

ESF Networking Meeting

Varieties of Shared Intentionality

Institute of Philosophy, University of London, 2-3 December 2013

Summary

Human beings are social beings that can think and act both as individuals and also jointly as members of larger social groups. We find shared intentionality whenever an individual experiences, thinks or acts jointly with other members of a group. What does it mean for two or more individuals to jointly possess an intentional state such as an evaluative attitude or an intention? What types of social cognitive capacities does shared intentionality depend upon? What is the relationship between intersubjective, plural modes of experience and first-person singular modes of experience? What is the role of shared intentionality in the development of normativity? This networking meeting brought together researchers from the three collaborative research projects that make up the Eurounderstanding programme to explore these and other questions concerning shared intentionality.

Final programme

Monday 2nd December

9-9.30 Registration and Welcome

9.30-10.30 Stephen Butterfill (Warwick) Varieties of Joint Action

10.30-11.30 Mattia Gallotti (Columbia) Individualism and the We-mode

11.30-12.00 Break

12.00-13.00 Glenda Satne (Copenhagen) Knowing Others by Doing Things Together

13.00-14.30 Lunch

14.30-15.30 Hans Bernhard Schmid (Vienna) Plural Self-Awareness

15.30-16.00 Break

16.00-17.00 Dan Zahavi (Copenhagen) You, Me and We: the Sharing of Experiences

17.00-18.00 Philippe Rochat (Emory) I, We and They in Early Development

Tuesday 3rd December

9.30-10.30 Teresa Marques (Lisbon) Shared Desires

10.30-11.30 Jonas Åkerman (Stokholm) Subjectivist Metasemantics for Indexicals and
Perspectival Communication

11.30-12.00 Break

12.00-13.00 Julian Kiverstein (Amsterdam) & Andreas Roepstorff (Aarhus) Coordination as
Sign of Common Ground

13.00-14.30 Lunch

14.30-15.30 Hannes Rakoczy (Göttingen) The Early Ontogeny of Social Ontology

15.30-16.00 Break

16.00-17.00 Johannes Brandl (Salzburg) The Conventional/Normative Distinction: Easy for
Children, Hard for Us

17.00-18.00 John Michael (Copenhagen/CEU, Budapest) The Sense of Commitment

Scientific content of the event

The workshop began with two talks from outside experts. Stephen Butterfill has published extensively on joint action and has co-authored papers with Guenther Knoblich (PI of DRUST). His paper was concerned with different types of joint action distinguished by the degree to which they require mutual or common knowledge. The central question that

occupied Steve throughout his talk was the difference between two or more agents acting together and genuine cases of joint action. He argued for the existence of minimal cases of joint action in which agents represent not only their own plan for action but also the plans of the other agents they are acting with. These minimal cases of joint action are distinguished from more complex cases in which agents must take into account or represent each other's mental states.

Mattia Gallotti gave the second paper. Mattia is a prominent junior researcher currently working as a postdoctoral researcher at Columbia University. He is the co-author with Chris Frith of a much discussed *Trends in Cognitive Science* paper in which they review evidence for what they call a "we mode" of cognitive processing. In his talk Mattia began by explaining why one might think there are different types of shared intentionality. He then moved on to explain and provide evidence for the "we mode" focusing in particular on work on team reasoning.

The final paper in the morning was given by Glenda Satne, a postdoctoral researcher working at the Centre for Subjectivity Research in Copenhagen under Prof Zahavi. Glenda is a member of both the DRUST and NormCon groups. She gave a paper in which she argued for the possibility of knowing other's mental states through acting together with them. Far from requiring knowledge of other mental states, joint action can often be the source of our knowledge of other people's mental states. Glenda proposed that we conceive of this knowledge of others as a second person form of understanding that plays an essential role in cognitive development .

Our third external expert Hans Bernhard Schmid gave the opening paper in the afternoon. Hans Bernhard is among the leading researchers in the field of social ontology and a founding member of the European Network of Social Ontology. Hans Bernhard's talk was an argument for an irreducible shared or communal form of self-awareness, a form of mental integration across persons that forms a plural self. He argued that the first-person is not only singular but can also take a plural form. Plural self-awareness plays the same role in the integration of a group of mind as individual self-awareness plays in the integration of an individual's mind.

The final two papers of the days were intended as partner papers. Dan Zahavi, a member of both NormCon and DRUST, gave a talk investigating the relationship between second-person or intersubjective modes of awareness and shared or collective intentionality. Like Hans Bernhard, Dan was concerned with the relationship between first-person forms of self-awareness, plural forms of awareness we characterise using the term “we” and second-personal or intersubjective forms of awareness. Dan showed how the latter second-person intersubjective forms of awareness are fundamental in relation to plural forms of self-awareness, with a particular focus on the sharing of emotions we find in empathy. The main argument of his paper was that second-person forms of intersubjectivity function as a presupposition for shared intentionality and can help us to understand what precisely a shared or we-perspective is. Philippe Rochat, an external partner on NormCon, gave a far ranging paper reviewing the developmental work he has done with infants and neonates on the emergence of a shared we-perspective, and the important role that social emotions of shame and guilt play in this developmental process. Philippe ended with some of his recent research exploring the development of a concept of property ownership in infants.

The second day began with a focus on language and communication. Teresa Marques, a member of the CCCOM group based in Lisbon, gave the opening paper titled Shared Desires. Her paper started from an analysis of value proposed by David Lewis in terms of groups of agents that desire to desire the object of value. Lewis treats value as shared intentional states insofar as he analyses value in terms of the dispositional states shared by a group. Teresa then proceeded to discuss a problem that has been raised for Lewis’s position – that of how to make sense of disagreement within a group with respect to what one should desire to desire. The paper raised an interesting set of issues for our workshop about the connection between sharing values and the first-person plural “we” perspective discussed on the first day of the workshop. Teresa’s paper was followed by a talk from Jonas Akerman, postdoctoral researcher working at Stockholm university as a part of the CCCOM group. Jonas’s talk was concerned with the problem about how to account for the role of perspective in communication.

Jonas’s talk was followed by a joint presentation by Andreas Roepstorff and Julian Kiverstein of the DRUST group again continuing the theme of communication. The talk began with a brief review of some of the experiments Andreas has been running at Aarhus looking at how

interacting groups of agents create common ground. Some of these experiments concern very simple and minimal cases of joint action, for example subjects coordinating tapping together. Others are more complex involving subjects making decisions together. The central argument of this talk was that agents can both create and test for common ground through coordination. This took us back to a theme that came up in Steve's talk on the first day about the relationship between coordination and shared intentionality found in minimal cases of joint action.

The afternoon session began with two papers from members of the NormCon group. Johannes Brandl gave a paper titled *The Social Roots of Normativity*. The paper was concerned with children's understanding of the distinction between conventions such as dress codes or traffic rules and moral norms like justice, honesty and kindness. Johannes set out two models of normativity. The cooperative model (attributed to David Lewis and Hannes Rakoczy) claims that norms are regularities in behaviour expected and preferred by most group members. The authority model argues that norms are deontic rules (rules expressed using an imperative like "must") learned by imitation from an authority (e.g. a parent or caregiver). Johannes proceeded to offer a defence of the authority model. Hannes Rakoczy, also from the NormCon group, gave the next paper on the early development of collective intentionality and normativity. What is common to collective intentionality and normativity is that a subject must understand that something that people do (e.g. use money, act kindly) has a particular "status function" in a given context. When we use money for instance we assign a value to a piece of paper, and we assign a function to the piece of paper – it can be used to exchange for goods of a certain value. The workshop ended with a talk by John Michael, a postdoctoral researcher on the DRUST project working in Copenhagen with Dan Zahavi's group. John gave a paper on the *Sense of Commitment* in which he looked at the role of commitment in planning and coordination of joint actions. The paper was particularly concerned with the conceptual connection between commitment and expectations and developed a minimal account of commitments as arising out of this connection.

Assessment of results and impact

The main aim of the workshop was to provide a forum for members of the three groups to discuss the very different work they have been doing on issues that directly or indirectly bear on the nature of shared or collective intentionality. Over the course of the two days, inside and outside the workshop we succeeded in finding many common questions and concerns. Some examples are the role of the we-perspective or first-person plural perspective in sharing values (Zahavi, Rochat, Roepstorff & Kiverstein and Marques); the relation between second person and intersubjective understanding (Zahavi, Satne, Roepstorff and Kiverstein); sharing of perspectives and communication (Marques, Akerman, Roepstorff and Kiverstein, Zahavi, Rochat); sharing of meaning and communication (Akerman, Roepstorff and Kiverstein); difference between social norms and conventions (Brandl and Rakoczy). One valuable outcome of meetings like this one is that it gives us an occasion to explore these sorts of overlapping questions across collaborative research projects in a way that otherwise probably wouldn't happen. In organising the workshop, we were careful to invite a mixture of senior and junior researchers. Another valuable outcome of this meeting is the opportunity it gave the junior researchers in our group the opportunity to try out their ideas in a critical but friendly setting. The London Institute of Philosophy was an excellent choice of location with both days of the workshop being well attended and with excellent and fruitful audience participation in question and answers. Finally the meeting greatly benefitted from the participation of three outside experts who were able to offer each of the groups useful perspectives on how their work might bear on the debates and problems concerning shared intentionality.

List of speakers and participants

Speakers:

Stephen Butterfill (Warwick, Philosophy)

Mattia Gallotti (Columbia, Philosophy)

Glenda Satne (Copenhagen, Philosophy)

Hans Bernhard Schmid (Vienna, Philosophy)

Dan Zahavi (Copenhagen, Philosophy)

Philippe Rochat (Emory, Psychology)

Teresa Marquez (Lisbon, Philosophy)

Jonas Akerman (Stockholm, Philosophy)

Andreas Roepstorff (Aarhus, Cognitive Neuroscience, Anthropology)

Julian Kiverstein (Amsterdam, Philosophy)

Johannes Brandl (Salzburg, Philosophy)

Hannes Rakoczy (Goettingen, Psychology)

John Michael (Copenhagen, Philosophy)

External Participants:

1. Frank Hindriks
2. Andrei Ionescu
3. Sarah Pawlett Jackson
4. Herman Witzel
5. Tuuli Tahko
6. Mihai Ometita
7. Marco Meyer
8. Rucinska, Zuzanna
9. Angelica Kaufmann
10. Cheng, Huei-Ying
11. Nicholas Shea
12. Kassman-Tod, Joseph
13. Andrew Chitty
14. Keith Gifford
15. Steffen Borge
16. 劉夏泱 Hsia Yang
17. Robyn Carston

18. Edwards, Jonathan
19. Rachelle Bascara
20. Hong Yu Wong
21. Steph Marston
22. Alexandra Blickhan
23. John Simons
24. Kelly Vassie
25. Joseph Higgins
26. Richard Weir
27. Hector Rojas
28. Matthias Wurtenberger
29. Christopher Ferguson
30. David Bordonaba Plou
31. Chris Howes
32. Elliott, Ellese
33. Daniel Yon
34. Laura Silva