



Title	Interpretation of Action and Sociality of Action
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Interpretation of
Action and Sociality of
Action
SOCREAL 2010

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Interpretation

- We use the word ‘interpretation’ (of action) as to make a choice from possible intentions of an agent which explain his action.
- If the intention which an interpreter decides as the interpretation of an action has the same type as the intention which *actually* motivates it, we say that the interpretation is *correct*.

Case A

- Suppose that Mike wants to take a taxi. Then, he intends to stop it, and so he raises his hand toward a taxi. Let John be the driver of the taxi. He interprets Mike's action *correctly*, so he stops his car, and Mike successfully takes a taxi.
- In this case, everything goes well.

Case B

- Suppose that Mike wants to take some exercise. At first, he intends to work upper body, and he raises his hand. At the moment John happens to pass by, and he watches Mike's raising hand. John interprets Mike's action *wrongly*, and He stops his car. But Mike, of course, does not get into the car.
- John may complain about Mike's action.

Case C

- Let us revise Case A with following modification. Suppose that John has a strong desire to go home. So, John is aware of Mike's action, whereas John does not stop his car.
- Mike may complain about John's action.

Interpretation of raising hand (1)

- Mike's intention to stop a taxi [I1]
- Mike's intention to take some exercise [I2]
- With appropriate mental states of Mike, both [I1] and [I2] why he raises hand.
- John can believe that
 - Mike raise hand because of [I1]
 - Mike does so because of [I2]

Interpretation of raising hand (2)

- Why does John interpret raising hand as the expression of the intention to stop a taxi?
- In a case that involves a pedestrian and a taxi, *the possibility* of raising hand's being the expression of the intention to stop a taxi is stronger than *possibilities* of the action's being the expression of other intentions.

Restriction on interpretation

(RI)

(I) [Y] interprets [A] as the representation of [I]

only if

(II) [Y] *can rationally believe* that [X] makes [A]
because of [I]

[A]: action [X]: agent of [A] [Y]: interpreter
[I]: intention

1. Mike [P1]
2. John [P2]
3. Mike's intention to stop a taxi [I1]
4. Mike's intention to take some exercise [I2]
5. Raising hand [E1]
6. Interpretation of [E1] [E2]
7. Stopping a taxi by [P1] [E3]

- Both I1 and I2 meet condition (Π) in (RI)
- There may be other intentions which meet (Π). But, here, suppose that they do not occur to [P2].

The Direction of the complaint in the Case B

- In the Case B,
John([P2]) may complain about [E1] of Mike([P1]).
- The Case B contains the intentional action (= Mike's raising hand [E1]) involving the unintentional result (= to stop the taxi [E3]).
- It occurs because of John's *misinterpretation*.
- But it is not John but Mike who ought to excuse himself for his action.

Predictability of interpretation

- If we admit that our actions are founded on *predictabilities of interpretations* (PI), the problem of direction may disappear.
- For, if Mike[P1] takes the possibility of misinterpretation into consideration, he did not raise hand in the situation of the Case B. For, in such a situation, it is strongly possible that a taxi driver interprets raising hand[E1] as the expression of [I1].
- So, we can say that Mike also makes mistake. And, if the possibility of misinterpretation is strong, we would say that one who is wrong is Mike.

From intention to action (1)

(A) Mike believes that

(1) the taxi driver of the taxi (which gets closer to Mike by chance)

(a) interprets raising hand as the expression of the intention to stop a taxi, *and*

(b) is willing to stop a taxi, when he is aware of such an expression.

From intention to action (2)

(B) Mike believes that

(2) all taxi drivers

(c) interprets raising hand as the expression of the intention to stop a taxi, *and*

(d) is willing to stop his car, when he is aware of such an expression.

From intention to action (3)

(C) Mike believes that

(3) most taxi drivers

(e) interpret raising hand as the representation of the intention to stop a taxi, *and*

(f) are willing to stop his car, when they are aware of such an expression.

From intention to action (4)

- It may work well. Here, one may point out that (C) does not entail (A) unless we add some incidental presuppositions. But even so, it is plausible that Mike raises his hand as the expression of his intention. For, if (C) is true, Mike will still act so as a *reasonable bet*.

From intention to action (5)

- However, (C) still has one drawback. Let us revise Mike's case with following modification. Suppose that John is aware of Mike's action, whereas John does not stop his car. In this case, Mike may complain about John's action. And if he does, Mike's complaint is directed to John.

From intention to action (6)

- Even if actually (3) holds and Mike believes so, John is just an exceptional man to (2). So, Mike's complaint must be something like "How bad luck it is today!" which does not have the directedness. Thus, we can say that (C) explains Mike's action, but it does not explain his complaint.

From intention to action (7)

(D) Mike expects that

(4) all taxi drivers

(g) interprets raising hand as the expression of the intention to stop a taxi, *and*

(h) is willing to stop his car, when he is aware of such an expression.

Case Study [Kidnap]

A kidnap occurred in a big city. This city is abounding in crime for several years and local residents are conscious of crime. But, kidnappers demanded ransom and parents paid ransom for their son. After all, kidnappers carried out their kidnapping successfully. In this crime kidnappers used a person (P) as a messenger. They asked P to send a letter in which they demanded ransom and indicated the locations of transactions. P contributed to kidnapping-for-ransom by sending the letter.

Case [1] child

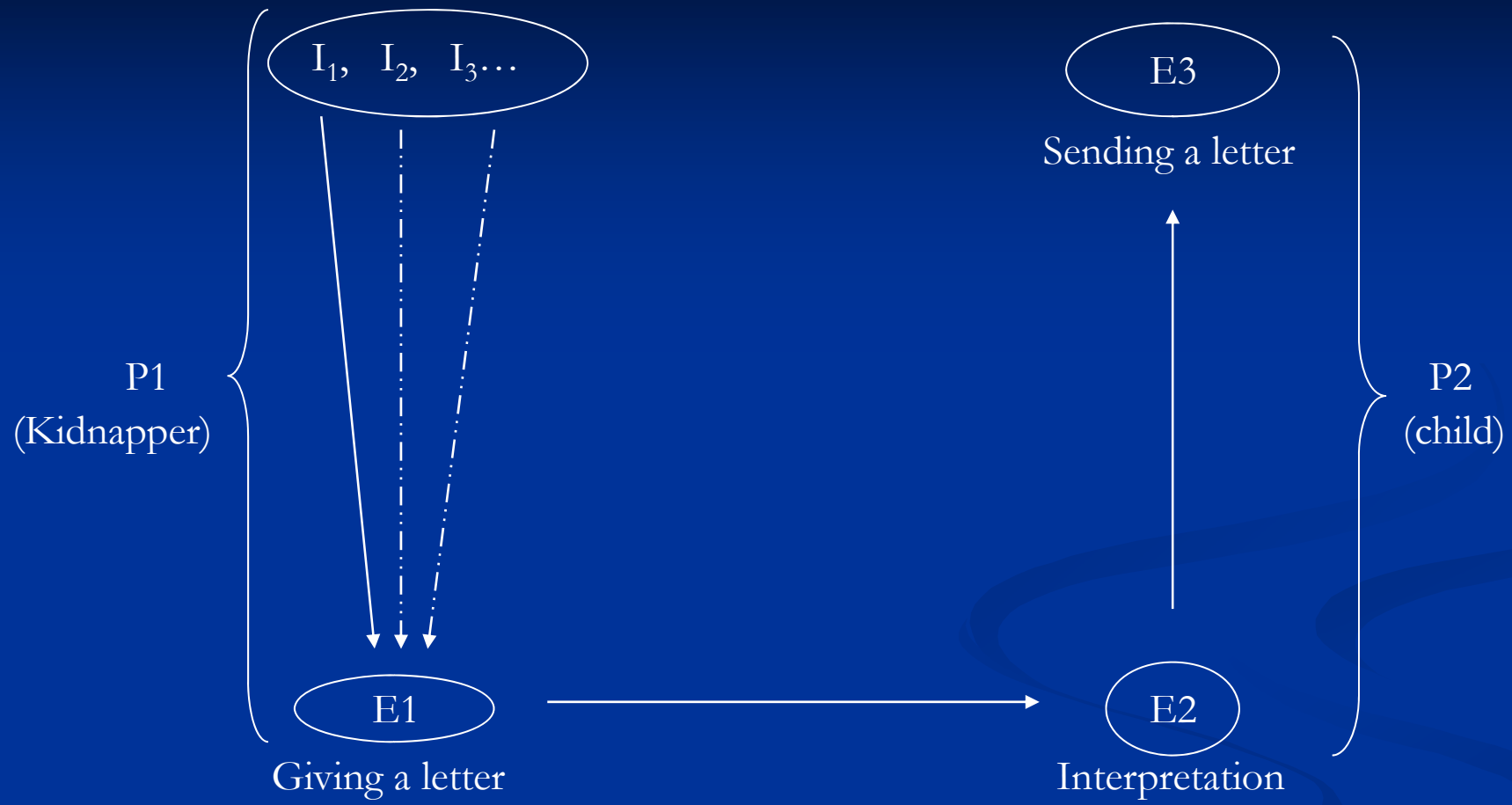
A kidnap occurred in a big city. This city is abounding in crime for several years and local residents are conscious of crime. But, kidnappers demanded ransom and parents paid ransom for their son. After all, kidnappers carried out their kidnapping successfully. In this crime kidnappers used *a child* as a messenger. They asked *the child* to send a letter, in which they demanded ransom and indicated the locations of transactions. *The child* contributed to kidnapping-for-ransom by sending the letter. But, *the child* didn't know contents of the letter. Because *the child* was asked to send a letter when he happened to pass a kidnapper by.

Case [2] adult

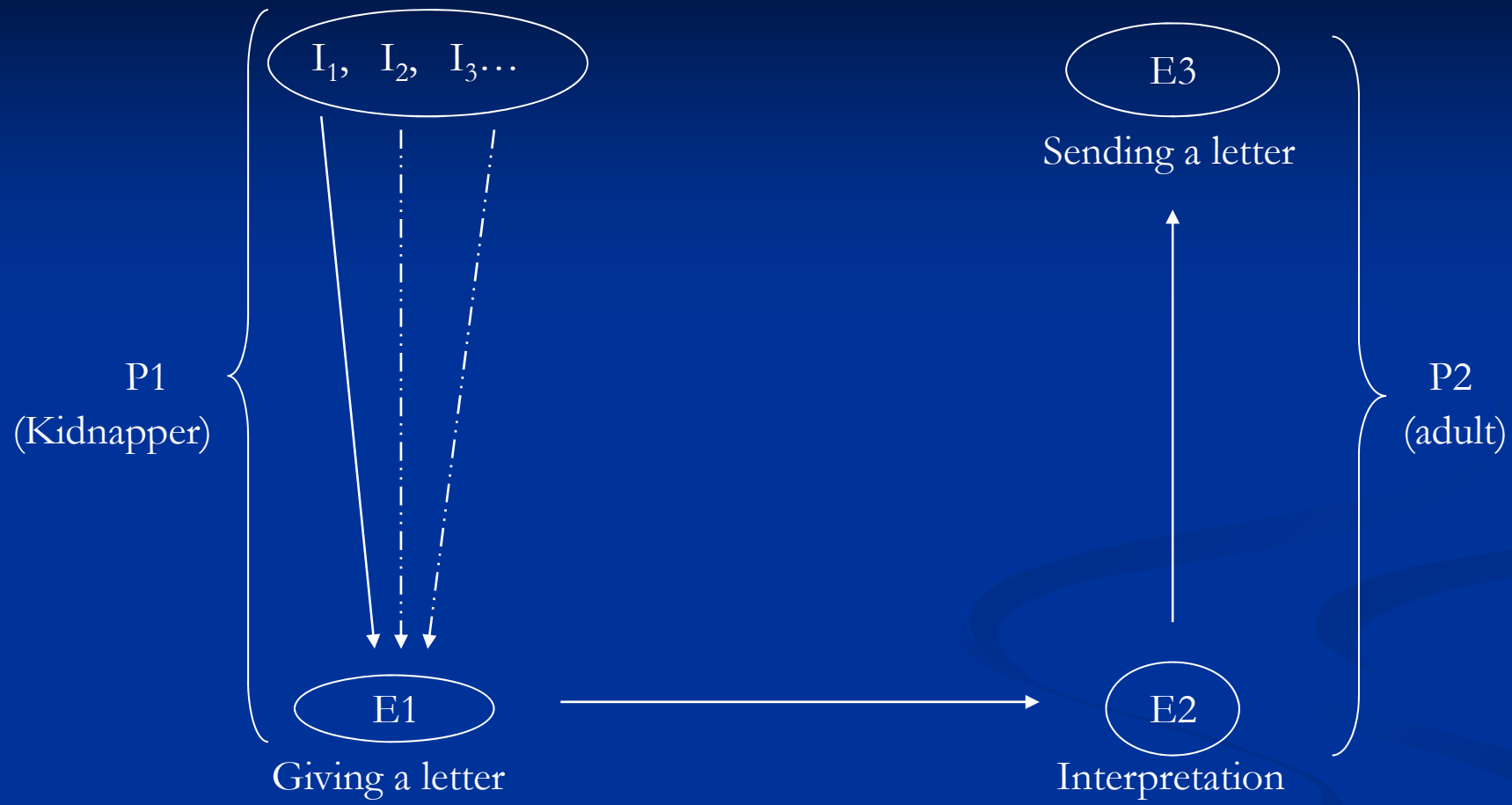
A kidnap occurred in a big city. This city is abounding in crime for several years and local residents are conscious of crime. But, kidnappers demanded ransom and parents paid ransom for their son. After all, kidnappers carried out their kidnapping successfully. In this crime kidnappers used *a adult* as a messenger. They asked *the adult* to send a letter, in which they demanded ransom and indicated the locations of transactions. *The adult* contributed to kidnapping-for-ransom by sending the letter. But, *the adult* didn't know contents of the letter. Because *the adult* was asked to send a letter when he happened to pass a kidnapper by.

Case [3] member of kidnappers

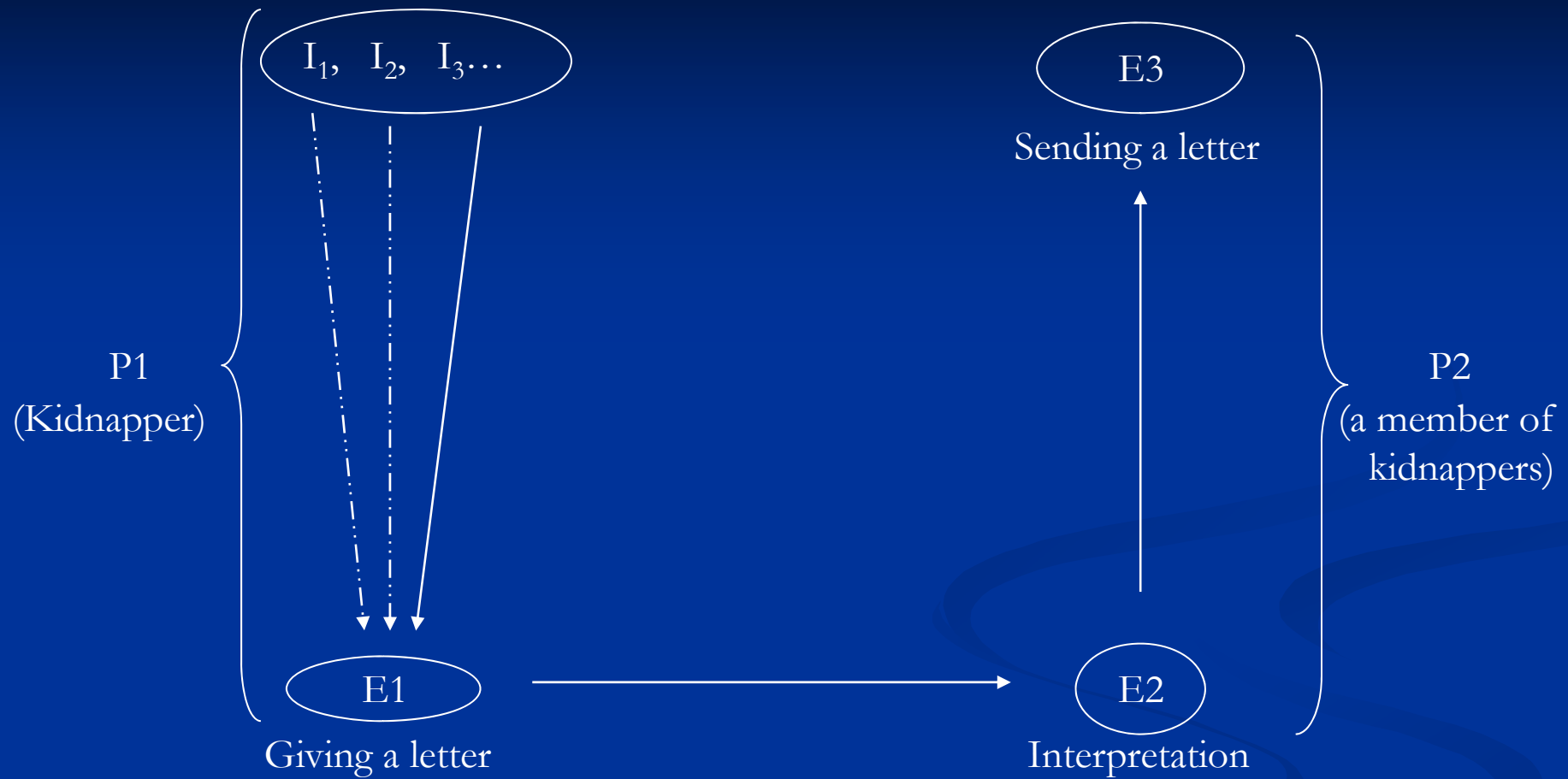
A kidnap occurred in a big city. This city is abounding in crime for several years and local residents are conscious of crime. But, kidnappers demanded ransom and parents paid ransom for their son. After all, kidnappers carried out their kidnapping successfully. In this crime kidnappers used *a member of kidnappers* as a messenger. They asked *the member* to send a letter, in which they demanded ransom and indicated the locations of transactions. *The member* contributed to kidnapping-for-ransom by sending the letter. As a matter of course, *the member* did know contents of the letter.



The child case



The adult case



The member case

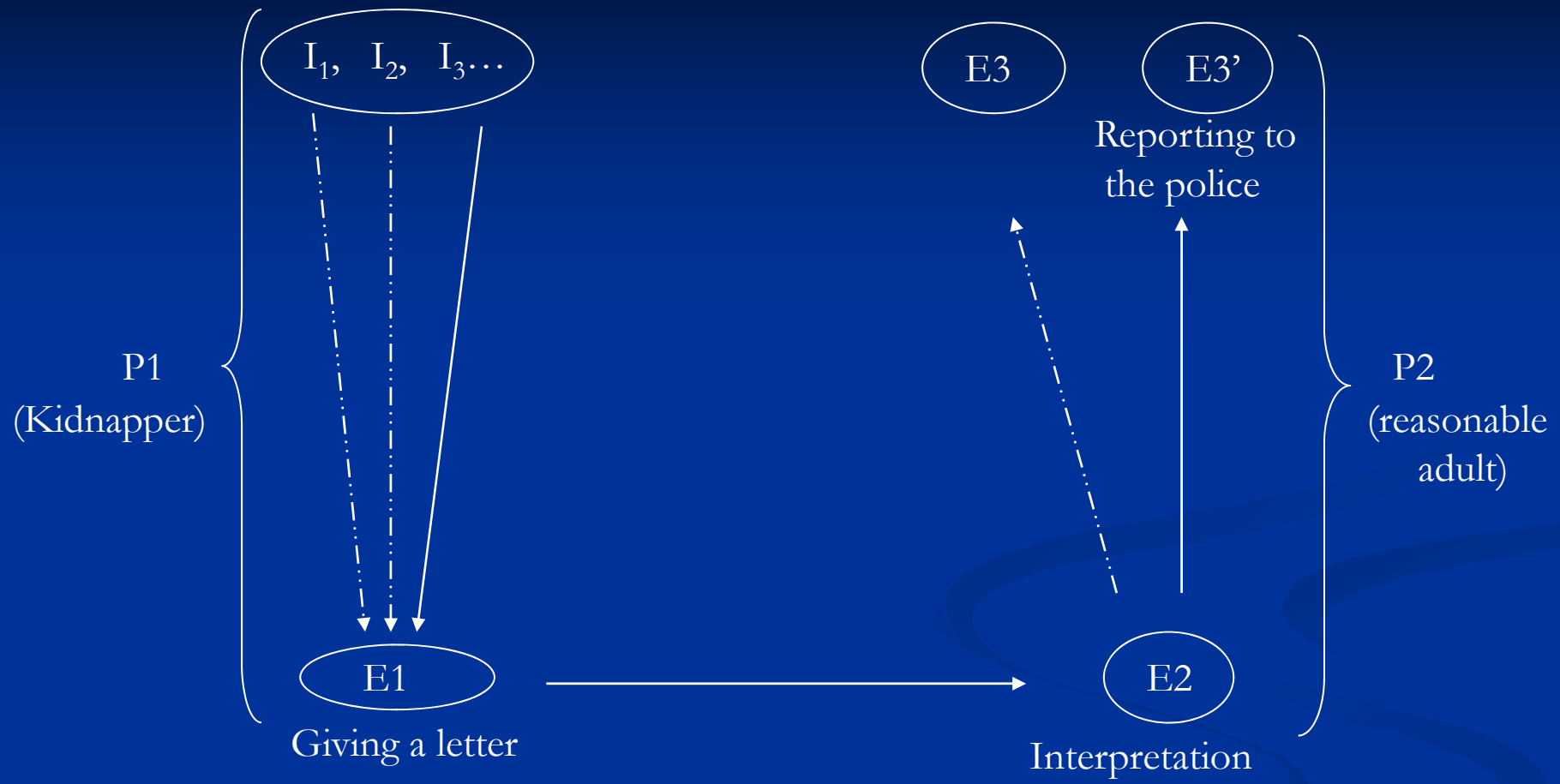
case	child	adult	a member of kidnappers
Causal connection	✓	✓	✓
Cooperative	NG	NG	✓
Share end	NG	NG	✓

Case	child	adult	a member
Causal connection	✓	✓	✓
Cooperative	NG	NG	✓
Share end	NG	NG	✓
Seriousness	High	High	High
Predictability	?	?	Full

What is the predictability of intention ?

[Predictability of Intention] (“the P2’s predictability of intention of P1’s action”) in our cases is ...

the possibility of picking up I_3 (the intention of demanding ransom) from a set of intentions which are candidates for the reason of P1’s action.



Reasonable adult case

Impoverished interpretation

- The point of the matter is *not* whether P2 discovers the purpose of P1's action.
- The point is...
“P2 picks up $[I_1]$ from *limited resources*, viz. a small number of candidates for the reason of P1”.
- But P2 could have expanded its resources if he had tried. But he had not tried.

Expected predictability of intention

[the child case]

Demanding ransom (I₃)



Giving a letter (E₁)



other intention (I₁ or I₂ or...)



Giving a letter (E₂)

[the adult case]

Demanding ransom (I₃)



Giving a letter (E₁)



other intention (I₁ or I₂ or...)



Giving a letter (E₂)

- *We* estimate that for the child it is so hard to predict that I₃ is the intention of P1's action (E₁) in the child case.
- *We* expect the adult to predict that I₃ is the intention of P1's action (E₁) in the adult case.

Expected predictability of intention [EPI]

- EPI depends on *our evaluating the situation* in which a person makes any action. Our evaluating the situation in the adult case, viz. big city where is abounding in crime, makes EPI strong.
- But, when the adult's action is located in another situation, for example a tranquil country town, we may say that he is not responsible for his action.

Thank you
for your attention

