GEORG MEGGLE*

REPORT ON WORKSHOP COLLECTIVE INTENTIONALITY – II

(Leipzig, 2000 Oct 27/28/29)

Collective attitudes (beliefs and intentions in particular) are central for analyzing, and theorizing about, the social world. The international *Collective Intentionality* group, which was created in 1999, is a network of scholars from different disciplines. By maintaining an e-mail network, by organizing workshops, and by other means this group aims at arriving at deeper understanding of the conceptual and philosophical nature and the logical aspects of these attitudes, as well as of the various theoretical and practical consequences of these *Collective Intentionality* attitudes. For *Collective Intentionality* discussions and interaction between scholars from such disciplines as Philosophy, Artificial Intelligence, Logic, Psychology, and Sociology are essential.

There are many connections between the study of *Collective Intentionality* and that of *Communicative Understanding*. Therefore, the Research Group *Kommunikatives Verstehen (Communicative Understanding)* cooperates with the *Collective Intentionality* group, and one result of this cooperation was the 2nd *Collective Intentionality* Workshop, which took place in the

* G.Meggle: Philosophisches Institut Universitaet, Leipzig, email: meggle@uni-leipzig.de

Philosophy Department of Leipzig University, 2000 Oct *27/28/29,* organized by Georg Meggle (Leipzig) and Raimo (Tuomela).

Here are the main tenets of the talks, presented here in the order of the workshop's program. The speaker's own abstracts are used for that purpose as much as possible.

Seumas Miller (Canberra) gave the opening speech *"On the Mental States, Commitments and Reasons of Collectivities"*. But now, maybe as a lesson from our discussions, he wants his talk to be referred to via a new title, which makes it absolutely clear what he was after: *Against Collective Agency*. From his philosophical standpoint the 'actions' of collectives, and in particular, organisations, either do not exist, or else are reducible to the actions of individual human persons. More specifically, Miller rejects the view that macro-entities, such as nation states and corporations, have mental states such as beliefs and intentions, or that they engage in reasoning. Consequently collectives do not perform actions – or at least do not perform actions in any suitably strong sense of the notion of an action; and collectives are neither rational nor moral agents. Properly speaking, all actions and processes of reasoning are performed by individual human persons (and any relevantly similar individual beings), and none are performed by collectives. In the course of arguing for a reductivist conception of the "actions" of collectives, Miller considers, and rejects, the arguments of a number of theorists, including Peter French and Philip Pettit.

Kay Mathiesen (Massachusetts): *"What do we Mean by "We"? A Philosophical Analysis of Collectives"*. According to Mathiesen, a "collective intention" is any intentional state (e.g., belief, desire, or intention to act) the subject of which is not an individual person but a collection of persons. Recent work on the theory of collective intentions and collective action focuses on

small-scale, one-shot collective intentions and, thus, fails to provide an adequate account of the large scale enduring collectives of interest to social and political philosophers. In her paper Mathiesen laid the foundations for an account of such enduring collectives. She argued for an account of collective intentionality that is ontologically individualist (and thus agreed with Seumas Miller's main tenet) and phenomenologically collectivist. Mathiesen then sketched an account of collective identity and argued that sharing a collective identity allows individuals to form enduring, large-scale collectives, which can be the subject of numerous collective intentions and actions over time.

Anthonie Meijers (Eindhoven): *"Dialogue, Understanding and Collective Intentionality"*. This paper had three objectives. First, Meijers argued that our notion of dialogue is conceptually linked to the notion of cooperation or collective action. It cannot be solely understood in terms of the notion of individual action. Secondly, the paper investigated the structure of intentions in communication. What kind of intentions are involved? When can dialogue be called successful? What does mutual understanding mean? Finally, Meijers analysed some of the consequences that follow from the view that dialogue is a form of collective action, in particular with regard to Grice's conversational maxims, the notion of openness in communication, and the very notion of a speech act. This also helped to articulate the differences between the received view and Meijer's own position.

Frank Hindriks (St. Andrews): *"Social Ontology, Social Groups, and Collective Intentionality"*. The notion of collective intentionality captures the idea that people can share intentional states such as intentions and beliefs and that they constitute social groups in virtue of such shared states. This paper resolves two sources of skepticism with respect to this notion. An Ockhamian kind of skepticism that asks whether we need the notion at all, and a skepticism that is inspired by a fear of a Hege-

lian spirit or group mind that motivates the question whether a mysterious kind of entity is involved. This latter question is answered negatively by showing that the accounts of Searle, Tuomela, and Gilbert share the feature that although intentional states of a group may differ from individual intentional states, they are constituted by mental states from individuals. A comparison of the accounts with respect to voluntarism, the role of agreement, mutual belief, and common knowledge, as well as their degree of holism follows including some conclusions concerning the relative quality of the accounts. The paper also portrays the larger projects of providing an account of social ontology within which the explications of collective intentionality are presented by the three mentioned philosophers. Explication of the role the notion plays in these larger projects is part of the response to the Ockhamian kind of skepticism.

Rafał Wierzchoławski (Lublin): *"Did Alfred Schütz meet Margaret Gilbert?"* Do Margaret Gilbert and Alfred Schütz share anything together? The answer that they both refer to the level of everyday experience of the social world (reality) and that they both apply the concept of "us" as basic and fundamental one, is neither difficult, nor very original, however true. Wierzcholawski focussed his attention on the problem whether according to Schütz and Gilbert (and if so, to what extend) one can talk about common understanding and sharing the same concept (plural subject, "we-relationship"). Wierzcholawski argue that in spite of the fact that:

(1)   in interpretation of sociological tradition (Simmel, Weber, Durkheim) both of them stress different points;

(2)   in their pursuits they undertake different perspectives (from inside of the participant or the analytical view from nowhere);

(3)   they use different languages and conceptual schemes, and

(4)   when taking into account the developments in philo-
sophical analysis (don't forget that Alfred Schütz died
in 1959), one can still bring into question whether the
same (analogical) constitutive elements of the basic
social situation, such as: "doing something together"
can be found (at least in nuce) in their analysis of
"us».

Wolfgang Balzer (Munich) & *Raimo Tuomela* (Helsinki &
Leipzig): *"Social Institutions, Norms, and Practices"*. This joint
paper submitted a model of social institutions which binds to-
gether the two central components of institutions, a) a ‚behavio-
ral' system of social practices as repeated patterns of collective
intentional actions and b) the normative ‚Überbau' consisting of
a task-right system which on the one hand is influenced and in
basic cases even induced by the ‚underlying' practices and on
the other hand serves to stabilize them. An explicit and relati-
vely simple connection in terms of sanctions is drawn between
actions which are obligatory or permitted by special positions on
the one hand and the ‚ordinary' course of actions which occurs
in social practices within an institution on the other hand. Obli-
gations and rights are not simply bound to actions, but to sy-
stems of actions given in the form of systems of social practices.
This adds an essential component which has been neglected in
formal treatments so far. The inclusion of social practices yields
a rich structure in which the emergence and maintenance of
norms can be tackled in a realistic way.

Solveig Hofmann (Munich): *"The Social Practice of a Women's
Group: A First Simulation"*. Hofmann presented a program for
the simulation of a particular social practice taking the example
of a women's group. The program is based on the Multi-Agent-
System SMASS. (Balzer: 2000). The implementation is based
on a model developed in W. Balzer and R. Tuomela, 1999. The
program uses a (finite) set T of points of time, a set A of agents

and a set of attitudes (intentions and believes), which can be varied by parameter files. For every agent a a subset of parts of intended collective activities is randomly generated out of a set of definable action types related to the elements of T. In addition iterated mutual belief structures are generated for every agent, which represent the belief about which group members will share her intentions at a certain point of time. An important difference between the conceptual and the program model is that the trigger condition for performing a common action is determined by majority calculations over these mutual belief sentences. After the performance of a common action the success is randomly evaluated for every agent, who has participated. Hofmann presented an analysis of the outcome of simulation runs, i.e. the performance of common actions and the cohesion of the group in dependency of the degree of joint intentions and the mutual beliefs about the presence of these joint intentions.

Petri Ylikoski (Helsinki): *"We-attitudes and Social Institutions"*. Ylikoski first compared Raimo Tuomela's and John Searle's accounts of we-attitudes and their role in their theories of social institutions. According to this comparison, their accounts turn out to be rather different. In the second part of the paper Ylikoski challenged the thesis that we-attitudes are necessary for the existence of social institutions. As a conclusion he suggested that the role of we-attitudes in the analysis of social institutions should be reconsidered.

Maj Tuomela (Helsinki): *"On Rational Trust"*. In this paper, an analysis of rational trust (TR) and a context for rational trust (Y) were offered and argued. The focus was on a person's trust in another person that he will perform a specific action. M. Tuomela's analysis of rational trust relies on a view of trust where the trustor expects to be intentionally gratified by the trustee's action. The "trust context Y" involves the conditions for a situation where the trustor can consider whether such gratification

may be expected. Rational trust is distinguished from the more general notion of rational reliance by the presence of context Y and the trustor's expectation of the trustee's intentional gratification . The trustor's expectation of the trustee's "acting with goodwill" towards him is the central belief of the trustor involved in rational trust.

Michael Robins (Bowling Green): *"Joint Commitment and Circularity"*. One of the most puzzling aspects of joint commitment is that action and intention are those of individuals, so what sense can be made of their social counterpart? The main issue dividing the two schools of thought is whether the genuinely social aspect can be constructed out of the intentions of individuals. It is agreed that joint commitments in the strongest sense are both categorical and interdependent. But the exchange of commitments leading up to agreement consists of commitments offered on the condition of a like commitment of others. The logical conundrum is how these apparently conditional commitments can "fuse together" to become unconditional and interdependent. The non-reductive school holds that any such derivation is circular because it has to smuggle in a prior notion of a joint commitment. The reductive school denies this. According to Robins the circularity problem is multi-faceted, but that in the final analysis our lot can be cast with the reductivists.

Kaarlo Miller (Helsinki): *"On Collective Commitment"*. After a brief presentation of individual commitment and intention, Miller argued against the view that individual commitment presupposes persistence of intention. Instead, intention implies persistence in attempts to act. With collective commitment the case is different; the agent is not free to drop his intention as he pleases. Miller argued for an account in which, first, there is no collective commitment unless there is some agreement among the parties to what they are committed to, and, second, if there is such an agreement, it presupposes obligations and rights for the

parties, and, third, a collective commitment to the content of the agreement emerges if and only if the parties also intend to carry out these obligations, including obligations not to violate the rights of the other parties. Miller's position: A collective commitment has "parts" as it entails various commitments for the individual members. These part-commitments form a hierarchical structure, and various relations of dependece between them will be discussed.

Raimo Tuomela (Helsinki): *"Collective Commitment and We-Mode Thinking"*. The paper presented and discussed collective commitment notions of various strength. The most central notion of collective was taken to be based on a shared plan or on an agreement, and it was analyzed by means of the "Bulletin Board" view. This model of joint intention (and collective commitment) formation has been argued to stay clear of the kind of "deconditionalization" problem that is involved in many coordination situations. Conditional intentions by the participants such as "I will do X if you will do X" and the ensuing problem of circularity is avoided by the model presented in the paper in part because of the underlying presuppositions of the situation. These presuppositions were argued not to be too demanding. Some other theoreticians', e.g. Bach's and Velleman's, accounts were also commented on.

The proceedings of this workshop will appear as a special issue of Grazer Philosophische Studien in 2001. (These proceedings will also include papers from the Workshop On Social Facts / Discussions on and with Margaret Gilbert, Leipzig, July 6-7 2000. Hence the title of the proceedings: Social Facts & Collective Intentionality, ed by G. Meggle.). Where the 2001 Collective Intentionality meeting will take place is still an open question. In 2002 the group will meet for a CIA Workshop (= Workshop Collective Intentionality and Agency) in Lund, 2002 June 12-13, just before the next International conference of ESAP (European Society of Analytical Philosophy), Lund,

June14-18. This Lund workshop will be organized again by Georg Meggle and Raimo Tuomela. Suggestions are welcome as early as possible.

The atmosphere of the Leipzig workshop was very relaxed. No wonder: It was not only a workshop but, in the end (and, of course, not planned by either of the organizers) it also turned out to be something like an extended version of a big birthday party - Raimo Tuomela's 60th birthday was on Sept 9th 2000. Once more: Good Luck, dear Raimo.

REFERENCES

W. BALZER (2000). SMASS: A Sequential Multi-Agent System for Social Simulation. In R. SULEIMAN, K.-G.TROITZSCH, N.GILBERT (eds.), Tools and Techniques for Social Sciences Simulation, Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag, 65-82.

W. BALZER & R. TUOMELA (1999). Collective Intentions and the Maintenance of Social Practices, manuscript.

Collective Intentionality group:
http://www.valt.helsinki.fi/kfil/coli/
Research Group Communicative Understanding:
http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~fkv