by attitudes about the Teleological legitimacy of the interaction, and} \]
\[ H7d: \text{These effects will be mediated by attitudes about the Procedural legitimacy of the interaction.} \]
Figure 4-7. The likelihood of Symbolic Consent increases with higher ratings of teleological and procedural legitimacy.
Chapter 5

Research Design

Advocates of deliberation claim that emphasizing communication between citizens is central to political decision-making because it is a means by which people create collective power (Habermas, 1984). Empirical investigations of deliberative democracy have tested theoretical claims about how civil society might better achieve democratic standards through procedural and communicative decision processes. I argue in Chapters 1-3 that this legitimizing function of communication implicates fundamental relational dynamics of human communication. In Chapter 4, I describe conceptual models of deliberative legitimacy, and introduce relational framing as a variable construct that helps clarify their effects. In this chapter, I discuss my method for testing those hypotheses.

To test the hypotheses, I designed a study that involved small-group interactions about a divisive political issue, because this is the context most commonly studied by deliberation researchers. I wanted to test the role of relational frame salience in the context of an issue that participants found important, because the significance of frame judgements increases as “involvement” in the interaction increases (e.g. by increased “coordination, engagement, and immediacy”) (Solomon & McLaren, 2008, p. 105). To identify a highly salient and engaging issue, I pretested several issues using a college student sample drawn from a departmental participant pool. Several college-life issues were tested, including “roommate selection methodologies,” “sexual assault and alcohol abuse prevention programs,” and “eliminating the foreign language requirement.” The selected discussion policy was the proposal to allow concealed handgun carriage on campus for those licensed to carry concealed handguns in public (herin: “campus carry”). I selected this divisive issue because pretest participants ranked it as
most “important,” “interesting,” and “contentious” and participants reported high rates of “strong” pro and con views.

The procedure included pre- and post-interaction survey instrumentation for self-reported data. Elements of the process were modified to create experimental treatments to test the influence of deliberative design. Other concepts from the models were measured using self-report questionnaire instruments.

Participants

Participants (N=213) were college students recruited from a research participant program associated with an introductory speech course at a large Mid-Atlantic university. The course was required for a large majority of students, and participation in the research represented 2% of the final course grade. Students enrolled in the course are automatically included in the pool and randomly assigned to studies, within screening requirement constraints. During recruitment, participants who “strongly feel that people with concealed carry licenses SHOULD be allowed to possess handguns on campus” and who strongly feel they “SHOULD NOT” were included in the sample. The screening requirement also included U.S. citizenship.

Of participants reporting biographical data, the mostly male (54.5%) sample was mostly White (85.0%), Asian (8.0%) and Black (4.0%). The sample resembles the gender composition of the university population (53.8% male), while over-representing the published White (68.5%) and Asian (6.1%) university populations. Of 180 participants reporting a party affiliation, a majority of the sample associated with the Republican Party (45.0%), followed by the Democratic Party (31.1%), and no party affiliation (21.7%).
Procedures

After participants completed the online recruitment questionnaire, they were asked to sign up for an in-person research session. Separate sign-up lists with four seats per session were offered to supporters and opponents of campus carry, such that a fully attended session would include eight total participants. Thirty-seven sessions were conducted with an average of six participants ($SD= 1.6$, $Min= 4$, $Max= 8$). Multiple sessions were conducted on 15 separate days, and each day was randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions.

Pre-deliberation procedures

A laboratory room was configured for a small-group discussion. A conference table was prepared with numbered cards to indicate seating positions; these numbers served as participant identification numbers. Several materials were provided at each seating position: consent documents, session information, background information, pre-session questionnaire, and deliberation materials.

The consent documents consisted of the IRB-approved informed consent materials and signature page. Session information materials consisted of a discussion agenda, discussion ground rules, and group goals; the latter two types of information varied by experimental condition. Background information materials consisted of two USA Today opinion articles arguing for and against campus carry. Participants also received a copy of the application for a concealed weapons permit in the local county. This application included the requirements (e.g. age, fee) and exclusions (e.g. enumerated felony crimes) for licensure. The pre-discussion questionnaire consisted of items to measure issue-related attitudes. The deliberation materials consisted of two pages: “Review & Discussion of Other Students’ Reasons,” and “Voting Activity.”

Upon arrival to the laboratory, students self-selected a seat. They gave their name for class credit purposes and completed signed informed consent. Prior to video recording,
participants were verbally asked to confirm their understanding of the consent document and for consent to recording. The session moderator (always the Primary Investigator) then introduced the research and gave an overview of the session. Some of this overview was common to all groups, and some of the overview differed by experimental condition.

All groups were informed that they would consider the proposal, “Penn State SHOULD allow students with proper state-issued licenses to carry concealed guns on campus.” They were further told that they would be considering specific arguments in support and in opposition to the proposal, before deciding if those argument should be included in a letter to the university president.

**Experimental conditions**

In my discussion of Model 1 (Chapter 4), I note three deliberative design features that I expect to activate differential relational frame salience. Although these features manifest in various ways, I selected two common implementations of each feature as an experimental operationalization. The following sections describe how those decisions were manifested in the procedure.

**Participant Selection** did not vary between the experimental groups. However, participants were given different information about how the group formed. In the “Random” assignment condition, participants were told “You weren’t selected by any criteria other than schedule availability,” while in the “Stakeholder” condition, participants were told that they “were offered specific timeslots based on the issue stance you expressed on the background information survey.” Whereas the “Random” group was told that they were representing “a cross-section of the student body,” the “Stakeholder” group was told they were representing “the perspectives of other students with your views.” Participants in the “Random” group to introduce
themselves with their name, hometown, and academic major. “Stakeholder” participants introduced themselves by name and their stance on campus carry.

This manipulation is the operationalization relevant to Hypothesis 1a, which predicted that this distinction would prime the participants’ perceptions of their relational starting point. The “Random” condition is intended to increase affiliation-salience by highlighting the participants’ standing relationship as fellow students. By contrast, the “Stakeholder” condition is intended to prime the dominance-salience frame by highlighting competitive attitudinal groupings.

Ground Rules for the discussion differed by “pro-social” and “pro-analytic” guidelines, following Gastil and Black’s (2007) distinction. The “pro-social” rules included instructions like “consider how each person’s perspective and experience might lead them to different beliefs,” whereas the “pro-analytic” rules included instructions such as “Be open to engaging with points of disagreement.” Participants received these instructions verbally, and could reference them in print on the reverse side of the session agenda.

This manipulation is the operationalization relevant to Hypothesis 1b, which predicted that “pro-social” rules would increase affiliation-salience by highlighting the desirability of interaction norms like respect and consideration. By contrast, the “pro-analytic” rules prime dominance-salience by highlighting the potential for members of the group to challenge each other’s points of view.

Outcome Tasking was implemented as a differential explanation of the small group’s goal. In the “Cooperative” condition, participants were told that they should aim to “find points of agreement … to determine the strengths and weaknesses” of each perspective. By contrast, participants in the “Oppositional” condition were told that their objective was to “find points of disagreement … to determine whether the pro or con perspective has the better argument…. “
This manipulation is the operationalization relevant to Hypothesis 1c, which predicted that a “cooperative” goal would frame the purpose of the interaction as affiliation-salient by emphasizing the idea that participants can mutually support each other in pursuit of an integrative solution to a shared problem. By contrast, the “oppositional” goal implies that the exercise is a matter of winning or losing controversial points.

These three design choices represent different influences on relational frame activation. However, because of sample size limitations, it was not feasible to sample nine independent groups to enact every combination of these features. Instead, I combined the group goal and ground-rule manipulations to create four conditions (see Table 8-1), which represent the following arrangements:

**Advisory Citizen Deliberation** occurs when a group of random citizens affected by a problem are asked to consider the issue and to produce recommendations and analyses, but not decisions. An example of this arrangement is the Oregon Citizen’s Initiative Review, which is a randomly selected body of citizens who deliberate and create recommendations to voters about referendum items on the state ballot (Gastil & Levine, 2005).

**Advisory Stakeholder Deliberation** occurs when a group of people selected to represent particular positions or interests are asked to consider the issue and to produce recommendations and analyses, but not decisions. An example of this arrangement is a Federal Advisory Committee, which consists of representatives from stakeholders who advise administrative agencies.

**Decisional Citizen Deliberation**: occurs when a group of random citizens affected by a problem are asked to consider an issue and return a definitive judgement. An example of this arrangement is a trial jury.
**Decisional Stakeholder Deliberation** occurs when a group of people selected to represent particular positions or interests are asked to consider an issue and return a definitive judgement. An example of this arrangement is a parliament or legislature.

Table 5-1. Experimental Conditions by Introduction Manipulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Selection</th>
<th>Group Goal</th>
<th>Ground-Rules</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advisory Citizen Deliberation</strong></td>
<td>Random</td>
<td>Stakeholder</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advisory Stakeholder Deliberation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Decisional Citizen Deliberation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Decisional Stakeholder Deliberation</strong></td>
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</table>

After participants received orienting information, they completed a pre-discussion questionnaire. These items included agreement or disagreement with the proposal, certainty in that position, and personal issue salience.

**Deliberation procedures**

Following the questionnaire, participants were asked to review the background information materials. Then, they gave general responses to the material; they were prompted to call attention to information they found unique or interesting in the materials, and arguments they found particularly strong or weak.

After participants discussed the background information, they were asked to consider six prepared arguments. These arguments were produced by a pilot study, in which students were asked to submit reasons in favor and in opposition to campus carry. The most common reasons were then combined into a set of six statements. The groups were instructed to consider how much each argument should influence the judgements of other students and administrators about
the issue. After discussing these reasons, the participants voted individually on those arguments. The “Voting Activity” sheet included three items for each of the six arguments. Participants were asked to respond yes or no to the question “Should this argument be included in the letter?” They were then asked, “How strongly do you feel about including or excluding it” with a 5-point response scale ranging from “Not at All” to “Very Strongly.” Finally, they were asked “Do you think this is a good argument to consider when deciding on the issue” with a 5-point response scale ranging from “Very Bad Reason” to “Very Good Reason.”

**Post-deliberation procedures**

At the conclusion of the voting exercise, participants were asked to complete the post-session questionnaire. This instrument contained the self-report measures for testing the hypotheses, which are described in the section that follows.

**Measures**

**Relational Frame Salience**

All four proposed models involve conditional effects associated with relational frame salience judgements. In the most common RFT measurement approach, participants rated the relevance of dominance-salient dimensions (e.g. persuade/coerce, influence/comply) and affiliation-salient dimensions (e.g. liking/disliking, attraction/aversion) to scenario descriptions representing “compliance” goals (e.g. gain assistance, change other’s orientation) and “affinity goals” (e.g. offer positive evaluation, seek disclosure) (Dillard, Solomon, & Samp, 1996, p. 711; Dillard & Solomon, 2005, p. 329). In another study, participants provided their own recollection of events characterized as dominance- or affiliation-salient, in response to instructions; for example, participants were asked to recall an interaction in which “one person exerts or tries to
exert power, control, or influence over the thoughts, feelings, or actions of another…” (Dillard, Solomon, & Palmer, 1999, p. 55).

The study most similar to the present investigation asked participants to role-play as members of a corporate executive board (Henningsen, Henningsen, Cruz, & Morrill, 2003). Like the present study, these participants made a collective decision (to select a CEO), but they were assigned to conditions in which they received specific cooperative or competitive interaction goals. The participants then rated the interaction on 7-point scales for dominance and affiliation-salience. In the present study, interaction goals were also primed in the experimental manipulation, and participants self-reported relational frame salience.

The post-deliberation questionnaire contained two batteries of items to measure relational frame salience during the interaction. In the first battery, participants responded to questions about “how you would describe the conversation you just had.” These items ask for self-reported observations of the group’s interaction, using descriptive language from prior RFT studies consistent with dominance-salience (#1&2) and affiliation-salience (#3&4):

1) During our interactions, we were establishing who had more or less authority.
2) Our interactions were influenced by who had more or less control.
3) During our interactions, we were establishing a friendly or unfriendly tone.
4) Our interactions were influenced by how much we like or dislike each other.

The second battery of items ask for self-reported observations of the participant’s own experience during the interaction, specifically with respect to the degree they had pursued cooperative interaction goals (#2,4,6) or competitive interaction goals (#1,3,5).

1) I felt pressure to only support arguments that favored my perspective on the issue.
2) I had a sense of who I liked and disliked personally.
3) I felt like I had to be more guarded with people on the other side of the issue.
4) By the end of our conversation, I felt less like I was talking with strangers.
5) I had a sense that I was personally winning or losing particular arguments.
6) I felt that the conversation helped me understand my group members better.

To determine the measurement properties of these scales, I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis using MPlus software (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017). The
affiliation/disaffiliation and dominance/submission scales were modeled as separate latent factors. Models used a robust maximum likelihood estimator to mitigate the influence of non-normal distributions of residuals. The model accounting for small-group nesting with a sandwich estimator for standard errors, via the Mplus CLUSTER procedure (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017, p. 261). However, model fit improved with the omission of clustering, suggesting that residual clustering was not biasing the maximum-likelihood estimates. Minimum acceptable fit criteria were RMSEA lower 90% interval bound < 0.05, CFI > 0.95, item factor loadings > 0.5 (Kline, 1998). Because research under RFT has consistently shown that the affiliation-salience and dominance-salience scales are independent, uncorrelated latent factors would be reassuring. However, past studies have found a negative correlation between dominance-related and affiliation-related judgements (Dillard, Palmer, & Kinney, 1995).

The initial model fit for the first four-item battery was acceptable ($X^2_1 = .598$, $p = .44$, CFI =.1, RMSEA < .000 [90%CI .000, .167]), and loadings for the “dominance” items exceeded .75. However, the loadings for the “affiliation” items were low (< .32), and the correlation between the latent factors for dominance and affiliation was large ($b = .53$, $p = .01$). Thus, the first battery did not meet the measurement criteria.

The initial model fit for the second six-item battery was unacceptable ($X^2_9 = 44.18$, $p < .001$, CFI =.735, RMSEA = .137 [90%CI .099,.179]). Two loadings from the dominance scale and one loading from the affiliation scale were below .6. The correlation between the latent factors was not significant ($B = -.03$, $p = .764$). Thus, the second battery did not meet the measurement criteria.

While neither item battery was independently acceptable, the independence of the scales suggests that they may be measured differently. Thus a composite of the two batteries was modeled. The revised model includes the dominance sub-scale from the first battery and the affiliation sub-scale (excluding the item loading below .60) as indicators of the respective latent
variables. This model produced acceptable fit ($X^2 = 3.09$, $p = .214$, CFI = .992, RMSEA = .051 [90% CI .000, .156]). All loadings exceed .70, and the correlation between the latent variables is not significant ($B = .05$, $p = .561$). This tentative model demonstrated desirable measurement properties, but because it was a combined scale, some further validation was desirable.

To increase confidence in the model, I tested for convergent validity by adding a third latent variable to the two-factor model. This additional latent variable was perceptions about the other participants during the discussion, in which participants characterize the other participants as generally “cooperative,” “honest,” “sincere,” and “straightforward.” This subscale, which measured generally pro-affiliative traits, demonstrated coherent measurement traits; all loadings exceeded .70. In the three-factor model, this battery was positively associated with affiliation/disaffiliation ($B = .36$, $p < .001$) and negatively associated with dominance/submission ($B = -.21$, $p = .001$). The direction and similar magnitude of the relationships suggests that while the two latent variables are uncorrelated, they are not merely unrelated.

RFT contends that an interaction is either Affiliation/Disaffiliation-salient or Dominance-Submission-salient. However, as Solomon, Dillard, and Anderson (2002) noted, “frames may switch quickly as the relational implications of messages vary throughout an exchange” (p. 150). Thus, the global measures of the present instrument should involve some conflation of frame salience throughout the interaction. As a crude measure of this conflation, I used the scale mean (3) as a cutoff to assess how many participants rated the interaction as salient to both frames (both >3), differentially salient (only one >3), or salient to neither (both <3). Most participants ($n = 121, 61.4\%$) rated the interaction as differentially salient, about a quarter ($n = 50, 25\%$) rated both frames salient, and the remainder ($n = 26, 13.2\%$) rated neither frame salient. The percentage of participants who gave differential interaction-salience ratings was somewhat higher among those who reported feeling “strongly” or “very strongly” about the campus-carry issue (66.3%) than among those who reported feeling ambivalent (57.4%).
Participants’ prior stance (0 = Disagree, 1 = Agree) on campus carry did not predict Affiliation/Disaffiliation-salience ($b = 0.10$, $S.E. = 0.18$, $p = 0.582$), but a pro-carry stance corresponded to lower ratings of Dominance/Submission-salience ($b = -0.28$, $S.E. = 0.14$, $p = 0.049$).

**Teleological Desirability of Deliberation**

Model 1 portrays teleological desirability of deliberation as an outcome of deliberative design, mediated by the effects of design on relational framing relevance perceptions. I described this concept as the degree to which a deliberative process is appropriate to the problem. To measure this, I used a three-factor, six-item scale to measure participants’ perceptions of the process’ practicality, usefulness, and social benefit (e.g. “If more people participated in this sort of discussion, our Penn State community would be stronger”). These items used five-point Likert-type response scales (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). The items are listed in the Appendix.

The three-factor measurement model CFA for Teleological Desirability fit well ($X^2 = .67$, $p = .881$, $CFI = 1.0$, $RMSEA = .000 [90\%CI .000,.058]$). All loadings exceeded .64. Thus, the variable met the measurement criteria.

**Experience & Valuation of Deliberative Norms**

Model 2 portrays the citizens’ perceptions of the value of deliberative discourse norms as an outcome of experiencing those norms enacted in discussion. The items to measure norm enactment and valuation are modified from Moy and Gastil’s (2006) instrument. Moy and Gastil (2006) used multiple items to measure each norm, and treated them separately in the analysis. Because of limited questionnaire space, each was reduced to a single item, and collectively they reflect a broad conception of deliberative norms.
Participants used 5-point Likert-type scales to rate the degree to which the conversation achieved four norms: non-overbearingness, opinion explicitness, sensibility of arguments, and comprehension of reasons. In a separate section of the questionnaire, participants rated the importance of those discourse qualities. The language in the two batteries was similar; for example, the item measuring enacted explicitness was “Everyone was very explicit about their opinion,” and the item measuring valuation of explicitness was “It is better when people are explicit about their opinions.” The items for both measures are listed in the Appendix.

Because the wording of the scales is similar, both were modeled in a single CFA to confirm multidimensionality. The two-factor model fit well ($X^2_{19}=30.67$, $p=.044$, CFI =.954, RMSEA =.056 [90%CI .009,.091]), but factor loadings were as low as .4. This low communality is consistent with their development as separate scales in past research (Moy & Gastil, 2006). This necessitates a general interpretation of any effects estimated in Model 2.

**Prior Commitment & Assessment of Argument Quality & Endorsement of Argument**

Model 3 relates individuals’ prior commitments (e.g. to political groups) to their assessments of the quality of issue-specific arguments. Their willingness to endorsement of an argument (i.e. accept it as reasonable) is influenced both by that quality assessment and by the prior commitment directly.

A computed score from two variables on the pre-deliberation questionnaire indicates participants’ prior commitments with respect to campus carry. One item measured their stance: “Do you agree or disagree with the proposal?” (-1 = Disagree, 1 = Agree). A second 5-point item measured the strength of that stance: “How certain are you of your position on this proposal?” (1 = Not At All Certain, 4 = Very Certain). The product of these scores (Min = -5, Max = 5) is used as a continuous prior commitment score. No zero point is possible in this scale, which reflects the
greater conceptual difference between the binary choice than between the gradations of vote
certainty.

Participants evaluated six arguments as part of the procedure. One item from the voting
activity form indicates the evaluation of each argument: “Do you think this is a good argument to
consider when deciding on the issue?” (1 = Very Bad Reason, 5 = Very Good Reason). Oral
instructions to participants clarified this question during the exercise introduction, explaining it as
asking if the argument is an important point to consider for people who are still deciding what to
think about this topic.

A computed score from two variables on the voting activity form indicates argument
endorsement. The first item was a binary choice, “Should this argument be included in the
letter?” (-1 = No, 1 = Yes). A second item asked for the strength of the vote: “How Strongly do
you feel about including or excluding it?” (1 = Not At All Strongly, 5 = Very Strongly). The
product of these scores (Min = -5, Max = 5) is used as a continuous argument endorsement score.

On average, participants endorsed two pro (M=2.03) and two con (M=2.02) arguments.
Most groups (n=25, 67.6%) accepted the same number of pro and con arguments in the aggregate
(i.e. the average number of accepted and rejected arguments within the group was within 1). Of
the 12 groups with a discrepancy, seven accepted more pro-concealed-carry arguments and five
accepted more con-concealed-carry arguments. On average, participants initially opposed to
campus-carry accepted 1.66 pro arguments and 2.44 con arguments. Similarly, on average,
participants initially in favor of campus-carry accepted 2.42 pro arguments and 1.57 con
arguments.

**Symbolic Consent**

In some small-group deliberative procedures, a final act of symbolic consent is part of the
process. In this procedure, the final page of the post-deliberation questionnaire asked participants
if they would like their name to be included on the final letter produced by the group. Importantly, the participants did not know the final outcome (i.e. I did not aggregate the scores in front of the participants). Participants were instructed to “only put your name on this form if you wish for your name to be on the group letter when it is submitted to the Office of the President.” The score resulting from this question indicates if the participant requested that their name be included (0 = Not Signed, 1 = Signed).

Overall, 46.2% of participants signed the final letter. In 44.4% (n=16) of groups, more than half of the participants signed the letter. In two groups, all participants signed, and in three groups, no participants signed. Of those initially opposed to campus-carry, 39.4% signed, whereas 53.8% of those supporting campus-carry signed.
Chapter 6

Analyses

In this chapter, I discuss the analysis of data produced with the methods and measures I describe in Chapter 8. Using these data, I test the hypothesis posed in Chapter 4. Each chapter corresponds to an empirical model of deliberation effects. I augment each model by positing that these effects are conditional on relational frame salience, as described by Relational Framing Theory.

Analytic Plan

The statistical tests were performed with structural equation modeling in MPlus 7.3 using maximum likelihood estimation (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017). Standard errors and parameter confidence intervals were estimated using bias-corrected bootstrapping based on 500 resamples with replacement. This approach permits asymmetrical estimation of standard errors and confidence intervals for indirect effects (Preacher & Hayes, 2008, p. 883).

Parameter statistical significance (but not mean difference) tests are based on estimated confidence intervals, but the parametric results of the analyses are also reported using a robust maximum likelihood estimator, with statistical significance tests reported at alpha .05.

Model fit is appropriate to the data if point-estimated root-mean-square error (RMSEA) is below .10 and comparative fit index (CFI) is greater than .90 (Kline, 1998). Model 4, which involves a binary outcome, uses robust (variance-adjusted) weighted least squares (WLSMV) estimation (Beauducel & Herzberg, 2006) and 500 bootstrap resamples to estimate standard errors and parameter confidence intervals. The WLSMV model is appropriately well fit to the data if the weighted root mean square residual (WRMR) is below 1 (Yu, 2002, p. 45).
Preliminary Analyses

Prior to analysis, the data were checked for appropriateness to the intended model. Multivariate outliers (n=3), defined by a Mahalanobis Distance more than three standard deviations above the mean, were removed. Cases with substantial missing data from the final questionnaire (n=13) were removed. These data were from individuals who terminated the study early for scheduling reasons, and all criterion variables were missing in these cases. No participant terminated early because of distress related to the protocol.

The design included an experimental effect: deliberative design choices. The hypothesized effect (H2a-c) is contingent on the argument that the experimental factors cause systematic variation in the relational framing measures. To check this manipulation, two models were tested using the SPSS UNIANOVA package. The factor scores from the relational frame-salience measurement model (i.e. the affiliation/disaffiliation and dominance/submission-salience measures) were modeled as outcomes of two fixed-effect factors: experimental condition and session number nested within condition (because the session numbers identify the condition). For affiliation/disaffiliation-salience, the between-conditions factor was not significant ($F_3 = 1.2, p = .312$), but the between-groups factor was significant ($F_{32} = 2.90, p < .001$). The adjusted R2 indicates that between-group differences account for 24% of the variation in affiliation-salience. For dominance-submission-salience, the between-conditions factor was not significant ($F_3 = 1.2, p = .280$), and the between-groups factor was not significant ($F_{32} = 1.35, p = .072$). Therefore, the manipulation was unsuccessful; therefore, these data and claims about relational framing are limited to those appropriate for observational (cross-sectional) rather than experimental data.
Substantive Analyses and Results

Model 1: Process Design and Teleological Legitimacy

Hypotheses

Model 1 relates deliberative design features and teleological desirability of deliberation. The design features are operationalized as experimental manipulations of the discussion instructions. I hypothesized these effects individually, such that I expected teleological desirability to be greater in the random (versus stakeholder) condition (H1a), in the pro-social (versus pro-analytic) ground-rules condition (H1b), and in the cooperative (versus adversarial) task framing condition (H1c). However, the study design conflated H1b (ground rules) and H1c (group goal) for sample size economy. Thus, the data do not support testing of the individual effects. In lieu of those independent effects, I named typologies of mini-publics in which these features co-occur (see p. 75). Thus, the data support testing two hypotheses:

H1a: Teleological desirability ratings will be higher when the group is composed of randomly selected members of a public and lower when the composition is based on prior interest.

H1b: Teleological desirability ratings will be higher when the process emphasizes interaction standards that favor attention to social aspects of discourse (e.g. respect, open-mindedness) AND the interaction task is framed as cooperative (e.g. to co-create a set of recommendations), compared to processes that emphasize purely analytic aspects (e.g. critical analysis, high evidentiary requirements) AND frame the task as adversarial (e.g. to determine which side of an issue has superior reasons).

To explain these effects, I argued that these manipulations represent different relational frame-salience cues, as described by Solomon (2006). Thus, I hypothesized that design choices that increase teleological desirability will do so via an indirect effect through affiliation salience.

H2a: Increased affiliation/disaffiliation-salience of the interaction will mediate the positive relationship between participant selection and teleological legitimacy.

H2b: Increased affiliation/disaffiliation-salience of the interaction will mediate the positive relationship between pro-social (versus pro-analytic) ground rules and teleological legitimacy.
Model 1 was tested with and without the relational framing component. The first model was a regression of the latent variable representing Teleological Desirability of Deliberation on dummy variables representing the experimental conditions. The model for testing H1 (see Figure 4-1) fit well ($X^2_{19}= 8.40, p = .97, \text{CFI} = 1.00, \text{RMSEA} = .000 [90\%\text{CI} .000, .001]$). Only one bootstrapped bias-corrected 95% confidence interval for the paths predicting Teleological Desirability of Deliberation differed from zero, suggesting a group mean difference between Advisory Stakeholder and Deliberation and Decisional Stakeholder Deliberation ($b = .76, 95\%\text{CI} .01, 3.30$). The positive sign suggests the mean difference is positive, consistent with H1b. However, the difference occurred only within the stakeholder condition, suggesting that task framing and discussion rules are less influential on Teleological Desirability when the interaction is among randomly selected participants. These analyses do not support Hypothesis 1a, and partially support Hypothesis 1b.

The second model added relational frame salience as a predictor of Teleological Desirability of Deliberation (see Figure 4-1). The model for testing H2 (see Figure 4-2) fit well ($X^2_{49}= 45.85, p = .60, \text{CFI} = 1.00, \text{RMSEA} = .000 [90\%\text{CI} .000, .041]$). As in the prior model, the bootstrapped bias-corrected 95% confidence interval for mean difference between Advisory Stakeholder and Deliberation and Decisional Stakeholder Deliberation was significant ($b = .50, 95\%\text{CI} .01, 2.40$). None of the indirect effects from the experimental condition dummies to Teleological Desirability differed significantly from zero. These analyses do not support Hypothesis 2.
Model 2: Deliberative Norms and Procedural Legitimacy

**Hypotheses**

Model 2 relates deliberative norm enactment during discussion to increased judgments of the importance of those discourse norms. I hypothesized that:

**H3:** Participation in deliberative processes that exhibit more adherence to deliberative norms will correspond to higher post-deliberation evaluations of the importance of those norms.

I argued that this effect is contingent on these norms causing participants to perceive the interaction as more affiliation-salient. Thus I hypothesized that:

**H4:** Increased perceived affiliation-salience and decreases in dominance/submission-salience of an interaction episode will mediate the positive relationship between experienced pro-deliberative norms and increased the valuation of those norms.

**Statistical model and hypothesis tests**

Model 2 was tested with and without the relational framing component. The first model was a regression of the latent variable representing Valuation of Deliberative Norms on Experience of Deliberative Norms. The model for testing H3 (see Figure 5-1) fit well ($X^2_{19}=30.36$, $p=.05$, $CFI=.97$, $RMSEA=.06$ [90%CI .006,.090]). Experience of Deliberative Norms predicted Valuation of Deliberative Norms ($b=.25$, 95%CI .04, .51). This analysis supports H3.

The second model adds relational frame salience to mediate the relationship between Experience of Deliberative Norms and Valuation of Deliberative Norms. The model for testing H4 fit well ($X^2_{50}=85.80$, $p=.001$, $CFI=.93$, $RMSEA=.06$ [90%CI .038,.082]). Experience of Deliberative Norms positively predicted Affiliation-Disaffiliation-Salience ($b=.315$, 95%CI .10,.54), and negatively predicted Dominance-Submission Salience ($b=-.236$, 95%CI -.44,-.04), but did not directly predict Valuation of Deliberative Norms ($b=.145$, 95%CI -.10,.39). Valuation of Deliberative Norms was predicted by Affiliation-Disaffiliation-Salience ($b=0.334$, 95%CI .12,.55) but not Dominance-Submission Salience ($b=-.076$, 95%CI -.23,0.08).
indirect effect via affiliation/disaffiliation-salience was nonzero \((b = .105, 95\% CI .02, .25)\), but the indirect effect via dominance/submission-salience was not significant \((b = .02, 95\% CI -.01, .08)\). This analysis partially supports Hypothesis 4.

**Model 3: Prior Commitments, Reasoning, and Decisional Legitimacy**

**Hypotheses**

Model 3 relates prior issue attitude (i.e. pro vs con) to endorsement of particular arguments. This effect occurs partially directly, and partially through evaluations of the quality of specific arguments.

\[H5a:\text{ Participants' judgements about specific arguments during deliberation are related to their prior issue commitment, and}\]
\[H5b:\text{ Participants' assessments of the strength of specific arguments partially mediates the relationship between prior issue commitment and argument endorsement.}\]

I argued that the direct relationship between prior attitude and argument endorsement is stronger under conditions like strong group salience. As dual-processing models suggest, cognitive elaboration on the argument itself is not the only way to produce an endorse/reject judgement. These heuristic route judgements are associated with persuasion-resistance, which in turn is associated with dominance-salience perceptions of an interaction. Thus, I hypothesized that:

\[H6: \text{The positive relationship between group affinity and endorsement of an argument is attenuated by participants' judgements of affiliation salience and strengthened by judgements of dominance salience for the interaction episode.}\]

**Statistical model and hypothesis tests**

Model 3 was tested with and without the relational framing component. The six arguments (3 pro and 3 con) were analyzed in two separate models, such that each was an average effect across three different arguments. In the first model, Endorsement of Argument was regressed on Prior Commitment and Assessment of Argument Quality. Assessment of Argument Quality was regressed on Prior Commitment. Both the direct effects and the indirect effect of
Prior Commitment on Endorsement of Argument via Assessment of Argument Quality were assessed. The model for testing Hypothesis 5 (see Figure 5-1) is just-identified (i.e. all paths between variables are estimated, the model has no degrees of freedom).

For the model of arguments opposed (anti-campus carry), Prior Commitment (-5= *Strongly Anti-Campus Carry*, 5= *Strongly Pro-Campus Carry*) predicted Assessment of Argument Quality (1 = *Bad Reason*, 5 = *Good Reason*) (b =-.14, 95%CI -.17, -.12) and Endorsement of Argument (0 = *Exclude Argument*, 1 = *Include Argument*) (b =-.08, 95%CI -.15, -.001). Assessment of Argument Quality predicted Endorsement of Argument (b =2.11, 95%CI 1.68,2.48). Finally, the indirect effect of Prior Commitment on Endorsement of Argument via Assessment of Argument Quality was nonzero (b =-0.30, 95%CI -.37, -.23).

For the model of arguments in favor (pro-campus carry), Prior Commitment predicted Assessment of Argument Quality (b =0.07, 95%CI .05,.11) and Endorsement of Argument (b =0.15, 95%CI .05,.25). Assessment of Argument Quality predicted Endorsement of Argument (b =1.68, 95%CI 1.15,2.08). Finally, the indirect effect of Prior Commitment on Endorsement of Argument via Assessment of Argument Quality was nonzero (b =.12, 95%CI -.07,.20).

The analyses of both the opposed and in-favor models support Hypothesis 5a and Hypothesis 5b.

The second model added relational frame salience to moderate the relationship between Prior Commitment and Argument Endorsement. In these analyses, Relational Frame Salience was modeled using factor scores produced by the measurement model to permit interaction effects. The six arguments were again analyzed in two separate models.

The model of arguments opposed (anti-campus carry) fit acceptably well (X^2_1= 1.94, p =.16, CFI =1.00, RMSEA = .07 [90%CI .00,.22]). Table 9-1 shows the unstandardized regression weights, 95% bootstrapped confidence intervals, standard errors, and (parametric) p-values. The significant path moderation effect of Dominance/Submission-Salience on the relationship
between Prior Commitment and Argument Endorsement supports Hypothesis 6, but Affiliation/Disaffiliation-Salience was not a moderator. The indirect effect remained significant in this model \( (b = 0.30, 95\% \text{CI } -0.38, -0.23) \).

Table 6-1. SEM Path Estimates for Model 3 – Anti-Campus Carry Arguments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>( b )</th>
<th>95%CI</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome: Endorsement of Argument</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of Argument Quality</td>
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<td>1.69, 2.541</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment of Argument Quality X</td>
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<td>Prior Commitment X</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome: Assessment of Argument Quality</strong></td>
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<td>Prior Commitment</td>
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<td>-1.39</td>
<td>0.166</td>
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</table>

The model of arguments in-favor (pro-campus carry) fit acceptably well \( (X^2 = 1.75, p = 0.19, \text{CFI } = 0.99, \text{RMSEA } = 0.06 \text{ [90\%CI } 0.00, 0.21]) \). Table 9-2 shows the unstandardized betas, 95\% bootstrapped confidence intervals, standard errors, and (parametric) \( p \)-values. Neither relational framing salience measure moderated the relationship between Prior Commitment and Argument Endorsement. The indirect effect remained significant \( (b = 0.12, 95\% \text{CI } 0.07, 0.19) \).
The analysis of anti-campus-carry arguments supported Hypothesis 6, but the moderating effect of relational frame salience was not present in the pro-campus-carry argument analysis.

Model 4: Deliberative Legitimacy and Consent

Hypotheses

Model 4 relates legitimacy attitudes (Models 1 and 2) to symbolic consent. Affiliation/disaffiliation-salience is expected to increase, and dominance/submission-salience to decrease, the likelihood of symbolic consent via their effects on legitimacy perceptions:

\( H7a: \) The likelihood of Symbolic Consent will increase as the interaction is perceived as more affiliation-salient;

\( H7b: \) Dominance-salience, by contrast, will negatively influence those perceptions;

\( H7c: \) Effects \( H7a & b \) will be mediated by attitudes about the Teleological legitimacy of the interaction, and

\( H7d: \) Effects \( H7a & b \) will be mediated by attitudes about the Procedural legitimacy of the interaction.
**Statistical model and hypothesis tests**

Model 4 related the relational framing salience measures to Symbolic Consent via Teleological and Procedural deliberative legitimacy perceptions. The model fit well ($WRMR = .88$).

The measure of Teleological Legitimacy was predicted by affiliation-salience, such that more affiliation-relevant interactions were more legitimate ($b = .78, 95\% CI .43, 1.49$), but was not related to dominance/submission-salience ($b = -.07, 95\% CI -.29, .14$). Procedural Legitimacy was predicted by Affiliation/Disaffiliation-salience, such that more affiliation-relevant interactions were more legitimate ($b = .59, 95\% CI .34,.94$), and by Dominance/Submission-salience, such that more dominance-relevant interaction are perceived as less procedurally legitimate ($b = -.27, 95\% CI -.54, -.01$). An interaction model using the relational framing factor scores confirmed that the dimensions do not interact as predictors of either measure.

Symbolic Consent – operationalized as the participant’s decision to include his or name on the final letter (0= No, 1=Yes) – was not directly predicted by Affiliation/Disaffiliation-salience ($b = -.29, 95\% CI -7.74, .61$) or Dominance/Submission-salience ($b = .04, 95\% CI -.23, .81$). It was not predicted by Teleological Legitimacy ($b = .70, 95\% CI -.12, 9.70$) or Process Legitimacy ($b = .05, 95\% CI -.21, .30$); thus these analyses do not support H7a or H7b. There were no indirect effects; thus these analyses do not support hypotheses H7c or H7d.
Chapter 7

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I drew attention to the theoretical role of deliberative interaction in achieving democratic legitimacy. I argued that communication theory helps explain how and when deliberative mini-publics produce legitimizing outcomes. While all political communication involves a high level of equivocation at the interpersonal level, deliberation fosters a relational environment that guides how participants perceive meaning within the discussion.

My findings suggest that the transformative potential of deliberation lies in the relationships between participants. Scholars propose deliberative democracy as a set of expectations about how discourse may be useful to improve civic life. My findings suggest that the experience of relationships during deliberation is variable. This variation represents the potential for citizens to interpret political communication in fundamentally different ways.

Individuals interpret political interactions (and the messages therein) differently depending on their assessment of relational dynamics. Differential perceptions may cue participants to expect other speakers to enact dominance/submission goals (e.g. producing opinion change) or affiliation/disaffiliation goals (e.g. producing shared understanding). In turn, these expectations may correspond to different message-level tactics and interpretations about received messages. Democratic deliberative theory holds that honest and open communication is necessary for reasonable political decisions. But individuals in dominance-directed interactions tend to “strategically manage information through a collection of linguistic choices” (Zhou, Burgoon, Zhang, & Nunamaker, 2004, p. 394). Thus, activation of the affiliation/disaffiliation-salience interaction frame is crucial for legitimate political communication. To test this theoretical deduction, I empirically examined interaction-level effects of relational frame activation during small-group deliberative interactions.
In these analyses, I report two substantial empirical findings. Relational frame salience is a conditional effect of learning norms and reasoning on arguments. When participants experience norms like “respect,” they are more likely to interpret the interaction as Affiliation/Disaffiliation-salient, which in turn predicts positive general valuation of those norms as characteristics of political discussion. Further, when participants decide to accept or reject specific arguments, they evaluate both its consistency with their prior stance and judge its quality. When participants perceive an interaction as Affiliation/Disaffiliation-salient, the direct influence of prior position consistency decreases, and when they perceive the interaction as Dominance/Submission-salient, the influence of quality judgement increases. These findings are described in more detail in the following sections.

Summary and Theoretical Implications of Main Findings

Model 1: Process Design and Teleological Legitimacy

In the first set of hypothesis (Model 1), I theorize the causes of differential relational frame activation during deliberation and the consequences of this activation. I predict that choices between methods of participant selection (H1a), governing interaction norms (H1b), and discussion ground rules (H1c) would affect Teleological Legitimacy because they create specific variation in relational frame activation (H2a-c). Only Hypothesis H1c is supported by the present analyses, such that random group selection corresponded to higher Teleological Legitimacy. Random participant selection is one of the features of a deliberative mini-public that most clearly differentiates it from other forms of political participation. Participants may perceive that distinction and prefer it to the stakeholder model. The manipulations did not induce systematic differences in relational frame-salience. This could be because the features are not primers of relational framing, but they could also be because the operationalization of the differences was too subtle.
Model 2: Deliberative Norms and Procedural Legitimacy

In the second set of hypotheses (Model 2), I note that deliberation researchers argue that experiencing deliberative norms leads citizens to value those norms as qualities of political discourse. This effect is present in the current data (H3); participants’ experiences of deliberative norm enactment positively correspond to their reported value of deliberative norms in general political conversation. I measured these variables on the same instrument at the same time, so the direct effect may be larger than in a non-laboratory setting. However, the conditional role of relational framing demonstrates a more nuanced relationship. The norm reinforcement effect occurs because pro-deliberative norm enactment serves to change participants’ perceptions of the nature of the interaction by increasing affiliation/disaffiliation-salience. The significant indirect effect supports this expectation (H4).

The Model 2 findings suggest that experiencing deliberative norms engenders an appreciation for those norms because they signal an affiliation-salient relational framework for interpreting the communicative interaction. The concept of differential relational frame salience explains how individuals choose to enact communication as strategic action or as communicative action (Johnson, 1991; Habermas J., 1984). In the former type, individuals’ communication is guided by “the standpoint of maximizing utility or expectations of utility,” whereas in the latter type, “at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations … seek to reach an understanding… in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement” (Habermas J., 1984, pp. 85-86).

Like Habermas’ typology of social action, RFT posits fundamental aspects of human communication. It gives additional specificity, however, to how deliberative participants are able to distinguish between strategic and communicative action, to allow for the assumption that they are at liberty to produce and interpret messages that “are coordinated not through egocentric calculations of [individual] success but through acts of reaching understanding” (Habermas J.,
My findings support my argument that the enactment of deliberative norms is desirable because they shift the subjective experience of the interaction toward a more cooperative interpersonal interaction paradigm.

This conclusion is provisional, pending replication. However, it potentially sets up a line of research to study why deliberation as an experience may transform political attitudes and behaviors in ways that other political communication do not.

**Model 3: Prior Commitments, Reasoning, and Decisional Legitimacy**

In the third set of hypotheses (Model 3), I noted a known pattern of biased political behavior, whereby prior attitudes and associations (i.e. “commitments”) independently affect citizens’ judgements about the quality of specific arguments. Under rational theories of citizenship, individuals’ party affiliations correlate with values and beliefs that, in turn, drive assessments of the merits of particular arguments relevant to policy disputes. However, these prior commitments also directly influence policy preferences (Gerber, Huber, & Washington, 2010). In my laboratory sessions, I asked participants – whose prior affiliations I had already measured – to rate the quality of specific arguments, and to vote to endorse those arguments. I tested the hypothesized direct and indirect effects for both pro- and con- arguments.

The direct path and indirect paths were present in these data for both models (H5); prior issue stance influenced argument endorsement independent of its effect on the assessment of that argument’s quality, such that a more favorable pro-campus-carry attitude corresponded to lower endorsement of arguments opposed to campus-carry and higher endorsement of favorable reasons.

Introducing relational framing variables added nuance to this model. For anti-campus-carry arguments, the direct relationship between prior commitment and argument endorsement is conditional as a function of dominance/submission-salience. The positive interaction effect with a
negative main effect suggests that higher levels of Dominance/Submission-salience reduced the magnitude of the direct effect. That is, as Dominance/Submission becomes more salient to the interaction, the less pro-campus-carry Prior Commitment had an independent reductive effect on argument endorsement.

In the pro-campus-carry arguments model, higher levels of Dominance/Submission-salience had a significant main effect, reducing endorsement strength regardless of prior stance. However, the interaction effect between prior commitment Affiliation/Disaffiliation-salience was not significant in this model.

Contrary to my expectation, Affiliation/Disaffiliation-salience (rather than Dominance/Submission-salience) attenuated the direct relationship between prior stance and argument endorsement. This invites further inquiry into the explanation that deliberation is an unusual mode of political communication to which participants respond favorably. Increases in Affiliation/Disaffiliation-salience may represent participants’ perceptions that the interaction is an alternative to “normal” party- and ideology-driven political interaction.

An unexpected interaction was found between Argument Evaluation and Dominance/Submission-salience; the positive relationship between argument evaluation and argument endorsement was higher at higher levels of Dominance-Submission-salience. Interestingly, in this pro-campus-carry model, Argument Evaluation was positively predicted by Affiliation/Disaffiliation-salience. This suggests that both frame-saliences may be useful for different parts of the reasoning process.

The difference between these models suggests a need for replication across a broader range of issues. While the difference between the models could be due to instability in the estimates, it may be attributable to a quality of the issue or an unmeasured trait of the participants. However, the diverse patterns are consistent with several studies that associate affiliative and dominant behavior with a wide variety of specific communication tasks (Burgoon, Dunbar, &
Segrin, 2002; Walther & Burgoon, 1992; Newton & Burgoon, 1990). As I note in Chapter 3, Burgoon and colleagues noted that interpersonal dominance is not universally undesirable; rather, it is a valuable skill that should be “stripped of its pejorative connotations” (Burgoon & Dunbar, 2000, p. 116). Because deliberation is an invitation to both critical reasoning and interpersonal understanding, dominance-salient interactions might be a desirable interpretive mode for some discursive tasks. In these data, variance in dominance affected the relationship between independent judgement of an argument’s quality and likelihood of endorsing that argument.

**Model 4: Deliberative Legitimacy and Consent**

In the fourth set of hypotheses (Model 4), I predicted that legitimacy attitudes from Models 1 and 2 would influence the likelihood of participants electing to sign the final letter produced from the discussion. These effects were not present in the data. This could be due to low ecological similarity between the laboratory environment and real-world deliberation. The session was much shorter than the typical deliberative meeting, the policy under consideration was not actually under review by the university administration, and some students expressed uncertainty about the meaning of the signature after the session concluded.

**Practical Implications**

There is growing consensus that mini-public facilitators ought to practice “active facilitation” by intervening in deliberation to influence the interactions between participants (Smith, 2009). Active facilitation is often conceived of in terms of tasks like correcting participation asymmetries, summarizing arguments, transitioning across agenda segments, and managing interpersonal conflict (Stromer-Galley, 2007, p. 13). Specific behaviors aside, the facilitator’s actual goal is somewhat more vague.
Mansbridge et al. (2006) noted that establishing a conversational atmosphere may benefit the process because “in such an atmosphere the impediments to what each participant wants to say will usually be lowered; domination may also be reduced” (p.13). Moore (2012) suggested that facilitators attempt to guide participants’ interactions for consistency with norms of deliberation such as inclusivity, comprehensiveness, deception avoidance, and non-coerciveness (p. 149) using a wide array of tools including “at the level of the conduct of deliberation, including the design of the forum, issue framing, recruitment, and the structuring and facilitation of the process” (p.150). The present study does not help achieve any of these outcomes or better utilize these means, but they may help redefine the goal of the deliberative facilitator.

One useful contribution of this dissertation is a reconceptualization of the purpose of deliberative norms. Rather than encouraging participants to practice non-dominance or inclusivity as goods in themselves, facilitators could attempt strategies to effect appropriate relational-salience cues. For example, facilitator training might replace guidance to reduce interpersonal conflict and promote respectfulness with guidance to promote specific relational communication goals during specific parts of a procedure. Unfortunately, my attempt to manipulate variation in the framing salience measures failed, so this study cannot support specific guidance about how deliberative facilitators might purposefully activate these frames.

A second useful outcome of this study is identification of differential effects for framing salience during the reasoning process. If the effects are replicable, facilitators may find this information useful for structuring deliberative processes. Segregating experience-oriented discussion from reason-oriented discussion of specific arguments may prove beneficial because, as Solomon, Dillard, and Anderson noted, “an inability to privilege one frame over the other compromises the interpretation of otherwise ambiguous social cues” (p. 150). It may be more appropriate for deliberating citizens to frame personal stories as affiliation/disaffiliation-salient and scientific evidence as dominance/submission-salient. If participants are unable to apply a
clear interpretive frame to these types of messages, they may be unable to interact with them productively.

**Strengths and Limitations**

The analyses and claims developed from this research are limited by methodological considerations. First, my approach to measuring relational framing departed from prior research. The final measure composition was substantially revised, as might be expected in an initial trial of a new measurement approach. One significant unanswered question is how stable relational frame-salience stays throughout an hour-long interaction. RFT suggests that relational frame judgements are always present but are not always highly relevant and not always stable. It is likely that relational framing is more salient during particular phases of deliberation (e.g. discussion of argument merits) (Solomon, Dillard, & Anderson, 2002, p. 150). Future research might clarify systematic patterns of frame salience related to specific activities of deliberative interactions.

Another open question is the degree to which frame-salience judgements deviate from initial impressions; do specific moments cause revision (e.g. particular vocal or context cues), or does initial frame salience judgement resist revision? While the present study is limited by this uncertainty, recordings may be useful to support future analyses. Because the sessions were recorded, it is possible to search for communication cues that might indicate frame-salience changes (e.g. mean vocal amplitude; Tusing & Dillard, 2000).

Second, these data were collected from an undergraduate student sample, with restricted age range. It is possible that the effects do not generalize to other populations. It is also likely that the magnitude of the effects are different in other contexts, particularly because deliberative designs vary widely. Finally, these data do not account for potential variation between different political issues. Future research should account for these potentially meaningful variables.
Programmatic Implications

This dissertation marks the starting point of a larger program of research. The concepts and data presented herein speak to broader conversations about deliberative democracy that will continue for many years. In *The Necessity of Politics*, Beem (2000) noted the “intuitive and widespread belief that our society is experiencing a breakdown” (p. 9). On the account he described, American politics have become so divisive and social relations so diffuse that civil society lacks the necessary cohesion to act as a cohesive citizenry. It is unclear how capable the average citizen is of working with others to contribute to his or her own government. This state of affairs leaves the political observer to wonder what role the *demos* really plays in democracy.

Organizers of mini-publics aim to solve this problem by changing objective institutions of power, subjective experiences of power, and intersubjective construction of power. They modify procedural plans to create better public spheres that are accessible to and inclusive of the whole public. They develop facilitation styles to foster deliberative norms to encourage people to interact with respect, a commitment to mutual understanding, and openness to influence by the force of a strong argument. Finally, in the service of producing reasonable decisions, they believe these constraints will enable citizens to cooperate to create understanding as they compete over policy outcomes. Empiricists face the formidable task of developing measurement and causal models for each proposition.

It is my hope that this dissertation represents progress toward understanding the latter problem. This project addresses a substantial theoretical argument with deliberation. Farrell (1993) criticized Habermas for positioning strategic action - an “orientation to success” – as fundamentally different from and less desirable than communicative action – an “orientation to understanding.” In particular, Farrell took issue with Habermas’ choice to position the two “not as a distinction between two ways of looking at the same action, but as two different and mutually
exclusive ways of acting” (p. 194). I offer a theoretical resolution to this dispute. As RFT suggests, the same speech act may be interpretable under two fundamental paradigms, but they are mutually exclusive as empirical mechanisms governing interaction.

Based on this insight, I hope to extend my research program to examine natural interactions in mini-publics using survey-based measurement of participants’ experiences. The first order of business is to identify determinates of systematic differential frame salience perceptions in deliberative interactions. The second is to identify the consequences of those differences, particularly with respect to how participants reason on arguments. Finally, if these effects are consistent and substantial, facilitation protocols might make use of relational frame salience by explicitly helping participants disambiguate the relational significance of their interaction at appropriate times.

Citizens can do astonishing work during deliberation. Together through talk, they come to understand difficult problems, comprehend nuanced technical information, and contend with deep differences in their core values. In the face of division, they co-construct solutions for the betterment of society. Yet, there is no guarantee of this cooperation or of these outcomes. Case studies of deliberative mini-publics reveal many obstacles to realizing their benefits. As Allen (2009) wrote, one of the most daunting problems of democracy is “how to create trust… The hardest part is getting citizens to that point of being mutually well-intentioned” (p. 56). I hope my project helps shed light on how to do this more reliably and effectively. I think it is a first step to clarifying the conditions required for a legitimate deliberative democracy.
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Appendix

Instrumentation

The instrumentation appendix contains item wording not reported in the main manuscript. All of the following items were measured with a 5-point scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 5= Strongly Agree).

Teleological Desirability of Deliberation

1. Students would choose to participate in the kind of discussion process we had today if they had the opportunity.
2. Most likely, the average student would be UNLIKELY to spend time participating in a discussion like this.
3. Generally, average students would find participating in this sort of session valuable.
4. Most students would NOT get much out of participating in a session like this.
5. If more people participated in this sort of discussion, our Penn State community would be stronger.
6. Even if many people participated in discussions like these, it would NOT make much of a difference.

Experience of Deliberative Norms

1. Nobody was too overbearing during the discussion.
2. Everyone was very explicit about their opinion.
3. Everyone presented sensible arguments in support of their views.
4. Everyone understood the reasons behind each other’s views.

Valuation of Deliberative Norms

1. It is better when people are not too dominating during political discussion.
2. It is better when people are explicit about their opinions.
3. It is better when people use sensible arguments to support their views.
4. It is better when people understand the reasons behind each other’s views.
### Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

#### Model 1

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<th>ASD</th>
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Note: Model-estimated latent variable means, covariances (variances on diagonal), correlations

#### Model 2

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Note: Model-estimated latent variable means, covariances (variances on diagonal), correlations
### Model 3 (Con Arguments)

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Note: Sample means, covariances (variances on diagonal), correlations. Relational framing scales are factor scores

### Model 3 (Pro Arguments)

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Note: Sample means, covariances (variances on diagonal), correlations. Relational framing scales are factor scores
Model 4

Variables                  Variance/Covariance Matrix

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Note: Model-estimated latent variable means, covariances (variances on diagonal), correlations

Standardized MLR Parameters and Statistical Tests

The analyses were conducted using unstandardized maximum-likelihood estimated beta weights, with 95% confidence intervals estimated by bootstrapping. Whereas the MLR estimator computes confidence errors based on parametrically-derived standard errors, the bootstrapping method confidence intervals are observed from the distribution of estimated betas. In the former case, the confidence interval is always symmetrical, but in the latter, it may be asymmetrical (if the distribution of betas is non-normal). However, in most instances, the estimated 90% CI using either method is the same. The parameter estimate will be nearly the same for both approaches.

The tables in this section are the parametric outputs of the same analyses, based on robust maximum-likelihood estimation (via the MPlus MLR estimator). Unlike the manuscript results, these parameters are reported as *standardized* Beta weights, to add information about the general magnitude of the effects.
### Model 1

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<td>-0.105</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>0.183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Stakeholder Deliberation (Dummy)</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td>0.658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisional Citizen Deliberation (Dummy)</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>0.080</td>
<td>0.549</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Model 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome: Valuation of Deliberative Norms</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation/Disaffiliation-Salience</td>
<td>0.321</td>
<td>0.093</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance/Submission-Salience</td>
<td>-0.071</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>0.347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of Deliberative Norms</td>
<td>0.133</td>
<td>0.112</td>
<td>0.235</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome: Affiliation/Disaffiliation-Salience</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience of Deliberative Norms</td>
<td>0.301</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>0.002</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome: Dominance/Submission-Salience</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience of Deliberative Norms</td>
<td>-0.229</td>
<td>0.094</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Model 3 (Con Arguments)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome: Endorsement of Argument</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of Argument Quality</td>
<td>0.709</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Commitment</td>
<td>-0.121</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>0.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation/Disaffiliation-Salience</td>
<td>0.366</td>
<td>0.208</td>
<td>0.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance/Submission-Salience</td>
<td>-0.321</td>
<td>0.248</td>
<td>0.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Commitment X</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of Argument Quality</td>
<td>0.284</td>
<td>0.280</td>
<td>0.311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Commitment X</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>0.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation/Disaffiliation-Salience</td>
<td>-0.350</td>
<td>0.215</td>
<td>0.103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome: Assessment of Argument Quality</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior Commitment</td>
<td>-0.610</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation/Disaffiliation-Salience</td>
<td>-0.063</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>0.345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance/Submission-Salience</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Commitment X</td>
<td>-0.039</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation/Disaffiliation-Salience</td>
<td>-0.094</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.163</td>
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</table>

Model 3 (Pro Arguments)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome: Endorsement of Argument</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of Argument Quality</td>
<td>0.539</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Commitment</td>
<td>0.182</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation/Disaffiliation-Salience</td>
<td>-0.149</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td>0.589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance/Submission-Salience</td>
<td>-0.663</td>
<td>0.223</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Commitment X</td>
<td>-0.068</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>0.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of Argument Quality</td>
<td>0.556</td>
<td>0.231</td>
<td>0.016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prior Commitment X</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.968</td>
</tr>
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<td>Affiliation/Disaffiliation-Salience</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>0.281</td>
<td>0.788</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome: Assessment of Argument Quality</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior Commitment</td>
<td>0.322</td>
<td>0.063</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation/Disaffiliation-Salience</td>
<td>0.156</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>0.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance/Submission-Salience</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Commitment X</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>0.478</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affiliation/Disaffiliation-Salience</td>
<td>-0.076</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>0.248</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Model 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>β</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome: Symbolic Consent (signed letter)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation/Disaffiliation-Salience</td>
<td>-0.292</td>
<td>0.563</td>
<td>0.604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance/Submission-Salience</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>0.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teleological Legitimacy</td>
<td>0.643</td>
<td>0.507</td>
<td>0.204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of Deliberative Norms</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>0.152</td>
<td>0.708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome: Teleological Legitimacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation/Disaffiliation-Salience</td>
<td>0.850</td>
<td>0.092</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance/Submission-Salience</td>
<td>-0.072</td>
<td>0.098</td>
<td>0.463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome: Experience of Deliberative Norms</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation/Disaffiliation-Salience</td>
<td>0.494</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance/Submission-Salience</td>
<td>-0.224</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Curriculum Vitae

David Lee Brinker, Jr.

Education
Ph.D.  Communication Arts and Sciences, The Pennsylvania State University
Completion anticipated Fall 2017.
Dissertation: The relational basis of democratic legitimacy.

M.A.  Mass Communication, Marquette University, December 2013

B.A.  Public Relations with a minor in Business Administration, Marquette University,
December 2009.

Refereed Journal Articles
Advice Process (TDAP): Exploring relational influence on advice interactions and
outcomes. In press.
Gastil, John, Rosenzweig, Elizabeth, Knobloch, Katherine & Brinker, David. (2016). Does the
Public Want Mini-Publics? Voter Responses to the Citizens’ Initiative Review.
Communication and the Public, 1(2), 174-192.
Online: A Media Richness Analysis of Varied Civic Education Modalities. Journal of
Pokrywczynski, James & Brinker, David. (2014). Congruency and Engagement Test in an Event

Book Chapters
In Infante, D., Rancer, A.S., Avtgis, T., MacGeorge, E.L. (Eds.), Contemporary
Company.
S. Duhé (Ed.), New Media and Public Relations (2nd ed., pp. 233-244). New York, NY:
Peter Lang Publishing.

Teaching
CAS101: Introduction to Human Communication (with Dr. Kirt Wilson, Spring 2017).
CAS / PLSC 409 - Democratic Deliberation (Spring 2017)
CAS250: Small Group Communication (partial semester, Fall 2016).
CAS100B: Effective Speech: Group Communication Emphasis (Online) (Fall 2017; Fall 2015).
CAS100A: Effective Speech: Public Speaking Emphasis (Spring 2014).