Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy
VOL. 29, NO. 3 · FEBRUARY 2025
https://doi.org/10.26556/jesp.v29i3.3516
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"I THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS!"

FRIENDSHIP AND THE NORMATIVITY OF INFLUENCE

Emma R. Duncan

THE NOTION that relationships affect the appropriateness of interpersonal influence is intuitive, almost to the point of banality. Consider, for example, friendship. We generally take it that friends are permitted (and often expected) to offer advice when a mere acquaintance may not, to support or encourage us in ways that might be unwelcome coming from a stranger, or to tell us hard truths that even a romantic partner may be reluctant to share. Friends are often permitted to blame us and offer criticism when others are not and may even be blameworthy themselves for not doing so. Though it may seem obvious that friendship shapes the normativity of interpersonal influence, it is far less obvious how it does so. Many theorists recognize that interpersonal relationships factor into the normativity of influence, yet extant treatments of the nature and role of the relevant relationship-based considerations remain somewhat gestural. Since it is important to us not to give (or be a) bad influence when it comes to our friends, we have a stake in understanding how this relationship shapes the normativity of interpersonal influence.

Focusing on examples of rational influence (that is, influence via the provision of good reasons) and drawing on social psychological research and philosophical treatments of special relationships, I argue that attending to a triad of features partly constitutive of friendship can illuminate the normative considerations at stake in influencing friends. This paper consists of four sections. In section 1, I introduce and analyze a case using extant accounts of the normativity of (rational) influence to demonstrate the need for a more robust and comprehensive framework for assessing particular instances of influence.[1] In section 2, I identify and discuss three key features of friendship that can serve as the basis

1 Herein I use 'rational influence' and 'influence' to refer to influence via the provision of good reasons. My goal is not to argue what counts as a good or bad reason but to focus on a form of influence that is often treated as the paradigm of acceptable influence in the relevant philosophical literature. Although my analysis centers on rational influence, the proposed framework may also be applicable to nonrational forms of influence, e.g., certain kinds of manipulation and "nudges."

for such a framework. In section 3, I explain how those features bear on the normativity of influence. Finally, in section 4, I reassess the case discussed in section 1 in order to demonstrate what the proposed framework can reveal about how relationship-based considerations shape the normativity of influence.

1. ASSESSING THE NORMATIVITY OF RATIONAL INFLUENCE

There is a longstanding presumption in the philosophical literature that among the methods of influence available to us, rational influence—influence via the provision of good reasons—is the paradigm of appropriate influence. As George Tsai observes, "There is, of course, something deeply right in the idea that rational persuasion is generally a respectful method of influence, that its use is compatible with acknowledging that the person on whom it is used ultimately has the right to decide for herself how to live."[2] But not all instances of such influence are on a moral par. As some authors have recently argued, sometimes even the provision of good reasons can be disrespectful, intrusive, or insulting.[3] For example, someone might offer good reasons in a way that is objectionably paternalistic or on a matter that is not their business.[4] Among the many factors that bear on the normativity of influence, the relationship between the influencer and influencee plays a substantial role. The expectations, obligations, permissions, and prohibitions bound up with these relationships help shape the normative space between influencer and influencee. However, it is not always clear what effects these elements have on the appropriateness of an instance of influence. Consider the following case of rational influence between friends.

> *Test*: Phelipé has been studying diligently for an important test tomorrow. In need of a break, he is considering attending a party with friends with whom he has in the past tended to stay out too late, at the expense of his academic performance. Phelipé has recently endorsed a new

2 Tsai, "Rational Persuasion as Paternalism," 79. I use the term 'influence' rather than 'persuasion' to minimize confusion, as the latter is sometimes used as a synonym for influence via the provision of reasons and thus would not admit of "nonrational" forms. Despite this terminological difference, I take it that Tsai and I are discussing the same phenomenon. Tsai, for example, characterizes "rational persuasion" as "the activity of offering reasons, evidence, or arguments to another person" and contrasts this form of influence with coercion, manipulation, rhetoric, and deceit (78). Thanks to an anonymous reviewer at *JESP* for prompting me to clarify this point.

3 See, for example, Cholbi, "Paternalism and Our Rational Powers"; Shiffrin, "Paternalism, Unconscionability Doctrine, and Accommodation"; and Tsai, "Rational Persuasion as Paternalism."

4 See Herstein, "Justifying Standing to Give Reasons."

> commitment prioritizing his education and is eager for the opportunity to prove himself. Phelipé's friend Alex, however, believes Phelipé's optimism is unjustified. Citing relevant examples of Phelipé's past failures of judgment and self-control, Alex tries to dissuade Phelipé, explaining that the evidence suggests that if Phelipé attends the party, he will likely fail to follow through on his commitment and suffer significant consequences.

How ought we evaluate Alex's attempt to influence his friend? On a standard assessment, Alex has behaved appropriately, protecting his friend's welfare through the most respectful means of influence available. In offering Phelipé reasons rather than, say, attempting to manipulate or deceive him, Alex has shown respect for the authority of Phelipé's will and his capacities as a competent practical reasoner. Nevertheless, one might reasonably think that something in the situation has gone awry.

Those with such intuitions might avail themselves of another assessment currently on offer, according to which Alex's influence is objectionably paternalistic despite operating via the provision of good reasons. That is, it fails to properly respect some aspect of Phelipé's rational or practical agency. As Seana Shiffrin explains, "The essential motive behind a paternalist act evinces a failure to respect either the capacity of the agent to judge, the capacity of the agent to act, or the propriety of the agent's exerting control over a sphere that is legitimately her domain."[5] On this characterization, an instance of influence might be objectionable because it interferes with or preempts the operation of another's rational or deliberative faculties. Alternatively, the influence might be disrespectful or intrusive because it is not a matter of the influencer's concern. Finally, the intercession could be objectionably paternalistic because it is motivated by a belief that the influencee's judgment or deliberative capacities are inferior, and the influencer attempts to substitute his or her own judgment.[6] However, it is not obvious that any of these concerns account for the intuition that there is something suspect about Alex's influence.

First, Alex's influence does not appear to preempt or occlude a deliberative opportunity for Phelipé. Although Phelipé's deliberations may not yet be complete, he has had a chance to canvas and weigh what he takes to be the relevant considerations prior to Alex's influence. Second, as Phelipé's friend, this sort of thing does seem like Alex's business. The two friends share the kind of history that generates an implicit permission to exchange reasons, even on topics like this that might be considered too personal for others to permissibly

5 Shiffrin, "Paternalism, Unconscionability Doctrine, and Accommodation," 220.

6 See Cholbi, "Paternalism and Our Rational Powers," 126–27.

intercede.[7] Finally, although Alex does seem to think that Phelipé's judgment may be clouded by unfounded optimism, it is not clear why Alex's intervention would constitute an effort to substitute his own judgment for that of Phelipé's. Although Alex's influence does not appear to meet the criteria for objectionable paternalism, the literature suggests yet another factor that bears on the appropriateness of his influence.

Some authors who argue that the provision of reasons can sometimes be objectionably paternalistic have suggested that this can turn in part on the relationship between the influencer and influencee.[8] However, these treatments of the nature and role of the relevant relationship-based considerations remain largely suggestive and primarily focused on relationship participants as rational deliberators. Those who worry there is something normatively suspect about Alex's influence that is not, at least in the first place, reducible to respect for Phelipé *qua* rational agent require an alternative theoretical toolset. And even those who think Alex's influence appropriate can benefit from a more structured framework for explaining how the fact that one stands in a friend-relation to the influencee can bear on the normativity of one's influence. In what follows, I explore three key features of friendship that can provide the basis of such a framework.

2. THREE KEY FEATURES OF FRIENDSHIP

In this section I highlight three central features of friendship that bear on the normative status of influence: care, vulnerability, and trust. While this list is not exhaustive of the relationship-based considerations that figure into the normativity of influence, they are key features of (arguably) all interpersonal relationships and help us understand the normative significance of other relationship factors.[9] As such, they are promising candidates for a preliminary framework for assessing how relationships affect the normative status of influence. In what follows, I examine each of these features in some depth to illuminate their

7 See Tsai, "Rational Persuasion as Paternalism."

8 See, for example, Cholbi, "Paternalism and Our Rational Powers"; and Tsai, "Rational Persuasion as Paternalism."

9 See LaFollette, *Personal Relationships*; and Guerrero, Andersen, and Afifi, *Close Encounters*. Other factors such as power dynamics, mutuality and reciprocity, and interdependence (of the goals and goods of the relationship) also affect the normative landscape. However, I argue that understanding the considerations resulting from care, vulnerability, and trust is central to understanding how these factors bear on the normativity of influence in different relationships.

function within friendship, shedding more light on how they might impact the normativity of influence.

2.1. Care

Friendship is marked by care for one another's well-being, as well as an expectation that each will act to support that well-being.[10] Caring about another involves being invested in them, having a stake in and taking an interest in their well-being.[11] When we care about someone, not only do we want them to flourish, but we stand to gain or lose from fluctuations in their well-being, and we are directly affected by how well or poorly they fare. We experience joy at their successes, concern over their perils, and sorrow at their setbacks. And we do so not merely from a perspective of self-interest but out of concern for the other for *their* sake. Friends take part in each other's fortunes and follies, rely on each other for support, confide in one another, and are disposed to do so from a certain kind of mutual concern and affection.[12] Genuine care of this kind also requires that we attend to the object of care, that we are vigilant about what happens (or might happen) to it.[13]

Friends also see each other as a source of import and, as such, see each other's needs and interests as sources of reasons and special duties.[14] In caring about another, we are disposed to attend to considerations pertaining to them and to respond to the reasons (real or apparent) that those considerations generate.[15] For example, that a dear friend is immensely fond of the symphony gives me a reason to accept his invitation to accompany him or provide good reasons for declining. Declining simply because the symphony is "not my thing" may not suffice since treating this reason as decisive may fail to prioritize my friend's interests as I should, given my care for him.

Importantly, the scope of care (the aspects of another's well-being to which the elements of our orientation of care are sensitive) varies by relationship.

10 Annis, "The Meaning, Value, and Duties of Friendship."

11 Jaworska, "Caring and Internality."

12 Scanlon, *Moral Dimensions*. Sometimes we use the term 'concern' to capture a thinner psychological orientation akin to the kind of general concern or goodwill we ought to have toward our fellow human beings. I take it that Scanlon's use of concern here is meant to capture a thicker kind of orientation, like the one described by Jaworska. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer at *JESP* for prompting me to clarify this.

13 Helm, *Love, Friendship, and the Self*.

14 See Annis, "The Meaning, Value, and Duties of Friendship"; Brink, "Impartiality and Associative Duties"; Jeske, "Friendship and Reasons of Intimacy"; and Nelkin, "Friendship, Freedom, and Special Obligations."

15 Seidman, "The Unity of Caring and the Rationality of Emotion."

For example, a tutor may care about her pupil, but the organizing focus of that care is the student's academic performance, and so her care may not include anything beyond that scope. Other aspects of the student's well-being, such as his self-esteem or sense of security, may be included but only *qua* the role they play in his academic well-being. Friendships, on the other hand, are marked by mutual care for a friend's overall well-being.[16] This includes things like self-esteem and security, as these affect our overall well-being, but it would include things like academic performance, for instance, only insofar as they contribute to the friend's overall well-being.

2.2. Vulnerability

Friendships also give rise to vulnerabilities beyond those associated with care. Importantly, we open ourselves up to disappointment and various harms by relying on friends to fulfill important needs and by affording their view of us considerable weight in our own deliberations, attitudes, and self-conception.

Among the marks of friendship is that it contributes to our well-being by fulfilling a variety of psychological needs like the needs for emotional attachment, to belong, to feel loved and appreciated, and to care for others.[17] We often view friends as sources of guidance, recognition of our own self-conception, trust, and autonomy support.[18] When we rely on others to fulfill these needs, we position them to promote or to diminish our well-being in significant ways. For instance, whether a friend responds to personal self-disclosures with criticism or support can affect one's self-esteem, sense of validation, personal identity, and overall well-being.[19]

16 Familial relationships, especially between adult siblings, also often involve care for overall well-being, though care does not play the constitutive role it does in friendships. While being someone's friend, spouse, or parent typically involves being subject to certain duties of care and trust, it is not clear that we are beholden to a particular set of norms simply in virtue of being someone's sibling. Due to their shared histories, intimate daily contact, and relatively egalitarian relations, siblings can become friends and therefore subject to friendship's norms and expectations. But this parallel relationship between siblings need not arise. For more on the similarities and differences between sibling relationships and friendships, see Cicirelli, *Sibling Relationships Across the Life Span*.

17 Guerrero, Anderson, and Affifi, *Close Encounters*.

18 Autonomy support involves responsiveness to the other, acknowledging the other's perspective, and encouraging self-initiation (Deci et al., "On the Benefits of Giving as Well as Receiving Autonomy Support"). Recent research has found that mutual autonomy support in relationships like friendships promotes participants' well-being, secure attachments, and relationship satisfaction, and these benefits accrue from both giving and receiving autonomy support. See Deci et al., "On the Benefits of Giving as well as Receiving Autonomy Support."

19 Vangelisti and Perlman, eds., *The Cambridge Handbook of Personal Relationships*, 218.

Failures to fulfill personal needs can be particularly damaging in cases where relationship partners also serve as attachment figures. In some adult friendships, for instance, relationship partners can function as a safe haven and serve as a secure base that helps engender in the other a kind of confidence that enables them to take risks and venture beyond their comfort zone.[20] Those who stand in these special relationships to us, whether in virtue of mutual caring or attachment relationships, are poised to support and empower us but also to undermine crucial aspects of our well-being. This is made even more apparent by the fact that we tend to give extra weight to the opinions of those with whom we share close relationships.

We often care most about the opinions of those with whom we stand in special relationships like friendship, and our interest in maintaining those relationships gives us reason to place more value on how our friends respond to our disclosures. We typically want those whom we like to like us in return, and when we reveal ourselves to them, it matters to us how they interpret us, whether they value our disclosures, and whether they accept or support the aspects of our identities that we disclose.[21] Further, it is expected we place some special value on our friends' perspectives on important matters in our lives. Given these needs and expectations, friends are well positioned to harm or help us in ways that others cannot and to impact us in sometimes profound ways.[22]

2.3. Trust

The last key feature that bears on the normative import of influence is trust. In friendships, trust promotes intimacy and self-disclosure, enables us to navigate and cope with the vulnerabilities that stem from friendship's complex expectations, and can serve as an empowering form of support and influence.

Although accounts of the nature of trust are rich and varied, there are a few generally accepted aspects of the phenomenon that ought to be noted. First, we can distinguish between the attitude of trust that we take toward others and a bond of trust that implies mutual acceptance and reciprocity of the attitude of trust. It is this *bond* of trust that has been identified as a particularly important aspect of friendship.[23] Second, trust is often taken to be a species of reliance that is distinct from *mere* reliance.[24] For example, I may merely rely on fellow

20 Wonderly, "On Being Attached."

21 See Greene et al., *Privacy and Disclosure of HIV in Interpersonal Relationships*.

22 L'Abate and Baggett, *The Self in the Family*, 135.

23 See, for example, Annis, "The Meaning, Value, and Duties of Friendship"; Thomas, "Friendship"; and Vangelisti and Perlman, eds., *The Cambridge Handbook of Personal Relationships*.

24 See, for example, Baier, "Trust and Antitrust"; Faulkner, "The Problem of Trust"; and Goldberg, "Trust and Reliance." What distinguishes trust from mere reliance is disputed,

drivers to follow the rules of the road yet not trust them to do so. Finally, trust makes us susceptible to certain negative reactive attitudes, namely hurt feelings and betrayal.[25] As some argue, a readiness to feel betrayal rather than, say, anger or resentment helps distinguish trust from mere reliance.[26] Of the accounts of trust currently on offer, I favor a care-based account that is well suited to accommodate this set of features and fits well in the context of friendship and other close interpersonal relationships.[27]

On this care-based view of trust, when we trust, we invite the trusted to adopt a particular orientation of care toward us—to make what matters to us matter to them, for our sake.[28] When we trust those with whom we do not have a close personal relationship, the care sought by the truster is a penumbral form of the care seen in close relationships. But in friendships, the bond of trust calls on the deeper and more extensive care that is characteristic of the relationship. This bond involves a mutual understanding that one's trust is accepted and that the trusted will manifest appropriate care for the truster's interests in the relevant domain. Thus, the bond of trust encourages self-disclosure in two ways. First, it provides reassurance that the disclosure will be treated with the support and sensitivity characteristic of the friendship (not merely with confidentiality), and second, it generates normative pressure to reciprocate in kind.[29]

It is important to note that although trust is often sensitive to evidence of (un)trustworthiness, it is not typically subject to the same evidentiary constraints we ordinarily take belief to be. For instance, in relationships where the bond of trust is present, we may owe it to a friend to give them the benefit of the

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and some eschew the distinction altogether. See, for example, Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*; and Hawley, "Trust, Distrust and Commitment."

25 See Baier, "Trust and Antitrust"; Holton, "Deciding to Trust, Coming to Believe"; Jones, "Trust and Terror," 17; McGeer, "Trust, Hope and Empowerment"; O'Neil, "Lying, Trust, and Gratitude"; Hawley, "Trust, Distrust and Commitment"; Hinchman, "On the Risks of Resting Assured"; and Kirton, "Matters of Trust as Matters of Attachment Security."

26 McLeod, "Our Attitude Towards the Motivation of Those We Trust," 474. It is also important to distinguish between the act of betrayal and the feeling of betrayal. Notably, susceptibility to the feeling of betrayal adds a kind of vulnerability distinct from (though not wholly unrelated to) the vulnerability associated with mere reliance. See Duncan, "The Normative Burdens of Trust."

27 See Duncan, "The Normative Burdens of Trust."

28 Duncan, "The Normative Burdens of Trust."

29 The bond of trust also helps distinguish intimate self-disclosure from mere openness. For example, despite their mutual professional trust, two therapists disclosing personal information to one another in confidentiality is not likely to generate intimacy of the kind characteristic of close friendships.

doubt on some matter even in the face of evidence to the contrary.[30] Notably, even in cases where a person is not initially up to fulfilling the expectations of the truster, trust can nevertheless empower the trusted to rise to the occasion, which can give us reason to extend it.[31] The potential scaffolding effect of trust, wherein the truster draws the trusted as someone capable of meeting the truster's expectations and expresses hopeful confidence in them, can make trust a powerful and important form of influence, as well as a source of autonomy support, especially amongst friends.

3. The Normativity of Influence

Care, vulnerability, and trust are not merely important features of interpersonal relationships—they are also strongly implicated in the basic norms governing interpersonal influence. In addition to the expectation that influence should be respectful of the influencee *qua* practical reasoner (e.g., avoiding objectionable paternalism), we can identify at least three further normative standards we generally take to govern interpersonal influence. First, the influencer should have *standing* to influence in the manner and domain in which they attempt to engage the influencee.[32] Second, the influencer should take steps to avoid or minimize reasonably foreseeable harm that could arise from the influence. Finally, the influence should be adequately conducive to uptake by the influencee.[33] In what follows, I illuminate some of the central ways in which care, vulnerability, and trust affect whether an instance of influence adheres to or violates these norms.

3.1. Care and Standing

Certain forms of influence manifest a kind of care that only certain people in our lives are positioned to manifest appropriately. For example, a helpful stranger might manifest appropriate care about your gustatory pleasure when

30 See Stroud, "Epistemic Partiality in Friendship."

31 McGeer, "Trust, Hope and Empowerment."

32 See Tsai, "Rational Persuasion as Paternalism"; Jonas, "Resentment of Advice and Norms of Advice"; and Herstein, "Justifying Standing to Give Reasons." The literature on standing, including standing to blame, is far too rich to canvas here. Although authors have identified several factors that can affect one's standing to influence in certain ways, I have in mind here only what is referred to as the business condition, which holds that the matter in which one intercedes ought to be one's business.

33 I take it that the norms of rational influence are not exclusively moral. A piece of influence ill positioned to achieve the aims internal to the activity does not obviously violate a moral norm (unlike influence that causes undue harm), but it nonetheless goes "wrong" or is "bad" *qua* form of influence.

she, unbidden, recommends that you try the steamed clams rather than deep-fried mussels because the restaurant is known for the former. On the other hand, she may express inappropriate care if she recommends the clams because the dish is better for your cholesterol level. You may rightly inquire of her, "What do you care about my cholesterol?" If, on the other hand, a close friend recommends the clams out of concern for your cholesterol level, she manifests care that is appropriate given your relationship. In fact, your friend may be remiss in not at least reminding you that cholesterol should factor into your decision.[34] Indeed, while her care for your health, warranted by your friendship, gives her standing to offer you reasons pertaining to it, that care also generates an expectation that she do so when appropriate.

Not only are friends permitted to care about us in ways that are inappropriate for others—they are also expected or required to intercede out of care for our well-being when others are not. It would be infelicitous at the very least to reply to your friend's reminder about your cholesterol intake with "What do you care about my cholesterol?" or "That's really not your business." It is their business in part because they care, and your friendship licenses that care.[35] A friend may bristle at nagging intercessions about their own health, but expectations of care bound up in friendships can give us reason to risk their irritation and resentment at attempts to manifest that care via certain forms of influence. Although attempts to influence sometimes risk resentment, especially those perceived as forceful or intrusive, such risks can be warranted by the opportunity to genuinely support those with whom we have special ties.[36] Indeed, when the stakes are high and we refrain from influencing when we are

34 Of course, there are limits to permissible influence, even for friends and other intimates, and even caring reminders can sometimes be inappropriate. First, respect for autonomy sometimes requires that we respect a friend's choices and cease our efforts to influence. Second, incessant or nagging attempts to influence can be disrespectful or objectionably paternalistic and so be impermissible on those grounds. Third, a pattern of nagging influence may take on the character of a demand, which a friend may not be permitted to issue in the matter—though another, like a spouse, perhaps might. The comparatively high degree of interdependence in spousal or romantic partnerships, wherein the lives of participants are so intertwined that achievement of the goods and goals of the relationship is inextricable from the behaviors of each party, can give those parties standing to make certain demands on one another regarding the relevant behaviors that others may not. Many thanks to an anonymous reviewer at *JESP* for prompting me to address these complexities in more detail.

35 The idea is not that an attitude of care is sufficient to make the matters of someone else's life your business but that care grounded in the relevant relationship with the influencee involves expectations that generate (defeasible) permissions and even obligations to intercede in certain matters.

36 See Jonas, "Resentment of Advice and Norms of Advice," 822.

in position to help a friend, they may reasonably protest, "Why didn't you say something? I thought we were friends!"[37]

While care and standing to influence do not necessarily give us decisive reason to heed a friend's influence, we do generally think that we have added reason to take their counsel seriously. After all, the protest "Why didn't you say something?" would lose some force if there were no expectation that the advice would be given some special weight in the influencee's deliberations. Moreover, the mutual care that is characteristic of friendship gives us reason to grant the influence of friends extra, even if not decisive, weight in our deliberations. Doing so conveys respect and trust but also acknowledges the care underlying the influence as something that deserves recognition.

The expectations of care bound up in the relationship between the influencer and influencee affect whether the influencer has standing to influence as she does, as well as the likelihood of the influence's success. But expectations of care also help shape the ways in which we are vulnerable to another's influence and so affect whether that influence adheres to the norm regarding harm.

3.2. Vulnerability and Harm

It seems fairly uncontroversial that, *ceteris paribus*, our influence should not harm others, at least not more than it helps them. But as we have seen, the manner and degree to which we are able to harm or benefit others varies depending on our relationship to them. The provision of reasons by a friend can be harmful if she fails to appreciate the special ways in which her friend is vulnerable to her influence.

This vulnerability can be construed in two ways. The first concerns susceptibility to being moved to heed the influence. For instance, we are more likely to give uptake to the influence of our friends than that of strangers. Other things being equal, then, a friend's influence is more likely to be successful in achieving its aims, whether good or ill. Vulnerability to influence can also be understood as the extent to which one is apt to be harmed or benefitted by the influence. Although friends are often well positioned to promote our well-being, they can also hurt us in ways that strangers typically cannot since interactions with friends are more likely to involve personally important matters. Further, negative interactions with intimates, such as those involving criticism and insensitive treatment, can indicate a lack of proper respect or valuation.[38] Though

37 See Annis, "The Meaning, Value, and Duties of Friendship," 352.

38 See L'Abate and Baggett, *The Self in the Family*; and Kowalski, *Behaving Badly*. This is certainly not to say that strangers cannot hurt us in meaningful ways. But it is important to acknowledge that disrespect, insensitivity, or indifference, for example, can cut more deeply coming from an intimate from whom you justifiably expect the opposite.

intimates can (and sometimes do) tell us hard truths that strangers should keep to themselves, critical or insensitive influence from a friend or intimate can be harmful and its impacts more lasting than even positive interactions.[39]

Moreover, our vulnerability to friends means that their influence can impact deep and important aspects of our practical identities in sometimes unintended ways.[40] It is characteristic of friendship that the parties remain open to being directed and drawn by one another, which means that our choices, interests, and self-conception are often shaped by our friends in distinctive ways.[41] Not only do our activities become oriented toward those of our friends, but we are also led by our friends' recognition and interpretation of our motives and character to recognize and interpret those aspects of ourselves in certain ways.[42] Friends are poised to understand better than many others how we experience the world and what it is we value, and they represent that understanding to us in ways that can influence and enrich our sense of self.[43] Approval or disapproval of certain traits or behaviors, for instance, can shape our self-evaluations and affect what we take to be (good) reasons for action, valuable ends, and so forth.[44]

It is important to note that the manner of influence by which approval and disapproval are expressed matters too. For example, while it may be permissible and expected for parents to express disapproval of their child's behaviors, traits, or dispositions directly via criticism, there is far less room for such expressions in friendships. Although parents have the authority to make demands (or influence in ways naturally construed as demands) of their children or exert strong (even coercive) influence over the formation of their character and behaviors, friends do not have such authority over one another.[45]

39 See Rook, Sorkin, and Zettel, "Stress in Social Relationships."

40 By 'practical identity' I mean to capture roughly Korsgaard's notion of "a description under which you value yourself, a description under which you find your life to be worth living and your actions to be worth undertaking" (*The Sources of Normativity*, 101). According to Korsgaard, our practical identities, which are multifaceted and relational, give rise to reasons and obligations. For example, one whom identifies as a "trustworthy friend" has reason to do what a friend trusts them to do, as such, based in their practical identity.

41 Cocking and Kennett, "Friendship and the Self."

42 Cocking and Kennett, "Friendship and the Self," 504–5.

43 Cocking and Kennett, "Friendship and the Self," 509.

44 Of course, parents and siblings, especially during early childhood and adolescence, play a substantial role in shaping our identities. See Cicirelli, *Sibling Relationships Across the Life Span*. The dominance of this influence, however, wanes as friends become significant and sometimes primary sources of attachment, support, and influence.

45 There are limits to the demands a parent can reasonably make of a child, and a parent's ability to make authoritative demands diminishes as children grow into adulthood. It is also important to distinguish between what is appropriate and what is tolerated. I may

Notice that in virtue of an influencee being a friend, one's influence is more likely to satisfy one norm, i.e. conducing to uptake by the influencee, but is also at increased risk of flouting another, namely avoiding or minimizing undue harm. That friends are more likely to heed our influence and more likely to be deeply impacted by it, then, gives us reason to refrain from interceding in some cases and reason to intercede, albeit with caution and sensitivity to certain factors, in others.

3.3. Trust and Uptake

Along with care and vulnerability, trust also plays an important role in the normativity of influence. The presence (or absence) of trust can directly affect the influencee's uptake of the reasons provided by the influencer, and trust can serve as a form of influence itself. As such, trust generates reasons to influence, or refrain from influencing, in specific ways.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, we are more likely to follow the advice of those we see as trustworthy, i.e., expert and well intentioned.[46] Some forms of influence do not depend much on trust, as is the case when, for instance, an influencer merely points out or makes salient reasons that we have to do a thing but that we are simply not attending to. But in other cases, like advising, trust in the advisor can itself supply a reason to do as advised. For example, when we solicit advice from a professional, their expertise gives us reason to follow the advice, even if we do not trust but instead merely rely on them. We also often receive unsolicited advice from friends, family, coworkers, and even strangers whom we do not consider experts. In these cases, our trust in them gives us reason to do as they advise.[47] It is not merely that we trust that the advisor knows what they are talking about; we also trust that their advice is grounded in care for our interests for *our* sake and that they have advised us to do what they surmise we have most reason to do. While trust can bolster the efficacy of the reasons offered by a trusted influencer, it can also serve as a form of influence in its own right.

There are two ways in which trust can influence. The first is by empowering the one trusted. As noted earlier, trust can involve a belief in the one trusted that

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tolerate my parent making inappropriate demands about my romantic life while giving them little to no uptake, though I likely would not tolerate such demands from a friend.

46 See Bonaccio and Dalal, "Advice-Taking and Decision-Making"; and Sniezek and Van Swol, "Trust, Confidence, and Expertise in a Judge-Advisor System." The relevant expertise need not be formal. I may, for example, consider a long, happily married friend sufficiently expert on marital issues, though not one who is thrice divorced.

47 As Laurence Thomas observes, accepting the advice of friends on trust rather than on the grounds that it seems the most sound can indicate intimate trust and the depth of regard we have for them. Thomas, "Friendship," 26.

can outstrip evidence of trustworthiness on the matter. On one influential view, this belief is underwritten by hope for what the trusted might achieve.[48] This investment of hope can empower the trusted as they come to see themselves and their own potential as the truster does.[49] In trusting, one can scaffold another's agency, empowering and inspiring them to fulfill the truster's expectations.

The second way in which trust can influence is through its own internal normative expectation, namely the expectation that the trusted adopt a particular orientation of care toward the truster.[50] When we trust, we ask that the one trusted make what matters to us matter to them, for our sake. Trust, then, addresses an additional reason beyond what the trusted may already have to comply with the influence—namely, the trusted's care for the truster. For example, I may have my own set of reasons to keep to my low-cholesterol diet, but when my friend trusts me to do so, I gain an additional reason that is rooted in my care for her. Moreover, when we are trusted rather than merely relied upon, we risk betraying rather than merely disappointing the truster if we fail to fulfill her expectations.[51] When something becomes a matter of trust, so to speak, it can become an expression of the trusted's care for the truster, which accounts for the deeply personal hurt feelings or sense of rejection characteristic of betrayal. Given the added layer of normativity and risk of betrayal, then, influencers have reason to be particularly cautious about their efforts to influence when trust is involved.

Now that we have a clearer understanding of the import of these three key features of friendship and how they bear on the normativity of influence, I will reassess the case of Alex and Phelipé to demonstrate how their friendship shapes the relevant normative considerations at stake in Alex's influence.

4. REASSESSING *TEST*

Thus far I have shown that care, vulnerability, and trust interact in complex ways to shape the normativity of interpersonal influence. I have highlighted the contours of these elements in the context of friendship to show how they can serve as the basis of a preliminary framework for assessing whether an instance of influence satisfies or runs afoul of basic norms of influence. With this preliminary framework in hand, we can now reassess the case introduced in

48 McGeer, "Trust, Hope and Empowerment."

49 McGeer, "Trust, Hope and Empowerment," 252.

50 Duncan, "The Normative Burdens of Trust."

51 See Baier, "Trust and Antitrust"; Holton, "Deciding to Trust, Coming to Believe"; Jones, "Trust as an Affective Attitude"; and McGeer, "Trust, Hope and Empowerment."

section 1 to determine how Alex's influence fares. Recall that the relevant norms require (1) that Alex have standing to influence as he does, (2) that he avoid or minimize undue harm, and (3) that he exert influence that is sufficiently conducive to uptake by Phelipé. As I will argue, there is good reason to think that Alex's influence falls short along some of these dimensions. More importantly, though, examining Alex's influence through the lens of the framework provided here will help illustrate how his role as Phelipé's friend structures and animates the normative considerations at work in this example.

To determine whether Alex has standing to influence Phelipé as he does, we must answer two questions: (i) Does Alex have standing to influence Phelipé on this matter? And (ii) does he have standing to influence in the manner that he does, i.e., by offering Phelipé good reasons to refrain from his intended course of action? The answer to both, according to my suggested framework, is yes.[52] Considerations of care (licensed by the relationship) are central to whether one has the kind of stake to underwrite standing to influence another.[53] In this case, Alex's influence is rooted in the care that is constitutive of their friendship, which licenses certain types of intercessions aimed at protecting and promoting his friend's well-being in a broad range of matters, including those intertwined with Phelipé's values and commitments. Further, in offering evidence-based reasons for Phelipé to avoid the party rather than, say, issuing a demand, Alex has deployed a form of influence countenanced by their friendship. If Alex were instead to simply demand that Phelipé avoid the party, he would lack standing to influence in this way because their friendship does not permit of such demands.[54] If their relationship were different, say, if and Phelipé

52 It is worth noting here that although at least one of the views already discussed shares this affirmative conclusion, our explanations and their potential implications differ. For example, recall that Tsai's explanation hinges primarily on whether Alex and Phelipé have a history of exchanging reasons on this sort of topic. While I agree that such a history is relevant, it seems neither necessary nor sufficient for standing since we often seem to have the standing to influence others on novel topics, and even the right kind of history would be insufficient to ground Alex's standing to influence Phelipé if their friendship had already dissolved. On my view, relationships (and especially norms and expectations of care) play a key role in generating a stake in influencing in certain ways and on certain matters; this stake does not rest on historical exchanges and often dissolves if the relationship ceases.

53 The idea is not that caring itself is sufficient for standing to influence but that the aspects of relationships that license caring can also give someone the kind of stake we ought to have when influencing others. In other words, it is the relationship that makes another's behavior in a particular domain, in some sense, my business.

54 This is of course not to say that one cannot make demands within a friendship. I may, for example, demand that a friend refrain from causing me unnecessary harm or that they treat me with the basic respect and dignity I am owed as a member of the moral community. But standing to make such demands is not underwritten by our friendship. Further, it may be

were romantic partners and some of Alex's own interests were meaningfully dependent on Phelipé's academic performance, then Alex might have standing to demand that Phelipé avoid the party given the nature of the stake Alex would have in the matter. Even so, considerations of vulnerability and trust might still speak against issuing such a demand in that case, particularly if other forms of influence were available to Alex. Let us turn to the second norm of influence wherein the issue of vulnerability comes to the fore.

Whether Alex's influence avoids or minimizes undue harm to Phelipé depends on whether it is sufficiently sensitive to Phelipé's vulnerabilities. A straightforward reading of the case might suggest that in acting to protect his friend from the risk of failure and its consequences, Alex's influence is indeed responsive to Phelipé's vulnerabilities. Alex has minimized not only the risk of harm to Phelipé's academic interests but also potential harm to Phelipé's fledgling commitment to prioritizing those interests. However, there is more at stake here than the consequences of Phelipé's failure.

Because of their friendship, Phelipé is likely to give extra weight to Alex's influence, more specifically to the way in which Alex has drawn Phelipé—as one who, on his own, is unable to follow through on his own commitment. Further, Phelipé is more likely to take to heart the message implicit in Alex's reasons for dissuading Phelipé: that Phelipé should not trust his optimism or sense of self-efficacy in pursuing the commitment he has endorsed.[55] The concern is not simply that Alex's construal of Phelipé differs from Phelipé's own self-conception but that Alex's construal fails to recognize and support the role of Phelipé's new commitment in Phelipé's evolving self-conception and is potentially damaging to Phelipé's self-esteem and self-trust. The reasons Alex draws on in his dissuasion suggest a lack of appreciation for (i) the degree to which Phelipé's commitment itself is a response to the flaws and failures Alex has cited, (ii) the motivating role Phelipé's commitment is poised to play in his practical identity and deliberations, and (iii) the importance of allowing Phelipé to test his new commitment in order to solidify its role in his psychological economy. One might reasonably object that testing our commitments

that many of the demands we can make in the context of friendship are akin to imperfect duties, which do not entail obligations to perform a particular action. For example, it may be that I lack standing to demand that a friend accompany me to a specific concert because they are my friend, though I may make a broader demand that they generally behave in ways characteristic of a friend.

55 If Alex were instead a colleague or perhaps even a parent, Phelipé might be less affected by his message, thinking to himself "Alex just doesn't know me that well; he doesn't really know what I'm capable of." But friends, especially close friends, are often in a privileged epistemic position with respect to our character, behaviors, strengths and weaknesses, and we have reasons to give genuine uptake to their advice and assessments of us.

(especially prematurely) can be risky, and perhaps Alex has simply acted with an abundance of caution to protect his friend. Although an important consideration, protective measures can sometimes be at cross purposes with duties and expectations to promote well-being. And when they are a matter of trust, disappointing those expectations carries further risks.

Recall that among the needs that we rely on (and often trust) friends to fulfill are the need for recognition of our self-conception and autonomy support. In dissuading Phelipé, Alex has sought to protect his friend from one kind of harm but has done so at the expense of providing another important form of support and promoting certain other aspects of Phelipé's well-being. Phelipé reasonably trusts Alex, as his friend, to offer autonomy support, a responsive recognition of Phelipé's perspective and self-conception that encourages the kind of self-initiation Phelipé is attempting. In neglecting to provide such support, Alex disappoints Phelipé's trust (in this specific regard). Such disappointments of trust can be harmful not only to the truster but also to the underlying relationship, necessitating some sort of reparative action, even if the disappointment of trust does not rise to the level of betrayal.

At this point, one might reasonably wonder "What is a friend to do?" Given their friendship and the stakes for Phelipé, it seems Alex should intercede *somehow*. But all forms of influence are not on a moral par, and dissuading his friend as he has, even on the basis of justified doubts, poses additional risks to Phelipé, their friendship, and the bond of trust they share. If dissuasion were the only mode of influence available to Alex, then the foregoing considerations may, all things considered, speak in favor of Alex's influence. However, the trust between the two friends affords Alex alternative and more ideal means of influence.

The norm that influence should avoid or minimize harm speaks against critical influence of the kind Alex has offered and in favor of some other form of influence that would improve Phelipé's chances of success. For instance, rather than talking Phelipé out of testing his new commitment, Alex could emphasize its import and fragility while offering informed guidance on following through when it comes time to leave the party. In doing so, he would provide the kind of secure base that can make a difference to Phelipé's success along with the support called for by their friendship. Importantly, this would be not just a matter of Alex being a good friend but a matter of him acknowledging that in virtue of their friendship, Phelipé justifiably relies on him for the relevant kind of support, and so denying it would risk subjecting Phelipé to a distinctive sort of harm.

The final consideration relevant to the normative status of Alex's influence is whether the influence is sensitive to the expectations stemming from the bond of trust in his friendship with Phelipé. The concern is not that their bond of trust precludes Alex from harboring or even expressing doubts about Phelipé's

capacities *qua* agent, as the literature on objectionably paternalistic influence might suggest. Doubting is compatible with trust, and although Alex may doubt his friend's ability to follow through on his commitment in this particular situation, that does not amount to disrespecting his agentive capacities in the manner suggested by some characterizations of objectionable paternalism. However, their bond gives Alex (some) reason to trust Phelipé when Phelipé genuinely expresses optimism that, in light of his new academic commitment, he will leave the party at a reasonable time. Since trust is not sensitive to evidence the way ordinary beliefs are, Alex's trust can be warranted even in the face of Phelipé's past failures, which provide evidence contrary to the belief that Phelipé will succeed in his efforts.

Moreover, given that their bond of trust makes Phelipé more likely to heed Alex's advice, it seems appropriate for Alex to trust Phelipé and contribute what he can in the way of influence to scaffold Phelipé's agency and improve his chances of success. As noted earlier, this would involve offering supportive advice but may also involve an explicit expression of trust in Phelipé. In expressing his trust in Phelipé to adhere to his commitment, Alex would give Phelipé an additional reason to act as he plans. When it comes time to act on his commitment, he would have his own reasons as well as reasons that are tied to Alex's trust, including that if he fails, he not only fails himself but also disappoints Alex's trust. Employing trust as a means of influence would, at least in this case, be more respectful of Phelipé's practical limitations and better manifest the care characteristic of their relationship.

I have argued that while Alex's advice fares well with respect to some norms of influence, it falls short along certain dimensions, given his role as Phelipé's friend. Importantly, we needn't conclude that in advising Phelipé as he does, Alex commits an egregious wrong against him. What I hope to have shown is that by applying the framework articulated in the preceding sections, we can discern a clear and significant tension between Alex's actions and some of the norms that govern the appropriateness of his influence *qua* Phelipé's friend. At the least, Alex's influence here is less than ideal and of a kind that Phelipé might find reasonably objectionable. Whether we should label the relevant normative deviation a moral violation or wrongdoing is a matter that I will not discuss here. I limit my assessment to the conclusion that there are good reasons, rooted in the normativity of influence (as shaped by his friendship with Phelipé), for Alex to refrain from dissuading as he does and to choose an alternate means of influence marked by trust and support.[56]

56 The idea is not that Alex has breached some deontic requirement but that given the nature of his relationship to Phelipé, the influencee, there remain commendatory reasons for

5. Conclusion

Whether one agrees with the judgment that Alex's influence is normatively suspect, I hope to have shown that (and how) a relationship-centered framework for assessing rational influence can helpfully illuminate the normative considerations at stake in a particular instance of influence. I have suggested that three factors common to personal relationships—care, vulnerability, and trust—are promising candidates for a preliminary framework to assess the normative status of rational influence. I have used this framework to illuminate how the provision of good reasons, even by a well-meaning friend, can run afoul of relationship-based considerations in subtle and complex ways. Although I have focused primarily on friendship, attending to these features in the context of other sorts of relationships could be equally fruitful, though its results will likely vary across different relationships. The features I have highlighted also interact with culturally based value systems. For example, extended family members might have more extensive standing to intercede in highly personal matters in some cultures, while there might be quite strong societal expectations of care amongst strangers in others. This sort of variation is to be expected and does not, in my estimation, undermine the proposed preliminary framework. My goal here has been not to offer a calculus for determining whether an instance of influence was morally good or bad but to highlight key features that necessarily contribute to its normative character. In doing so, I have also aimed to illuminate how our relationships interact with and shape the norms of influence more broadly.[57]

Stanford University
erduncan@stanford.edu

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influencing Phelipé differently. For more on the distinction between requiring and commendatory reasons, see Little and Macnamara, "Non-Requiring Reasons."

57 I am grateful to David Brink, Manuel Vargas, and two anonymous reviewers at the *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* for their instructive feedback on this paper. Special thanks to Dana Nelkin and Monique Wonderly for extensive comments on and illuminating discussions of the ideas and arguments represented here.

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