

Lecture 01: Joint Action

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1. The Question

Overall: Which forms of shared agency underpin our social nature?

Requirement: An account of joint action must draw a line between joint actions and parallel but merely individual actions.

What distinguishes genuine joint actions from parallel but merely individual actions?

A *joint action* is an exercise of shared agency.

2. The Simple View

The Simple View Two or more agents perform an intentional joint action exactly when there is an act-type, ϕ , such that each agent intends that they, these agents, ϕ together and their intentions are appropriately related to their actions.

3. The Circularity Objection

‘how can an individual refer to a joint activity without the jointness [...] already being in place?’ (Schweikard & Schmid 2013)

4. The Circularity Objection Again

‘Examples of what I shall refer to ... as “acting together” include dancing together, building a house together, and marching together against the enemy, where these are construed as something other than a matter of doing the same thing concurrently and in the same place’ (Gilbert 2013, p. 23)

‘The key question in the philosophy of collective action is simply ... under what conditions are two or more people doing something together?’ (Gilbert 2010, p. 67)

‘two or more people are acting together if [and only if] they are jointly committed to espousing as a body a certain goal, and each one is acting in a way appropriate to the achievement of that goal, where each one is doing this in light of the fact that he or she is subject to a joint commitment to espouse the goal in question as a body.’ (Gilbert 2013, p. 34)

‘any random group of agents is a group that does something together’ (Ludwig 2014, p. 128)

5. Walking Together in the Mafia Sense

Bratman offers a counterexample to something related to the Simple View (see Bratman 1992, 2014). Suppose that you and I each intend that we, you and I, go to New York together. But your plan is to point a gun at me and bundle me into

the boot (or trunk) of your car. Then you intend that we go to New York together, but in a way that doesn’t depend on my intentions. As you see things, I’m going to New York with you whether I like it or not. Does this provide the basis for an objection to the Simple View?

References

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