

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?
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?