

Bratman on Group Action

Philosophy 444

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Two Initial Points

1. Gilbert on authority. How much real-life authority comes from being the person who has been making the decisions and has others going along with them? (See, for example, what's going on in Bolivia right now.)
2. Bratman's picture. Start with a simple theory, and add complications to deal with puzzle cases. The history of philosophy is that this doesn't end well. Work through the details, but be cautious.

Three Conditions

- Mutual Responsiveness
- Commitment to joint activity; i.e., we both intend to do this very activity, under something like this description.
- Commitment to mutual support; i.e., we both intend to help the other should they falter, and not claim all the glory.

The last condition is a strengthening of the idea that cooperative activity is not side-by-side activity.

Can I intend that we F?

- Sure - I can intend to spend a sunny day at the beach, without intending the sunshine
- I can even, I think, do it without being 100% sure of the sunshine
- Don't need complete control
- Another example: I can intend to holiday in Paris, although I can't control all the aspects of my getting to Paris.

Mesh

- As stated this feels too strong.
- Imagine that your job is to get the paint. I have views about where to get the paint from (as in Bratman's example), but also how to drive there. This feels like it shouldn't matter; it's your job to get the paint.
- How much counterfactual resiliency of mesh is interesting here. Bratman's pun about 'beyond the pale' drives an interesting point.
- In practice, it can feel almost coercive to include a strong restriction on sub-plans.

Reflexivity

- Long tradition of thinking about the point of intention is that action is brought about as a result of this very intention.
- Bratman is extending this to a group setting.

What exactly counts as coercion?

If I dictate all the terms, that's coercive. But where we draw the line between power imbalance and coercion is tricky. (Famously!)

What Counts as Support

- The single possible kind of support feels really weak.
- What if there is a kind of thing I can't stand seeing anyone suffer through.
- Feels like we need a generic here not an existential

Explicit disavowal of commitment

- Discuss these for a bit
- Do they defeat shared intention; shared cooperative activity?
- Do they

Can we get commitment from elsewhere

- Typical case - assurances and responsibility to live up to assurances
- Big picture - let people know what game they are playing
- Let people rule out options
- This is a good thing to do

Are Competitive Games SCAs, or Group Actions

- I mean sort of yes, sort of no.
- What turns on this question?