An Approach to Political Interlocutions

KNUT MIDGAARD
HALVOR STENSTADVOLD
ARILD UNDERDAL
University of Oslo

1. Introduction*

During the last decades there has been an increasing tendency among political scientists to try to describe and explain political behavior in rationalistic terms, i.e. in terms of deliberate and intelligent choices.[1] Such an approach requires that the various types of situation in which political actors make their decisions are made the object of systematic study with a view to obtaining a clear understanding of the problems and possibilities with which the actors are confronted, and of the types of interaction the situations are apt to produce.

Two features are likely to be salient in the choice situation of a political actor pursuing his goals: 1) the existence of rules, some of which are inherent in human interaction, and some of which can be manipulated to favor certain interests and types of behavior to the detriment of others, and 2) the existence of other actors who are pursuing their own goals, perhaps taking the political actor's own possible choice of strategy into consideration, and perhaps acting in ways which are parasitic on the rules. This applies more specifically to political interlocutions, in particular debates and negotiations, both of which are characterized by an official purpose; a set of participants who pursue their goals; the formal commitment of the participants to the rules of language and the rules of procedure; the possibility of dishonesty and insincerity, etc.

These kinds of interaction, the subject of this essay, deserve systematic study for at least two reasons. First, they do indeed have a central place in political life. There are many significant situations, processes, and events that we cannot get a firm grasp of unless we have a good understanding of the debates and negotiations involved. Second, they are fascinating subjects in themselves, with considerable human significance. This conviction has led to a series of studies in Oslo in

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the field of negotiations and debates. Among these are theoretical and empirical inquiries by the present authors.[2]

This is a very provisional report. On the one hand it presents some of the theoretical framework behind the questions asked in the various studies mentioned; on the other hand it is to some extent the fruit of these studies.[3] We have tried to blend both discussions and negotiations into one theme. It may be that we have dealt with too much at one time. However that may be, we have tried to systematize some basic concepts and considerations relevant to these and to other types of interlocutions, and to illustrate the relevance of these concepts and considerations through different types of examples. Much of what we say may seem trivial, but for us it has been useful to survey dimensions and elements whose significance can easily be overlooked, even though they are central.

We hope nevertheless that this provisional discussion can serve as an argument for a systematic study of the situations political actors confront when participating in debates and negotiations, or in other types of interlocutions, and that it can encourage a systematic study of the whole range of discussions and negotiations: creative ones, efficient and fair ones, tough ones, harsh ones, restrained and unproductive ones, unconnected and dull ones, those characterized by pretense, insincerity, and the exploitation of good will, as well as absurd ones.

We will first discuss basic aspects of the institutional framework of an interlocution: its purpose and topic, the participants and auditors, place and time, language, procedural rules, and organizational set-up. We will then introduce concepts related to the individual participants: their goals, premises, resources, etc. Finally we deal with the relationships between what goes on in an interlocution, and its environment or context. Throughout we shall discuss the implications and effects of different kinds of actions that the participants may perform.

Thus we will try to point out the significance of the various aspects and dimensions both by way of theoretical discussion and by examples from political life. Although no theory in any strict sense is constructed in this article, we hope to be able to suggest some kinds of dynamics to which different constellations of 'values' along the various dimensions may lead.

2. Purpose, Principles, and Common Premises

The concept of interlocution, or dialog, seems to imply the idea of a purpose that is recognized by the participants as being the purpose of the interlocution, i.e. a purpose to which they are committed in their capacity as participants. This implies that a participant who believes that at least one of the other participants is mistaken about the purpose, or disregards it, will feel that there is something defective about the interlocution.

The purpose to which the participants in an interlocution have committed themselves by taking part in it, must be distinguished conceptually from the goals they pursue through their participation; these may be very different from, and

in fact at variance with that purpose. To underline this distinction terminologically, and, in particular, to make a terminological distinction between the purpose we are dealing with here and the objective which a powerful or dominant coalition might consider the 'real' purpose of the interlocution, we will as a rule use the term 'official purpose' (or 'formal purpose') to denote the purpose to which the participants commit themselves through their participation.

The notion of the official purpose of an interlocution like a discussion or a negotiation implies that of its official topic. Thus, the official purpose of a discussion may be to solve a theoretical problem, and this problem is then its official topic; or the purpose may be that the participants help each other and the auditors to a better understanding of a phenomenon, which is its official topic. Similarly the purpose of a negotiation may be that the participants reach, i.e. sign, an agreement on a transaction, the character and conditions of which will be the topic of the negotiation.

The above considerations necessitate in any concrete study, an analysis of the official purpose and its implications, and the official as well as the real assumptions of participants and listeners. This proved necessary, for example, in the analysis of the negotiations on the enlargement of the European Community. Part of the difficulty there was that different conceptions were suggested as to the implications of negotiating on the conditions for membership. The Community found it finally necessary to point out to the applicant countries that the topic of the negotiations was more restricted than had been suggested. In the domesic debate in Norway disagreements then arose about the kinds of commitment the government had already made by negotiating at all.[4]

To continue, the official purpose may be more or less *specific*, and at each level of specificity there may be more or less *agreement*. If there is disagreement of any importance, even at a quite general level, the interlocution will be strained, and the more marked and the more complete the disagreement, the more the interlocution will be felt to have an absurd or pathological character. As the agreement on the official purpose approaches nil the interlocution dissolves.

The first phase of the Paris talks on Vietnam provides an interesting example. According to North Vietnam the purpose of the talks was to decide on the unconditional cessation of US bombing and all other acts of war against North Vietnam and thereafter to take up other questions of common interest. The United States, for their part, maintained that the purpose of the talks was to discuss the cessation of the bombing together with related questions. Thus, both parties agreed that the talks were to deal with the cessation of bombardments and other related questions, but disagreed beyond that point. Indeed, the United States found that the North Vietnamese formulation of the purpose was absurd, as there would be no need for a meeting to decide the date and hour for the cessation of the bombardments.[5] It is hard to disagree with this insofar as the talks are assumed to be negotiations between equals. The North Vietnamese statements indicate, however, that the United States had been compelled to accept talks, and it is not obvious that North Vietnam considered this part of the talks to be negotiations at

all. One should therefore not be surprised that the talks proved difficult, considering the implications of behaving in such a way as to accept the other party's formulation of the purpose.

It should be noted that disagreement within an organization on the purpose of an interlocution may reflect disagreement about the purpose of the activity of the organization on a higher or a more general level. Thus, in a students' association disagreement among different groups as to the purpose of its general activity, or as to the purpose of the debate meetings during a given term, may lead to tensions or conflicts in an individual meeting with regard to what foci of attention the given topic may permit.

Sometimes the participants in an interlocution agree to consider one objective the purpose of the interlocution while pretending, vis-à-vis the environment, that it has another purpose. In this case we might distinguish between the *externally official purpose* of the interlocution and its *internally official purpose*. Consider, for example, a TV discussion between young Marxists and young Christians. The externally official purpose, announced by the program leader, may be to highlight what Marxists and Christians have in common and where they differ. However, the participants may have agreed among themselves that the purpose of the discussion is to lead the listeners to a better understanding of the evils of our time and what to do about them. This, then, is the internally official purpose of the program. If this is really the purpose that all participants pursue, then it could be said to be the real purpose, as opposed to, the official purpose. The possibility exists, however, that the subgroup of Christian participants have secretly agreed that the purpose of their participation is to turn as many Marxists as possible into Christians, and the Marxists for their part may have agreed among themselves that the purpose of their participation is to turn as many Christians as possible into Marxists. This possibility makes it clear that the distinction between an 'externally official purpose' and an 'internally official purpose' is necessary for the description of collective actors and their activities as well. (In fact, the participants in an interlocution may be considered a coalition, viz. the coalition of all.)

In cases where one coalition, e.g. the organizers, are dominant to the extent that they can decisively influence the outcome of the interlocution, one might perhaps say that the internally official purpose of their participation is, or can be, the real purpose of the interlocution. Recognizing their power, they might, for example, invite participants with different points of view to discuss the official topic, their real purpose being thus to legalize the debate and a certain outcome of it. The internally official purpose of one subcoalition might also be considered by that coalition to be the 'real' purpose of the interlocution even if the coalition was not dominant. That would be the case if they identify their objective with what they consider to be the 'historical tendency,' implying that a certain effect will materialize even if they are not dominant.

As different specifications of the purpose of an interlocution may affect the various participants and interests differently, and as the wording may also have subtle implications, it is obvious that the formulation of its purpose can be the sub-

ject of difficult negotiations. Disagreements over the title of disarmament con-
ferences are illustrative in this respect. If specificity is avoided in order to reduce
conflict, the interlocution may become so disconnected that it can serve no variant
of the official purpose in an efficient way.[6]

The participants in an interlocution, in committing themselves to the official pur-
pose, may at the same time commit themselves to various principles with which the
solution of their task must accord. It may be presupposed, for instance, that the out-
come of a peace negotiation shall respect the neutrality of certain states. Similarly,
it may be presupposed that a party committee which has been given the task of elab-
orating a report on a specific issue, keeps within the frame established by the party
program. If such a presupposition is not felt to be sufficiently clear, a demand may
be made that it be included in the formulation of the purpose.

When complex topics are to be dealt with by a conference, the organizers will
often appoint a committee with the mandate of elaborating a report on the topics
to be dealt with. The participants will then be under an obligation to pay atten-
tion to this report. Participants who have provided the committee with principles or
premises are, it seems, particularly committed to not ignoring the conclusions of the
committee and the premises leading to that conclusion. This would apply par-
ticularly if the committee were appointed during the conference, but the same kind
of dynamics of commitment may be found even where the committee delivers its
report before the conference itself begins.

It is quite another matter that such a report is probably more often decisive
for the final outcome simply because there is no fully elaborated alternative. So
the report easily becomes the focal point of the discussions, particularly when time
is short.[7]

More generally, institutional actors, e.g. a secretariat or a mediator, can often
play a main role in such processes of reaching common ground. The main reason
is usually to be found in their capacity as institutional or common actor, but other
kinds of resources, too, are relevant to their success, for example manpower, ex-
pert knowledge, etc.

Part of the purpose of many, if not most politically significant interlocutions is
to reach a conclusion or a decision. In some of these there is a strong commitment
to building up a body of tenable common premises that will lead in the end to a
conclusion or decision. While this process goes on, each participant is more or less
strongly committed to the different elements of the tentative common body of
premises. Of course, one is not assured that the participants succeed in carrying
through their project; time may be short, or there may be other obstacles. Even
after the body of common premises has been expanded for a while – through
deductions, specifications, questions, proposals, appeals, and the establishment of
new, independent premises – so as substantially to restrict the range of possible
solutions, there may still remain a gap between participants or groups of partici-
pants. Now, in many interlocutions it will be meaningful to bridge this gap by a
compromise. If this final step is due to mutual respect, it seems to be in perfect

harmony with the kind of commitments on which the previous process was based, and which were reinforced through this process.

A very different situation obtains in pure bargaining where the participants are not committed to trying to elaborate a common justification, and where the outcome is due to individual evaluations with regard to what each party may gain from not making any concession, as compared to what they may lose thereby.[8] Even here, however, arguments play a role. A kind of duel will ensue in which each party tries to influence a sort of image of the situation which will serve as a kind of objective indicator as to who is to make a concession.

Altogether, there is a wide range of different situations. In particular, we would like to draw attention to the important category of discussions or negotiations that terminate in a vote. In such situations one is not unlikely to end up with two or more coalitions. Each of these will often find it important to build up a body of common premises in the way indicated above. In many cases, however, special probing techniques will be used prior to the decisive vote. These techniques include sounding-out and trial votes, both of which serve to reduce the number of alternative solutions by making it clear that one or more of these would have no chance of surviving a decisive vote.

3. Participants and Listeners

An interlocution requires participants. In a number of cases these include persons who have officially committed themselves to participating, e.g. through accepting an invitation to do so. In other cases there is, at the outset, only a set of potential participants, out of which emerges a set of real or active participants, e.g. by signing up on a list of speakers, the list being in principle open to anyone present. The set of potential and real participants, which may or may not have been delimited on a formal basis, can be coextensive with the set of potential and real listeners (or readers), as is the case in a committee. But parliamentary debates suffice to remind us that this is not always the case.

Of course, the question of who will participate and who audit in an interlocution, particularly one which is found to be politically important, can become a point of controversy. Thus, in the informal talks which prepared the Antarctica Conference in Washington in 1958, the question whether the conference should be open to all countries, or at least not be limited to the twelve countries that participated in the preparatory talks, proved to become a delicate point. The participants argued in terms of efficiency and legitimate interests, while at the same time national interests, or goals, were of course a motivating force.[9]

In the Kampala negotiations in 1968 between Biafra and Nigeria, Biafra wanted an independent chairman and several foreign observers, in order to have orderly and fair discussions, and also in order to ensure herself of witnesses to the proceedings. Nigeria for its part found this irreconcilable with its conception of the conflict as a domestic question and accepted only the presence of Commonwealth

Secretary Arnold Smith as a leader of the discussions.[10] Finally the perennial question of open versus closed meetings must be remembered in this connection.

The question of the level at which talks are to be conducted, i.e. the question of the status of (the representatives of) the participants, may prove significant. In fact, both this question and that concerning which actors should be represented often have an internal connection with the question of the purpose of the interlocution.

In many interlocutions different positions are assigned to the different participants. In a debate there may be a chairman, perhaps a main speaker, a panel, and ordinary participants. In a negotiation, there will often be a chairman, chiefs of delegations, and ordinary members of delegations. In a criminal law suit there is the counsel for the prosecution, the defendant, the judge, the suspect. In addition, there may be less formal roles. Thus in a forum like a students' association there may be coalition leaders, or persons who belong to a coalition leadership. Over time a number of quite marked expectations as to their behavior may have developed, while still leaving room for inventiveness and strategic considerations. The distribution of formal positions among the participants may of course be important for them, affecting, for example, the resources at hand. This question too may therefore easily become a matter of controversy.

A participant will move from one role to another and back during an interlocution, being auditor at one time and speaker at another. Although speaking and listening (and observing) are the central, or constitutive activities of an interlocution, a third role should be distinguished, that of activists, or participants in an extended sense, who are part of a coalition and contribute to its cause through applause, whistling, laughter, heckling, etc. (If one focuses on the permanent competition in which the activists participate, instead of on the individual interlocution, it might be natural to consider them full-scale participants.) Their activity, or expected activity, may decisively determine who are to participate in the debate, how the speakers will perform if they are allowed to speak at all, and how their interventions will be interpreted and assessed.

Now, let us consider for a moment the relationships between a speaker (writer) and subgroups of his audience. There is first his *addressee,* or formal addressee, who need not be identical with the person or group he really wants to influence, his *target,* and neither of them need be coextensive with, nor belong to those of the receivers who are in fact primarily influenced or affected, who belong to what we might call the group or persons *affected*. Three points should be made in this connection. A participant in an interlocution, e.g. in a TV duel or a multilateral negotiation, often has targets with highly divergent preferences, or qualifications, a fact which can make for the use of emotive words and trivialities. Second, it is often difficult to address an important target group without having other interested parties listening in, a fact which may play a part, *inter alia,* in a domestic debate in connection with an international negotiation. Third, in subtle cases a speaker may express himself in such a way that to the ordinary auditor he addresses one person or group, while the initiate, who understands another level

of his language or is in possession of particular background information, recognizes another person or group to be the addressee on specific points. Similarly, the lay listener and the initiate may have different conceptions as to who is the speaker's target. Consider, for example, statements made by the chief US negotiator in the Paris talks on Vietnam at a press conference. Some of these statements can be thought to contain suggestions which were only understood by his counterpart, and the target of his suggestion might have been a coalition within the counterpart.

Just as one may sometimes wonder who is the 'real' addressee or target, there can be reason to ask who is the 'real' speaker or *origin*. The speaker may be understood by some to be only a spokesman for someone else.

It should also be noted that the speaker will in some cases be *anonymous*. Of course, it may be difficult to sustain a dialog with an anonymous partner although anonymity may in some cases be a condition for communication.

A strange situation occurs if an anonymous meeting submits strong demands to an authority, as in fact occurred at the Norwegian Coke Factory at Mo i Rana in 1970. A meeting of workers, convoked by an anonymous 'festival committee,' agreed to present a list of demands, which were at odds with the agreement still in force between the union and management. As the meeting had not appointed any representatives the demands were conveyed through the press and not directly to the management.[11] The situation was delicate. The management could not ignore the demands, because the initiators and the other participants to the meeting were now committed among themselves, and they had committed 'the workers' externally. However, the management could not negotiate with an anonymous group. The local union, on the other hand, had been indirectly discredited by the organizers of the meeting; at the same time it could be suspected of being co-responsible. In a way, the 'identity' of a workers' delegation consisting of formal union leaders only, or of a mixture of such leaders and other representatives, would be ambiguous to the management. The management decided to contact the national union, which proved able to get the situation under control and negotiate an agreement which was both satisfactory to the workers and acceptable from a formal point of view.

4. Place and Time

Every piece of human interaction may be located in time and space. Each of these two dimensions deserves attention in the analysis of political communication. In this section, therefore, we shall briefly outline the significance of place and time for the dynamics and outcome of interlocutions.

Place

An oral interlocution ordinarily requires that the participants assemble in one place. The location of this place may be important, or at least it may be assigned

great importance, for technical reasons or because of the interpretations it could give rise to, e.g. with regard to power relationships or the character of the conflict in question.

Thus, the parties to the Vietnam conflict converged on Paris as the locus of the talks both because no party would be at a disadvantage from a technical point of view, and because Paris could be considered neutral ground. In the Nigeria/Biafra conflict, anywhere in Nigeria or Biafra was of course unacceptable as the site of the negotiations, and with regard to other alternatives neither party wanted a location which could be associated with support for the opposite party. Kampala proved to be acceptable to both parties.[12]

If we go farther back, the negotiations on a cease-fire in Korea are illustrative. The first choice of site, Kaesong, which was the old capital of Korea and located on territory controlled by North Korea, could of course be taken as an index, or even an expression of the strength, if not superiority of North Korea. More important, however, was the fact that its location gave rise to incidents and mutual accusations. After some time, the negotiations were broken off. When the UN delegation proposed that the liaison officers of the two parties should meet at Pan-Munjom to discuss a new site, this proposal was dismissed as meaningless. The same happened when the UN delegation submitted a concrete proposal concerning the site of the negotiations: North Korea stated that the nations of the world were now eagerly waiting for the Kaesong talks to be resumed. The UN delegation therefore came to the conclusion that North Korea could not accept any UN proposal because this might be interpreted as an admission that the UN accusations had been correct. The UN delegation consequently asked North Korea to propose a new site, whereupon Pan-Munjom was proposed.[13]

The microgeography of the place, for instance the structure of the hall or the building in which the interlocution takes place, may also be important. The different parts, rooms, and corridors of a building, having certain general functions, present the participants with particular opportunities and constraints. 'Corridor politics' is made possible by access to areas outside the hall, the regular function of which assures the kind of relative lack of disturbance needed to promote the kind of probing discussion and informal bargaining that progress in the talks may depend upon. Certain areas of a hall may give rise to similar opportunities, which are effectively hindered in the big, floodlit room filled with rows of chairs. In fact, in the case of the Norwegian Students' Association, the microgeography of the hall proved to be quite decisive for coalition formation and for the utilization of certain kinds of resources.[14]

Time

The time dimension actually includes two aspects: 1) the significance of time available for the interlocution, 2) the significance of time relations to other events and processes.

Time available is relevant first to productivity, and second to the extent to which

purposes and goals are fulfilled. As to productivity, the relation with time is curvilinear: up to a certain level – depending on individual characteristics and the situation – greater stress leads to improved performance. As this level is passed, the relation becomes negative. As to goal attainment, the relation with time is generally positive, subject, however, to the modification following from what we have just said about productivity.

This kind of relationship is clearly relevant to problem-solving activities, and it may also apply to each individual participant in bargaining. Here, however, other consequences would be equally prone to follow. Time shortage will most probably restrict the number of moves. There will be less time for sounding out and for analyzing the situation. This implies that greater risks have to be taken at each move, and that the probability of wrong moves and of failure to reach a solution increases. Bargaining under time stress may lead into a game where each player would like both, or all, to make concessions, but where no concession is made because each player fears that the other, or others, would try to exploit the situation by standing firm. Bargaining under time stress may also lead into a contest of nerves, of brinkmanship, similar to situations that game theorists label 'chicken.' Conversely, bargaining with no, or a very wide, time limit, opens the way for games of attrition.

It is worth stressing that even where the time limit is formally asymmetrical, restricting A but not (to the same extent) B, the actual stress of time will be felt by both.

Particularly in discussions, time shortage favors the one who is able to express his views shortly. Since some kinds of positions – notably the clearcut, unqualified ones – lend themselves more easily than others to a brief presentation, these kinds of positions would also be favored. Moreover, time shortage implies increasing chances that one will not be held responsible, and that one will not have to explain one's utterances. This indicates that time limits not only constitute restrictions, but that these restrictions themselves in their turn may create opportunities. As these opportunities are used, the discussion may enter a stage of escalation, leading gradually to increasing conflict. Shaping the character of the debate, time becomes relevant also to the resource situation of the participants. Broadly, time shortage favors formal and role resources to the detriment of the resources of knowledge. This is relevant to the internal structure of coalitions, insofar as it favors expressive leaders. Thus we have a closed dynamics: the character of the discussion influences the choice of leaders, and the kind of leaders required helps reinforce the 'expressive' character of the debate.

Some few words should be said on the other time aspect: the time relation to other events and processes. Broadly, we may distinguish between the primarily symbolic and the primarily technical or strategic significance of time relations. A relation takes on symbolic significance if it brings about associations which give a tacit meaning to particular moves or to the interlocution as a whole. More often, perhaps, the relevance of time relations will be technical, constituting strategic restraints and opportunities that are not due to symbolic significance.[15]

5. Language: Rules and Commitments

The vehicles of communication in interlocutions are primarily linguistic; in fact, the concept of interlocution implies the idea of linguistic interaction. The significance of other means of communication should not be neglected, however. Thus, facial expressions, applause, whistling, and laughter may be important instruments of communication and influence in oral interlocutions. In written interlocutions, pictures may be as important as the text itself.

Besides, it should be noted at once that activities or interactions in the environment of the interlocution may constitute decisive elements of communication. If a party to a peace negotiation escalates its war effort, its intention may be to suggest a high level of aspiration in the negotiation. Similarly, de-escalation may be an attempt at underlining the will to find a reasonable solution. Demonstrations during a parliamentary debate or a faculty meeting can be a means of communicating, or underlining, what forces might be unleashed if the meeting does not lead to a satisfactory result.

These types of communication, which are subject to a complex logic, may remind us of the fact that 'tacit communication' can also be a significant aspect of interventions in the interlocution itself. Thus, repeated use of a certain terminology, or the systematic avoidance of it, or a slight change of style, etc. can be instruments of tacit bargaining. The content and force of this kind of tacit communication, however, depends upon the fact that the speech acts in question primarily have another meaning and force, viz. their 'official' meaning and force, which are due to the system of rules that constitute the language in question.

This is not the place to deal with the rules of specific languages. It should be emphasized, however, that in a given interlocution differences in theoretical or ideological outlook may be accompanied by significant differences in terminology and meaning. Such differences involve strategic possibilities the character and consequences of which will vary with the official purpose of the interlocution, the goal structure of the different participants, the distribution of knowledge about the different 'languages' over the audience, the possibility of the various actors' translating from one 'language' into another, etc. Thus the fact, or possibility, that in the language of some student organizations the concept of 'Trotskyite' implies 'fascist' gave rise to an interesting episode at a public meeting in a permanent student forum where the continuous struggle for adherence is an essential part of the picture. A marxist leader maintained that a previous intervention by a conservative leader had revealed how the conservative group in the forum embraced Trotskyites. The conservative leader was then confronted by a situation which we may view in the following way.

He must assess what meaning and force this statement had to the members of the marxist group, to more or less initiated members of other groups, and to the general audience; and he had to make up his mind as to the likely consequences of possible responses. Anyhow, his conclusion, as evidenced by his behavior, was that he had to destroy the force of the esoteric accusation of fascism by making the

implication explicit and explaining the background of what he considered to be the language rule in question.[16]

We would now like to deal with the general rules of conduct, apart from the principle of pursuing the official purpose, to which an actor commits himself by participating in an interlocution. These rules seem to be the following:[17]

1. The rule of *sense,* i.e. the rule of trying to speak sense;
2. The rule of *sincerity,* i.e. the rule of not trying to mislead by one's own use of language;
3. The rule of *relevance,* i.e. the rule of sticking (in a reasonable degree) to what is relevant to the official purpose and to the addressee;
4. The rule of *attentiveness,* i.e. the rule of paying attention to what is said by the other participants;
5. A more general rule of *respect* toward the other participants.

These rules are constitutive in the sense that an interlocution where they are openly ignored, so that one does not even pretend to follow them, can hardly count as an interlocution at all – at least it requires extraneous motives to go on.

The content of the fifth rule, the rule of respect, will vary somewhat with the circumstances: the background of the interlocution, its purpose, etc. In general, however, it seems to require that collocutors be treated as people who follow the above rules, unless good reasons for a suspicion to the contrary can be presented. With regard to the rule of relevance, it should be noted that it is closely related to, but not identical with the principle of pursuing the official purpose of the interlocution. Generally, the five rules can be justified on 'rule-utilitarian' grounds while an 'act-utilitarian' approach may justify violations of them to the advantage of the official purpose.[18] We find it fruitful *not* to label the principle of pursuing the official purpose a rule. Due to this convention we can make a terminological distinction between a participant's 'topic-orientation,' i.e. his orientation vis-à-vis the official purpose, and his 'rule-orientation,' i.e. his orientation vis-à-vis the five, and possibly additional, rules. It should be noted at once that a participant may be confronted with a dilemma because he feels a strong commitment to both the official purpose and the five rules. In a negotiation, for instance, a person who represents a group or an organization, and who strongly dislikes insincerity, may feel that in order to obtain a fair agreement, which is the official purpose of the negotiation, he must be somewhat insincere because of the tactics of the opponent. In a discussion, a participant may be in doubt whether he should pay attention to a question posed by a well-meaning but not very efficient collocutor: on the one hand he may feel that he is obliged to answer, but on the other he may fear that an answer would be likely to lead the discussion astray.

The principle of pursuing the official purpose and the five rules can be said to constitute the general principles of interlocutions. To the degree that participants suspect collocutors of seriously violating these, in particular the rules of sense, sincerity, relevance, and attentiveness, and the principle of pursuing the official purpose, the interlocution will be strained; particular efforts may be required to

keep the interlocution on a relatively good track. To the degree that participants in fact systematically violate the principles, and are known to do so, the interlocution tends to dissolve. Nevertheless, tolerance seems in many situations to be quite high, a fact which in itself suggests an interesting field of inquiry.

A speaker in most cases has to *pretend* that he is pursuing the official purpose and is following the rules of sense, sincerity, and relevance if his violation of any of these is to be effective. As we have already suggested, violations of the rules need not always be due to the speaker pursuing goals other than the official purpose of the interlocution, although this is probably most often the case. His motive can be to prevent others from acting to the disadvantage of the official purpose, or it can be to facilitate or enforce behavior in accordance with the same rules as he is himself violating. Thus, a participant in a discussion, who is exposed to the technique of insinuation or to the use of irrelevant facts unfavorable to himself, might try to scare his opponents from going on with these methods by retaliating or even escalating. Of course, he thereby risks involving himself in a battle where his opponent is superior.

Now some points with regard to each of the five rules.

Violations of the rule of sense are probably the most rare in politically significant interlocutions. It is well known from psychiatric theory, however, that utterances which involve particular kinds of contradictions can provoke serious effects by putting the addressee into a difficult or impossible situation.[19] It seems that political techniques which exploit the possibility of such effects deserve close attention even if they are not among the most frequent ones.

The most common violations have to do, it seems, with the rules of sincerity and relevance. Obvious examples are flagrant lies, insincere promises, and breaches of promise. Furthermore, a speaker may pretend to be more certain or firm on a point than he really is, or to have better reasons than he does. He may submit facts that are favorable to himself, or unfavorable to his opponent, without saying anything about their relevance, which is perhaps minimal but which is suggested to be considerable, due to the presumption of relevance. Similarly, a speaker may ask questions which, in order to be meaningful, presuppose the validity of statements which he knows to be doubtful; furthermore, he may refer to a phenomenon, a person, etc. in terms which imply a doubtful or controversial subsumption; etc.[20]

Obviously, lack of attention to what has been said by others in the interlocution easily leads to irrelevancies and nonsense. The cause of such behavior may be personal distraction or fatigue, or structural characteristics of the participant, who is perhaps a corporate actor. If participants pay little attention to what collocutors have said, however, this can also be due to aspects of the situation. First, time may be so scarce for each speaker that he has to concentrate on his own main points. Further, the topic may be so complex and auditors and activists so critical that most speakers have to write their interventions and consistently stick to what they have written. Moreover, the procedural rules may be such and the list of speakers so long that a person who asks for the floor to comment upon an intervention will not get it until it is too late. It should not be forgotten, however, that

a speaker who abstains from paying attention to what collocutors have said, quite often does so for tactical reasons. Thus, he might find that by answering a question he would hurt his own 'non-topical' interests too much, or he would not be able to clear up suggestions in such a way that the official purpose, rather than the 'non-topical' interests of the opponent, would be furthered. Anyhow, to the extent that participants are unwilling or unable to pay attention to what other speakers have said, the interlocution is on its way to becoming a sequence of monologs.

As to open disrespect, or abuse, this may be spontaneous or deliberate. In either case it can have significant effects. In the case of seemingly spontaneous abuse, other participants and the audience can easily become uncertain or even confused, because they cannot tell whether the speaker is really spontaneous or not or how others are interpreting his behavior. Participants may be in doubt as to the appropriate response; insofar as they suspect he is deliberate, they may wonder who his main target is. Altogether, a fluid and unpredictable situation may arise.

The participants in a concrete interlocution will of course be committed to more than the general principles of interlocution. First of all, they will have committed themselves to the concrete purpose of that interlocution, and very often to a set of procedural rules. Second, they will be committed to various traditions and legal provisions, and the context may commit them in other ways, too.

What we would like to point out in particular is that the process of committing oneself, and decommitting oneself, goes on throughout the interlocution, at the same time as other aspects of the situation are continuously modified, in particular the knowledge or the assumptions of the participants and their attitudes. The act of committing oneself in one way or another is characteristic of all speech acts. Thus, in negotiations, where strategically motivated commitments play a significant role, descriptions of the background of the situation, and of actors, events, etc. – not least the terminology used in these and in explicit arguments – can commit a party as effectively to a certain position as explicit promises, threats, and unconditional declarations; or, the commitments undertaken in the party's descriptions and arguments may be a necessary condition for the explicit commitments' effectiveness.[21] The Paris talks on Vietnam and the negotiations between Israel and the Arab countries are cases in point. In both, the description of the background of the situation, and of what the conflict 'really' is about, has played a significant role.

It should furthermore be emphasized that a participant, through his speech acts, not only commits himself to concrete positions in practical or theoretical matters; he also commits himself more generally to certain qualities, attitudes, and styles. Through questions and tentative statements he may commit himself to an inquiring and listening attitude with regard to a range of topics, and he may commit himself to a helpful and friendly attitude to participants who reveal, or purport to have a similar attitude. Through categorical and sarcastic statements, on the other hand, he seems to commit himself to a high level of achievement in certain respects, and he may commit himself to a line of general disrespect vis-à-

vis certain groups, or to a somewhat cynical attitude to the choice of political methods. Another way of describing this process of committing oneself to an attitude or a style, is to say that a speaker, through the commitments involved in his speech acts, is creating, or reinforcing, or modifying, or destroying, an 'official' image of himself.

If a commitment reduces or suspends a previous commitment, it can be said to decommit the speaker. A number of factors determine in what ways, to what extent, and at what costs a participant in an interlocution commits or decommits himself and his organization or coalition. There is, first, the question of whether his own position and the character of the situation permit the speech act to 'come off' in such a way that it involves the commitment in question.[22] A somewhat drunk prime minister in a private party, for example, or a junior civil servant in a committee meeting, would have difficulties in committing their country even if they would like to, while a sober minister of foreign affairs in an international conference does so easily. Second, the question arises as to the actual effect of a 'felicitous' speech act.[23] When President Kennedy, in a speech to the population of Berlin, and thereby to the whole world, in 1961 argued that the United States could not abandon Berlin because that would destroy the credibility of the United States, he committed himself and his country more effectively than he would have done by saying the same thing to Premier Krushchev in a closed meeting.[24]

A number of elements determine the consequences of a 'felicitous' commitment or decommitment: the competence of the receivers, and their interests or goals, the way their reactions and moves can effect the speaker's own interests, or the interests he wants to protect, or is committed to protecting, etc. Thus, it is easier for a solicitor in a lawsuit (without a jury) to abandon an assertive or sarcastic style if he has been effectively rebutted, than it is for a politician or a coalition leader in a forum where there is a continuous struggle going on between parties or coalitons. Although the solicitor may have to take his client's image of him into consideration, the outcome depends upon the judge, whose duty it is to pay attention only to the evidence presented. A coalition leader in a students' association, on the contrary, may prefer, for good reasons, to escalate, and thereby to confirm an image he may have come to dislike somewhat himself, instead of making a concession and at the same time changing style. The latter alternative may appear difficult to carry through in a successful way, partly because of the moves he can expect from the activists and the participants on the other side, and partly because the general audience and his own coalition are likely to prefer a bold although somewhat unacademic assertiveness rather than a sincerity the quality of which will be unclear, in particular if his opponent has been equally harsh and sarcastic.

It seems that the conditions for creativity and for restraint and harshness in discussions and negotiations must be accounted for partly in terms of the commitments characteristic of the various types of speech acts. Moreover, the time aspect, the resources and limitations of the participants, and the influences of the context have to be taken systematically into account.

6. Procedural Rules

There is no sharp distinction between procedural rules and some of the rules and principles outlined above. Thus, many procedural rules can be seen as the application of general rules and principles to one particular interlocution or a series of interlocutions. One of the functions of verbatim records can be to discourage speakers from certain kinds of insincerity. The rule that the chairman can break off an intervention which deals with irrelevant matters, as provided in the Norwegian municipal law, is a direct support of the rule of relevance. The possibility of short comments directly related to an intervention corresponds to the rule of attentiveness. The rule that a speaker should address the chairman, and the rule that the chairman can reprimand a speaker for abuse, serve the function of discouraging infractions of the general rule of respect.

There is also an intimate two-way relationship between 'substance' and 'procedure.' In negotiations where the official purpose states that the solution to be reached is to be a certain kind of aggregation of the interests or evaluations of the participants, the purpose calls for procedural rules that do make it possible for each participant to present his interests or evaluations. Conversely, a procedural rule such as adopting direct instead of indirect negotiations in a conflict, where the legitimacy of one of the participants (like Israel in the Arab-Israeli controversy), is a basic issue,[25] can be taken to imply a substantive position.

In this connection it should be pointed out that certain types of procedural rules, without necessarily logically implying a substantive position, are found to be particularly significant in this respect. This is, for instance, the case with the structuring of the agenda of negotiations.

The primary official purpose of procedural rules is to organize and regulate the interlocution so that the official purpose of the interlocution is advanced in a fair and efficient manner. Ideally, this implies three sub-purposes:

1. Making the topic-directed interaction productive and efficient, with a due regard to common premises;
2. Giving a fair chance to each of a set of topic-connected goals, i.e. goals that are directly connected with the official purpose, so that, together with it, each of them makes up a variant of the official purpose;
3. Protecting against the counterproductive advancement of goals irrelevant to, or even inconsistent with the official purpose.

Let us look at more examples. Efficiency may be served by rules which secure for the different participants, in particular the incumbents to the various positions, the possibility of voicing their opinions, and also rules which provide for quick clearing up of misunderstandings, the immediate answering of questions, the introduction of particular committees, etc. An example of procedural rules which serve the purpose of giving a fair chance to each of a set of topic-connected goals is the rule of discussing two topics simultaneously.[26] An example of procedural rules which serve the purpose of protecting against counterproductive goals is the

closing of doors, and – in certain connections – the rule that a person whose personal interests are involved leave the hall.

It should be noted that a procedural rule which is introduced to serve efficiency and fairness can also have side-effects such as paving the way for a certain type of solution. Thus in the conference on the enlargement of the European Community, the procedure of consultations, combined with the principle of 'adequate synchronization,' most probably favored uniform solutions for all the four applicant countries.[27]

Procedural rules can also be adopted with a view to protecting goals or interests not directly related to the purpose of the interlocution. For instance, meetings may be closed or even held in secret to protect interests which the participants have outside the interlocution. Similarly, the purpose of some procedural provisions is to protect the cohesiveness of a participant. This applies to rules providing opportunities for free and closed discussion within each coalition during negotiations. The practice followed in the negotiations between the EEC and the applicant countries is a case in point.[28] If one or more of the participants finds a procedural rule to be highly discriminating and unfair, it may also be considered illegitimate, and accordingly be disregarded. Should this happen, the procedure obviously no longer fulfills its official purpose. Very likely the interlocution will be seriously strained. One participant's breaking a rule will often prove a strong temptation to other participants, thus creating a dynamics gradually increasing the strain, perhaps leading eventually to the breakdown of the interlocution as 'key' rules are disregarded. This also applies to situations where the real controversial question is not which goals to promote, but rather which rules will in fact be most instrumental for a given set of purposes and goals.

Even where there is complete agreement on all procedural questions, we have no guarantee that the rules agreed upon will in fact prove efficient instruments for promoting the official purpose. One instance where this may not be the case is when the practicability of certain rules tacitly depends on their not being used by all or even most potential participants. In many debate fora the discussion would collapse if most of the members present, let alone all, actually made use of their procedural right to speak. This problem may be solved by voluntarily abstaining, or by including in the procedure certain 'safeguard clauses' which are to apply automatically, or on the explicit decision of the chairman or a (qualified) majority of the participants. Sometimes it will be difficult to decide in advance on the most adequate safeguard clauses. In many instances, therefore, we may conclude that a certain amount of flexibility in interpreting and practicing the rules will be necessary in order to allow progress.

7. Goals and Premises

Before going into the details of the possible relationships between a participant's goals[29] and the official purpose of the interlocution in question, we would like to comment upon some other aspects.

First, a distinction has to be made between a person's *official* goals and his *real* goals, the latter category including both goals which he has *decided* to pursue and goals which he *tends* to pursue. Similarly, if the participant is a corporate or a coalition actor, the distinction between *externally official* and *internally official* goals will be needed. Suppose, now, that a situation has emerged where there is a discrepancy between a personal actor's official goal and his real goal. Three main alternatives are open to him. First, he may stick to both goals, pretending to pursue his official goal while in fact pursuing the other. Second, he may try to make his official goal approach his real goal, which would be natural if he had committed himself unintentionally or in a somewhat rash way. Third, he may decide to consider the official goal his real goal. He may do so because he considers it his duty to adopt the goal he has declared to be his or because he finds it the most convenient solution.

Second, we would call attention to earlier comments on the relationship between the official purpose of an interlocution and the body of common premises. A similar relationship can hold between a participant's goals and his premises (depending upon the character of his goals). Thus, his goal may be, quite abstractly, that a solution be found which is consistent with certain prescriptive and descriptive premises. Or his goal may be to find a solution within a rather narrow range, subject to certain principles. This applies to both official and real goals. Of course there may be considerable differences between his official premises, including those which all participants have committed themselves to, and his real premises. Note in particular that an actor's attitude to different persons, groups, or organizations may constitute significant, 'unofficial' premises for his goals. Thus, vanity, positive or negative felings vis-à-vis a certain collocutor, and the wish to please or annoy different listeners may influence his goals.

Third, the degree to which a participant is committed to his goals (and premises) may be as important as the character of the goals themselves. Consider proposals submitted in a negotiation. Ultimata constitute one extreme, tentative proposals which only suggest a possible solution constitute another. In between is a wide range of possibilities. Thus, a party in a negotiation may, on a particular point, declare that until strong counterarguments have been submitted he will go in for a certain solution on the basis of such and such considerations. The art of commitment,[30] to use Schelling's phrase, is obviously an important one. So is the art of not getting committed unintentionally, not the least in debates.

Let us now look at the relationships which can obtain between a goal and the official purpose of an interlocution. First, an official purpose, like solving an international conflict, may be so vague as to permit a wide range of *topic-connected* goals, i.e. goals directly connected with the official purpose so that, together with it, each of them makes up a variant of the official purpose. Second, a participant may have goals which are *instrumental* in relation to the official purpose or a variant of it, and he may have goals which are *ulterior* in relation to it, i.e. goals for which the official purpose or a variant of it is instrumental.

The remainder of the goals which a participant may entertain can be designated

non-topical goals. These divide into two groups: the set of *anti-topical* goals and the set of *a-topical* goals. By an anti-topical goal we understand a goal logically irreconcilable with the official purpose of the interlocution. By an a-topical goal we understand a goal which is not logically irreconcilable with the official purpose but which, at the same time, is neither topic-connected, instrumental, nor ulterior. A goal which is originally considered to be non-topical, and therefore irrelevant to the advancement of the official purpose, may prove to be *instrumental,* or it may prove to be *counter-topical,* i.e. it may appear that attempts to further it work to the disadvantage of the official purpose of the interlocution.

It will often be difficult or even impossible to get at an actor's topical or non-topical goals if the context of the interlocution is not taken into account. To discern a debater's a-topical goals – e.g. pleasing a part of his audience or exploiting an unfortunate formulation by a collocutor – one may have to recognize the competitive situation due to future elections. The same may be true of a debater's anti-topical goals, for example convincing his addressees of a view which he knows to be incorrect but which he has come to commit himself to. As regards negotiations, a party's topic-connected goals, i.e. the kind of agreement it aims at, may be due to the negotiator's concern for his future bargaining reputation or for the precedence effect of the agreement. It may also be due to coalitions formed to advance common interests in several negotiations.[31]

As the purpose of an interlocution and the principles presumed may be imprecise, the participants may differ with regard to what constitutes topic-connected behavior. Consider, for example, a negotiation, whose official purpose is to find a fair solution to a problem of distribution. The parties may suspect or even accuse each other of being purely egoistically motivated, although each considers himself to aim at fairness.

It should also be noted that two interlocutions which are identical with regard to goals but differ with regard to official purpose are likely to differ with regard to behavior. Consider, for example, a debate recognized as being of the duel type. The participants may here attack each other quite openly. If, on the other hand, the discussion is presumed to be of the inquiring type, each participant will have to pretend that he is contributing fully to the problem-solving activity, while all the time trying to reveal weak points in his collocutor. This may be a difficult art, perhaps so difficult that the discussion takes a fully topic-directed course. On the other hand, mutual fears may make a discussion completely unproductive although each participant primarily wishes to fulfill his commitment to the official purpose of the discussion.

8. Resources

In order to promote his goals, whatever these may be, a participant needs resources. Here the term means everything a participant can utilize to promote his goals, and inherent characteristics that can be instrumental to goal attainment. As to the last

part of the definition, it is included with a view to personal qualities, like calm or good nerves, and structural traits of collective actors which cannot easily be changed, and which may represent a strategic advantage.

It is to some extent an egg-and-hen question as to which comes first, goals or resources. We might say that an actor often first of all has a preference structure. Considering his resources and the various hindrances to be overcome, he then sets his goals. Perhaps he finds that he cannot reach any satisfactory goal in the present situation, so he tries to find out whether he can change the situation into one where he is more likely to attain satisfactory goals. The problem may arise, however, that he does not possess the resources required for effecting such a change. This may, for example, be the case in a negotiation where positions have hardened, or in a discussion which has become heated or competitive.

It is not certain that a participant who at the outset seems to have more resources than necessary for his goal-fulfillment will in fact dispose of these in a manner instrumental to the attainment of his goals. On the other hand, it is fully possible that a participant who at the outset seems to be short of resources will in fact obtain his goals, acquiring new resources which can perhaps also be used in future negotiations or discussions. Let us therefore have a look at what might happen to resources during an interlocution.

First, resources may be used up. This is the case with the time assigned to a speaker. It is also the case with resources primarily located in the context but at the same time drawn upon in the interlocution. Thus, money can be used up in a strike, and ammunition and food in a war.

Second, resources can be devalued. This is the case with arguments and stylistic means. If an argument is used repeatedly during a debate, it can lose much of its force. The same is true of strong words. To the extent that a speaker feels that this has happened to his utterances, he will be tempted to compensate for the loss of force by escalating – by becoming more dogmatic or categorical, by using harsher words, exaggerating even more, trying even harder to be funny, and so forth.

Third, resources can be destroyed or seriously damaged. This may be true of good will and prestige. A false step can be fatal, in particular if opponents are there to exploit it.

Fourth, resources can be made irrelevant. A participant's resources can be made irrelevant by himself, by other participants, or by the general course the interaction has taken. Note, for instance, that creativity (which would be an important resource for a topic- and rule-directed participant in an inquiring discussion or an integrative negotiation) can be made irrelevant because the competitive elements come to dominate the situation. What we would like to do here, however, is to indicate some ways in which a participant by his own actions can make resources irrelevant. Suppose a participant has the personal qualities as well as the social and political background to serve as a mediator in a conflict. Suppose further that he has come to take sides in it, perhaps criticizing one party in an emotional way. His resources for mediating will most probably have become irrelevant. In this connection, we should be particularly aware of the possibility that a participant may

also have made his resources irrelevant by engaging himself in a related contro-
versy where, for example, he felt compelled to compensate for a certain lack of
relevant knowledge by the use of irony, accusations, or similar means.

Fifth, a resource can even be made detrimental, or turn detrimental; i.e. from
being an asset it can become a liability. Thus, the sagacity of a debater can
lead to a kind of superiority, which makes a significant number of the auditors
take the part of his opponent. As to negotiations, it should be noted that qualities
which are resources in integrative negotiations, like for instance openness and
sensitivity, can turn detrimental if the negotiations turn markedly distributive.

Sixth, resources can be made relevant, e.g. by bringing about a significant
change in the situation. For instance, a participant can maneuver so as to get a
meeting opened, or its composition changed, so that he can exploit his ability to
play upon certain feelings or prejudices. Or, a participant who, being open,
spontaneous, and creative, thrives in inquiring discussions and integrative nego-
tiations, may bring an interlocution out of a harsh and competitive track by in-
troducing a person who, due to his authority, is able to influence the attitude of
the participants in the direction wanted. In this connection it should be mentioned
that such a change may even mean that qualities having had the character of
liabilities are turned into resources.

Seventh, resources can be reinforced and built up. This, in particular, applies
to images. A brilliant performance can put several failures into the category
of 'mishaps.' A successful use of different stylistic elements can correct an
impression of onesidedness. If we consider a series of interlocutions in a per-
manent forum, it is obvious that a participant by performing well can acquire
not only prestige and good will but also other types of resources that in
their turn may reinforce the types of resources on which his primary success was
based. Thus, he can be adopted as a member of a group that lends him additional
prestige; he can be given particular tasks which provide him both authority and
new insight; the consequences of this, again, may be that his performance impress-
es a more extensive audience, etc.

Let us now introduce a set of categories which has proved useful in some of
the studies undertaken in Oslo. We would like to underline, however, that the
following scheme is of a very tentative character, and that it should be considered
a set of suggestions rather than an established framework. Our point of departure
will be the fact that any actor – individual or collective – has what we might
call an 'internal constitution,' which may be considered both a resource in itself and
a precondition for other kinds of resources. This broad category, which we shall
call 'inherent resources,' includes physical and psychological characteristics as far
as individuals are concerned. On the level of collective actors, technical capacity
and structural characteristics such as cohesiveness deserve attention. While
technical capacity will always be instrumental in integrative negotiations, and most
often in pure bargaining, a psychological or an organizational structure that makes
the participant rather inflexible will be detrimental to joint problem-solving but
often an important asset in pure bargaining.

Inherent resources are a necessary condition for three other kinds of resources, all of which can be attributed directly to the actor himself. These are, first, the resources of knowledge. These resources are related to different elements of the situation. Thus, some are related to the official topic and the common premises, while others are related to the goals and resources of the various participants, and others, again, are related to the context of the interlocution. Knowledge of past history of the interlocution or of the body in which it takes place, can of course also be highly relevant, providing a fuller understanding of the whole situation.

Second, an actor may have 'formal resources,' or resources of communication. Here, we have on the one hand the resource of correct and efficient behavior, on the other hand the resource of communicating in ways far from respecting the rules of the interlocution. Linguistic virtuosity and wittiness might also be mentioned. Formal resources border on the category of inherent resources. A main difference, is that formal resources are generally more easy to acquire or modify.

Third, we propose the category of 'material resources.' Material resources are important particularly insofar as they give an actor possibilities of administering positive and/or negative sanctions outside the interlocution itself. Therefore, this category is more relevant to bargaining than to joint problem-solving activities. For example, military resources are required to inflict pain upon an opponent, so as to have him sign a treaty establishing peace on your terms.

The distinction between inherent resources and the three latter kinds of resources is by no means clear-cut. The main difference is one of fundamentality and long-term stability. You may, within limits, change your topical knowledge and also your formal and material resources more easily and in shorter time than you can change those elements of your physical, psychological, and structural constitution that lend themselves to modification at all.

Two more categories may be introduced. These are, most often, positively related to the categories outlined above. We should like to underline, however, that there is no necessary relationship. One is the category of 'image resources.' These are, unlike the types suggested above, resources that exist only insofar as others believe them to belong to that actor himself. Image resources in this sense are most often acquired through one's own behavior. The image may be one of prestige as well as one of sluggishness – their usefulness will depend on the situation.

So far we have dealt with resources attributed directly to the actor himself. There is, however, another category of resources, standing apart from the others in that they stem from an actor's social location, more particularly his belonging to certain groups or coalitions. You have this kind of resource – 'role resources' – only insofar as you can act as a member of some collectivity. This may be a coalition taking part directly in an interlocution, or it may be one outside the group of participants. The role resources may broadly be divided into qualitative (as will be the case with an actor borrowing prestige from his membership in a coalition – the prestige is ascribed to that coalition, only indirectly to him, i.e. only due to his being a member), and quantitative (e.g. a certain number of votes). The actor's relationship to his coalition will decide the 'force' of his role resources; a chairman,

for example, is usually in a better position to represent or commit his coalition than a rank-and-file member.

For all these kinds of resources, goal attainment through interaction will depend not only on what is 'objectively' true, but perhaps even more on what the actors hold to be true. Therefore, we propose to distinguish *real* resources from *perceived* resources. The latter category divides into two subcategories: resources as perceived by self and resources as perceived by others. In addition, there are perceptions of higher orders: other's perception of self's perception of own resources, etc.

Our distinctions apply to resources taken individually as well as comparatively, and to each of the categories introduced above. We may, however, very briefly indicate the general significance of these distinctions in situations which are primarily competitive but which also contain elements of common interest. For the sake of simplicity, let us label Party's resources as perceived by Party (A), Party's resources as perceived by Opponent (B), and real resources (C).

Now, if $A > B$, and this is perceived by Opponent, Party will – in the eyes of Opponent – be likely to overstrain his resources. The outcome will depend, among other things, upon the relationship between A and C. If $A > C$, and if Party tries to exploit his resources fully, he will in fact overact – to the detriment of himself. If $A = C$, Opponent might take actions not succeeding because of Party's strength. If $A < C$, both Party and Opponent underrate Party's resources.

If $A < B$, and if this is perceived by Party, he seems to be in an enviable position, being able to benefit from his image of 'strength.' This is at least the case if $A = C$. If $A < C$, Party risks suboptimalization; if even $B < C$, Opponent may overact. If $A > C$, Party may benefit from his image. He may, however, overact, thereby either strengthening his image, provided he is not shown up, or – if he is – spoiling it. It should also be noted that Opponent, if overestimating Party's resources, may feel compelled to base himself upon resources the use of which implies infractions of the rules of the interlocution, and is likely to lead the interlocution into a track that both have reason to regret.

If $A = B = C$, we may expect a 'realistic' interaction. If $A = B > C$, Party may overstrain his resources, while Opponent risks suboptimalization of his own opportunities. If $A = B < C$, the situation is largely reversed, and a crucial question will be who is the first to get more correct information.

It has been suggested above that the perceptions related to resources, together with the relationships between perceptions and 'real' resources, can form many patterns and give rise to different kinds of games. If uncertainties are added to errors, the set of possibilities will of course become even richer.

Finally, we would like to point out that a participant in an interlocution, without believing that a certain collocutor possesses the resources attributed to him in an image he enjoys in wide circles, nevertheless may have to take this image into consideration. He may have to recognize that the image constitutes a resource although he finds it false. A similar proposition would hold if he falsely believed such a false image to exist.

9. Context

The context of an interlocution can be described in many dimensions. The relevance and salience of each of these will of course vary with the situations. There are some, however, which should generally be kept in mind. In the following discussion we will focus on what we shall call the organizational context, the substance context, the actor context, and, finally, the interaction context.

By the 'organizational context' we understand the context constituted by the organization within which the interlocution takes place. By 'substance context' we refer to the fact that a discussion or decision in one matter may have significant consequences for other matters. By 'actor context' we refer to the fact that the discussion or decision on the topic in question may have significant consequences for actors who do not participate in the discussion and who might try to influence its outcome in a manner favorable to their interests. By 'interaction context,' finally, we refer to the fact that an actual or possible interaction in the environment of the interlocution may influence the way the discussion develops. As to the relationship between these categories, it should be noted, for example, that an element in the interaction context may, but need not, be located in the organizational context of the interlocution.

An example might illustrate our concepts. The Antarctic Treaty, whose purpose is to secure the Antarctic as a peaceful area open for scientific research, provides biennial consultative meetings where possible recommendations to the governments are discussed. Consider the deliberations on one item, for instance the conservation of fauna and flora in Antarctica, at one of these meetings. This discussion should, first, be viewed in the light of the organizational context, specifically the previous meetings where the same question or similar ones have been discussed, and above all in regard to meetings to come. In particular, the possibility of a revision of the treaty in 1991, where the question of national claims versus internationalization can be reopened, may influence the strategy and behavior of various countries. The discussion on the item in question should also be seen in the light of the activities and interactions taking place in the Antarctic itself, which form part of the interaction context; to some extent these may be planned with a view to their effects on the future regime in Antarctica.

Now, as the Antarctic Treaty is specifically a safeguard for scientific research in Antarctica, the scientists constitute an important subset of the actor context. The discussion on our item may therefore have to be understood against the background of the meetings of SCAR (Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research), whose members in fact constitute a transnational pressure group of scientists. Finally, as regards the substance context, certain countries might also consider the regulation of other 'new' territories, especially the sea bed, when deciding upon a strategy for the consultative meetings in general and upon their attitude on our specific item in particular.[32]

We would like to make some more general remarks on the various dimensions of the context. As to the organizational context, the above example illustrates one

subdimension, namely that of the relationships between different meetings in the same body. Another subdimension which may have to be considered, for instance in analyses of the discussions in a committee, is that of the relationship between the body within which the interlocution takes place, and other bodies. Thus, another body may be higher in authority, or it may have the same immediate superior authority. In the latter case, elements of competition may emerge. In the former case, the salient feature of the situation may be that the superior body can abolish a decision made by the inferior body, or that it is supposed to make a decision on the basis, among other things, of a recommendation submitted by this body. The possible premises of the superior body are in such cases likely to influence the discussions in the inferior one; perhaps members of the higher body will try to influence them more directly. The salient feature may also be that the superior body can modify the purpose, composition, resources, etc. of the lower body, or that it can abolish it. In such cases the participants may act so as to maximize their chances of being re-elected; further, their time perspective may be influenced, etc.

With regard to substance context and actor context little need be added. Let us only give two more examples. In the domestic debate on Norway's affiliation with the European Community, the question of the consequences of membership versus no membership for the security of Norway, and also of the EEC, was a central theme, although the decision had little formally to do with this question. The role played by New Zealand during Great Britain's negotiations with the European Community illustrates how elements of the actor context can intervene. New Zealand was particularly active during these negotiations because of her major interests in agriculture, which was one of the major items in the negotiations.[33]

As regards the interaction context, we would like to point out two subcategories. First, the purpose of the interlocution may be to regulate the interaction in a certain area. This is, for example, the case with peace negotiations, which can take place while the war is still going on. We shall use the term 'base context' to refer to the interaction to be regulated. Now, developments in the base context may of course influence the way a negotiation develops, for instance, and vice versa. More particularly, participants in the interaction in the base context may consciously try to influence the negotiations by their moves; thus they may escalate the war effort, or start preparing a strike. Similarly, moves made in the negotiations – e.g. concessions, promises, threats, stiffening of terms – may have the purpose of influencing the behavior of the opponent in the base context. It should be noted that the set of participants in each interaction will often, but need not be the same.

Finally, we would like to point out that the interaction context of an interlocution may include other interlocutions, in particular future ones. Here, too, we can distinguish between a substance dimension and an actor dimension. A participant in a negotiation may adapt his arguments to the fact that he will later have to negotiate similar agreements with other actors. Similarly, in a debate, in particular a TV confrontation, where a politician strongly disagrees with his opponent, he will

perhaps adapt his style to the fact that he might later like to consider forming a coalition with him.

10. Conclusion

We suggested in our introduction that the framework outlined, in combination with other theoretical elements, can provide a fruitful basis for the study of rather different types of political interlocutions. Of course, the centrality of the various elements of the framework varies considerably with the topics studied. In his study of the debate forum of the Norwegian Students' Association, Stenstadvold found that microgeography, i.e. the structure of the hall where the debates took place, and the distinction between addressee, target, and persons affected, provided him with decisive clues for understanding what went on in the forum. To Underdal, in his study on Norway's negotiations with the European Community, the internal structure of one of the two parties, the European Community, played a similar role. Yet we found a great deal of common ground. Thus, the official purpose repeatedly required particular attention, and the tension between the obligations assumed by the participants and their strategic considerations, is a common theme.

As the different studies now in progress or under preparation reach completion, we hope to be able to supplement the present framework and to improve this provisional attempt at a systematization. Furthermore, we hope to be able to develop parts of our considerations into something more like theories in a strict sense. Much of this work has to be done on more specific types of interlocutions. We think, however, not only that the degree of generality chosen here should not be neglected, but that one direction of research should aim at even greater generality. Thus it may be possible to arrive at a framework of concepts covering both political interlocutions within an institutional framework, as discussed here, and political communication of a less connected and direct nature.

NOTES

1. See the contributions of Harsanyi, Olson, Mitchell, and Sartori, in Seymour M. Lipset (ed.), *Politics and the Social Sciences*, New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1969. See also Harsanyi, 'Rational-Choice Models of Political Behaviour vs. Functionalist and Conformist Theories,' in *World Politics 21*, pp. 513—538.
2. Knut Midgaard's study — *Communication and Strategy*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1970 — gave much of the theoretical background. He has been the main supervisor for several of the later studies. The two other authors wrote their master's theses in this field. Stenstadvold (*Det Norske Studentersamfund: En debattanalytisk studie*, Oslo: Institutt for statsvitenskap, 1971) dealt with the debate forum of the Norwegian Students' Association, while Underdal made a study of the institutional framework of Norway's negotiations with the European Community on the conditions of membership (*Forhandlingene om norsk medlemskap i EF: En studie av rammebetingelser*, Oslo: Institutt for statsvitenskap, 1972). Underdal's work is part of a project which also comprises a study on the negotiations in the agricultural sector, and another on the negotiations in the fisheries sector. Most of the remaining studies have dealt with international negotia-

tions: on national quotas in pelagic whaling, on the establishment of the Antarctic Treaty, negotiations taking place under this treaty, the UN Conference on the Law of the Seas, the Paris talks on Vietnam, the Kampala negotiations between Nigeria and Biafra, the Middle East situation, etc. Some works deal with labor negotiations. Most of the studies mentioned are completed, others are still in progress. The studies on the politics of Antarctica and other 'new territories' form a central part of the research program of the Fridtjof Nansen Foundation at Polhøgda, under the direction of Dr. Finn Sollie.

3. Something must be said about the inspiration for this series of studies. One source is the theory of strategic games, in particular bargaining theory inspired by the former in works by Thomas C. Schelling and Fred C. Iklé; another has been an interest in the character and conditions of open, 'topic-directed,' and creative communication, as discussed by such philosophers as Arne Næss and Karl Jaspers. J. L. Austin's philosophy of language pointed to the constitutive elements of interlocutions, in particular the commitments made by the participants in their speech acts. Richard B. Walton and Robert B. Mc-Kersie's book, *A Behavioral Theory of Labor Negotiations*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965, provided a firm and fruitful ground for dealing with the tension between co-operation and creativity on the one hand and conflict and calculation on the other, as well as pointing out problems and possibilities related to interaction between corporate actors. Erving Goffman, too, has been a rich source of ideas. Finally, our line of thought has been confirmed by certain central ideas in works by Jürgen Habermas, John R. Searle, and Jan Andersson and Mats Furberg.

4. Underdal, *op. cit.*, pp. 57—64.
5. Source: press releases from the talks.
6. Fred C. Iklé, *How Nations Negotiate*, New York and London: Harper & Row, 1964, pp. 13 f.
7. T. C. Schelling, *Strategy of Conflict*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960.
8. See R. Duncan Luce and Howard Raiffa, *Games and Decisions*, New York and London: John Wiley & Sons, 1958, pp. 135 ff.
9. Turid Sand, *Opprettelsen av Antarktis-traktaten av 1959: En forhandlingsteoretisk analyse* (unpublished cand. polit. thesis), Oslo, 1972.
10. Nils Butenschøn, *Nigeria/Biafra: Konflikt og forhandlinger*, Report No. 12 from the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo, December 1972.
11. Viktor Valnes, *Analyse av en forhandlingssituasjon: En bedriftsstudie* (unpublished cand. polit. thesis), Oslo, 1972.
12. Butenschøn, *op. cit.*
13. Willam H. Vatcher, *Panmunjom: The Story of the Korean Armistice Negotiations*, New York: Praeger, 1958.
14. Stenstadvold, *op. cit.*
15. Underdal, *op. cit.*, Chapter 7.
16. Stenstadvold, *op. cit.*, pp. 161 ff.
17. P. H. Nowell-Smith, in his *Ethics*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1954, pp. 81 ff, discusses three 'rules of contextual implication' for serious speech: 1) 'When a speaker uses a sentence to make a statement it is contextually implied that he believes it to be true. And, similarly, when he uses it to perform any of the other jobs for which sentences are used, it is contextually implied that he is using it for one of the jobs that it normally does.' 2) 'A speaker contextually implies that he has what he himself believes to be good reasons for his statement.' 3) 'What a speaker says may be assumed to be relevant to the interests of his audience.' These rules are discussed in M. Furberg, *Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts: A Main Theme in J. L. Austin's Philosophy*, Gothenburg: Acta Universitas Gothoburgensis, 1963, pp. 98 ff. Concerning rules implied in speech, cf. also E. Stenius, 'Mood and Language-Game,' *Synthese 17* (1967), pp. 254—274, and D. Føllesdal, 'Comments on Stenius's "Mood and Language-Game",' *Synthese 17* (1967), pp. 275—280, where the point of departure is L. Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, but where considerations in G. Frege's philosophy are also brought in.
18. On this distinction, see e.g. W. K. Frankena, *Ethics*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968, Chapter 3.
19. Cf., e.g., P. Watzlawick, J. H. Beavin, and D. D. Jackson, *Pragmatics of Human Com-*

munication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes, New York: Norton, 1967.

20. Cf. J. Andersson and M. Furberg, *Språk och påverkan: Om argumentationens semantik* (Language and Influence: On the Semantics of Argumentation), Stockholm: Aldus/Bonniers, 1967.

21. T. C. Schelling, in *The Strategy of Conflict*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960, and *Arms and Influence*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966, has made penetrating analyses of 'the art of commitment.' R. Jervis, too, in *The Logic of Images in International Relations*, Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1970, has made a major contribution; cf. in particular Chapter 6, 'Coupling and Decoupling of Signals.' It should be emphasized, however, that J. L. Austin's philosophy of speech acts provides a basis for systematic inquiries into the commitments inherent in different types of speech acts. See his *How to Do Things with Words*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962.

22. Cf. J. L. Austin, *op. cit.*, (particularly lectures II, III, and VIII) on illocutionary acts, and felicitous/infelicitous speech acts. Cf. also John Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge: The University Press, 1970, particularly Chapter 2.

23. Cf. J. L. Austin, *op. cit.*, on perlocutionary speech acts, lecture VIII.

24. Iklé, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

25. See Daniel Heradstveit, *Jews and Arabs: Conflict Perceptions and Conflict Strategies*. Report No. 13 from the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo, December 1972, pp. 70—79. See also: Heradstveit and Kjølberg, *Midt-Østen*, Oslo: Norsk utenrikspolitisk institutt, 1970.

26. In the Middle East controversy this kind of solution has been suggested in order to overcome the disagreement with regard to the relative order of such items as the recognition of Israel and the question of borders.

27. Underdal, *op. cit.*, pp. 229—237.

28. *Ibid.*, Chapter 7.

29. We should like to comment briefly on the relationship between the concept of goal and the concept of preference structure, or utility function. A person will often have a preference structure over the alternatives in question before he sets himself a goal, his goal being the outcome of considerations related to the value of each alternative and the character of the path that leads to it. This need not be so, however. His goal may for example be due to an intuition or a fundamental choice which cannot be interpreted in this way. It should furthermore be noted that a person, on having set himself a goal, may have a preference structure over the alternatives compatible with his goal on one hand, and those not so on the other.

30. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, Chapter 2.

31. Cf. J. Coleman, 'Foundations for a Theory of Collective Decisions,' *The American Journal of Sociology, 71*, 1966, (6), pp. 615—627.

32. Truls Hanevold, 'The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings: Form and Procedure,' *Cooperation and Conflict 3/4*, 1971, pp. 183—199.

33. Underdal, *op. cit.*, pp. 115—116.