"The People Watching at Home"
An analysis of political disagreement in a public inquiry event

Tom W. Underwood and Jo Angouri
University of Warwick, UK

This paper explores disagreement practice in political discourse and specifically in the under explored public inquiry communicative event and specifically in the *select-committee hearing*. We revisit earlier work on theorising disagreement to expand and extend our understanding of its contextual nature, particularly in relation to the making of ideology.

Public inquiries combine the characteristics of professional meetings with characteristics of political discourse. They are typified by hybridised and ambiguous role expectations which participants negotiate in and through (potentially competing) practices in doing the ideological work demanded by the policy process. In this context, disagreement emerges as expected and key to the performance of the interactants' situated and explicit/semi-permanent roles as professional politicians.

By applying Critical Interactional Sociolinguistic analysis within a wider frame of audience design, we demonstrate the importance of the ideological role of disagreement to the policy process. We argue that further attention needs to be given to the policy talk in meso-level political events, such as the public inquiry, which connect the ideological (macro) political domains of human activity with the (micro) *here and now* of talk.
We close the paper with directions for further research.

Key Words: disagreement, ideology, Critical Interactional Sociolinguistics, audience, policy process, meso-space, political discourse

1. Introduction

The linguistic community's conception of disagreement has long since moved on from seeing this interactional phenomenon as a negative and relationally damaging act, to exploring its wide range of interactional functions and perceptions across communicative contexts. But it is still rare that assessments of disagreement go further than a consideration of its relational contributions. In this paper we argue that disagreement is a fundamentally performative act for professional politicians in the doing of policy, so much so that we conclude disagreement to be a linguistic resource for both being political and for making issues political. By taking an explicitly critical approach to interactional sociolinguistic analysis of the policy process, disagreement per se emerged as a clear locus of ideological negotiation between the participants in our dataset as we explored the performativity of policy process talk. The under-researched public inquiry event is typified by interactional acts which have profound ideological ramifications. The growing public visibility it receives, increases the symbolic capacity of such policy interactions to shape hegemonic narratives.

The paper also acts as a mandate for examining interaction in the exploration of critical social and political issues, in particular vis-à-vis policy "meso-levels" which connect the macro political and social domains of human activity with the *'here and now'* of talk. Ethnographic research into broadcast talk provides a useful starting place in explaining participants' interactional choices within this dynamic and high-stakes particular political (interactional and material) space. It also furthers our understanding of the contextual nature of disagreement practice which has not yet been considered, at least not explicitly, in relation to the expectations of the multiple audiences that impact directly and indirectly on the design of interactive political encounters.

The paper is structured in four core parts; we open the paper with a discussion of our research locus, the policy environment and provide a reading of the current sociolinguistic approaches to disagreement. We then turn to our methodological approaches and provide the analysis of two excerpts that illustrate our core theoretical stance. We close the paper with revisiting audience design and suggesting a framework for future studies on political discourse and disagreement.

2. **The UK Parliament Select Committee hearing**

Public inquiry events are exceptional in their demonstration of ideology as something socially negotiated, and simultaneously of interaction as ideologically dependent for its meaning. We understand them as a meso-level of political activity defined by membership, goals, practices, norms and materialities, connecting the ideological order to the situated micro moment of interaction. Evidently, a meso-level is an analytical construct. The 'micro-meso-macro' metaphor is an analytical artefact deployed to unpack complex phenomena and as such is useful for zooming in on the research question we seek to address; we use it here to identify hybrid or relatively undefined communicative event in which the synthesis between micro level linguistic features and macro-level ideologies are particularly dynamic and highly productive.

We explore the UK Parliament Select Committee hearing as a meso-level within the policy process for the analytical opportunity it offers to a critical interactional perspective. Select committees are groups charged by parliament to investigate either specific issues or issues of their choosing within their areas of responsibility. They are typically formed of several cross-party MPs or Lords (or both) whose membership is voted in by parliament but generally reflects the balance of party seats in parliament (Marshall 2020). Whilst select committees vary in the way in which they work and the things they try to achieve, they all largely conduct inquiries, publish reports and interrogate ministers by gathering a variety of oral and written evidence. This evidence gathering is largely enabled by its power to call on witnesses to a select committee hearing. This involves a panel of select committee members who, led by the select committee chair, take turns to interview witnesses. By consequence of being one of parliament's primary tools for holding government to account, select committees play a significant role in the UK policy making process.

Hajer's (1995) path-breaking work on the use of discourse analysis in sustainability policy demonstrates the usefulness of the policy process as an area for analysis. More than simply series of events in which solutions are found for societal problems, he argues the policy process to be where society manages social conflict; its participants are not simply searching for the solutions to problems, but they are primarily looking to socially define the problems before any such solutions can be found. It is this notion of the social definition of

the policy problem that we are interested in exploring vis-à-vis disagreement. More specifically, how the ideological work required of policy players is done through disagreement as a characteristic of the public inquiry interactional space. Hajer pictures the policy process as useful for understanding the source of many dominant societal discourses. For example, he claims that the 1984 inquiry held by the House of Commons Select Committee for the Environment (now the Environmental Audit Committee) into acid rain, an emblematic environmental issue of 1980s Britain, was a watershed moment in changing public environmental perception and policy. More specifically though, it is the process of social construction that he promotes uncovering; rich qualitative analysis of policy documents, hearings, etc. can provide insight into what constitutes hegemonic discourses and how the policy process itself contributes to their development. For such reasons, policy analysts are no strangers to discourse analytical approaches (Fairclough 2013).

The vast majority of work on policy discourse (and political discourse generally) relies on analyses of written texts such as government reports, corporate reports, news articles and NGO statements (see Livesey 2002; Rydin 1999) or ritualised spoken ones such as speeches and television interviews (see Montgomery 2007; Wodak 2009). More recently, linguists have frequented more atypical contexts such as social media posts (Kreis 2017). However, seldom does this extend to naturally occurring talk and interaction between politicians outside the parliament, and rarely within policy making contexts such as public inquiries, despite their profound implications for legislation and public consciousness (Buttny 2015). Whilst such contexts are emerging as areas for ethnographic research (e.g., Buttny 2015; Murphy 2019) the assessment of such talk in relation to its regulation of social conflict and by extension ideology construction is something that has yet to be addressed. We will return to this in the next section.

Though public audiences are allowed to attend most select committee meetings, albeit in restricted numbers, it is only with online availability of recorded select committees' meetings that they have become so publicly available. Policy process talk is, in this way, an area of emerging public visibility and interest in the same way that many other domains and processes of governance which were previously behind closed doors are receiving greater media attention (for example, Trump's first impeachment proceedings). We believe, and this paper attempts to show how, this growing availability has led to a hybridisation of the public inquiry space (interactional and material) where many features of broadcast talk and the news interview now apply.

Political beings are thus presented with new and challenging professional events within which to construct their identities whilst negotiating competing norms and expectations. These include emerging requirements for engagement with stakeholders and the public. How interactions are designed for the benefit of absent and overhearing audiences has long been the interest of research into broadcast talk (Hutchby 2005) and this should apply no less to policy inquiry communicative events. A central tenet of broadcast talk is that there is a potentially infinitely large audience, formed by a diverse set of clusters; how talk plays out can itself be the determinant of the size and nature of this audience. A well-researched example of this that bears relevance to the policy inquiry event is the political news interview (Montgomery 2007) which is often intended to produce quotable opinions and analysis from politicians in a way that can be used to generate further news which itself attracts an audience (Blum-Kulka 1983; Ekström 2001).

Consequently, the interactional design within the policy process is highly ideologically productive because of its direct effect upon the construction of policy; yet with ambiguous norms due to the potential presence of an overhearing audience whose makeup is somewhat reliant on the design of the talk itself. Thus we consider the select committee

meeting to be a specific space, interactional and material (Mondada 2011) and meso-level event for how it bridges together multiple and potentially diverse communicative practices, thereby representing opportunities to explore the relationship between a) macro politics and the formation of hegemonic ideologies and b) political role performance enacted in and through macro interactional design. We turn next to our theoretical approach, namely Critical Interactional Sociolinguistics.

3. Critical Interactional Sociolinguistics and policy analysis

3.1 Critical Interactional Sociolinguistics (CIS)

To explore how talk is performative in this emerging hybrid political/professional context, we are adopting a Critical Interactional Sociolinguistic approach to analysis. Interactional approaches are concerned with the ways in which social reality is enacted and negotiated in situ, through mapping the architecture of interactions. Interactional sociolinguistics (IS), led primarily by the work of Gumperz, explores both "*content and metapragmatic or indexical information about content*" (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2008, 537, emphasis added) to interpret *how* speakers "do" interaction in potentially communicatively ambiguous situations. Whilst IS facilitates explaining the nature of talk in relation to the beliefs at play in a given context, rarely has IS research been applied to its full potential in exploring the relationship between talk and the production and maintenance of hegemonic ideologies. This, however, is not inherent to IS, as Gumperz was particularly interested in the politics of language and power asymmetries (Rampton 2016). As has been argued elsewhere (Angouri and Wodak 2014), IS can be fruitfully combined with Critical Discursive approaches, and particularly Discourse Historical Analysis, for capturing macro/meso/micro political phenomena.

Our approach to IS intends to be explicitly critical by exploring the synthesis between the ideological issues at stake and the interactional practice of the speakers in the policy process. Whilst much IS research has a critical element in its ability to question the ideological bases upon which the social order is built, it is rare that such research directly addresses the interrelationship between participant's interactional strategies and their belief systems (or the systems they formally represent in the case of professional politicians). Such a critical perspective to interaction is also absent from the little existing research into policy talk. Our paper makes a contribution to this agenda.

Turning to the specific event of the select committee hearing; the participants must perform their roles as legitimate professionals in the definition of policy in relation to the ideological issues of the policy problem at stake. Consequently, this means that notions of professional roles are, perhaps unsurprisingly, dependent upon the policy issue at hand. However, the question of what is professional in the case of policy creation is itself a political question. As such, participants compete to manage this tension between the professional and the P/political. The definition of role expectations is itself part of the ideological work that the policy process therefore requires. Conversely, as policy problems are the foundations of professional identities, ideological policy contests can themselves be negotiated in disagreement about roles and their performance. In short, professional roles are themselves ideologically performative of the policy question at hand, whatever it may be. Through observing the interactional management of roles in the process of the social definition of policy we can, therefore, understand how hegemonic discourses are drawn upon, reinforced or challenged in the practice of interaction, as and when they are made relevant by speakers who, in turn, are also associated with political parties and their agendas.

3.2 Application to policy events

A CIS approach is integral to the analysis of policy interaction specifically because the interactional positions of political beings are so reliant upon hegemonic macro ideologies. Naturally, their professional role is explicitly defined by the ideologies that they subscribe to. CIS also helps to explore how the social order as negotiated in interaction contributes to the emergence of wider hegemonic discourses outside of the political sphere. Building off the back of Hajer's (1995) conceptualisation of the policy process as primarily a mechanism for the social definition of problems, spontaneous interaction represents an opportunity to explore the discursive struggle of social definition that is less visible in the more formalised and edited outputs of policy. The deictic practice of designating interactional positions is "social construction par excellence" according to Hanks (1990, 7) and when this is done vis-à-vis core ideological policy contests, interactional practices gain ideological significance that trickle into the wider public sphere, as in Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) orientation to the social as being the product of political practice.

Richer understandings of how discourses emerge and are socially constructed mark the wider contributions that CIS can make to policy analysis (and perhaps to other critical discourse approaches) where macro-level narratives are typically the analytical goal. Comparatively, our attention is oriented towards exploring how communicative mechanisms of government shape the policy process. We will next turn to the role of disagreement in understanding this, starting with its background in linguistic research.

3.3 Disagreement

Disagreement was initially regarded within linguistic research as a largely undesirable or negative communicative act (Sifianou 2012). Early politeness theory researchers, most notably Brown & Levinson (1987), portrayed disagreement as a potential imposition upon the positive face of an interlocutor, and thus within much of the subsequent work emerging from politeness theory, agreement is seen as being preferable in interaction (Levinson 1983). Meanwhile conversation analysts also claimed that disagreement is "dispreferred" by the language system itself which tends to elicit agreement on behalf of the interlocutor (Sacks 1973/1987). At base, both of these theoretical underpinnings posit a relationship between preference and agreement and regard conflict or disagreement as marginal in interaction (Bousfield 2014). Since Schifrin's (1984) seminal analysis of argument in Jewish communities, which depicted disagreement as a vehicle for expressing solidarity and sociability amongst group members, there has developed a substantial body of postmodern linguistic work exploring the great variation in disagreement practice in differing cultures and contexts (see Sifianou 2012 for a summary). Associations such as dispreferred or relationally damaging, which initially helped to define the concept, have largely been dismissed as a priori concepts alongside an increase in focus on the range of acceptability and functions of disagreement across contexts and local practices. Within this, disagreement has both been explored as the "way things are done" (Angouri 2012, 1566) and as a ''necessary part of the process of reaching agreement'' (Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1997, 193). These are particularly important contextual considerations to studies on disagreement in institutional and professional settings, as is relevant to our specific focus on a policy institution. Examples include work by Myers (1998), who demonstrates how academic seminars and other particular focus group interactions appear to feature ritualised and expected disagreement. Similarly, our previous work on problem solving talk in meetings (Angouri 2012)

distinguishes between disagreements which are considered inherent to getting things done (unmarked disagreement) and those which carry greater relational and identity based implications (marked disagreement).

However, as Georgakopoulou (2012) suggests, discursive approaches to disagreement have, if anything, only made it harder to say what is and is not disagreement. This complexity of disagreement research lies somewhat in parallel with the wider challenge of generalising patterns situated in specific contexts, but with a concept so polysemous and ambiguous as disagreement this challenge is particularly acute. Consequently, researchers still lack the theoretical frameworks and clear study goals to approach disagreement in interaction beyond variation. We believe that certain aspects of this problem can be answered by adopting a critical approach to disagreement that explores the relationship between ideologies and language and interactional processes. We probe this further in the next section.

3.3.1 A CIS approach to disagreement
In our analysis of disagreement, we are proposing an epistemological reorientation to move beyond the relational considerations that politeness research associated with the phenomenon and which are deeply embedded in disciplinary theory. We believe that disagreement research is somewhat held back by its attempt to shake off the lingering influence of earlier politeness theory approaches (Brown and Levinson 1987) which held relational considerations in high esteem for the evaluation of interaction. Whilst not denying the relational impact of disagreement as an important measure for understanding the social order in interaction, what is yet to be achieved in discursive approaches is thorough consideration of how the management and interpretation of disagreement in interaction is related to the ideologies which participants are negotiating.

In fact, we believe that evaluating disagreement practices in terms of the synthesis between interactional performance and ideological meanings gives a clear epistemological basis upon which to assess interactional strategies that better explains contextual variation. Disagreement for us (drawing on "opposing views" in Angouri and Locher 2012) suggests that the differentiation between whether utterances (and larger stretches of discourse) are in agreement or disagreement is by consequence of whether the views that they manifest ideologically align or dis-align. Yet, the indexical link between the interactional practice of delivering a view, and the view itself is a complex, contextually dependent one. We interpret this relationship within the select committee hearing event in terms of audience design; this represents an aspect of context which, despite its large sociolinguistic body of work, has not been fully considered within disagreement research. (The closest examples to this are a small number of studies exploring third party effects on disagreement, see Sifianou 2012). Disagreement is consequently presented as a resource used by participants in their attempts to do audience design which we interpret as a key part of the ideological work demanded by the policy process and has implications for macro and party politics.

Disagreement as a specific interactional practice is the focus of our attention within the communicative mechanisms of government because, we argue, it is fundamentally ideologically performative in the policy context. In this way, to disagree is to be political and to disagree in line with party stance is expected. It is, indeed, hardly innovative to suggest that disagreement is ubiquitous in governmental politics and democratic debate (M. Haggith 1993) and disagreement has long-established significance in political science. Schattschneider's (1960) seminal critique of pluralism in democratic societies depicts

conflict[1] as either exploited or suppressed by politicians with the intention of engaging or disengaging the audience around a particular issue. Although his general theory has undergone significant adjustment, he precursors our notion of disagreement as a performative practice. He calls conflict the "mobilisation of bias" (1960, 71) and by this envisages conflict as the political practice by which subjective attention is given to an issue with intent to give it political significance. Whilst this is a correlation we largely agree with, Schattschneider's (1960) explanation of this falls short of much empirical backing.

He recognised disagreement practice as reliant on the presence of audiences, but more importantly as an action that intends to shape audiences. As vicarious advocates in the policy process, politicians are to appear to reflect their voting base's concerns in their disagreements, yet simultaneously they also act to shape them. This particularly comes to the fore when new problems arise and require social definition in the way that Hajer conceptualises the policy process. Given the audience's shaping role of broadcast talk in political interviews discussed earlier, we posit that disagreement should be considered as a key function in the design of interaction for politicians to both attract certain audiences and make certain issues of relevance to their case.

4. Methodology

Our analysis focuses on data drawn from a single hearing (see UK Parliament 2018) which formed part of a wider inquiry into the sustainability of the fashion industry by the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC). This hearing featured the giving of evidence by several government ministers to the select committee panel, and was one of four hearings which comprised the inquiry, the other hearings featuring witnesses from a range of stakeholder groups such as NGOs, industry and academia. Whilst we were interested in exploring the function of disagreement practices within the single politicians' hearing, we took an ethnographic approach to the overall inquiry in order to ensure that our analysis of disagreement practices was guided by an understanding of the ideological positions of the main stakeholder groups to the inquiry. Video recordings of hearings along with all written evidence provided to the inquiry can be accessed on the UK government website and is thus in the public domain (UK Parliament 2019) though we did also attend one of the hearings in person.[2] Although our research is not based on longitudinal physical presence in a community, we take a holistic view of ethnographic methodology and consider our immersive approach in line with the principles of the ethnographic tradition with its emphasis of developing an emic understanding of the community and its norms (Angouri 2018).

This hearing also demonstrates a high-stakes interaction; one of our first observations was that it featured significantly higher levels of explicit disagreement than the other hearings, despite discussion of the same issues. As the politicians on the EAC question government ministers on government policy creation and enforcement, both witnesses' government positions as well as the creation of government policy are at stake and provide the backdrop for the discursive struggle to define the nature of the problem at hand. This

---

[1] Whilst conflict is not necessarily disagreement, the cross-disciplinary difference between these is a largely terminological one. For further discussion on distinctions between conflict and disagreement see Angouri (2012).

[2] For more information on the role of the UK Parliament see (UK Parliament n.d.), the UK Government see (UK Government n.d.), Select Committees (Institute for Government 2020), and Public Inquiries (Institute for Government 2018).

inquiry generally also already aroused significant notice when it was established (e.g. Laville 2019; Smith 2018; Smithers 2018) and one of its hearings (not the one at the focus of our analysis) was attended by a record-high select committee audience made open by public invitation, particularly to professional stakeholders across sectors (UK Parliament 2018). This contributed to abnormally high attention given to the inquiry, and with it increasingly higher stakes surrounding the potential ideological impact of its interactions as participants were aware of increased likelihood of their hearings being themselves watched and evaluated by relevant stakeholders.

Our intention is not to provide a summary of the ideologies and practices at play in this hearing (we do this elsewhere Underwood and Angouri, in prep.), but an exploration into the interrelationship between interactional roles and ideological contests at stake through disagreement. Consequently, we are more interested in the effects of these higher stakes upon participants' interactional choices. We will end with reflections into why the interactional performance of disagreement is so profoundly performative within this policy event, and, consequently, propose an analytical model that requires further application to policy.

5. Data analysis

5.1 Excerpt A: "I don't think you can um get away with that Minister"

Here, we explore how competing interactional expectations of role performance are negotiated by participants in order to do policy work and how this can be explained by wider ideological tensions. Early on in the hearing, there is discursive struggle over the rights and responsibilities of the participants to either request and/or provide information on purported workers' rights breaches in Leicester. At face, this appears to be a contest in defining their professional roles and what is interactionally required/expected of these within the context of the hearing. Whilst on the one hand both participants are Members of Parliament, the context of the select committee hearing demands participants to pursue professional investigation into the issue of inquiry that is to some degree a "neutral" assessment of the performance of activities of government.

Participants are balancing both roles as politicians within the wider context of the policy process, and roles as professionals within this specific interactional and material space of the select committee hearing. Creagh is both the Chair of the Environmental Audit Select Committee and a Labour Party MP, whilst Tolhurst is a witness to the committee and a Conservative Party Minister. In light of this, we see the participants negotiate their professional roles within the hearing as a way in which to do political, and by extension ideological, work as they try to socially define whether the issue of workers' rights is a policy problem or an enforcement problem.

The political agendas of the respective political parties are a core part of the wider context within which this interaction takes place. In line with Hajer (1995), the extent to which something is relevant to the policy process is much the preoccupation of policy workers as they attempt to socially define the nature of the policy problem. This occasionally comes to the fore when participants begin to attempt to undermine each other's performance of professional roles by insinuating their underlying political motives for doing so.

As we show below, the interactional performance of the participants is teetering on the edge between professional and political as they attempt to do ideological work whilst staying within the bounds of the select committee meso-level of activity – and its assumed neutrality. Professional roles are, in this way, the interactional resources that they use to

establish who gets a say on this policy issue; this is ideologically significant given that they are themselves symbolic representations of ideological positions. Importantly, this is something that is facilitated by the nature of the audience to the communicative event. The publicly available and disseminatable nature of the select committee hearing endows the interactions within it political potential. That the extent of this potential is open for interpretation allows for such political / professional ambiguity. It is the political opportunity of this professional setting that allows for the ideological potency of otherwise professional roles, especially when the nature of professional roles has such ideological significance in the topic of discussion.

Creagh	21	how many (.) joint workings are currently going on in Leicester↓
Tolhurst	22	yeah a-as I've as I've already: er said to er you umm um er Chair
	23	I: um (.) will not comment on ongoing investigations into
	24	Leicester= [in regards to well I-]
Creagh	25	=I'm not [asking you to give us the detail I'm] asking you to give
	26	us the number=
Tolhurst	27	=well [I-I'm]
Creagh	28	[one↑] (.) five↑ twenty five↑ [a hundred↓]
Tolhurst	29	[I'm (.) I've-]
	30	I'm telling you that I will not go into detail about the particular-the
	31	particular enforcement↑ work↓(.) that is being carried on (.) er joint
	32	inve-investigations in Leicester at this moment=
Creagh	33	=I don't think you can: um
	34	get away↑ with that Minister↓=
Tolhurst	35	=well I'm afrai:d I need to because as you
	36	will appreciate they a:re sensitive ongoing investigations (.) u:mm with
	37	an-and it's quite right (.) um that that information is not given publicly (.)
	38	[at this stage]
Creagh	39-46	((Repeated request for 'numbers' and not 'detail'))
Tolhurst	47	Heh as I(h)'ve said er chair y'know they're ongoing↑ investigations↓ I'm
	48	[not prepared I'm not prepared as minister
Creagh	49	[HOW MANY (.) SO THAT'S TWO↓ (.) THERE'S MORE THAN ONE↓(.)
Tolhurst	50	to sit here] to go into detail about those ongoing investigations (.)
Creagh	51	THERE'S TWO↓]
Tolhurst	52-59	((provides detailed justification)) I (.) cannot↓ (.) go into live
	60	investigations (.) and will not get draw:n (.) on that matter here↓
Creagh	61	(1) I think that's absolutely extraordinary I think the people watching at
	62	home will draw their own conclusions on that↓

Between lines 21-32, Creagh constructs an interactional context which demands Tolhurst to provide information into the claimed investigations in Leicester on the basis of Tolhurst's role as a witness, and simultaneously cements her interactional right to request such information through indexing her own role as chair to the inquiry. Tolhurst rejects this through an alternative rationalisation of the rights and duties of her professional role as witness and Minister. There is, therefore, disagreement about what is interactionally expected/justified of these roles in this context. In line 21 Creagh's question comes after several minutes of prior disagreement around the same issue and is delivered in a way as such to index the authority of a Chair or judge of an inquiry to demand information; the pause after "how many" works to stress what is interactionally being demanded of Tolhurst so as to

provide no leeway for an alternative response that does not deliver this specifically solicited information. The utterance ends with a drop in intonation that suggests authority in the question; rising intonation is typically associated with questions (i.e., requests for information, action, response, etc.) in British English common norms which also carry with them an element of acknowledgement about the imposition of asking a question, whereas the drop in intonation here implies a right to ask the question, and with it a responsibility on behalf of the witness to give that information. This excerpt is preceded by a long period (about 100 lines) of ambiguity interactionally achieved through lack of complicity in responses from Tolhurst in which she has not provided the information solicited by Creagh. Only in the context of this pre-established interactional dynamic does Creagh's utterance contribute to a wider performance of a professional role of the Chair in demanding both "simplicity" and "order" in response and asking for it in a way that suggests overriding authority in her right to determine the interactional responsibilities of the participants. However, the soliciting of information in such a way also presupposes Tolhurst as someone who knows the answer to the question, and more importantly perhaps as someone who should know it and be able to give it. This forms the basis of the ideological contest in this interaction, as whether this information can and should be provided determines the extent to which it is relevant to the definition of the policy problem at hand. Creagh's strategy also places the ideological contest firmly in relation to the audience. Her approach is typical of contemporary news interviewers which according to Montgomery (2007, 178-9) embrace a "no-nonsense, non-deferential manner" in order to "ventriloquise on behalf of a presumed sceptical public", thereby attempting to create solidarity with them by soliciting information in the way that they would and for their benefit.

In contrast, Tolhurst declines the information request by Creagh (lines 22-24) but relies on a professional justification with which to do this. As such, she takes disagreement with Creagh on a basis of role performance and requirements rather than political disagreement; by fore fronting professional considerations she diverts Creagh's attempt to make the information relevant for the definition of policy. Tolhurst's response in lines 22-24 continues to perform the interactional dynamic that Creagh has already begun to build yet attempts to undermine its importance in favour of her professional obligations not to provide the information that Creagh requests. Whilst not denying the authority of the Chair to request such information she provides an implicit professional rational for not doing so. Her use of the address "Chair" in line 23 further promulgates the chair-witness dynamic that Creagh has begun to create and serves as a form of tacit agreement with the implicit reasoning of Creagh's initial request. Acknowledgment of this interactional dynamic gives Tolhurst's subsequent declination of the request for the information justification as a right of a witness to this inquiry to withhold such information as she is somewhat cooperating with Creagh's interactional framing, if not her specific demands. The declination comes in the form of "I: um (.) will not comment on ongoing investigations" in line 23 and indexes a professionalism in her rejection of Creagh's request, rather than a direct contradiction of Creagh's right to request the information. "Not comment" carries connotations with declining requests to journalists for information for purposes which are sacrosanct, in line with Tolhurst's professional obligations. This could also be seen to undermine Creagh's questioning as almost journalistic, and thus whilst not denying the Chair – Witness dynamic, it undermines the strength of Creagh's right to receive such information. Likewise, it suggests that the aspect of Tolhurst's professional role in protecting the investigation of the workers' rights issues at hand is in fact of greater importance than the aspect of her role to provide information about it as a witness. As a result, as Creagh tries to force Tolhurst to provide this information on professional grounds, Tolhurst reacts by providing an alternative nuance to

her professional responsibility which expresses that she can in fact not provide this information, in order to maintain professionalism.

The participants have thus met in stalemate in a disagreement about what can be required by either professional role, which requires further work on both parts to bolster their interactional demands. In lines 25-26 Creagh develops her position as the Chair *of* the select committee; it is not just her opinion that Tolhurst must provide this information, but she is acting on behalf of the Committee to request such information. This is done through a repeated pronoun construction "*I*'m not asking *you* to give *us* the detail *I*'m asking *you* to give *us* the number". This also claims that Tolhurst's professional role does not prevent her from providing at least a number and talking over Tolhurst's attempt to respond she proposes a series of numbers that work to patronise the nature of Tolhurst's ability to provide an answer by demonstrating the communicative 'ease' of stating a number, in this way attempting to undermine Tolhurst's competence as a witness. In contrast, Tolhurst further bolsters the importance of her professional obligations not to provide any information (e.g., strong emphasis on "enforcement work" in line 31 to illustrate its priority over the select committee hearing) and denies the crude simplicity of Creagh's demand for a number (i.e., a number *is* detail).

Up until this point the participants have largely been acting exclusively within professional roles as reference points upon which to base their disagreement. To contrast, Creagh's strategy in lines 33-34 is to refer to the implicit political work being done, by actually suggesting that Tolhurst's strategy to use this "professional role" as an "excuse" or justification not to provide the information is actually a political tactic. This is done through a number of devices, first "get away" which references explicit political strategies and moralistic associations of potentially corrupt politicians, and "minister" which explicitly addresses her political role in government (and is also a nod to House of Commons talk) and finally the hesitation in the form of "can: um" supposes a sort of daring cheek or irony as Creagh breaks role in suddenly claiming that really Tolhurst's interactional position on this is in fact not professionally justified, but politically directed. This effects to criticise Tolhurst's role performance itself, suggesting that she is not playing the select committee "game", but in doing so this constitutes a political action on Creagh's part; to suggest Tolhurst is acting with political motivations is itself a political action. A similar pattern is then almost repeated again in lines 35-62 in which there is continued disagreement around what is and can be expected of the professional roles in the circumstance, and again ends with a discrete reference by Creagh in lines 61-62 which indicates that Tolhurst is doing her disagreement about the professional role for a political purpose. "The people watching at home" suggests that Tolhurst's professional guise will not fool the audience who will interpret her interactional choices as clearly political. These slightly more direct references to political behaviour act as nods towards the (potential) presence of a wider public audience. Furthermore, they are also attempts to underline one another's attempted alignments towards the audience in designing their responses. Because there is ambiguity regarding the position of the audience's role in the conversation (being not present), this means that they both need to claim a stance regarding the extent to which they are talking to one another with the intention to influence one another, or the extent to which they are talking to one another with the intention to influence the audience. Likewise, part of negotiating the influence of the audience is accusing the other of being influenced by the audience. Each reference to the people at home also works as a final explicit reference to the audience with whom she has been attempting to create solidarity with through her use of "no-nonsense" demands.

Returning to our concept of the meso-level, it seems that the *potential* duality of the participant roles in this context means that the role choices are significantly performative.

There exists a blurred line between the professional and political performance, and the extent to which participants are doing one or the other provides an opportunity for ideological work to take place. Attempts to do political disagreement (i.e., the ideological work) is undertaken on professional grounds and professional disagreement likewise can be targeted as politically motivated. It is the ambiguous nature of a listening audience which allows for the interactional tension between the political and professional and for the parallel ideological contest, too. Next, we will take a look into how contrasting disagreement practices within an interaction are mobilised to negotiate role expectations.

5.2 Excerpt B: "You're quite right you know"

Disagreement may be both exploited and mitigated by policy participants in attempts to do ideological work. Marra's (2012) research has shown that the mitigation of disagreement can be important for maintaining workplace relationships as it can function to acknowledge interlocutors' face needs. Whilst a different context, we can explore how participants to the policy process engage with expectations of workplace interaction in order to construct perceptions of interactional complicity and by extension professionalism. In this excerpt, McMorrin, a member of the Environmental Audit Select Committee and a Labour Party MP, employs leading questions that incite moral disagreement in an attempt to depict this policy issue as a moral problem. Tolhurst, in a very different strategy to the one we saw her adopt in the previous excerpt, mitigates her disagreement with McMorrin's moral premising by complying with the bounds of the question. She does this to avoid McMorrin's political bait in her attempts to construe the problem as a moral one. Simultaneously, the mitigated nature with which she has managed disagreement indexes notions of moral maturity and professionalism in interaction, which are important to the credence of her ideological work in reducing the role of morality in the definition of this policy problem. Consequently, by expressing an attempt to avoid disagreement, she is decidedly apolitical in her response so as to suggest that this is not a political problem.

McMorrin	1	can I just ask err minister tolhurst (.) um I d-don't (.) going back to er
	2	slavery in supply chains a:nd the need for legislation (.) here (.) I mean
	3	(.) <u>businesses</u> we know businesses are required to publish a statement
	4	saying what they (.) are doing to address <u>slavery</u> (.) in supply chains (.)
	5	but technically a business could publish (.) a slavery statement saying
	6	we're not doing anything (.) and they're still compliant↑ (.) with the
	7	transparency element within that (.) within that act (1) don't you think
	8	we need that tougher legislation↓ =
Atkins /	9 -	=((Disagreement between Atkins, a conservative minister and witness, and
McMorrin	17	McMorrin about whether this is a question for Tolhurst or Atkins))
Tolhurst	18	well I I er think what we've probably outlined and the fact that
	19	there's three Ministers here from three different departments is that
	20	a lot of these issues that affect u::m you know if we're not just the
	21	textile industry but er business and employment across the country
	22	crosses↓ er crosses the departments within government that's why we (.)
	23	do try and work together er and we we all come together on certain
	24	elements (.) umm absolutely when w:e u:m I mean er the minister
	25	((Victoria Atkins)) can highlight you know er give you more specific

	26	information about that particular that particular area of um area of
	27	legislation (.) but um it is quite right that we y'know one of the things
	28	that we obviously we're what the work we're doing around corporate
	29	governance a:nd er really expecting businesses to set up step up to what
	30	their <u>shareholders</u> and the wider public <u>expect</u> (.) umm whe:re and and
	31	y'know I can speak and it's quite right and I speak I think I speak for all
	32	<u>ministers</u> when I say when (.) er legislation isn't working we're always
	33	review that and make sure that we er change it where necessary to get the
	34	right outcome u:m so but you're you're quite right you know we uh the
	35	public expect companies to be transparent u:m and we:'re working with
	36	business to to to bring that (.) [forward]
McMorrin	37	[but] you could actually introduce
	38	regulation (.) to make it <u>more</u> transparent because I've just highlighted
	39	where that act is actually broken where businesses can get away from it er
	40	away with it um (.) a simple requirement could be that you that brands
	41	declare the source of raw material used so you actually see (.) the steps
	42	and where where the supply chains (.) are (2) could you not do that↑=
Tolhurst	43	=well
	44	it's an interesting er an interesting [suggestion]
Mcmorrin	45	[well that's] that's been highlighted (.)
	46	previously I'm surprised that y'know being (.) six months in the role (.)
	47	you haven't (.) looked at looked at any↑ of this in your↑ role=

McMorrin directs questions (lines 1-8 and 37-42) at Tolhurst which ask for legislation, i.e., policy work, on the implicit basis of businesses being potentially morally corrupt. This is most evident in the rationale that she gives for her questions. For example, in lines 5-6, the use of the conditional "could" suggests that businesses might want to avoid policing slavery within their businesses and supply chains. She also presents the apparent flaw in the regulation through presenting "business" as the agent, thus positioning businesses as potentially exploitative of the flaw, rather than merely benefiting from it. Likewise, in lines 39-40, "Get away […] with it" is an even more indicative positioning of businesses as morally corrupt, and the correction from "from it" to "with it" highlights this; "get away with it" obviously carries much stronger, potentially criminal, connotations of morality. By claiming the moral corruptibility of businesses, McMorrin implies they cannot be trusted to maintain workers' rights by their own devices and thus stronger legislation is necessary. Her questions can be seen as particularly leading due to their implicit moral prefaces. Specifically, in lines 5-6, the positioning of businesses as potentially morally corrupt functions to make her question in lines 7-8 appear morally driven. We assume by a principle of relevance (Sperber and Wilson 1986) that she asks the question in lines 7-8 because businesses are morally corrupt; however, she does not state a causal link between the question she asks and her prefacing. The negative rhetorical device "don't you think" in line 7 in conjunction with the drop in intonation at the end of the utterance (line 8) changes the nature of the communicative act; the question does not solicit information or an alternative view, but confirmation of McMorrin's moral reasoning (Ehrlich and Freed 2010).

The "leading" nature of the question can be seen as encouraging Tolhurst to engage in disagreement and present an alternative moral reasoning; we can reasonably assume that McMorrin is aware that Tolhurst does not share the view that this is a moral issue which consequently requires further legislation, given Tolhurst's prior positioning up until now during the hearing. Therefore, she is unlikely to solicit the confirmation demanded by the

question. It also co-opts Tolhurst into an interactional position defined by morality by referentially placing her as an interactant who is not only relevant to this moral problem but is someone who has a say on it. In absence of any justification, asking Tolhurst this question has the effect of answering McMorrin's moral preface question by positioning Tolhurst interactionally as a relevant moral judge through implicating that she is someone who is either capable or required to be making a moral judgement. Her position becomes not just as a witness to the inquiry, but as a moral witness. This has more significance than just positioning these interlocutors in relation to the issue, but it implicates the nature of the audience and the interlocutors' relationship to this audience. As the voting public to a political interaction will always be the ultimate judges of moral issues, to make this a moral issue is to suggest a broader, lay audience, over a more specific, perhaps technical one. McMorrin's prefacing also references the interlocutors as acting moral judges *for* the audience. Thus, Tolhurst has been challenged not only to present alternative moral reasoning, but by extension to respond to the nature of the audience which McMorrin has pictured as relevant to their interaction and their relationship to the audience as interlocutors.

Tolhurst does indeed disagree with McMorrin and provides alternative moral reasoning to imply that they are not moral judges, and that this is not a moral interaction. She positions the market ("public" and "shareholders") as the capable moral judge (lines 29-30 and 34-35) and implies that the moral corruptibility of business is irrelevant given that the market ensures that businesses police modern slavery. Furthermore, in lines 32-33 she implies that her disagreement is not on the basis of a reluctance to enact legislation but on the basis of moral grounds; the market can regulate businesses and there is no need for greater government control. In this way, she denies that they are talking as moral judges on behalf of the audience as McMorrin implies, but rather that the audience are their own moral judges. Furthermore, her two references "the public expect" in lines 30 and 35 could also be interpreted as a subtle rejection of the notion of a listening public audience. However, Tolhurst employs multiple linguistic strategies to mitigate her disagreement. Firstly, she uses "expect" three times to show solidarity with McMorrin's suggestion that businesses are capable of moral corruption and in doing so does not directly disagree with McMorrin's moral reasoning. Furthermore, repeated markers of agreement such as "absolutely" (line 24), "you're quite right" (line 34), "it's quite right" (lines 27, 31) purport that agreement with McMorrin's moral reasoning is happening here, or at least that she is not questioning the moral basis of her argument. In particular, using "right" three times here is interesting because of its moral connotations; not only does "it's quite right" mark agreement, but it suggests moral agreement or at least willingness to continue talking around the issue within a moral axis. Consequently, this acts to deny the existence of a moral *problem* at all. Thus, whilst conducting ideological disagreement on moral grounds, Tolhurst's use of linguistic features and communicative acts used to express the disagreement often appear to "do" agreement.

This strategy can be seen to add credence to her position by suggesting a maturity that perhaps McMorrin's leading question does not have. Her mitigation of disagreement represents an acknowledgement of the positive face needs (Brown and Levinson 1987) of McMorrin and in doing so she plays the professional role of the witness; accepting the bounds of the question is important to look like you are doing rightly what a witness is expected to do, whilst effort is made to couch any kind of substantive ideological disagreement deep within her interactional means of agreement. Maturity in interaction is itself a morally ground concept, so for Tolhurst to do disagreement within perceived morally mature bounds frames her as a quality moral judge in her capability to decide that morality is in fact not relevant to this policy issue. Thus her delivery of almost 'non-disagreement'

carries with it social meaning that passes commentary on her ideological position. In this way, mitigation of disagreement is not just because she does not want disagreement to occur, but because of what it represents about her moral competence, her interactive competence, and by extension the competence of her arguments.

However, in avoiding taking the political "bait", Tolhurst's mitigation of disagreement, perhaps ironically, causes its own tensions. After a similar repeated strategy from McMorrin in lines 37-42, again inciting disagreement (notably through "could you *not* do that"), Tolhurst no longer attempts to make any mitigated disagreement, but rather demonstrates a lack of willingness even to engage with McMorrin's challenge (lines 43-44). This can be seen as a refusal to play the political game, and as a result McMorrin takes direct attack on Tolhurst's professional role (lines 45-47) which she has been "hiding behind" to avoid political debate.

Tolhurst's attempt to construct moral maturity through mitigating disagreement, in contrast to McMorrin's attempts to make the issue at hand one of moral disagreement in its requirement of policy action, represent deliberately alternative interpretations of role expectations. The former indexing notions of a professional identity and the latter of a political one with the intention of making the problem at hand either a professional, or a political one. As a result, the interactional strategies are significant in light of the potential effect that they could have in determining the ideological framing of the policy issue at hand; this is the bottom line for these two participants whose interactional goals are to socially define the problems at hand.

6. Discussion

The extent to which disagreement is expected in the creation of public policy is so much so that it is fundamental to the enactment of the role performance of the political policy maker in this event. More specifically, the extent and ways in which policy makers decide to engage or look to be engaging in disagreement is a resource available to them in order to discursively define which interactional roles are relevant to the policy issue at hand. The political significance given to disagreement within the policy context is the indexical link through which an issue is given relevance in the definition of policy because disagreement is so inherently tied up with the professional performance of political beings. As a consequence of this, disagreement becomes a resource for participants in the policy context to index whether an issue at hand is a policy issue or not. It carries notions of political performance to such an extent that it (or mitigation thereof) becomes a resource for appearing political or not, and likewise for making issues political or not. This performance of the professional political roles potentially available to the participants in this space is itself core to the ideological regulation of policy, and management of disagreement is integral in this performative act. In this way, there exists significant tension around whether disagreement should itself be there or not, making "disagreement about disagreement" a common and highly performative act in the event. Because the primary demand of the policy process is the definition of whether certain issues should even be the focus of policy changes or not, the extent to which we can distinguish policy making professionals from political beings is highly constructive in the ideological definition of the policy issue at play. The ideological game at hand becomes one of exploiting or suppressing disagreement, with the intention of negotiating which issues are relevant to which aspects of the participants' roles. The irony of this is that disagreement is something which is frequently required of participants for them to be complicit in their interactional role.

This is a process by which political beings indicate their ideological orientation towards certain issues for the benefit of an overhearing audience. Disagreement's enactment (or lack of), therefore, goes beyond the interactional situated context; it has wider consequences for macro and micro party politics as it is a process whereby politicians decide which specific issues are important in defining their ideological mandate for the benefit of their audience. Disagreement, role performance, ideology and audience as a result become entangled concepts in which their indexical relationships are so intertwined that it is difficult to apply our preconceptions of them from their standalone theoretical backgrounds.

Accordingly, the place and function of disagreement in the meso-level of the policy inquiry hearing becomes contested ground because of the hybridisation of political and professional expectations. In the situated interactional context, particularly in the inquiry-witness dynamic, complicity and maturity are important, but the increasing accessibility of a potentially unlimited audience to the inquiry carries with it political expectations of disagreement. Disagreement is institutionalised for participants to "do" policy and areas of "political responsibility" need to be both interactionally and ideologically disagreed upon by the participants in order to meet the societal expectations of professional politicians' overall linguistic behaviours.

Disagreement is critical in the determining of which roles are relevant to which aspects of this event, but it is the ideological implications of whether certain issues are of professional or political importance that makes disagreement so ideologically performative here. This is demonstrated particularly by the fact that the same speakers adopt seemingly contradictory performances within the same hearing (Tolhurst, for example, in Excerpts A and B). It is this continued variation between disagreement practice in the political and professional performances of actors, as well as the professional and political expectations that they demand of one another, that allow for disagreement to be so ideologically constructive and challenging. Such dynamism is characteristic of this event and is what makes interactional practices here so ideologically potent.

What is particularly significant in this political meso-level is the extent to which the roles of the speakers are themselves significant in terms of the ideas that are being discussed, because politicians are, by definition, vicarious advocates for ideological groups on certain issues and are thus symbolic representations of specific ideologies. We would argue that every potential role in an interaction is such; however, politicians are the ultimate example of this because their very existence depends on it. Thus, disagreement between two politicians is itself symbolic of the difference between ideas. In this way, disagreement in policy making about substantive issues relevant to policy through the interactional negotiation of roles is a fundamental mechanism by which policy is ideologically/socially defined. Crucially, however, such disagreements are made in the name and on behalf of an audience. Politicians, therefore, do not disagree on behalf of themselves or even on behalf of ideologies, but importantly on behalf of ideologically-defined audiences.

The usefulness of an audience design framing, however, goes further than explaining that interaction is given ideological meaning because of the nature of the audience. The dynamic relationship between speaker variation and audience is one that helps us understand how the speakers can also actively shape the relationship with, and also the existence of, an audience in a context where this relationship is still novel and ambiguous. Principally, we are referring to the referee design aspect of Bell's (1984) audience design framework and referee design addition (2001), including persons significant for the speaker but physically absent. This allows for scoping how speaker choices are not just responsive to but also initiative of an audience or rather in engaging certain aspects of it over others. Broadcast talk theorists, according to Montgomery (2007), have well expanded on how interlocutors claim

communicative entitlement for their interactional positions through reference to the audience. They have also long realised how interlocutors choose to interact in order to potentially generate further audiences (the typical example being a provocative news anchor). However, when interactional roles are politically precarious, and the nature of the audience is also particularly uncertain, the initiative nature of audience design becomes particularly apparent. In this case, defining who the relevant audience is becomes incredibly important for the production of interactional positions and vice versa as the performance of interactional positions implicates, and by consequence may even generate, certain factions of an audience. This is part of the benefit of research into the meso-space of the select committee hearing; that brings to the fore the initiative aspect of audience design and highlights how it is as much an ideologically renewing process as it is an ideologically dependent one.

The social enactment of particular policy problems is not simply a reflection of the audience watching, as this contains multiple potential groupings of sub-audiences divided according to ideological lines regarding their beliefs on the policy issues at hand. The performative act of disagreement practice works to engage certain factions of the audience, by imbuing certain issues with political relevance to the inquiry over others. The success of engaging audiences around certain issues over others may often only be seen in subsequent stakeholder responses, as the framing of these issues begins to contribute to macro level discourses. In this way, meso-level events can also be defined by their dynamic multiplicity of audiences which allows for the disagreement variation to be so constructive of the relationship with the audience through its ideological work. We attempt to capture the interaction between different audiences, current or future, present or absent, in figure 1.

Demasi (2016, 68) has recognised this dynamic as a "multi-axial communicative environment" in which interaction between participants in political debate is also interaction with multiple audiences, and these interactions are all interrelated, multi-directional and performative. The framework below attempts to capture the interrelationships between the interactional roles of the policy context and audience; the existence and nature of these constituent parts is fundamentally dependent upon one another and these interrelationships are mediated primarily by disagreement in the public inquiry context.
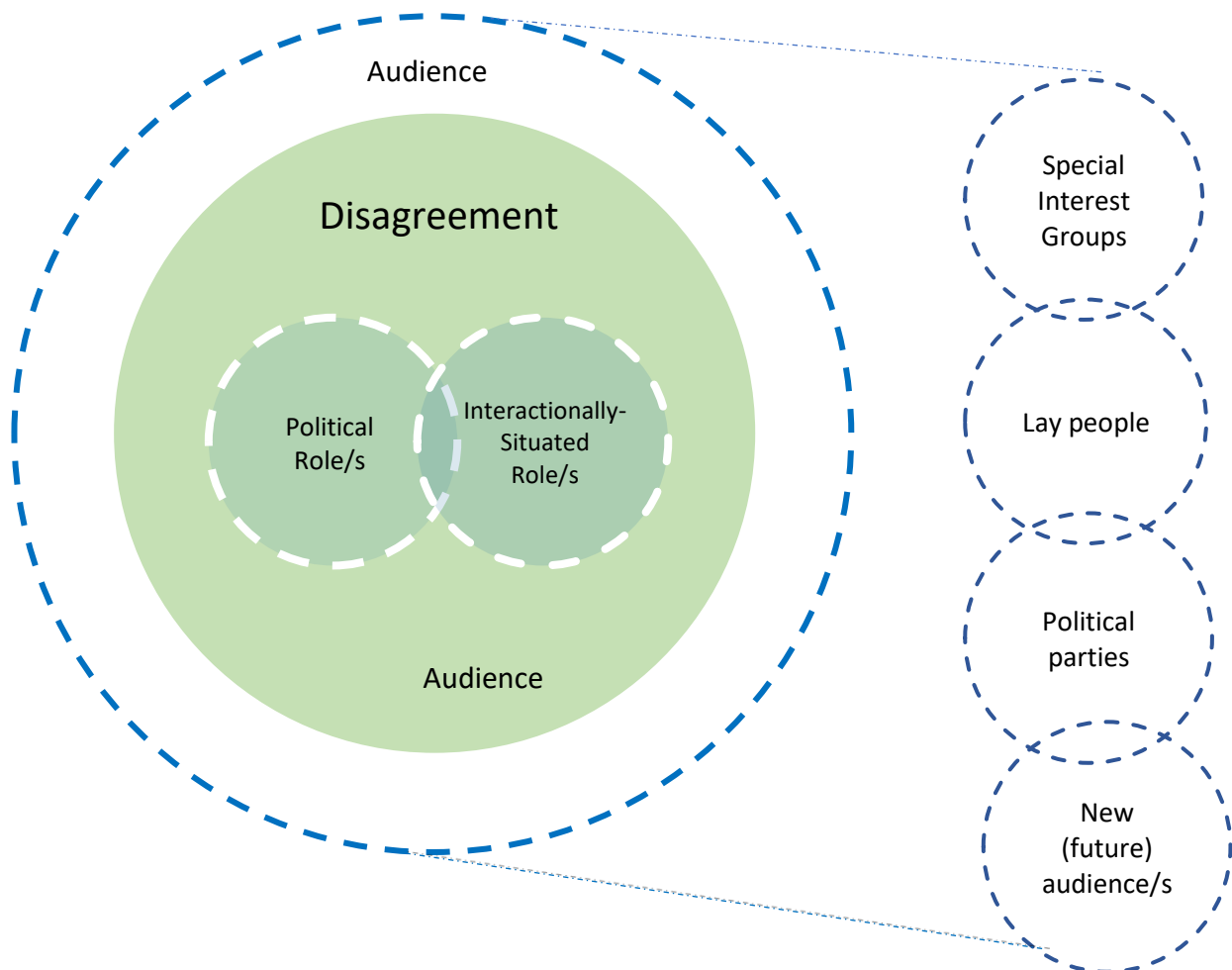
Fig.1 Disagreement and audience design

This model gives disagreement a central role in interpreting the relationship between audience and interaction within the public inquiry context. It is, evidently, an abstraction and simplification which aims to show the ideological projection of role performance in the event we are interested in. Fundamentally, the interdependencies between the professional roles of the participants in a political encounter not as scripted as parliament and the audience's expectations are co-constitutive in and through the disagreement act. We discuss this further in the closing of our paper.

7. Conclusion

Politicians are expected to disagree in order to align in their roles as politicians. Whilst they might not be aligning ideologically in relation to policy issues, they are "working together" to enact their policy roles at times which practically means agreeing to disagree as the main modus operandi of managing policy arenas, such as the public inquiry context. However, the changing nature of policy making domains which tie in with these expectations about roles and performance have an impact upon the construction of ideologies themselves. That talk is an increasingly visible aspect of the policy process impacts upon what it means to create and

define policy. Not only do the participants have to negotiate new or changing communicative domains, but their communicative ability and decision-making in light of these dynamic contexts can have profound consequences for the output of the policy process itself as well as its perceived societal role. It is perhaps axiomatic to suggest that the mechanisms of policy contribute to the nature of policy, but meso-level events present an analytical opportunity to map the symbiotic relationship between communicative practices/semiotic processes and policy-making.

Our paper has addressed the role and function of disagreement in the under-researched UK public inquiry ecosystem. We hope we pave the way for future studies in contexts where disagreement is ideologically driven, and therefore, a critical, political view is a theoretically useful starting point.

References

Angermuller, Johannes., Dominique. Maingueneau, and Ruth. Wodak, . 2014. *The discourse studies reader: Main currents in theory and analysis.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Angouri, Jo. 2018. *Culture, discourse & the workplace.* Oxon: Routledge.

Angouri, Jo. 2012. "Managing disagreement in problem solving meeting talk." *Journal of Pragmatics* 44: 1565-1579.

Angouri, Jo, and Miriam A. Locher. 2012. "Theorising disagreement." *Journal of Pragmatics* 44: 1549-1553.

Angouri, Jo, and Ruth Wodak. 2014. "'They became big in the shadow of the crisis': The Greek success story and the rise of the far right." *Discourse & Society* 25 (4): 540-565.

Bargiela-Chiappini, Francesca, and Sandra Harris. 1997. *Managing language: The discourse of corporate meetings.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Bell, Allan. 2001. "Back in style: Reworking audience design." In *Style and sociolinguistic variation*, edited by P. Eckert and J. R. Rickford, 139-169. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bell, Allan. 1984. "Language Style as Audience Design." *Language in Society* (Cambridge University Press) 13 (2): 145-204.

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana. 1983. "The dynamics of political interviews." *Text* 3 (2): 131-153.

Bousfield, Derek. 2014. "Stylistics, speech acts and im/politeness theory." In *The Routledge Handbook of Stylistics*, edited by Michael Burke, 118-135. New York: Routledge.

Brown, Penelope, and Stephen C. Levinson. 1987. *Politeness: some universals in language usage.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Buttny, Richard. 2015. "Contesting hydrofracking during an inter-governmental hearing: Accounting by reworking or challenging the question." *Discourse & Communication* 9 (4): 423-440.

Chiu, Ming Ming. 2008. "Effects of argumentation on group micro-creativity: Statistical discourse analyses of algebra students' collaborative problem solving." *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 33: 382-402.

Demasi, Mirko A. 2016. "Debating the European Union – Dynamics of Argumentation in Political Debates." Loughborough University.

Drew, Paul, and John Heritage. 1992. "Analyzing talk at work: an introduction." In *Talk at Work: Interaction in Institutional Settings*, edited by P. Drew and J. Heritage, 3–65. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ehrlich, Susan, and Alice F. Freed. 2010. "The function of questions in institutional discourse: An introduction." In *Why do you ask? : The function of questions in institutional discourse*, edited by S. Ehrlich and A. F. Freed, 3-19. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Ekström, Mats. 2001. "Politicians interviewed on television news." *Discourse and Society* 12 (5): 563–584.

Fairclough, Norman. 2013. "Critical discourse analysis and critical policy studies." *Critical Policy Studies* 7 (2): 177-197.

Georgakopoulou, Alexandra. 2012. "'A simple disagreement? A row? Or a massive fall out?': On the challenges of an analytical task." *Journal of Pragmatics* 44: 1623-1625.

Gumperz, John Joseph, and Jenny Cook-Gumperz. 2008. "Studying language, culture, and society: Sociolinguistics or linguistic anthropology?" *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 12 (4): 532–545.

Haggith, M. 1993. "Disagreement in creative problem solving." AAAI Technical Report SS-93-01.

Haggith, Mandy. 1993. "Disagreement in creative problem solving." AAAI Technical Report SS-93-01.

Hajer, Maarten A. 1995. *The politics of environmental discourse: Ecological modernisation and the policy process.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Halliday, Michael Alexander Kirkwood. 1978. *Language as social semiotic: the social interpretation of language and meaning.* London: Edward Arnold.

Hanks, William F. 1990. *Referential practice: Language and lived space among the Maya.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Haugh, Michael. 2007. "The discursive challenge to politeness research: An interactional alternative." *Journal of Politeness Research* 3: 295-317.

Haworth, Kate. 2013. "Audience design in the police interview: The interactional and judicial consequences of audience orientation." *Language In Society* 45-69.

Hutchby, Ian. 2005. "Conversation analysis and the study of broadcast talk." In *Handbook of Language and Social Interaction*, edited by R. Sanders and K. Fitch, 437-460. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Institute for Government. 2018. *Public Inquiries.* 21 May. Accessed June 2020. https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/public-inquiries.

—. 2020. *Select committees.* 19 May. Accessed June 2020. https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/select-committees.

Kreis, Ramona. 2017. "The "Tweet Politics" of President Trump." *Journal of Language and Politics* 16 (4): 607-618.

Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe. 1985. *Hegemony and socialist strategy. Towards a radical democratic politics.* London, New York: Verso.

Laville, Sandra. 2019. "Six UK fashion retailers fail to cotton on to sustainability." *The Guardian.* Accessed 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2019/jan/31/six-uk-fashion-retailers-fail-to-cotton-on-to-sustainability-environment.

Levinson, Stephen C. 1983. *Pragmatics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Livesey, Sharon M. 2002. "The discourse of the middle ground: Citizen shell commits to sustaiable development." *Management Communication Quarterly* 15 (3): 313-349.

Marra, Meredith. 2012. "Disagreeing without being disagreeable: Negotiating workplace communities as an outsider." *Journal of Pragmatics* 44 (12): 1580-1590.

Marshall, Joe. 2020. *Select Committees.* Accessed 2021. https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/select-committees.

Mondada, Lorenza. 2011. "The interactional production of multiple spatialities within a participatory democracy meeting." *Social Semiotics* 21 (2): 289-316.

Montgomery, Martin. 2007. *The discourse of broadcast news: A linguistic approach.* Oxon: Routledge.

Murphy, James. 2019. *The discursive construction of blame: The language of public inquiries.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Myers, Greg. 1998. "Displaying opinions: Topics and disagreement in focus groups." *Language in society* 85-111.

Rampton, Ben. 2016. "Foucault, Gumperz and governmentality: Interaction, power and subjectivity in the twenty-first century." In *Sociolinguistics: Theoretical Debates*, edited by N. Coupland, 303-328. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rydin, Yvonne. 1999. "Can we talk ourselves into sustainability? The role of discourse in the environmental policy process." *Environmental Values* 8 (4): 467-484.

Sacks, Harvey. 1973/1987. "On the preference for agreement and contiguity in sequences in conversation." In *Talk and Social Organisation*, edited by G.B., Lee, J.R.E. Button, 54–69. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Schattschneider, Elmer Eric. 1960. *The semisovereign people: A realist's view of democracy in America.* Hinsdale: Dryden.

Schriffin, Deborah. 1984. "Jewish argument as sociability." *Language in Society* 13: 311-335.

Sifianou, Maria. 2012. "Disagreements, face and politeness." *Journal of Pragmatics* 44: 1554-1564.

Smith, Sophie. 2018. "MPs launch inquiry into fashion industry's environmental impact." *The Telegraph.* Accessed 2019. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2018/06/22/mps-launch-inquiry-fashion-industrys-environmental-impact/.

Smithers, Rebecca. 2018. "MPs to examine environmental footprint of UK fashion industry." *The Guardian.* Accessed 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2018/jun/22/mps-to-examine-environmental-footprint-of-uk-fashion-industry.

Sperber, Dan, and Deirdre Wilson. 1986. *Relevance: Communication and cognition.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Tannen, Deborah, and Christina Kakavá. 1992. "Power and solidarity in modern Greek conversation: disagreeing to agree." *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 10 (1): 11-34.

UK Government. n.d. *How Government Works.* Accessed June 2020. https://www.gov.uk/government/how-government-works.

UK Parliament. 2018. *MPs to measure-up the fashion industry with event at the V&A.* November. Accessed June 2020. https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environmental-audit-committee/news-parliament-2017/sustainable-fashion-vanda-evidence-17-19/.

—. 2018. *parliamentlive.tv: Environmental Audit Committee.* 18 December. https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/ccea76b1-55ee-4cff-94a8-146852285d1e.

—. 2019. *Sustainability of the fashion industry inquiry - publications.* Accessed 2019. https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environmental-audit-committee/inquiries/parliament-2017/sustainability-of-the-fashion-industry-17-19/publications/.

—. n.d. *www.parliament.uk.* Accessed June 2020. https://www.parliament.uk/about/how/.

Wodak, Ruth. 2009. *The discourse of politics in action: Politics as usual.* London; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Address for correspondence

Tom W. Underwood
c/o Applied Linguistics
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL
UK

t.underwood.1@outlook.com

ORCID: 0000-0003-2722-6547

Co-author's information

Jo Angouri
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL
UK

J.Angouri@warwick.ac.uk

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0900-1029