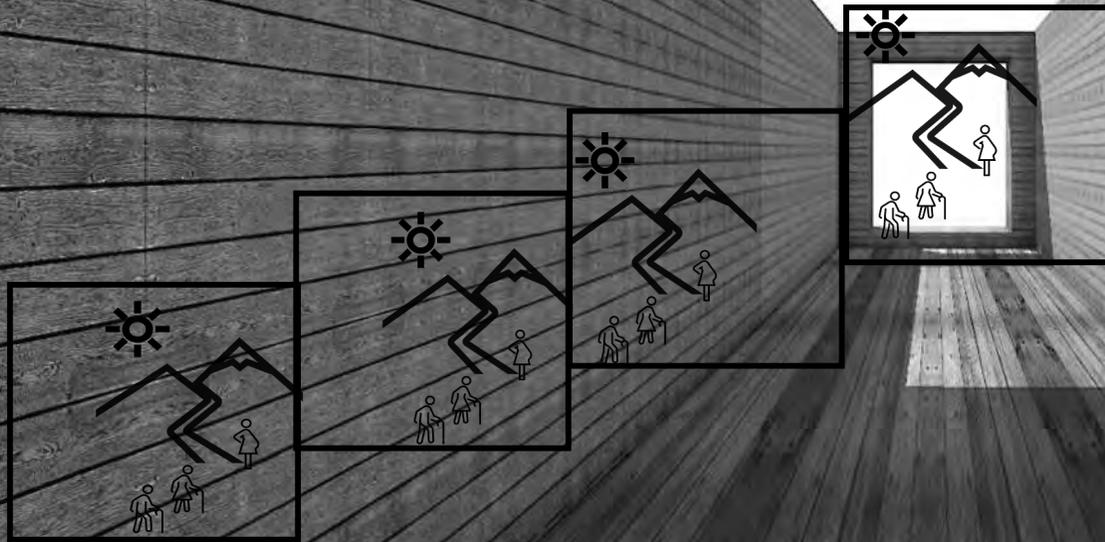


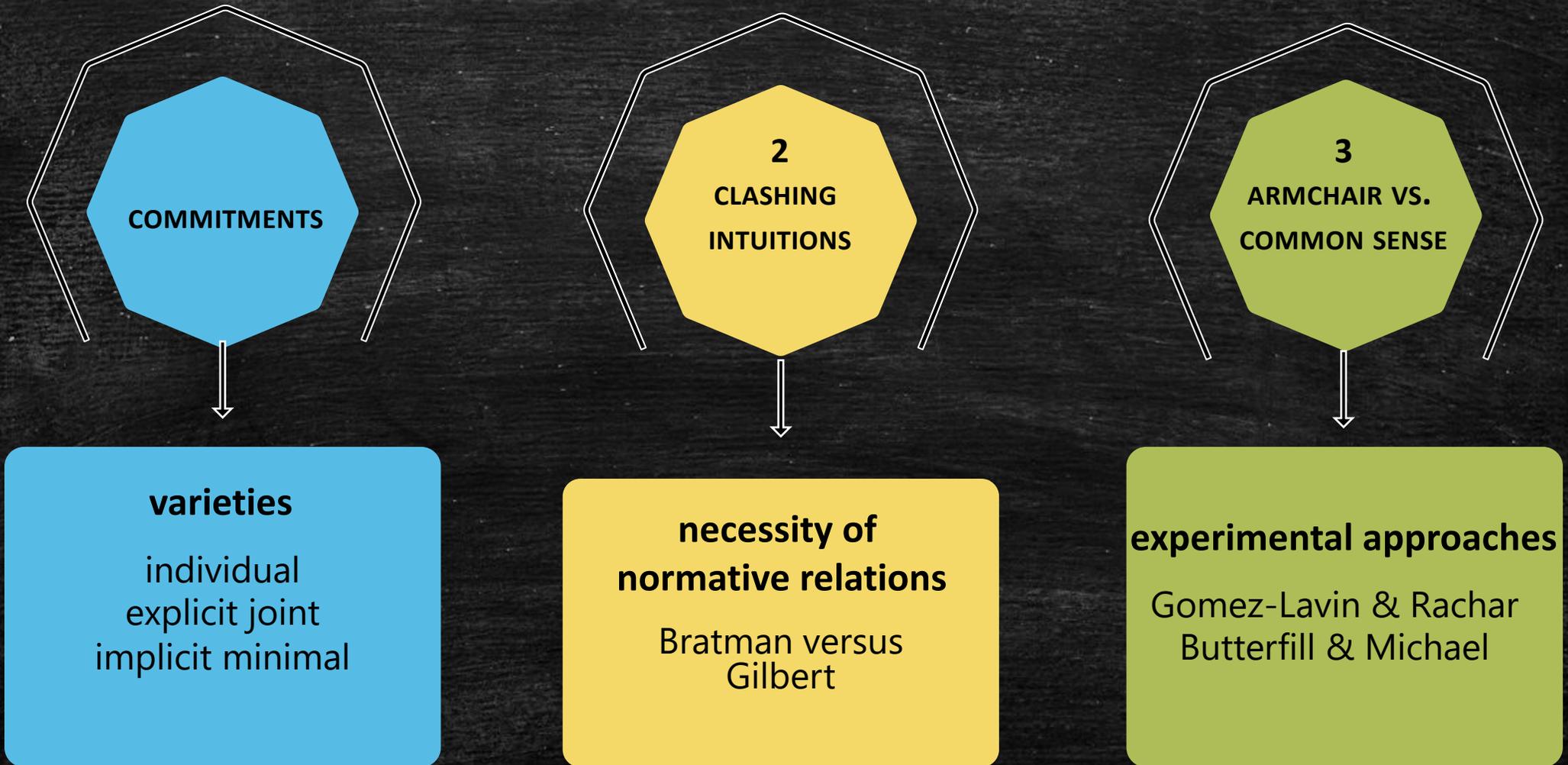
CAN JOINT COMMITMENTS LIVE LONGER THAN INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS?



ANNA STRASSER



OVERVIEW





Commitment – the social glue

actions

individual actions

joint actions

individual commitment

joint commitment

minimal sense of commitment

agents stand in a specific relation to their intentions

- helps to plan individual actions unfolding over longer timescales
- enables individuals to resist temptations & distractions
- makes individuals' behavior predictable

explicit group's relation to its shared intention

- helpful for planning & coordinating joint actions unfolding over longer timescales
- facilitates cooperation by making people willing to perform actions that they would not otherwise perform

one agent stands implicitly in a relation to the shared intention

- expectations & motivation can be disassociated

Can joint commitments live longer than individual commitments?

TO WHAT EXTENT INDIVIDUAL AND JOINT COMMITMENTS CAN FALL APART IN JOINT ACTIONS?

NON-NORMATIVIST
there are joint actions
without a joint
commitment



NORMATIVIST
all joint actions have
necessarily a joint
commitment

IN-BETWEEN
at least a minimal sense of
commitment is to be found

Clashing intuitions

WHAT HAPPENS IF ONE PARTICIPANT OF A JOINT ACTION IS CHANGING THEIR MIND?

Bratman (2014)

- ... necessarily destroys the shared intention and the joint commitment

There are minimal joint actions without joint commitment.



NON-NORMATIVIST



Gilbert (2013)

- there still is a joint commitment

All joint actions are necessarily based on joint commitments.

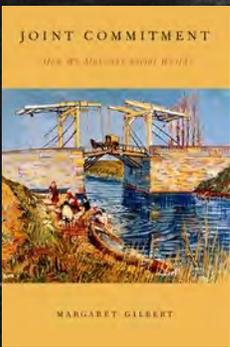


NORMATIVIST



2019 Lebowitz Prize of the American Philosophical Association for Philosophical Achievement and Contribution

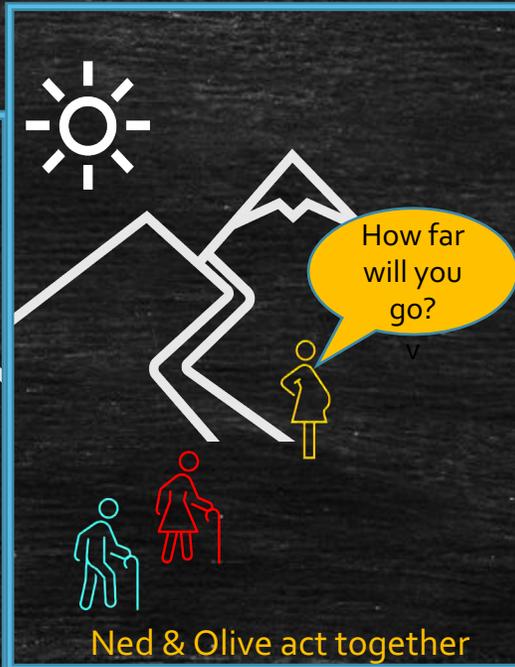
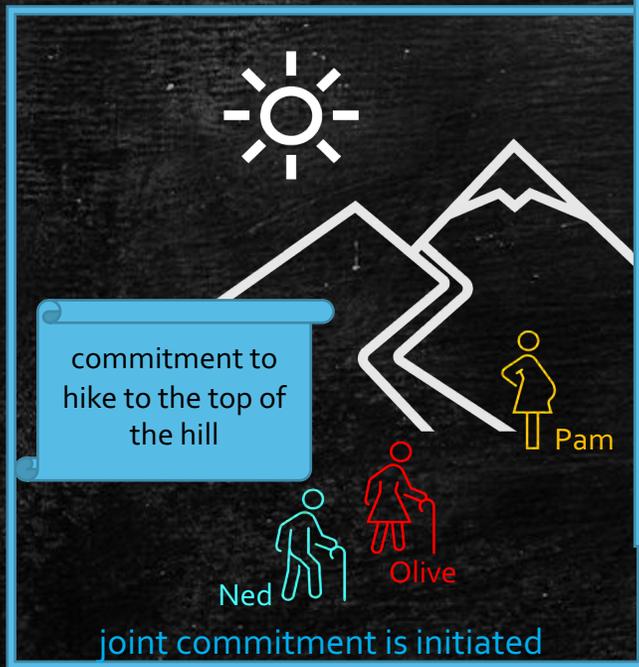
Michael Bratman and Margaret Gilbert, "What is it to Act Together?" virtual meeting on 6 April 2021



Olive's statement to Pam at the end is accurate!



Gilbert 2013, p. 8



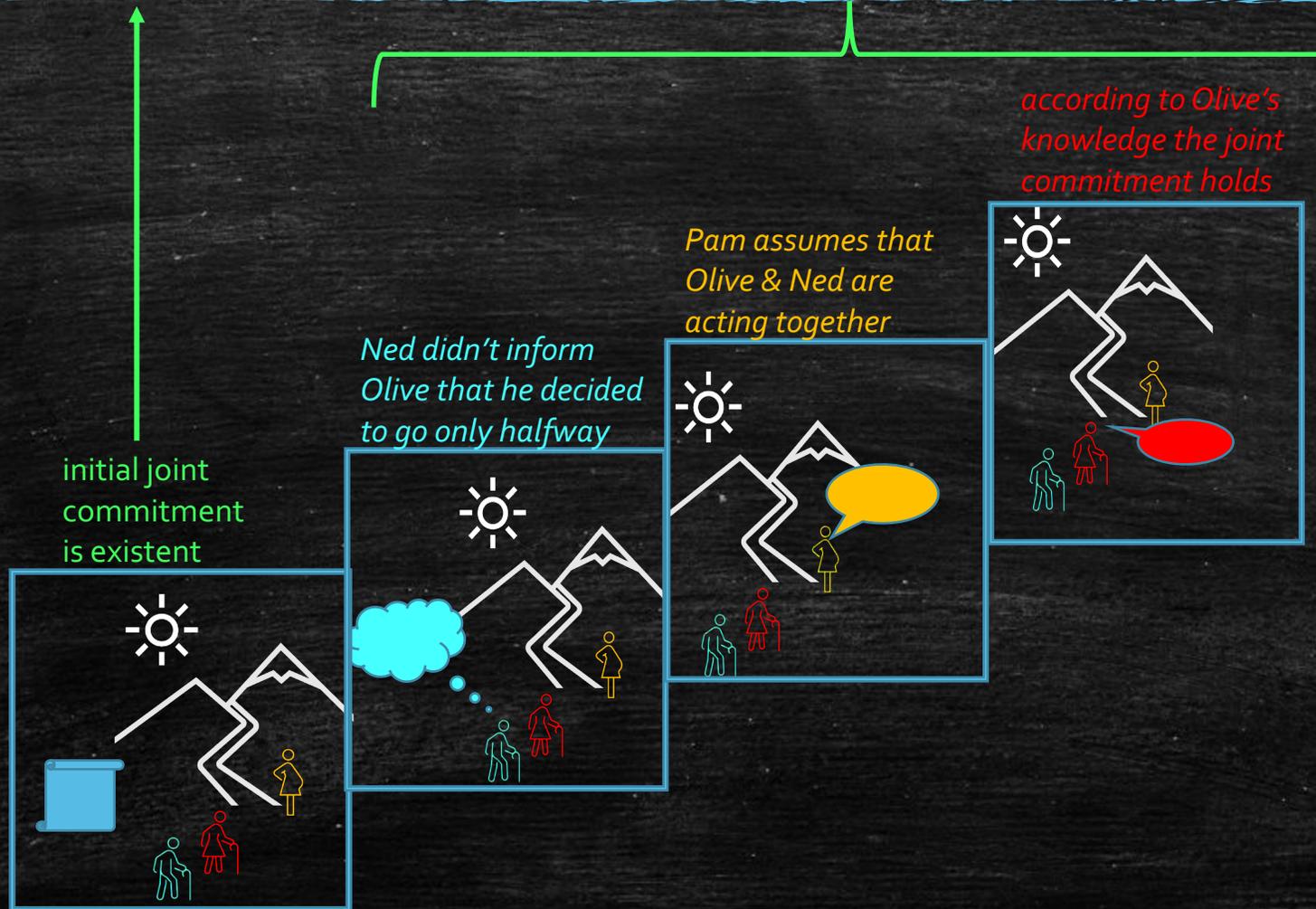
As I see it, once Ned has changed his mind they no longer have a shared intention to climb to the top.

Bratman 2014, p. 117

Is Olive justified to claim a joint commitment?

common knowledge!

~~common knowledge!~~



Can such intuitions be experimental tested?

NON-NORMATIVIST

Michael Bratman



- lacking common knowledge condition initiates a minimal joint action
- there are minimal cases of joint action without normative relations

Margaret Gilbert

- common knowledge condition does not have to hold throughout the joint action
- actionrelative normative relations are inherent in joint action

NORMATIVIST



FORMAL APPROACHES TESTING INTUITIONS BY SYSTEMATICALLY SAMPLING NAIVE PARTICIPANTS' INTUITIONS ABOUT EXPERIMENTALLY CONTROLLED SCENARIOS

Gomez-Lavin & Rachar (2019)



SUPPORT NORMATIVE APPROACH

Butterfill & Michael (under review)



DID NOT SUPPORT NORMATIVE APPROACH

indicating the normativist paradigm

3x1 between-subjects design:

control condition (C): no evidence of a joint action / **low condition (L):** low, joint action / **high condition (H):** high, joint action

	scenario	hypotheses	
1	helping (perspective of the helper)	JOINT ACTION → NORMATIVITY	obligation of the helper to notify the person being helped that he is leaving the joint action
2	helping (perspective of the helped)		having the standing to rebuke the helper for leaving the joint action
3	walking together (perspective of the participant that changes her intention)		having the standing to rebuke the other for leaving the joint action
4	walking together (perspective of the other participant)		obligation of the participant to notify the other person that he is leaving the joint action
5	elevator	NORMATIVITY → JOINT ACTION	evidence that a normative relations between two agents indicates that the two are acting together
6	ATM	OBLIGATION → MORALITY	obligation creates a moral obligation between actors engaged in a morally questionable joint action

**JOINT ACTIONS ARE INHERENTLY NORMATIVE, AND THIS
NORMATIVITY IS DISTINCT FROM MORALITY.**

Behavior involving shared intentions, commitments, obligations

3x1 between-subjects design:

(1) **baseline condition (B)**: joint action with no complications / (2) **test condition (T)**: joint action where one participant had secretly changed his individual intention / (3) **parallel condition (P)**: individual, NOT joint action

	scenario	test whether	hypotheses (<i>median</i>)	relation to predict	
1	hiking (Gilbert version)	behavior is categorized as involving shared intentions, commitments, obligations	(T) = (B)	commitment → shared intention, obligation obligation → shared intention, commitment shared intention → obligation, commitment	Yes Yes Yes
2	hiking* (variation with changed wording)		(T) ≠ (P)		
3	playing tennis		(T) = (B)		

RESULTS DO NOT SUPPORT THE HYPOTHESES

median of shared intention & commitment questions:

- (T) < (B)
- (T) not significantly different from (P)

median of obligation question

- (T) not significantly different from (B) and (P)

experiment 1 & 2:

- commitment → shared intention
- obligations did neither predict shared intention nor commitment

experiment 3:

- commitment do **not** predict shared intention
- obligation → shared intention
- obligation did **not** predict commitment

Yes
No
No

No
Yes
No

Can we compare those results?

Gomez-Lavin & Rachar (2019)

Butterfill & Michael (under review)

DESIGN: 3x1 between-subjects design



- SCENARIOS:
- | | | |
|---|----------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - helping to push a broken car - walking down Fifth Avenue - two men speeding up to leave an elevator - taking money from an ATM | <p>→</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hiking up the hill - playing a 5-set tennis match |
|---|----------|--|

scenario	walking	hiking
measure	<p>Rebuke</p> <p><i>Does the person who stays have the right to call out the person who peels off?</i></p>	<p>Commitment</p> <p><i>To what extent do you think that Ned and Olive have a commitment to walk to the top of the hill?</i></p>

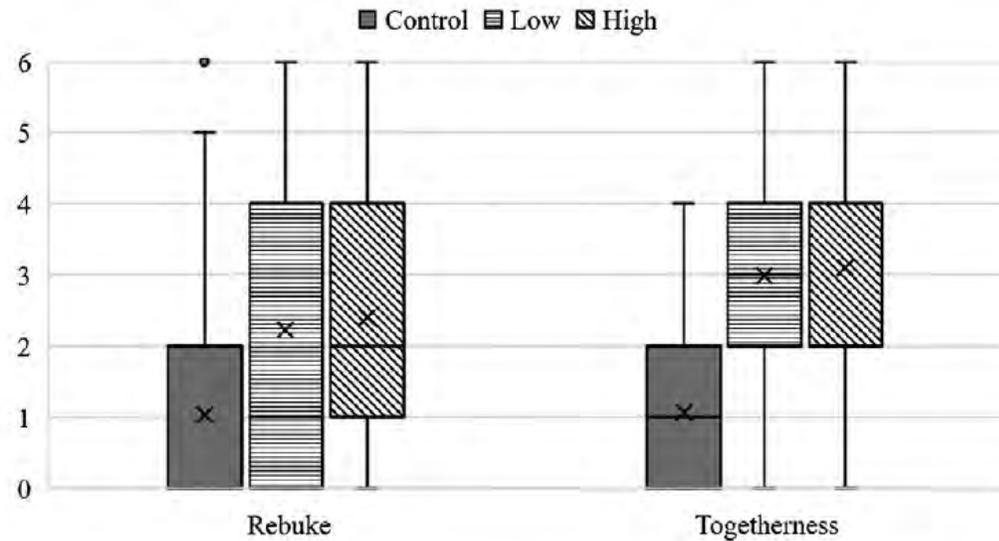
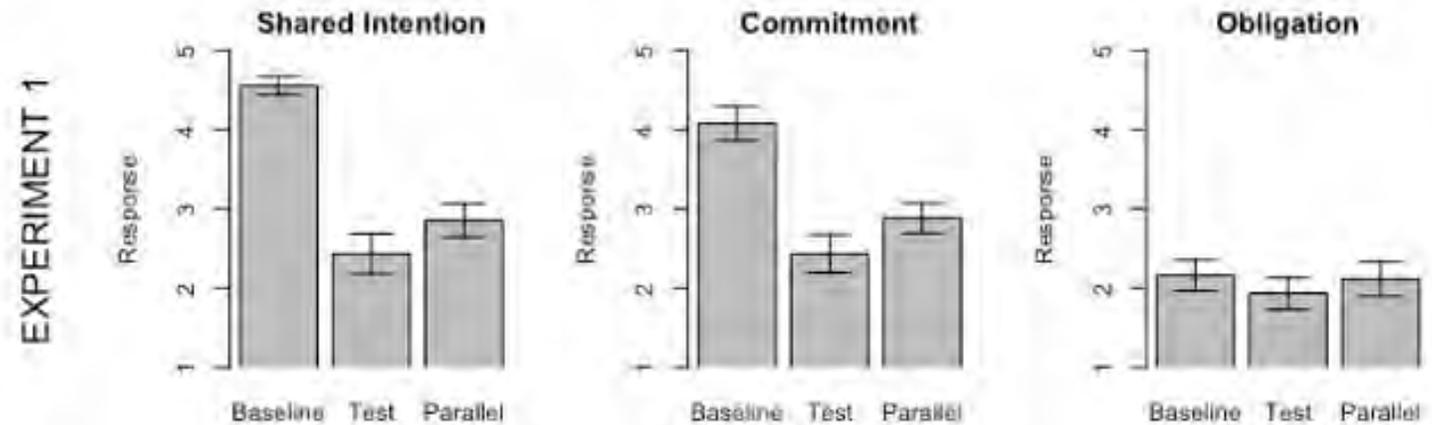


FIGURE 3 Box-and-whisker plot comparing dependent measures across our three conditions in Study 3. Bolded horizontal lines represent the medians of our measures, while "X" represents the means. Points represent furthest outliers where available

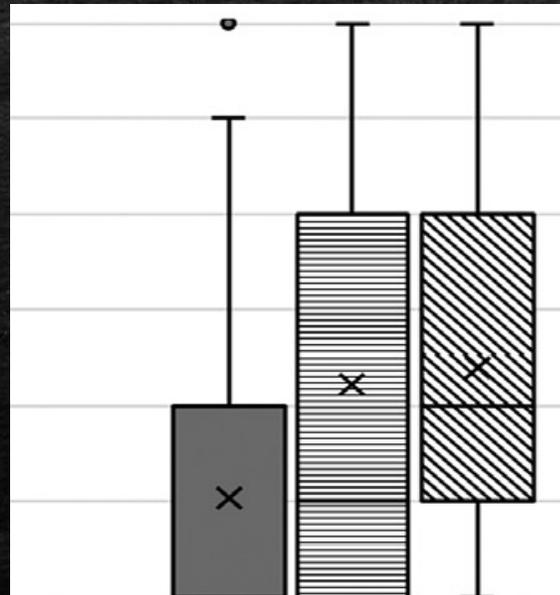
Figure 1. Mean responses for all three test questions in Experiments 1-3. The error bars represent standard errors.



Relationships between conditions

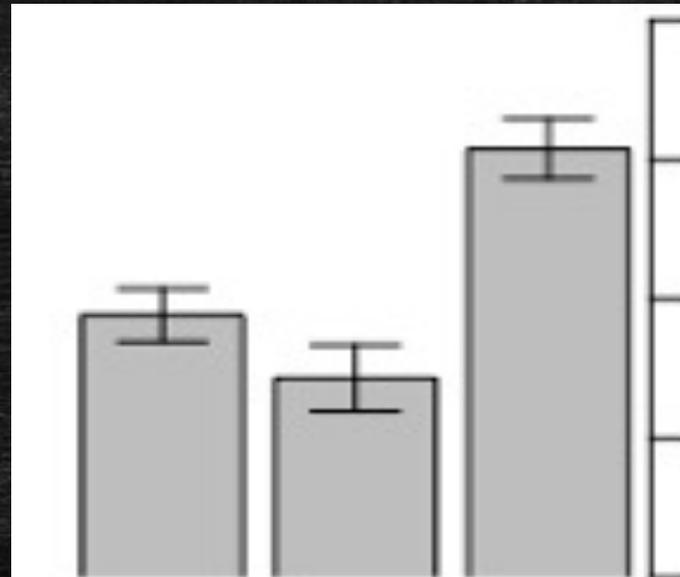
1. Relationship between **LOW** & **high** in study 1 is NOT similar to the relationship between **TEST** & **baseline**.
2. Relationship between **LOW** & **control** in study 1 is NOT similar to the relationship between **TEST** & **parallel**.

- NO difference between **low** & **high**
- difference between **low** & **control**



control low high

results of the rebuke measure of experiment 3



parallel test baseline

results of the commitment measure of experiment 1

- difference between **test** & **baseline**
- NO differences between **parallel** & **test**

- difference between **high** & **control**

- difference between **baseline** & **parallel**

Both studies agree on stating that the relationship between **baseline** & **high** involves a significant difference in the same direction (being higher) than **parallel** & **control**.

Interpretation of the pattern of results

participants in study 1

- took the scenarios describing the two kinds of joint actions (**LOW** & **high**) as somehow similar
- judged that the scenario describing **LOW** can be clearly distinguished from the scenario describing the non-joint action (**control**).

participants in study 2

- did not see a similarity between the two scenarios describing the two kinds of joint action (**TEST** & **baseline**)
- judged that there is a similarity between the scenario describing the non-joint action case (**parallel**) and the scenario describing the joint-action condition **TEST**

OF COURSE, I DO NOT KNOW WHAT PARTICIPANTS ACTUALLY THOUGHT

- 1st study made it easier to recognize **LOW** as a joint action
- participants of the 2nd study might have doubted whether scenarios of the **TEST** condition illustrate a joint action

Measures - questions

7-point scale anchored at 0

5-point scale anchored at 1

Notification measure *(experiment 4)*



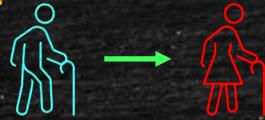
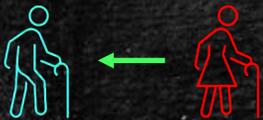
- *Should the person who peels off notify the other that they're leaving?"*
- points to a normative relation one could describe as a commitment of this person

Rebuke measure



- *Has the person who stays the right to call out the person who peels off?*
- points to a normative relation one could describe as a commitment of one person expecting the other one to be committed

ask questions about one agent



Commitment Question



- *To what extent do you think that Ned and Olive have a commitment to walk to the top of the hill?*
- seems to ask whether there a bi-directional joint commitment

ask questions about both agents



SURPRISINGLY, THE 1ST STUDY SEEMS TO EXAMINE THE PRESENCE OF A MINIMAL SENSE OF COMMITMENT, WHILE THE 2ND STUDY LOOKS FOR FULLY DEVELOPED JOINT COMMITMENTS.

What now?

MAYBE,

GOMEZ-LAVIN & RACHAR MADE IT TOO EASY, AND BUTTERFILL & MICHAEL MADE IT TOO HARD.

Finding indicators for a minimal sense of commitment, makes it more likely to take a scenario as describing a joint action.

Not finding indicators for full-fledged commitment you might think that the scenario doesn't describe a joint action.

While waiting for further results assessing common-sense intuitions –
I return to my armchair intuitions about Ned & Olive.

In favor of Gilbert, I claim that even minimal joint actions display a minimal sense of commitment.

They are not free of commitments.

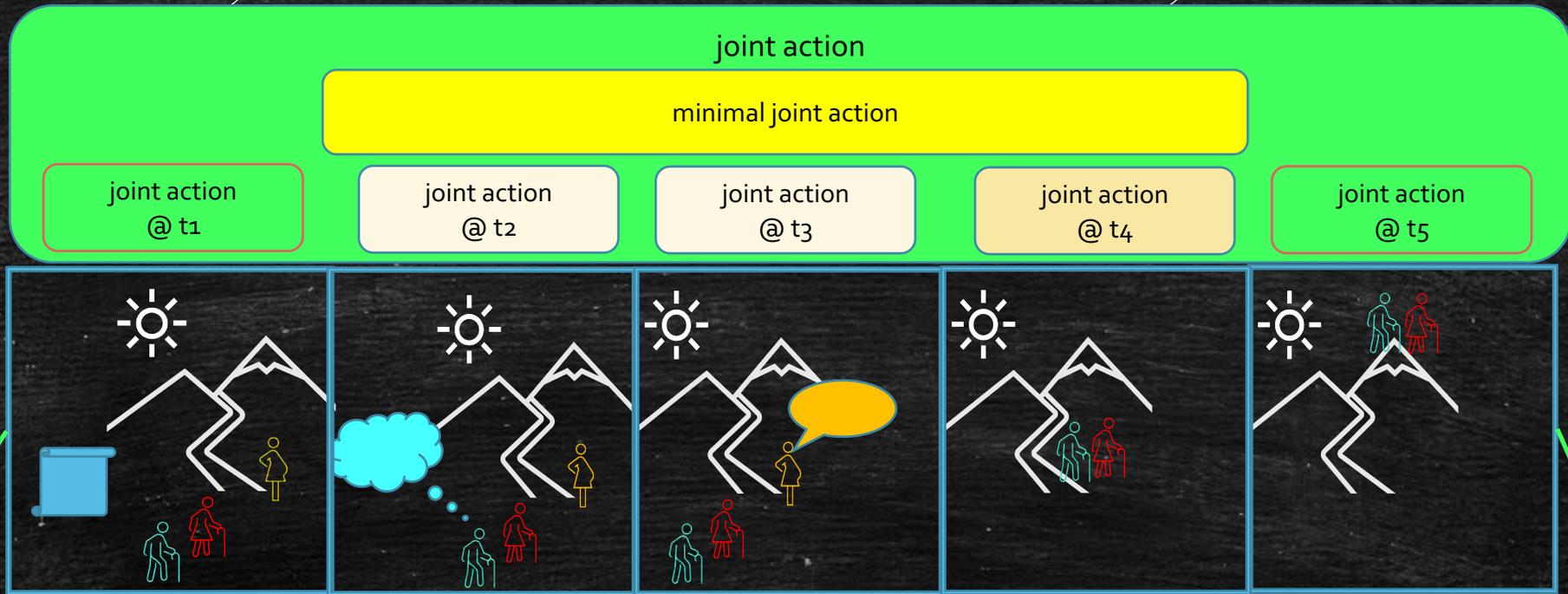
by

emphasizing Pam's perspective

- there is a commitment in the sense
 - that she expects that Ned should feel committed and
 - that she herself feels committed
- assuming, that Ned has a bad conscience for not informing Olive
- there is a commitment in the sense
 - that Ned thinks that Olive expects from him to be committed.

A MINIMAL SENSE OF JOINT COMMITMENT CAN LIVE LONGER THAN INVOLVED INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS

Some sort of commitment is always to be found



joint action @ t1
start of the joint action

- shared intention, joint commitment and obligations present

joint action @ t2 & t3:
acting on purpose together

- varying strength of the joint commitment

joint action @ t4:
before the end of the minimal joint action

- Ned thinks that Olive expects from him to be committed
- Pam feels committed

joint action @ t5:
before the end of the joint action

- Pam expects that Ned should feel committed
- Pam feels committed

*Thanks a lot for listening & I hope I will meet you
in the Q&A session!*

References

- Bratman, M. (2014). *Shared Agency: A Planning Theory of Acting Together*. Oxford University Press.
- Gilbert, M. (2013). *Joint Commitment: How We Make the Social World*. Oxford University Press.
- Gomez-Lavin, J. & Rachar, M. (2019). Normativity in joint action. *Mind and Language*, 34 (1), 97-120. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mila.12195>
- Butterfill, S. & Michael, J. (under review). Intuitions about joint commitment.