

Joint action new definition

Broadly conceived, joint action occurs when two or more agents' activities are coordinated and thereby effect or constitute some outcome.

[A] Why not stick with the (Sebanz, Bekkering, & Knoblich, 2006) working definition?
Because :

[1] it requires that joint actions should be 'social interactions' (which is a notion at least as hard to define as that of joint action)

[2] it specifies that 'two or more individuals coordinate their actions to ...': this is naturally understood as meaning that the individuals intentionally coordinate their actions (which is much too restrictive for the examples). The sentence I offer requires that the coordination matters for realising the outcome ('thereby') but not that anyone intends the coordination.

[3] it specifies 'in space and time' ---while the cases we are interested in all involve space and time, we want to stress that there are cases where intellectual insight into other minds might be necessary and these include cases where there is no (or extremely little) need to coordinate in space and time (e.g. suppose that a facebook group collectively promotes a particular charity by agreeing to make it the sole benefactor of their wills; the joint action is that of promoting the charity.)

[B] The new definition is very broad.

[1] Suppose some people are queuing for a bus. Their activities are coordinated and thereby effect the existence of queue. So this is a case of joint action. (We could argue about what counts as an outcome but that is unlikely to alter the underlying issue.)

[2] The definition doesn't distinguish cooperative from competitive activities. For example, suppose a large group of people are brawling in a park. Their activities are coordinated and thereby constitute a brawl. So this is also a case of joint action.