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Altruistic Argument in the Demand-Withdraw Pattern in Interpersonal Disputes

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Abstract: The demand-withdraw pattern in interpersonal disputes is associated with negative outcomes. Yet altruistic argument, viewed as prosocial evidence and reasoning, may affect the demand-withdraw pattern. Using multiple goals communication theory, multiple goal perceptions are hypothesized to mediate the relationship between two pattern types (using/not using altruistic argument), and interaction outcomes. US young adults (N=322) evaluated an interaction that varied in pattern type and relationship type. Mediation analyses confirmed the three hypotheses.

Keywords: demand-withdraw, interpersonal conflict, multiple goals theory, face, politeness, relationship commitment, altruistic argument

1. Introduction

The demand-withdraw (DW) pattern of interaction has been studied extensively in the interpersonal conflicts of spouses, dating partners and family members, and is regarded as one of the most intractable conflict patterns in close relationships. *Demand-withdraw* generally occurs when "one partner pressures the other through emotional demands, criticism, and complaints, while the other retreats through withdrawal, defensiveness, and passive inaction" (Christensen & Heavey 1993, p. 73). The pattern is linked to various negative outcomes and has generated several explanations (Schrodt, Witt, & Shimkowski 2014).

One recent explanation of the demand-withdraw pattern is the multiple goals communication account (Caughlin & Scott 2010). Since this explanation has not been substantially tested, this project fills the gap by examining two claims about variations of the demand-withdraw pattern derived from multiple goals theory: (1) that there is a variant of the demand-withdraw (DW) interaction pattern, which we term the caring demand-respond (CDR) pattern; and (2) that multiple goal perceptions mediate the relationship between the two pattern types and important interaction outcomes. After reviewing research on the demand-withdraw pattern, we advance and test hypotheses about the DW and CDR patterns.

2. The demand-withdraw interaction pattern, its effects, and explanations

The demand-withdraw interaction pattern is present in diverse types of relationships, including romantic relationships, friendships, parent-child relationships, and married couples (e.g., Baucom, McFarland, & Christensen 2010; Caughlin & Ramey 2005). The pattern is typically measured in

one of two ways. In a self-report measure, the Communication Patterns Questionnaire (Christensen 1987; Christensen & Heavey 1990), asks partners to rate the occurrence of conflict behaviors, such as one partner nagging and demanding and the partner withdrawing or avoiding discussion of the issue. These items formed DW measures for each partner. DW is also measured with global ratings of interaction behaviors (e.g., Heavey, Layne, & Christensen 1993), with "demanding" measured by ratings of blaming, accusing, criticizing, nagging, sarcasm, demanding, and/or pressuring, and "withdrawing" measured by ratings of avoiding discussion, becoming silent, or disengaging from the interaction.

Conversationally, the DW pattern involves a turn-taking structure of several adjacency pairs. An example can be seen in the following interaction, which takes place in the home of a husband (H) and wife (W). In real-life situations the wife often assumes the demander's role (Caughlin & Vangelisti 2000):

1. W: Why did you drink so much again?
2. H: Oh, ha ha…
3. W: I hate when you come home drunk all the time. I always tell you not to drink so much, and here you are drunk again, and you smell so bad.
4. H: OK, OK.
5. W: Didn't you say before that you wouldn't drink much? Why can't you keep your own words? Stop drinking so much!
6. H: I'm gonna take a shower now.

The interchange begins with the wife's complaint about her husband's drunkenness. When met with a minimal response, the wife then criticizes his behavior. The husband's subsequent perfunctory response is followed by his wife's criticisms and demand for change. The husband then leaves the discussion. Taken together, complaints, criticism and directive speech acts constitute the DW interaction pattern.

Effects of the DW pattern. The DW pattern has been observed in many countries around the world, such as the US, Taiwan, Brazil, Switzerland, Argentina, and Pakistan (Bodenmann, Kaiser, Hahlweg, & Fehm-Wolfsdorf 1998; Christensen, Eldridge, Catta-Preta, Lim, & Santagata 2006; Rehman & Holtzworth-Munroe 2006). However, the pattern has been linked to a variety of undesirable relationship outcomes, such as marital dissatisfaction (e.g., Caughlin & Huston 2002; Heavey, Christensen, & Malamuth 1995) and divorce (Afifi & Schrodt, 2003; Gottman & Levenson 2000).

A recent meta-analysis of 74 studies by Schrodt and his colleagues (Schrodt et al., 2014) analyzed the DW pattern and its effects on individual well-being, relationships, and communication. Moderate and systematic effect sizes were obtained for DW across these outcomes, with DW use predicting relationship outcomes like dissatisfaction and dissolution; individual well-being outcomes like anxiety and depression; and communicative outcomes like behavioral noncompliance. Overall, Schrodt et al. found that effect sizes were higher for distressed/clinical individuals than nondistressed individuals. Similar effect sizes were observed for both women and men in the demander role.

Explanations of the DW pattern. Over the years, several explanations of the demand withdraw pattern have been advanced, particularly to explain why women are often frequent initiators of the

pattern (Caughlin & Scott 2010; Schrodt et al. 2014). The *sex difference perspective* explains that the frequency of women in the demand role and men in the withdraw role is from socialized gender roles and differences in intimacy needs. Women seek intimacy and closeness by engaging in higher use of DW, while men seek more autonomy through withdrawal behaviors. The *individual difference perspective* further explains that differences in closeness/autonomy can result from differences in personality and attachment needs. In support of this perspective, the DW pattern is more frequently observed when partners have discrepant intimacy needs that are associated with discrepant attachment styles (Millword & Waltz 2008). Couples high in neuroticism, low in agreeableness and low in conscientiousness are also more likely to engage in DW (Caughlin & Huston 2006; Caughlin & Vangelisti 2000).

Still other scholars employ the *social structural perspective* that focuses on power differences between men and women. This perspective sees women as motivated to seek change when they are dissatisfied, unlike men who seek to maintain a satisfying status quo. However, Vogel and his colleagues (Vogel, Murphy, Werner-Wilson, Cutrona, & Seeman 2007) have found that sex differences in DW are not due to social structure differences, but to more domineering behaviors in problem solving discussions. The pattern is initiated by those who desire behavior change in their interaction partner, on topics that are meaningful for the initiator regardless of the gender of the demander (Baucom, McFarland, & Christensen 2010; Cauglin & Vangelisti 1999). Called the *conflict structure perspective*, this explanation of DW contends that it is the desire for change in a partner's behavior that determines the use of DW.

In sum, four explanations have been primarily used to explain the use of DW in interpersonal disputes, with the conflict structure perspective explicitly focused on communicative intentions.

3. Communication variations in the use of DW

As indicated, knowledge of the DW pattern has accumulated around documenting its negative effects on interactions and relationships. However, some researchers such as Caughlin (2002), have detected inconsistencies in DW effects, such as being associated over time with *increases*, not decreases, in relationship satisfaction. This inconsistency suggests that future research consider how different ways of enacting DW may affect interaction and relationships differently.

For instance, it is reasonable to believe that demanders in a DW interaction are not all bereft of an ability be polite, or that they lack the knowledge and/or ability to communicate their standpoints in ways that invite civil discussion. Given the universal recognition of politeness strategies for mitigating face threatening acts (Brown & Levinson 1978), it is reasonable to expect that demanders can persuade withdrawers to change their behavior, without using conventionally explicit DW behaviors. Differences in a demander's ability to craft an argumentative case for the withdrawer may moderate DW effects.

Thus, one way to examine the way the DW pattern is associated with interaction and relationship outcomes is to identify message features that either moderate or mediate DW effects. This strategy has not been the focus of research because DW measures have been focused on core DW behaviors like complaints, nagging, and demanding. However, while identifying ways demanders have positively engaged in DW has not been an explicit focus, a set of fragmented findings in the DW literature can be synthesized to provide support for pursuing this agenda.

First, when gratitude and affection are frequently expressed, the effect of the DW pattern is less strong in predicting marital dissatisfaction (Barton, Futris, & Nielsen 2015; Caughlin & Huston 2002). Expressing caring for the other and commitment toward the relationship appears to

protect marital quality by situating interpretations of DW practices. Similarly, dating couples who used DW behaviors equally in their disputes reported using more positive conflict resolution behaviors than primarily female or male initiated demand-withdraw behaviors (Vogel, Wester, & Heesacker 1999).

Differences in the communicative abilities involved in interpersonal argument may be a second moderating factor in DW effects, as high levels of DW have been associated with greater manipulative and controlling tactics and less use of cooperative and compromising tactics (Baucom, Atkins, Eldridge, McFarland, Sevier, & Christensen 2011). Male batterers, for instance, are more likely to pressure wives in hostile and provocative ways, but withdraw from their wives' demands (Berns, Jaobson, & Gottman 1999a, 1999b). Thus, lack of skill in argument may be an important mediator of the effects of DW on interaction outcomes.

Third, when either spouse's use of DW is associated with negative emotions like anger, DW is less associated with problem solving and compromising (King & DeLongis 2013; Papp, Kouros, & Cummings 2009). In fact, Baucom and his colleagues (Baucom et al. 2015), have recently advanced an interpersonal model of DW behavior, in which *emotional arousal* by both participants is seen as the initiating factor of the DW pattern. From their analysis of problem solving discussions Baucom and colleagues found that when demanders expressed more vocal arousal, they demanded more and withdrew less, while their partners withdrew more. When withdrawers expressed more vocal arousal, their partners demanded less and withdrew more. Vocally expressed emotional arousal emerged as a significant factor in the interpersonal process of DW.

Baucom and colleague's findings suggest the importance of identifying moderating and mediating factors to explicate the interpersonal process of DW. Besides emotional arousal, two mediators have been found to account for the effect of DW behaviors on interaction and well-being outcomes. In parent-adolescent discussions, the DW pattern facilitates low self-esteem in adolescents through particularly destructive conflict tactics (Caughlin & Malis 2004a, 2004b). In marital discussions, the DW pattern's effects is mediated by the extent to which spouses feel verified and understood (Weger 2005). From his analysis Weger concluded that

> The demand/withdraw interaction pattern significantly decreases both spouses' perception that they are understood. An issue that one spouse sees as important and in need of discussion is not simply met with dissent, it is met with indifference….Not only is the conflict pursuer's definition of the situation rejected, so too is the definition of the self as it is constructed in the process of interaction. (Weger 2005, p. 27).

In sum, process models of the DW suggest that emotional arousal, destructive influence tactics, as well as mutual understanding and identity affirmation play mediating roles in accounting for the effects of the DW pattern.

4. Conceptual gaps and proposed orientation

Given our review of the DW literature, it is apparent that few scholars have focused on understanding the communication practices used to construct more or less effective DW practices, despite the literature pointing to knowledge and ability in argument to be an important difference in the way people pursue change in each other's behavior. However, a few scholars have begun to

see DW in terms of the argumentation that occurs (Reznick & Roloff 2011).

We contend that seeking behavior change is a legitimate communication task that ideally involves engaging in a critical discussion. This task is characterized by several dilemmas. For instance, the demander's desire for behavior change and emotional arousal can easily make utterances open for multiple interpretations and misunderstanding. In addition, the core acts of DW are intrinsically face-threatening, so parties need knowledge of politeness and face support practices so that parties' identities and relationships are affirmed and respected. So the communication task is to create the conditions for a critical discussion, in which opening commitments include preserving desired identities and relationships as parties search for a rational resolution. The argumentation stage may be further benefited by parties engaging in altruistic argument, or the use evidence and reasoning about individuated benefits to the other party or community.

This communication task, we believe, calls for integrating knowledge of the multiple goals communication perspective with contemporary argumentation perspectives.

Argument in the DW pattern. As discussed, current interaction analyses of DW do not focus on the pattern's argumentative structure or practices. By contrast, an argumentation orientation, such as employing pragma-dialectic assumptions, would examine DW as a verbal way to manage disagreement in a social process of problem solving. An argumentation analysis could focus on the interactants' expressed reasoning and their adherence to critical standards and procedures in the use of DW (Frans van Eemeren & Rob Grootendorst 1984, 1992, 2004).

For instance, Van Eemeren and Grootendorst's model of critical discussion consists of four stages for resolving differences of opinion, consisting of a confrontation stage in which disagreement manifests itself; an opening stage in which initial commitments to the discussion are identified; an argumentation stage in which the parties defend their stances with argumentation; and a concluding stage in which the parties determine if a particular standpoint needs to be withdrawn. Van Eemeren and Grootendorst have further identified 10 rules for conducting a critical discussion and a variety of fallacies that can prevent critical discussion from occurring.

By adopting a pragma-dialectical approach to reasoning about the DW pattern, it would appear that the pattern violates a number of expectations for opening a critical discussion about behavior change. In DW, the initiator typically produces repeated demands and nagging in the form of directives, and criticisms and insults in the form of assertive speech acts, none of which are elaborated with argumentation. Such actions could be considered to be a violation of Rule 1, since the initiator puts pressure on the withdrawer in ways that undermines the right of the withdrawer to advance his/her own standpoint about the issue. The demander also violates Rule 7, since his/her standpoint is not defended with argumentation. Meanwhile, the withdrawer engages in avoidance behavior forms that are not sufficiently clear formulations of the withdrawer's standpoint or supporting argumentation (a violation of Rule 10). While the withdrawer may display respect for the demander by casting him/her as influential or correct, withdrawal does not signify the interactional effect of acceptance, so discussion remains unclear and unresolved.

Finally, Rule 1 is violated in DW when the demander criticizes or insults the other party with ad hominem attacks in ways that invalidate the party as a respected discussant. Such acts cast doubt that the withdrawer is capable of engaging in useful argumentation. In sum, when taken together the rules for critical discussion can be used to identify the features of DW that are problematic.

Multiple goals in the DW pattern. To the argument perspective for explaining DW patterns can be added another perspective, the multiple goals framework from interpersonal communication (Clark & Delia 1979). Multiple goal theories within interpersonal communication (Wilson 2007; Wilson & Feng 2007) begin with the assumption that communicative interactions are goal-driven (Berger, 2005), and that communicative goals are enacted, with actors' aims and moves situated against their definitions of the communicative situation (O'Keefe & Delia 1982; O'Keefe 1988). People pursue multiple goals in their interactions with others, with message design the process for expressing multiple goals, such as pursing primary task aims, preserving relationships and enacting desired identities. Multiple goals theory has been used to study regulative messages (O'Keefe, 1988), compliance-gaining (Wilson 2002), persuasion (Dillard 1990), relationship development (Caughlin 2010) and social support (Goldsmith 2004). Preserving identities and relationships are seen as conversational constraints that shape message editing (Hample & Dallinger 1987). Speakers manage their identities and relationship aims with their primary aim by prioritizing their goals, employing conventional discourse forms, or designing messages that integrate identity and relationship aims with the primary lines of argument.

Multiple goal theorists propose to identify the way message practices work to enact desired identities and relationships while advancing the instrumental aims of the interaction, and to identify effective ways of managing multiple goals. A multiple goals account posits that the way parties enact their relationship, as well as present and altercast their identities may facilitate the discussion of opposing standpoints. Studying the way DW is shaped by variations in the way participants express their relationships and identities may help identify forms of DW that may be more effective in resolving differences of opinion. Variations in DW may involve topical frames, lines of argument and discourse forms. Identity relevant discourse activities such as securing trust and expressing relationship commitments may also be seen as relevant to the opening phase of a discussion.

Recently, Caughlin and Scott (2010) have proposed to understand the demand-withdraw pattern with multiple goals communication theory. Caughlin and Scott have initiated their multiple goals account of DW by analyzing interactional data for different ways DW enacts identity and relationship aims. They identified four patterns. A first pattern involves the initiator seeking discussion and change, and the withdrawer exiting in overt avoidance. This traditional pattern casts the initiator as a demander and his/her actions as demanding. A second pattern involves the initiator's demands as a series of questions and withdrawing as a perfunctory response. In this pattern, the perfunctory response satisfies the expectations to be cooperative while remaining distant from the demander's desires. A third pattern, complain/deny, involves the demander complaining and the withdrawer challenging the legitimacy of the complaint. A final pattern involves the demander criticizing and the withdrawer defending his/her standpoint; in this case the demander invites the withdrawer to frame the interaction as a critical discussion.

Caughlin and Scott's (2010) theorizing and initial analysis show the viability of using multiple goals communication theory to understand variations of the DW interaction pattern. In cross-cultural work, we have observed a variation of DW that functions differently, which we named the *caring demand-respond* (CDR; or caring demand-withdraw) pattern (Song & Kline 2013). We believe that multiple goal expression and altruistic argument can distinguish between the caring demand-respond and demand-withdraw patterns.

The caring demand-respond interaction pattern. The caring demand-respond pattern (CDR) is an interaction pattern in which one partner attempts to engage the other in discussing an issue with

demands, complaints, and criticism *in a displayed effort to benefit the other person*, to which the other partner responds. In this test of the pattern, we have focused on instances in which the CDR partner withdraws. The CDR pattern is similar to the DW pattern except that the demander engages in a discursive effort to benefit the withdrawer. In the following example, the wife is demanding that her husband stop drinking so much, but the wife is engaging in a "caring demand":

1. W: Why did you drink so much again? You look so pale. Here, drink this glass of water. It'll make you feel better.
2. H: Oh, ha ha…
3. W: Every time you get drunk you always feel weak and have a headache the next day.
4. H: OK, OK.
5. W: Didn't you say you before that you wouldn't drink much? Remember last time how bad you felt when you were drunk, and you couldn't make it to the football game? Stop drinking so much!
6. H: I'm gonna take a shower now.

This CDR sequence is initiated by the wife's attendance to her husband's condition to which the husband responds with a minimal response. The wife then provides evidence for her complaint, which is followed by a perfunctory answer. The wife then elaborates on how her husband's behavior has jeopardized his own desires by missing a football game. This is responded to by the husband physically leaving the discussion. As seen, the CDR pattern involves the demander focusing on the withdrawer's desires and interests.

Comparing the two patterns can be distinguished in several other ways. The CDR pattern contains more positive and negative politeness forms than the DW pattern (such as giving reasons). The CDR pattern contains altruistic argument, unlike the DW pattern, in which evidence and premises come from the withdrawer's background. The CDR pattern also contains more rhetorical reasoning (O'Keefe 1988) in which the demander redefines the situation and explicitly reasons about the withdrawer's beliefs, whereas the DW pattern contains more expressive elements (such as expressing a litany of complaints, blaming, or issuing pronouncements).

Thus, in this study the CDR pattern involves using altruistic arguments, employing politeness forms, and engaging in rhetorical reasoning by redefining the situation and specifically addressing the withdrawer's beliefs.

5. Research hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to extend multiple goals communication theory to the analysis of CDR and DW interaction patterns as they relate to the management of disputes within close relationships. Our first objective was to establish the prevalence of the CDR pattern as a variant of the DW interaction pattern. We expected that the CDR pattern would be as prevalent as the DW pattern:

H1: There is no significant difference between the prevalence of the CDR and DW interaction patterns in American close relationships.

A second objective was to test the expectation that the CDR interaction pattern would be seen as more supportive of interactants' face wants, and more strongly associated with effective

interaction outcomes. Three interaction outcomes were examined. The perceived effectiveness of the CDR pattern in resolving the dispute was a first assessment, given that achieving the primary task is a key aspect of interpersonal communication competence (Weinstein 1969). Two other interaction outcomes were that participants would have greater mutual control in the interaction and higher relationship commitment. These two outcomes have long been considered features of a quality close relationship (Canary & Stafford 1992), which, we reasoned, would be linked to altruistic argument, reasoning and politeness embedded in the CDR pattern. Hence, the second hypothesis was:

> **H2**: The CDR interaction pattern is more effective than the DW pattern with respect to (a) supporting interactants' face wants, (b) managing the dispute effectively, (c) displaying cooperative interaction through control mutuality, and (d) displaying relationship commitment.

The third hypothesis tested the claim from multiple goals communication theory that multiple goal perceptions will mediate the relationship between interaction pattern types and interaction outcomes. See Figure 1 for its depiction. An important assumption of multiple goals theory is that multiple goal messages that express desired identities and relationships while pursuing the instrumental task will be associated with positive interaction outcomes, because parties will perceive multiple goal message features as enacting positive identities and a desired relationship for the parties. The parties' positive and negative face wants were the focus of this analysis, with the CDR interaction pattern indirectly associated with the three outcomes through affirming the parties' face wants. This final hypothesis was:

> **H3:** Multiple goal perceptions (i.e., face support) mediate the relationship between interaction pattern type and three outcomes: (a) interaction effectiveness (b) cooperative interaction through control mutuality; and (c) relationship commitment.

Figure 1: Mediation Model of the Influence of Interaction Pattern Types on Interaction Outcomes through Perceptions of Interactants' Face Support
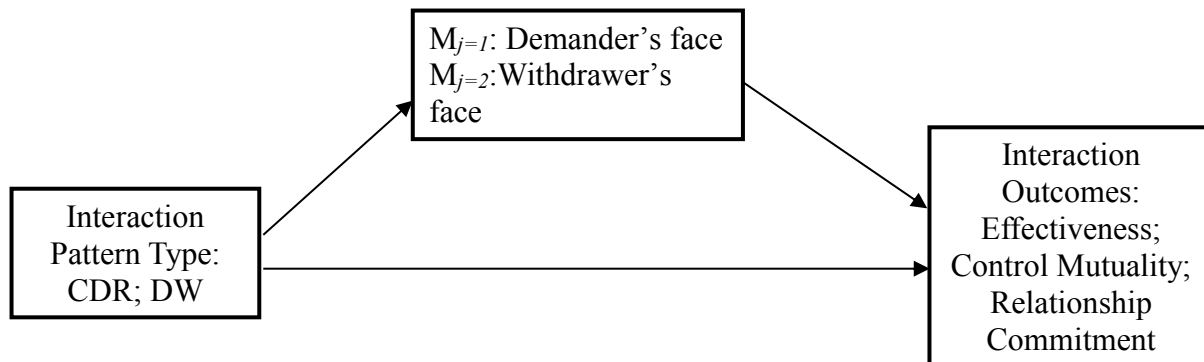
6. Method

Participants and procedures. A total of 322 participants (223 females, 99 males) were recruited from undergraduate communication classes at a US Midwestern university. The average age was 22 (SD = 7.89). Participants identified themselves as either non-Hispanic Caucasian (68.3%); Asian or Pacific Islander (18.9%); African American (5.9%); Latino or Hispanic (2.8%), Native American (1%), and 3.1% other ethnic groups.

The study employed a message perception paradigm, in which participants responded to a questionnaire containing a script of a conversation between two people in a romantic relationship, followed by a series of close-ended questions about participants' perceptions of the conversation and the speakers. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of four script conditions that crossed relationship type (married or dating) and pattern type (Demand-withdraw pattern or Caring demand-respond pattern). Hypotheses were tested using the SPSS macro, PROCESS (Hayes, 2013), a modeling program utilizing an ordinary least squares or logistic-based path analytical framework to test mediating and moderating relationships.

Interaction script materials. Two core scripts were developed to assess the demand-withdraw and caring demand-respond interaction patterns. One script consisted of a conversation between a husband and a wife, in which the wife (understood as the demander) tried to urge the husband (understood as the withdrawer) to stop his excessive drinking. In the demand-withdraw pattern version the wife criticized and blamed her husband and demanded change, while in the caring demand-respond pattern, the wife argued that the husband change his behavior by pointing out how drinking too much is preventing her husband from pursuing his aims. The second script consisted of a conversation between two college students in a dating relationship, in which the young woman (understood as the demander) urged the young man (understood as the withdrawer) to stop his excessive playing of videogames. In the demand-withdraw pattern, the young woman criticized the young man and demanded change for being late because of playing video games and how it affected her adversely, while in the caring demand-respond pattern the young woman argued that the young man stop playing video games by pointing out how playing video games had caused him trouble in the past. Within each relationship script and version, the demander's language was manipulated to correspond to each pattern condition (demand-withdraw/caring demand-respond), while the withdrawer's words were held constant. Each script started with a short description of the relationship between the two speakers and the interaction context, followed by the conversation.

To check that the script-conversations distinguished between the DW and CDR patterns, participants rated the degree to which they believed that the demander's words reflected a desire to express her own frustration (rather than express the withdrawer's concern). Participants rated the single item on a Likert scale of 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*). An independent samples *t*- test showed there was a significant difference in the ratings for the demand-withdraw (M = 2.99, SD = 1.13, N = 160) and caring demand-respond (M = 3.57, SD = 1.62, N =162) conditions, t (320) = 4.53, p < .001, two-tailed.

Instrumentation and measures. Two measures assessed if the scenarios used in the study were considered to be realistic, and whether both interaction patterns were prevalent in the interactions of those in close relationships. The perceived realism of each scenario was measured using a 3-item scale adapted from the realism scale. Participants reported on Likert scales (1 = *strongly*

disagree, 5 = *strongly agree*) the degree to which they agreed with each item (e.g., "The scenario is realistic," and "This scenario is likely to happen in real life."). The items were reliable ($\alpha = .88$), and so were averaged to form a realism measure.

To assess whether the caring demand-respond pattern is as prevalent as the demand-withdraw pattern in romantic relationships, participants reported the extent to which the interaction pattern in the script they had read had ever happened in their own relationships, and in the relationships of couples that they knew. Ratings for these two items were completed on 4-point scales (1 = *Never happens*, 4 = *Happens all the time*).

Participants' multiple goal perceptions of the interaction they read were measured with scales adapted from measures used in studies on advice, politeness and speaker impressions to assess the face, identity and relationship aims mutually perceived by the speakers about one another (Goldsmith 2000; Jones & Burleson 1997; Samter, Burleson, & Murphy 1987). The focus here was on perceptions of positive and negative face wants enacted by each person in the demand-withdraw interactions. Four items measured "Demander's face," which referred to the perceptions of the withdrawer's enactment of positive and negative politeness strategies (e.g., The demander is likely to perceive the withdrawer to be disrespectful, inconsiderate, or annoying (reverse items). Four additional items measured "withdrawer's face," which were perceptions of the demander's enactment of positive and negative politeness strategies (e.g., The withdrawer is likely to perceive the demander to be respectful, or considerate). A principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation showed that the items of each measure loaded onto the expected factors (with at least a .50 loading), which explained 58.14% of the overall variance. Cronbach's alphas for the two sets of items were .71 and .78, so they were each averaged to form two measures of Demander's face and Withdrawer's face.

Finally, three interaction outcome measures were used to assess the effect of varying the demand-withdraw interaction pattern. Participants rated the overall effectiveness of the interaction with three items that assessed if the conversation was effective, helpful, and appropriate. The extent participants perceived that speakers mutually controlled the discussion was assessed with three items. Example items were that speakers in the conversation "had an equal say" and "are cooperative with each other." Participants also assessed the extent speakers were committed to their relationship with three items (e.g., "The speakers in the conversation are committed to maintaining this relationship"). Each set of items were measured with 5-point Likert scales (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*). In each case items were reliable ($\alpha = .69, .71, .71$), so they were averaged to form measures of interaction effectiveness, control mutuality, and relationship commitment.

7. Results

Before testing the hypotheses, the scenarios were examined for their perceived realism. Descriptive analyses showed that the participants perceived the scenarios as relatively realistic, with the average rated realism across the scenarios was 3.81 on a 5-point scale. A with a one way analysis of variance with interaction pattern type as the independent factor (DW vs CDR pattern) indicated that scenario realism did not differ as a function of interaction pattern type (see Table 1 for means, standard deviations and ANOVA results for the dependent variables).

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations for Interaction Patterns

Variable	CDR		DW			
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*p*
Realism	3.74	.860	3.88	.760	2.35	.126
Prevalence in own relationship	1.68	.660	1.61	.700	2.45	.118
Prevalence in other relationships	2.49	.700	2.37	.710	.71	.399
Demander's face	2.15	.622	1.92	.599	11.27	.001
Withdrawer's face	2.71	.663	2.36	.679	21.06	.000
Interaction effectiveness	2.53	.832	2.25	.752	9.46	.002
Control mutuality	2.17	.691	1.89	.675	13.10	.000
Relationship commitment	2.74	.691	2.53	.715	7.22	.000

Note: CDR = Caring demand-respond pattern, *N* =160;
DW = Demand-withdraw pattern, *N* = 162.

Preliminary hypothesis tests. Hypothesis one predicted no significant difference between the perceived prevalence of the CDR and DW patterns in the interactions of those in close relationships. A series of ANOVAs (see Table 1) were conducted in which pattern type (CDR vs DW) was the independent factor and pattern prevalence and the interaction outcomes were the dependent variables. There was no statistical difference between the prevalence of the DW pattern and the CDR pattern in participants' own relationships or in the relationships of couples they knew. Thus, H1 was supported.

Hypothesis two predicted significant differences between the interaction patterns for perceptions of the parties' face wants and for the perceived effectiveness of the interaction. Table 1 shows that there were significant differences between the CDR and DW patterns for all of the interaction outcomes, with the CDR pattern producing higher ratings for perceptions that (a) the withdrawer's face would be affirmed and respected, (b) the demander's face would be affirmed and respected, (c) the interaction was helpful and effective, (d) the discussion was mutual, and (e) that that participants are committed to their relationship. Thus, H2 was completely confirmed.

Explaining the effect of interaction patterns on interaction outcomes through face support perceptions. Hypothesis three posited a mediation model (see Figure 1), in which the interaction pattern indirectly affects interaction outcomes through multiple goal perceptions, specifically perceptions of face support. We utilized Model 4 from Hayes (2013), which tests multiple mediators operating in parallel to assess the indirect relationship of the interaction pattern (predictor variable), interaction outcomes (outcome variables), and multiple goal measures as mediators (i.e., perceived support for the demander's face and withdrawer's face). The analysis of mediation tested to determine whether the predictor variable was correlated with the mediator variable (a path), whether the mediator variable was correlated with the outcome variable (b path), and whether the predictor variable was correlated with the outcome variable (c path). In the analyses, participants' age and gender were entered as control variables, and bootstrapping was set at 10000.

The Pearson correlations for the variables used in the mediation tests are presented in Table 2. As expected, the correlation analyses showed that there were significant relationships between interaction pattern type and perceptions of interactants' face support (rs were .18 and .25), between

face support and interaction outcomes (*r*s ranged from .28 to .47), and between interaction pattern type and interaction outcomes (*r*s ranged from .15 to .20). Also as expected, the interaction outcome variables were inter-correlated (*r*s ranged from .32 to .52). Given the expected correlations between the key constructs, we next tested H3, which predicted that the DW and CDR interaction patterns are related to all three interaction outcomes indirectly through perceived support of the interactants' face wants.

Table 2: Pearson Correlations of the Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Interaction pattern type	--				
2. Demander's face	.18**	--			
3. Withdrawer's face	.25***	.34***	--		
4. Task effectiveness	.17**	.30***	.47***	--	
5. Control mutuality	.20***	.39***	.34***	.33***	--
6. Relationship commitment	.15**	.28***	.34***	.32***	.52***

Note: ** *p* < .01. *** *p* < .001. Interaction Type: DW=1; CDR=2.

Three mediation analyses were conducted for the interaction outcome variables. H3a predicted that the CDR pattern is indirectly related to greater interaction effectiveness than the DW pattern through perceptions of interactants' face support. As expected, the mediation analysis on interaction effectiveness found that the interaction pattern type was completely related to interaction effectiveness through interactants' face support, with the total effect of interaction pattern type and task effectiveness reduced from a statistically significant *b* =.264 (*SE* = .088, *t* = 2.98, *p* < .003) to a nonsignificant *b* =.065 (*SE* = .081, *t* = .808, *p* = .419). Both support for the withdrawer's face wants (*b* =.156, *boot SE* = .043, *boot CI* = .077 to .248; *z* = 3.78, *p* = .000) and the demander's face wants (*b* =.042, *boot SE* = .025, *boot CI* = .004 to .100; *z* = 2.09, *p* = .036) were significant mediators in the analysis. Therefore, H3a was fully confirmed. The CDR pattern was perceived to result in a more effective interaction, because both the demander's and the withdrawer's face wants are affirmed and respected.

A similar mediation analysis examined the interaction pattern types affected perceptions of control mutuality between the interactants. As with interaction effectiveness, the mediation analysis showed that interaction pattern type was indirectly related to control mutuality through interactants' face support, with the total effect of interaction pattern type and control mutuality reduced from a significant *b* =.249 (*SE* = .074, *t* = 3.33, *p* < .000) to a nonsignificant *b* =.115 (*SE* = .071, *t* = 1.61, *p* = .107). Both support for the withdrawer's face wants (*b* =.064, *boot SE* = .024, *boot CI* = .022 to .117; *z* = 2.74, *p* = .006) and the demander's face wants (*b* =.070, *boot SE* = .027, *boot CI* = .023 to .132; *z* = 2.72, *p* = .006) were significant mediators in the analysis. Therefore, H3b was fully confirmed. The CDR interaction pattern was perceived to reflect an orientation toward discussion, indirectly as the demander's and the withdrawer's face wants are affirmed and respected.

Finally, as with the analysis of control mutuality, the mediation analysis for relationship commitment showed that interaction pattern type was positively related to control mutuality indirectly through interactants' face support, with the total effect of interaction pattern type and relationship commitment reduced from a significant *b* =.189 (*SE* = .077, *t* = 2.44, *p* = .015) to a

nonsignificant $b = .059$ ($SE = .075$, $t = .790$, $p = .429$). Support for both the withdrawer's face wants ($b = .084$, *boot SE* $= .029$, *boot CI* $= .036$ to $.150$; $z = 3.09$, $p = .001$) and the demander's face wants ($b = .045$, *boot SE* $= .021$, *boot CI* $= .011$ to $.092$; $z = 2.24$, $p = .024$) were significant mediators in the analysis. Therefore, H3c was fully confirmed. Compared to the DW pattern, the CDR interaction pattern predicted relationship commitment, when participants perceived that the demander's and withdrawer's face wants were affirmed and respected.

Details of these analyses are presented in the Appendix. As can be seen from them, the relationship between interaction pattern type and interaction outcomes (c_1) were significant on the bivariate level, but the relationships (c'_1) became non-significant when measures of multiple goal perceptions were added to the model as mediators, suggesting that the association the CDR pattern and interaction outcomes are mediated by interactants' face support. Hypothesis testing for H3a, H3b, and H3c collectively showed that interaction pattern type was significantly related to both the demander's and the withdrawer's face (a path), which was significantly related to all three interaction outcomes (b path). Therefore, the mediation model was established with perceptions of face support mediating DW interaction pattern types and interaction outcomes across all three interaction outcomes. H3 was fully confirmed.

8. Discussion

Three claims were advanced, tested, and supported in this study of the demand-withdraw pattern in close relationships. In the first claim, the discovery of no significant difference between the prevalence of the DW pattern and the CDR pattern indicates that the two patterns are both prevalent in American close relationships. Regarding the second claim, the CDR pattern produced higher ratings than the DW pattern for perceptions that the withdrawer's face was affirmed and respected in the interaction, the demander's face was affirmed and respected, the interaction was effective, the discussion was mutual, and that the parties were committed to their relationship.

Regarding the third claim, the multiple goals perspective produced insight into the mechanism as to how interaction patterns and their message features influence the interaction. As theorized, the findings produced a mediated relationship between interaction patterns and interaction outcomes through perceptions of the interaction pattern's ability to satisfy both participants' face wants. The specific findings showed that the CDR pattern was perceived to better serve the withdrawer's and demander's face wants than the DW pattern, which was also associated with better interaction and relationship outcomes. This finding is in line with the conceptualization of the CDR because it is able to accomplish multiple goals by demonstrating care and concern and also providing altruistic arguments and reasoning for the withdrawer. The subsidiary goal that was accomplished better by the CDR pattern was the preservation of face wants by providing each participant with a sense of self as a person who is respected and affirmed. These results are consistent with past findings that multiple goal messages project desired identities and relationships (e.g., Bingham & Burleson 1989; Goldsmith, Bute, & Lindholm 2012; O'Keefe & Shepherd 1987). In this context, the findings also contribute to satisfying the commitments parties have in the opening phase of a critical discussion.

This study demonstrates the merits of employing a multiple goals communication theory to examine variations of the DW interaction pattern (Caughlin & Scott 2010). The findings provide a go-ahead sign to craft and test other ways of expressing the desire for change that invite critical discussion. Numerous avenues for research could be pursued.

First, how do cultural premises affect the interpretation of DW practices? Given Song and

Kline's (2013) previous findings that cultures differ in interpreting DW practices, knowing how cultures differ in interpreting DW practices may lead to other ways to phrase and respond to DW practices as part of a critical discussion. Second, relationship histories may create obstacles to a clear understanding of speech acts in DW discussions. So what kind of messages may help the discussion in its opening phase? Third, it takes cognitive effort to recover and respond to negative altercasting that typically results from criticism, accusations, and demand practices. What practices could withdrawers be taught to help reframe the discussion in civil terms? Fourth, since the issue of a demand-withdraw interaction is particularly salient for the demander, and both parties' identities are important, it appears key to examine what kinds of confirmation practices might influence the conduct of critical discussion. Are there particular kinds of clarification and alignment practices that can be useful for discussing behavior change? Are there particular assurance and affirming practices that can help parties interpret the identity implications of the DW pattern?

The final two avenues for research can each contribute to argumentation theory. The DW pattern has traditionally consisted of complaints, criticisms and demands. Since each of these speech act have different preparatory conditions, the identity implications of these speech acts may also be different, which could theoretically lead to different lines of argument in a critical discussion. For instance, what are the preparatory conditions that suggest different message designs and responses to complaints and criticisms? Learning what types of designs and responses can defend one's standpoints while respecting identities may be helpful in pursuing a critical discussion about behavior change.

Finally, the caring-demand exchanges studied here show the value of using altruistic arguments to support one's standpoint for seeking behavior change. This reasoning type may be useful for conducting a range of critical discussions, but identifying the features of altruistic arguments is needed. Are there particular types of evidence that best display mutual good and benefits for the other party? Is helping the party reason through behavior change in relation to his/her individual desires or in relation to community needs more effective? Is altruistic argument more effective when it is focused on doing good for oneself, or doing good for others? Are there particular argument schemas that are useful for designing altruistic arguments? Finally, what role does generating positive self-feelings and self-worth for the other play in altruistic argument?

Our theoretical approach distinguished between the caring demand and the demand-withdraw patterns on specific message features, and was able to determine that relationship between these patterns and interaction outcomes was mediated through the interaction patterns' ability to satisfy face wants. Given these findings, future studies could employ this perspective to examine the mechanisms under which other variations of DW patterns influence interaction outcomes. This study also employed the message perception paradigm, which enables clear categorization and manipulation of message features. However, future research should also study the CDR pattern using an interaction analysis methodology to analyze caring demand messages in interactions.

Studying actual caring demand messages would enable researchers to uncover a variety of argument practices that have yet to be documented. The caring demand pattern assumes that interactants often intend to be firm in expressing their standpoints, but they also want to express respect and caring toward their partner. How is this accomplished? We suspect that many interactants encase their directness with conventional politeness strategies and forms (Brown & Levinson 1978). Other interactants may use message forms that construct positive identities through altruistic reasoning while simultaneously expressing firmness about the need to change

one's behavior. Studying actual conversations will enable the discovery and systematic description of new message forms.

In conclusion, a variant of the demand-withdraw interaction pattern, the *caring demand-respond* pattern, was examined in comparison to the traditional DW interaction pattern. The caring demand message incorporates altruistic argument, politeness forms and rhetorical reasoning. Analyses indicate that the effects of the CDR and DW patterns can be explained with argumentation and multiple goals communication theories.

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Appendix

Coefficients for Three Mediation Models with Interaction Pattern Type, Interaction Outcomes and Face Support (Multiple Goal) Perceptions

	Interaction Effectiveness				Control Mutuality		Relationship Commitment	
	Demander's Face (M_1)	Withdrawer's Face (M_2)	Interaction Effectiveness (Y; Total effect of X)	Interaction Effectiveness (Y)	Control Mutuality (Y; Total effect of X)	Control Mutuality (Y)	Relationship Commitment (Y; Total effect of X)	Relationship Commitment (Y)
Antecedent	Coeff.[1]	Coeff.	Coeff.	Coeff.	Coeff.	Coeff.	Coeff.	Coeff.
X (Pattern type)	.218** (.068)	.324*** (.073)	.264*** (.513)	.065 (.081)	.249*** (.074)	.115 (.071)	.189*** (.077)	.059 (.075)
M_1 (Demander face)	--	--	--	.195** (.067)	--	.322*** (.059)	--	.207** (.062)
M_2 (Withdrawer face)	--	--	--	.482*** (.062)	--	.197*** (.054)	--	.260*** (.058)
C_1 (Sex)	-.132 (.074)	-.265** (.080)	.004 (.023)	.029 (.087)	-.178* (.081)	-.083 (.076)	-.105 (.084)	.008 (.080)
C_2 (Age)	014 (.017)	.024 (.019)	-.124 (.096)	-.010 (.020)	.063** (.019)	.053** (.018)	.057** (.020)	.047* (.019)
Constant	1.65*** (.394)	2.00*** (.426)	2.12*** (.513)	.833# (.476)	.708 (.432)	-.222 (.416)	1.39** (.449)	.523 (.422)
	$R^2 = .046$ $F = 5.15$ $p < .001$	$R^2 = .099$ $F = 11.75$ $p < .001$	$R^2 = .034$ $F = 3.73$ $p < .05$	$R^2 = .245$ $F = 20.54$ $p < .001$	$R^2 = .087$ $F = 10.14$ $p < .001$	$R^2 = .231$ $F = 19.08$ $p < .001$	$R^2 = .052$ $F = 5.90$ $p < .001$	$R^2 = .167$ $F = 12.70$ $p < .001$

Note. $df = 3, 318$. *** $= p < .001$; ** $= p < .01$; * $= p < .05$; # $= p < .10$. [1] Unstandardized coefficients with standard errors are in parentheses.