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Helping Others in Interaction

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Abstract

This paper investigates the specific form of help that is provided by agents within episodes of shared agency. The paper discusses two different kinds of shared agency (distributively and collectively shared agency) that are prominent in the literature on shared intentionality and argues that these two kinds of shared agency correlate to two different forms of help in interaction (indirect and direct). In distributively shared agency, the contribution to the other's goal is a foreseen and expected consequence of one's action, but the helper is not required to form an intention to contribute to the other's goal (indirect help). When the helper forms that intention, they do so because they have additional motivation (two-factors direct help). By contrast, collectively shared agency puts the agents under the requirement of forming intentions to contribute to the other group members' goal (one-factor direct help). The paper discusses the relevance of the distinction between two forms of help in relation to recent debates about the ontogeny of shared intentions.

Keywords: Help, Shared Intentions, Shared Agency, Joint Action

0. Introduction[1]

Helping behavior is a ubiquitous social phenomenon within human and other animal societies (see Preston/De Waal 2002, Warneken/Tomasello 2014). Sometimes we help friends or in-group members in a spontaneous and unrequested manner; sometimes we help (and are helped by) complete strangers; sometimes we help others without the intention of doing so; and yet other times we help others in an instrumental way – maybe because we need help ourselves or because we care about our reputation and want to improve it. Also, help is more often than not affectively motivated or colored: you help your daughter keep her balance when she makes her first steps because you love her; you help a mother lifting her pram into the bus because you empathize with her difficulties, etc.

Although these brief examples differ in important respects, they all seem to have something in common: an agent (the helper) helps somebody (the helpee) when she contributes to the helpee's goal, predicting that her action will have benefits for the helpee. We take this as a working definition of help and we note that this characterization of help relies on a non-technical characterization of goals, according to which a goal is "the object of a person's ambition or effort; an aim or desired result" (Oxford Dictionary of English).

Our definition encompasses at least two different forms of help. In the first, the helper's action does not occur within a pre-established joint action (see Warneken/Tomasello 2006, Schmid 2010, Bottazzi/Troquard 2015, Roessler/Perner 2015), although it can initiate a joint action. In the second, the helper's action does occur within a pre-established joint action: here, the helpee is the helper's interactant. This is the help agents provide within an episode of shared intentional agency and which we hereafter label "help in interaction." This paper is concerned only with this second form of help.

There is general consensus in the literature that the phenomenon of help lies at the heart of shared intentional agency (Bratman 1992, Searle 1990, Tuomela 2000). In this paper, we argue that two important forms of shared agency – distributively and collectively shared agency – correlate to two different forms of 'help in interaction': direct and indirect. More precisely, we claim that, while distributively shared agency implies a commitment to indirect help on the part of the interactants, collectively shared agency implies a commitment to direct help. Intentional help is indirect or oblique when the contribution to the other's goal (and therefore the related benefits) is a foreseen, expected, and salient effect of one's action – but the agent forms no intention to contribute to the other's goal (which does not mean that the agent is averse to the prospect of benefiting the other). By contrast, intentional help is direct when the agent has an intention to contribute to the other's goal and thus to generate benefits for the helpee.

To illustrate how these two forms of help correlate to the two forms of shared agency, the paper is organized as follows. Section 1 begins by presenting an example that fulfills the relevant conditions of distributively shared agency (what Bratman also labels as "shared cooperative activity," see Bratman 2014: 38). Sub-section 1.1 shows that distributively shared intentions (the kind of intentions portrayed by Bratman) are linked to an indirect form of help – in the sense just defined: here is an expected and salient consequence of the action, but the agent forms no intention to contribute to the other's goal or aim.

Sub-section 1.2 modifies the scenario described in 1.1 and illustrates what we call a "two-factors" direct help in interaction. More precisely, we show that, although distributively shared agency correlates with indirect help, direct help can be provided within an interaction of that kind. However, its explanation demands resort to two different factors: the first factor is the intention shared by the interactants distributively, the second is an independent intention to help grounded in some additional motivation on the side of the helper (e.g., a pro-social attitude).

In section 2, we introduce our third example of help in interaction, which is contended to be structurally different from the forms of help instantiated in the first and in the second example. This is a case of "one-factor" direct help in interaction: we show that the form of help provided in the context of an interaction steered by collectively shared intentions is direct and that the intention collectively shared among the agents provides

[1] The authors have equally contributed to this article.

a single-factor explanation of direct help. To put this differently, the help provided in collectively shared agency is direct and can be explained solely by appealing to the collective intention that directs the interaction.

Finally, in section 3, we touch upon an important strand of research in developmental and evolutionary studies (Warneken/Tomasello 2006, 2007, 2014; Tomasello 2014), where our distinction of two forms of help appears to be particularly relevant. These studies claim that engagement in shared activities fosters the forms of cooperation that are characteristic of human behavior. By relying on a Bratmanian account of shared agency for understanding of helping behavior, these studies argue that pro-social helping behavior needs to be evolutionarily presupposed to explain children's intentions to contribute to other people's goals or aims. Thus, the resulting analysis of children's early helping behavior is given by a two-factor account of help in interaction (see Warneken/Tomasello 2006, 2007, see also Satne/Salice 2015). We surmise that, if collectively shared agency were put at the forefront of these empirical studies, a different framing of children's intentions to contribute to others' goals might come into view—one that could be provided independently of pro-social tendencies.

Before embarking in the investigation, one important remark on the notion of help is in order. As we will repeat in the remainder of this paper, the distinction between indirect and direct help does not parallel the distinction between selfish and altruistic help. Or, to put this another way, the indirect/direct distinction is orthogonal to the selfish/altruistic distinction. Not only is it possible for the helper to be motivated by altruistic considerations when helping the other in interactions guided by a distributively shared intention. Similarly, help in a collectively intentional interaction is compatible with selfishness as the help the agent provides is not altruistic in nature, but springing from her membership to a group.

1. Help in distributively shared agency.

This section investigates the role that help plays in what we call 'distributively shared agency.' By this term, we refer to a form of joint action that is triggered and monitored by agents' intentions coming in the form "I intend…," which enter salient relations with each other. One of the most important accounts of this kind of interaction is developed by Bratman in a series of influential publications.[2] Although we focus on Bratman's theory, we conjecture that our conclusions about help can be generalized to the broad family of accounts (see Ludwig 2016, Miller 2010, etc.) that aims to explain joint actions by exclusively invoking intentions in the I-form.

Consider this example: Alba and Simon hold two positions in the same philosophy department. Except for the usual small talk between colleagues about weather and politics, they have never really interacted before. However, during a coffee break, they happen to engage in a philosophical discussion and, unexpectedly, develop an interesting idea for a possible paper. At some point, Simon begins to consider publishing a paper with Alba, and so does she. Simon takes the initiative: "Why don't we write a paper together on this issue?" and Alba replies: "Yes, let's do that!" (Note that this conversation should not be read as implying that there are interpersonal commitments at place between Simon and Alba, see Bratman 2014: 111).

[2] To the best of our knowledge, Bratman does not label his account as 'distributive' and whether or not this label is suitable to qualify that account depends on what one means by that term. For instance, Jankovic/Ludwig (2016) suggest that Bratman proposes a collective account of shared agency. This is based on a narrow understanding of the term "distributive", according to which a sentence like "we intend to move a bench," in its distributive meaning, is equivalent to "each of us intends (himself) to move a bench." On this view, any reading of that sentence, which includes togetherness between the interactants, is broadly qualified as "collective". In this paper, we adopt a (compared to Jankovic/Ludwig) broader sense of 'distributive,' while holding to a narrower understanding of 'collective.' On this understanding, "The 'we' of joint intentions refers to us distributively, as the separate agents required to act on these intentions; the 'we' of group agency refers to us corporately, as a single, unified center of attitude and action." (List/Pettit 2011: 194; similarly, Gilbert 2014: 119). In the same vein, Schmid explicitly describes Bratman's view as "distributive" (Schmid 2009: 23).

After this conversation, Alba and Simon form two intentions, which can be reported by the statement "I (i.e., Alba viz. Simon) intend that *we* write a paper together." This makes the scenario fulfill Bratman's first condition for shared cooperative activity (Bratman 2014: 40ff):[3]

(1) (1a) Simon intends that Alba and Simon write a paper together, and (1b) Alba intends that Simon and Alba write a paper together.

It should be noted that, to avoid circularity (more precisely, to avoid a circular definition of shared intentions as intentions to do something together), the notion of togetherness in the content of the participatory intentions 1a and 1b has to be understood in a distributive sense. That is, the action is conceived by the intenders as an action that is performed by me and you, not by us as a group (which would indicate a collective understanding of togetherness). This commits Bratman's analysis to an account of shared agency in which the capacity for shared intentionality is accounted for by the capacity for individual planning intentionality plus some further conditions (Kern/Moll 2017). Bratman's account is explicit about the fact that the intentions capable of explaining shared agency are individual because they (i) are had by individuals and (ii) do not involve a collective, but only a distributive notion of togetherness, where 'we' points to you and I standing in certain salient relations, but not to a corporate or collective 'we'.

(1a) and (1b) are interdependent intentions: "the persistence of each [agent's] intentions […] is rationally dependent on the persistence of the other's corresponding intention […]" (Bratman 2014, 68).[4] Simon will continue to intend to write the paper with Alba if, but only if, Alba continues to so intend (and vice versa). To substantiate the idea of interdependence, remember that Alba and Simon have not entered obligations with each other, which means that what interdependence in this context comes to is the reasonableness of each of them continuing to have the intention to J only as long as the other has the intention to J (see footnote 3).

One fundamental feature of this interdependence is that each of the agents have unilateral power to break apart the shared intention.[5] What we mean by that is that "all that is required to, in effect, dissolve the shared intention is a change of mind by one party, something each party is in a position to bring about. For each party is in a position to rescind or change their personal intention, insofar as that intention is under his or her personal control" (Gilbert 1997: 79). Accordingly, if one of the agents drops the intention at issue, that is sufficient for the other to do the same without being at fault: if Alba drops her intention to write a paper with Simon, that is sufficient for Simon to drop his intention, and vice versa. Though Bratman also states that it is necessary that one of the interactants drops her intention in order to make it reasonable for the other to do the same, should that happen – for example, in the case where other reasons outweigh the reasonability of keeping this intention on the part of one of the interactants – that would be sufficient for the other to do the same. Such interdependence is crucial for the way help is framed in Bratmanian interaction and must be contrasted with the way agents' intentions interrelate in the second kind of interaction depicted in Section 2, where individuals do *not* have unilateral power to drop their intentions.

Interdependent intentions are not sufficient to capture the full-fledged sense of shared agency. More has to be added. The next element is that the way in which Simon intends the joint endeavor takes Alba's intention seriously. Simon knows that Alba's has an intention with the same content as his and, hence, that she is prepared, in the absence of obstacles, to act accordingly. In other words, Simon intends to write the paper by means of and partly because of Alba's *intention* to contribute, and the same applies for Alba. If that is the case, then the following condition (Bratman 2014: 51f) can be claimed to be fulfilled:

[3] In what follows we focus only on those conditions of Bratman's account that are most relevant for the purposes of this paper. These conditions will also serve to highlight the contrast between Bratman's distributively shared intentions and the collectively shared intentions that will be discussed in Section 2.

[4] The idea is further specified as follows: "the dependence here is a form of counterfactual dependence: I intend that we *J*; you intend that we *J*; if but only if you were to cease so intending, then other things equal, so would I; and vice versa" (Bratman 2014: 69).

[5] It should be noted that the expression "shared intention", employed throughout the paper to refer to Bratman's account, refers in this theory to a structure consisting of agents' participatory intentions rather than to a single token intention had by several individuals.

(2) (2a) Simon intends that Alba and Simon write a paper together in accordance with and partly because of (1b), and (2b) Alba intends that Simon and Alba write a paper together in accordance with and partly because of (1a).

This condition is meant to exclude cases of coercion or exploitation in which Alba intends to write a paper with Simon, but intends to do so by, e.g., hypnotizing or threatening him: Simon forms intention (2a) by way of Alba's intention in (1b) such that Alba is taken into account as a participant in the endeavor.

Another aspect of these intentions is that Alba and Simon agree on a plan or strategy to write the paper. Based on their areas of specialization, they develop a strategy with compatible sub-plans (e.g. Alba writes the introduction and first part of the paper, whereas Simon is in charge of the second part) to the effect that such sub-plans mesh and that this meshing is intended by both interactants. (As Bratman recognizes, this condition can be aptly relaxed as the agents may settle and agree on a particular plan of action while the interaction is already unfolding.) It then appears that we are allowed to claim that the example also fulfills the following condition (Bratman 2014: 53):

(3) (3a) Simon intends that Alba and Simon write a paper together in accordance with and partly because of the meshing sub-plans of (1b), and (3b) Alba intends that Simon and Alba write a paper together in accordance with and partly because of the meshing sub-plans of (1a).

Moreover, all this is "out in the open:" Alba and Simon need to be aware of the shared intention in order to plan about how to carry out that shared intention. This requires that Alba knows that Simon is informed about the relevant details, and that Simon, too, knows that Alba is also informed about them. In addition, Alba must know that Simon knows that she is well-informed, and the same may be said of Simon. A spiral of common knowledge seems to emerge, which justifies adding the following fact to the picture:

(4) (1)-(3) are common knowledge for Simon and Alba.

(For the purposes of this paper we can skirt how to exactly account for common knowledge, but see Bratman 2014: 57 for his position on the matter.) Also, mutual responsiveness between the interactants appears to permeate shared intentional activities: both subjects favor the joint nature of the activity and act in such a way as to keep track of, and guide themselves in, the direction of the goal. Thus, a further condition of Bratman's analysis (see Bratman 2014: 79ff) can be claimed to be fulfilled:

(5) There is public mutual responsiveness that tracks the goal.

In *Shared Agency*, Bratman argues that, whenever interactants share intentions in the way just described, they are under rational pressure to help and support each other. While Bratman does not profusely elaborate on this idea, his main claim in this regard is that commitments to help the other in a shared cooperative action are dictated by the rationality of cooperative action. In fact, imagine that, while reading Simon's part, Alba realizes that a certain conclusion does not follow from his argument. Despite her many other commitments, she decides to invest time and effort in reformulating the argument, so it becomes valid. In Bratman's parlance, she "helps" or "supports" Simon (see Bratman 2014: 56). Consequently, one could say that each individual agent has a:

(6) Commitment to mutual help and support.

In other words, the agents in this scenario are predisposed to help and support each other – on pain of irrationality (see Bratman 2014: 56f).

The idea of a commitment to mutual help should be evaluated against the background of some considerations concerning the notion of distributively shared intentions. First, we should note that Alba and Simon have two numerically distinct intentions. Second, Alba and Simon know that their intentions overlap. What do we mean by that? Start with the idea that intentions have conditions of satisfaction and they are satisfied when these conditions occur (Searle 1983: 79f). When we say that Alba's and Simon's intentions overlap, we mean that

the two intentions are satisfied by the occurrence of one and the same state of affairs.[6] Since the agents know of the overlap, this reinforces the relation of interdependence between the two intentions: the existence of each agent's intention makes it rational for them to act together. Yet, if Simon gives up on his intention, Alba is free to do the same without being at fault.

With this notion of distributively shared intentions in mind, one could further argue that the intentions referred to in (2)-(3) are formed in response to the question: "how do *I* reach my goal?", and the answer to that question is a plan or strategy which involves the other as a partner in the sense that the other will have a say in deliberating on the strategy.

1.1 A case of indirect help

Imagine that, at some point, Simon faces a difficulty and cannot provide his expected contribution to the joint endeavor. Alba realizes this. In so realizing, she notes that something stands in her way to the satisfaction of her intention: Simon's expected contribution is not provided. If Alba does not have other impeding reasons not to secure the expected contribution herself, Alba intervenes to fix the problem. Note that when she does this, she is acting based on rationality constraints regarding her intention to write a paper with Simon. As such, when Simon cannot provide his contribution, this appears to be an impediment to satisfying her intention, and because of this she is required to step in and help Simon on pain of irrationality. Thus, Alba intends to solve a problem that may prevent her from satisfying her intention: if she would not be motivated to do so then she would be irrational, for one has to do what is required by the intentions one has set oneself in order to achieve the goal one is pursuing. In other words, this is what is steered by her intention: to satisfy her intention of writing a paper with Simon by helping Simon provide his expected contribution.

And, yet, Alba's intention to write the paper with Simon (1b) overlaps with Simon's intention (1a) (and Alba knows this), to the effect that fixing the situation means that Alba also fixes Simon's problem. And obviously Alba knows this too: she is contributing to Simon's goal, after all. But does Alba intend this in the same sense in which she intends to solve her problem? In other words, does Alba intend to fix Simon's problem? It seems that she does not have to, although she obviously could – given certain additional conditions, e.g. if she is an altruistic person and usually forms intentions to help others achieve their goals and does so in the present case with Simon, or, perhaps Alba likes Simon and then forms the intention to help *him* personally. We will come back to this possibility in the next sub-section but, before this, we first need to specify what it means to say that, when Alba helps Simon in this scenario, she does not have the intention to fix Simon's problem, that is, to contribute to the satisfaction of Simon's intention.

Not all our intentional actions are intentional in the sense that they are steered and guided by intentions. In his previous work on the philosophy of action, Bratman (see his 1984) convincingly relaxes the condition that, for an action to be intentional, it has to be intended. He argues for the idea that: "If *S* intentionally *B*'s in the course of executing his intention to *B*, and *S* believes that his *B*-ing will result in *X*, and his *B*-ing does result in *X* […], then *S* intentionally brings about *X*" (1984: 401). Suppose that you intend to make mayonnaise, and suppose that you believe that making mayonnaise will result in making a mess of your kitchen; suppose further that you do indeed end up with tasty mayonnaise in the fridge, but with a messy kitchen as well; given the circumstances, it can be said that you have intentionally made a mess of your kitchen, without your having the intention to do so. Suppose somebody asks you whether it was you who made a mess of your kitchen. The only honest and acceptable reply would be for you to answer "yes," thereby attributing to yourself an action – the action of making a mess of your kitchen (although, no, you certainly didn't have the intention of doing that).[7]

[6] To be sure, this brief characterization of overlapping intentions models the rare case of *perfect* overlap, and, hence, the scenario at stake is admittedly oversimplified, but it seems that it could be appropriately refined by introducing degrees of overlap between intentions (see Kutz 2000, who formulate the idea in terms of overlapping goals). We won't go into such detail here, as we think this sophistication would not substantially impact the gist of our argument.

[7] It should be emphasized that this position within the debate on the so-called Doctrine of the Double Effect problem is not uncontroversial (the "Doctrine" is mainly discussed in the context of the moral permissibility of intentional, but not explicitly intended, side-effects of actions, see McIntyre 2019). A defense of this position

A similar consideration can be applied to the current example by parity of reasoning: Alba intends to fix the situation, and she of course knows that fixing the situation will result in contributing to Simon's goal insofar as she will contribute to the satisfaction of his intention (given that she knows that Simon's intention overlaps with hers). Since this is what actually happens, she intentionally does so. But she didn't need to intend it in the sense of having an intention the content of which refers to Simon. Sure, Alba was concerned with the satisfaction of her intention here, but she predicted and expected that doing so will result in contributing to the satisfaction of Simon's intention, too. And if she were asked whether she intentionally helped Simon, her only honest and acceptable answer would be "yes," thereby attributing to herself an action – the action of helping Simon. Note also that, based on the broad characterization of help we put forward in the introduction (according to which an agent helps somebody when she contributes to the helpee's goal, predicting that the action will have benefits for the helpee), Alba's behavior qualifies as help.

Our conclusion is hence that, in interactions of a Bratmanian kind, the contribution to the other's goal, that is mandated and provided on "pain of irrationality," is intentional only in an oblique, but not direct, sense. Hence, this kind of interaction only demands a kind of help that is indirect in the sense defined. This is because, in this kind of interaction, the agents share the intention 'distributively.'

1.2 A case of dual-factor direct help

Does the fact that intentions are distributively shared *exclude* the possibility for direct help in the resulting interaction? Certainly not, and this leads to our second scenario, which is a variant of the first. Remember that, for direct help to occur, the agent must intend—i.e. form an intention to the effect that one is—to contribute to their partners' goals. This can obviously happen in a Bratmanian interaction the moment in which Alba – in addition to her participatory intention – forms a further intention: the intention to contribute to Simon's goal. For instance, *if* Alba has an altruistic character and always follows, say, the maxim that others should be helped, *then* she might intend to contribute to Simon's goal – should Simon be in need of help. Similarly, if she empathizes with Simon's struggle, she may form that intention. Or perhaps she is concerned with her reputation at the Department, which leads her again to that particular intention. There may be indefinite many other reasons why Alba might come to form an intention to that effect while helping Simon to provide his expected contribution to the joint endeavor they pursue, but the central point here is that to form this additional intention is not mandated by the Bratmanian account of 'shared cooperative activity'.

To further elaborate on this, recall that, in this paper, we are not concerned with the selfish/altruistic dimensions of help. Thus, we will not investigate how these different motives for forming the intention to help impact the evaluation of Alba's action as selfish or altruistic. What matters to us though is that this kind of helping behavior, which involves forming the intention to contribute to someone else's goals, requires a 'two-factor' explanation in distributively shared agency: for help to be directly intentional, it is not sufficient for the agents to (distributively) share intentions, but additional elements have to be included in the agents' pool of motivations. As we will see in the following section, in the analysis of help in collective intentions, one is not required to call on a further factor to explain direct helping behavior. That explanation calls on one factor alone.

In this section, we have established that distributively shared intentions correlate with indirect help. We have also seen that, for direct help to occur in an interaction of this kind, the helper needs an extra motivation in addition to the intention she shares with the helpee. In the following section, we argue that the collective account of shared intentionality can accommodate explanations of direct help that are neither obliquely intentional nor motivated by other attitudes (whether pro-social or not). Help in collective interaction, is direct and its occurrence does not require extra motives: we show that, intentions shared in a collective sense can

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would require extensive elaboration, but we think it is legitimate to adopt it in the context of this paper for two main reasons. The first reason is internal to the discussion of distributively shared agency as this position is endorsed by Bratman. The second reason is related to its heuristic value in the context of this project: this position contributes to shed light to one structural difference between help in the distributive and help in the collective scenario, which would otherwise remain obscure.

account for the possibility of direct help, which constitutes a 'single-factor' explanation of this form of helping behavior.

2. Help in collectively shared agency: a case of single-factor direct help.

The conditions for shared intentions discussed in the previous section are meant by Bratman to be only sufficient, not necessary. Put differently, it is possible, for Bratman, that certain interactions, which do not fulfill those conditions, nevertheless qualify as cases of shared agency. In the same vein, the aim of this section is to identify some sufficient conditions that are able to capture a kind of shared intention that is not modelled by Bratman's account.[8] The notion of help will then be addressed in light of these conditions at the end of this section.

Imagine that Alba and Simon are members of a small alpine community. Recently, there was discussion within the community about the idea of building a small bridge over the adjacent brook in order to reach the next village down in the valley. In contrast to Simon, Alba does not have a desire to build a new bridge, but she is not opposed to it either.

Eventually, the community convenes to make a decision. Alba cannot attend the meeting, but she is informed afterwards that the group decided to build the bridge, in so doing they have also distributed the responsibilities regarding who will be doing what: for instance, Alba is to produce the list of necessary materials to build the bridge and Simon is involved in seeking these materials from providers. Since Alba was not there, she ignores how the decision was made – was it by means of majority voting? Was the decision made after evaluating the pool of considerations shared by all the members? Or did the mayor influence the decision by somehow exerting non-coercive pressure on the inhabitants? To be sure, one could assume that, had Alba been opposed to the idea of the bridge or had a problem with providing her contribution, she would have been more interested in the kind of decision-making procedure because she may have tried to influence it. However, Alba is not averse to the idea of the bridge (nor is she in favor of it) and she usually takes care of the kind of duties that the community has assigned to her. The only thing that matters for her is that the community decided in favor of building the bridge, which can be phrased as (from Alba's perspective):

(1) *we* intend to build the bridge.

A clarification is in order. Granted, merely sketching the above scenario does not yet *per se* constitute an argument in favor of the idea that groups can have intentions. In fact, we will not offer such an argument in this paper, but we rather operate under the assumption that (1) can be understood as the report of a group intention.[9]

[8] Schweikard/Schmid 2013 have helpfully classified the different positions in the debate on shared intentions by distinguishing three broad families of accounts on the basis of the feature the account holds make an intention shared: the subject, kind, or content of the intention. Correspondingly, a shared intention is accounted for as an intention had by a plural subject (e.g., in Gilbert 2014 or List/Pettit 2011); or as an intention held in a certain *sui generis* we-mode, i.e., as a we-intention (e.g., in Searle 1990); or as an intention that enters into salient relations with other agents' intentions (e.g., in Bratman 2014 and others). These three options need not be mutually exclusive, and some authors have defended different combinations of these features as central to an account of shared intentions (e.g., Helm 2008; List 2014; Rovane 2014; Schweikard/Pettit 2006, Tuomela 2007, Salice/Henriksen 2015, Zahavi/Satne 2015). In this paper we remain neutral about which analysis of shared intentionality is most adequate. Our aim here is only to show that different accounts of shared agency are committed to different accounts of help in interaction. In particular, we focus on the one implied by Bratman's theory of distributively shared intentions, discussed in the previous section, and on the collectivist account, that we describe in this section. Our description follows a number of views that make central appeal to the irreducible character of we-intentions to account for groups' actions (independently of whether they take the *we*, to be a sui-generis mode, a point of view accepted by group members, or a matter of intentions or commitments held by plural subjects).

[9] It merits attention that we adopt a neutral stance on whether (1) is a *true* report of a group's intention and by extension on whether group's intentions genuinely exist. For it could be claimed that no such intention is required to exist for individuals to be motivated to act as group members. Team reasoning highlights that the

Theories about group intentions largely diverge. For instance, List and Pettit contend that, for a group to form a conative attitude like a desire or an intention, the group must be organized in such a way as to preserve consistency among its attitudes (List/Pettit 2011). By contrast, Gilbert claims that, what is quintessential for a group intention, is the fact that the individuals have jointly committed to act as a single body (Gilbert 1997). These various theories do converge, however, in assuming that the intention at stake is one, i.e., one single attitude. We remain neutral about the rational or normative scaffolding of a group's intention, accepting the commonly held assumption that (1) refers to a group's intention, which is understood to be one – one single – attitude. The relevance of this point for an assessment of help in this second scenario is crucial and will be highlighted below.

If (1) is true (or is 'accepted' as such by group members), then the group members see themselves subject to a reason for forming a contributory intention to build the bridge – as in the following:

(2) (2a) Simon intends that *we* build the bridge, and (2b) Alba intends that *we* build the bridge.

We follow here the commonly accepted view held by different authors that have developed collective accounts of shared intentions that (1) offers a reason to Alba and Simon for forming intention (2a and 2b). The rationale that backs our contention is this: reasons for groups are *eo ipso* reasons for individuals (who are members of those groups). To put this in Tollefsen's words, once a group has made its mind about an issue,

> each individual will have a reason to accept the conclusion [the group has arrived at]. It is important to note, however that these [group's] reasons become reasons for an individual only after one recognizes that the group has reasons to adopt a certain conclusion. Thus, whatever reasons an individual might have to accept a decision that goes against his or her personal opinion on the matter is parasitic on the group's reasons. It is only when individuals recognize that 'we' will be adopting a policy or decision that is inconsistent with prior or present commitments that they may come to see themselves as having reasons to accept a conclusion they do not personally endorse (Tollefsen 2002: 38f, see also Szigeti 2014).

Schmid concurs:

> […] what 'we' think and intend should ultimately be what *each of us* has reason to think and intend – without any further reason such as fear of non-conformity, loss of reputation, sanctions, or some such, but simply in virtue of the attitude in question's being *ours*, collectively. (Schmid 2016: 68f)

Finally, a similar idea is endorsed by List and Pettit:

> Just as pilots can connect in [a] direct way to the instruments on the cockpit panel, so the members of a group may connect themselves directly to the attitudes of the group. They do not treat the group attitudes as mere indicators of what the group is to do, asking themselves explicitly whether they wish to identify with the group, and acting only if they have this wish. Rather, the individual attitudes are under the automatic guidance of the group, so that they can respond as spontaneously as pilots do when they take their cue from the panel before them. Or at least they may do this where there are no 'red lights' that suggest they should hesitate and take stock (List/Pettit 2011: 192).[10]

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acceptance of the existence of such a group intention is sufficient reason for individuals to form contributory intentions to pursue what (is accepted to be) the group's goal (Hakli et al. 2010: 297). While spelling out the conditions of satisfaction of 'acceptance' (thereby settling on whether, and in which sense, groups can have intentions) is a crucial theoretical issue, it can be sidestepped for the purposes of this paper.

[10] Even Gilbert, who denies that (1) entails (2), grants that if we decide to φ, each one of us has thereby reasons for φ-ing: "A participant in a shared intention on the plural subject account can reason as follows: 'We intend to clean the house today, my staying home is required for that, therefore I have reason to stay home.' […] The premiss stating that 'We intend...' together with the statement of what is needed to satisfy the intention leads to a conclusion about what l have reason to do. In the absence of countervailing reasons, this is what I should do, from the point of view of practical reasoning." (Gilbert 1997: 75).

Accordingly, if Alba thinks that it is rational for her group to decide to build the bridge, then that decision should be rational for Alba, too, insofar as she is a group member. That is, her group's intention to build the bridge provides her with a sufficient reason to form the intention that we (from her perspective) build the bridge.

Against this backdrop, if the occasion comes to act upon the group decision and there are no strong defeaters that make Alba doubt or question the decision, Alba would, things remaining equal, form the intention at stake. This indicates that the relation between (1) and (2) is defeasible for it only holds under certain conditions. In fact, nothing in what we argued excludes the possibility that Alba, while being aware of her group's intention, fails to give her contribution to the group's action because she fails to form intention (2b). Or that Alba indeed gives her contribution to the collective endeavor, but not because of intention (2b), rather because of her conformist character or her feeling that she is under an obligation, etc. In the remainder of this section, we assume that Alba and Simon feel the rational pressure of forming a contributory intention, that they have no reasons against it, and thus that they act on it.

Below we come back to intentions (2a) and (2b) and to the specific relation they mutually enter into. Before doing so, however, let us briefly ascertain some further sufficient conditions.[11] Here is a preliminary list of such conditions that would be satisfied by a collective view like the one described here.

The third condition is about conceiving of building the bridge as an intentional, non-coercive activity:

(3) (3a) Simon intends that we build the bridge in accordance with and partly because of (1), and (3b) Alba intends that we build the bridge in accordance with and partly because of (1).

Furthermore, if groups can form intentions like (1), then their group members will have

(4) normative expectations that other members of the group will have formed individual intentions to the effect that (1) and thus, provided that there are no defeaters, form individual intentions of the form of (2) and (3)[12].

Given (1) to (4) there is

(5) mutual responsiveness between the agents regarding the fulfillment of the goal specified in (1)

Now, how do conditions (1)-(5) shape the help that the interactants are willing to provide in this kind of interaction?

Suppose that at some point Alba recognizes that Simon is not in a position to provide the contribution he is expected to make. She realizes that he is encountering a problem in performing his part of the plan and that this could potentially present a threat to the satisfaction of the collective intention: hence, Alba is under rational pressure to provide help. This is because there is a collective intention to be satisfied, and Simon's contribution is a necessary step towards doing so. We might suppose then that Alba jumps in and helps Simon. This speaks in favor of introducing the additional condition:

[11] While we follow 'Bratman's style' in presenting the collective view as meeting sufficient conditions involving individual's intentions and common knowledge, there are important differences between these two sets of conditions that we indicate at each step (apart from those explicitly indicated in the text, there are also important differences concerning shared deliberation on the plan towards the collective goal, the discussion of which we have therefore omitted entirely since it does not affect our argument here).

[12] A further consequence of this view, on which we cannot further expand for reasons of space and relevance is that, in normal conditions, normative expectations that other group members have formed individual intentions to pursue intentions (1) can lead to mutual knowledge that they all have such intentions. Yet, as opposed to Bratman analysis, common knowledge of having formed such intention logically follows—in a defeasible manner—from a group intention and it is not a condition for it.

(6) There is a commitment to mutual help and support.

The question, however, is whether this form of helping behavior coincides with the one that stems from the distributively shared intentions described in Section 1.

At first glance, one could be tempted to give a positive answer to this question. After all, in Bratmanian interaction, Alba would not have had the specific intention of writing the paper with Simon, had Simon not had the same one. As we have seen, the intentions had by Alba and Simon in the distributive scenario are individual and interdependent intentions. Similarly, one could claim that, in this context, too, the existence of (2a) interdepends with that of (2b) – (2a) and (2b) are individual and interdependent intentions. Hence, just as before, whenever one of the agents is in need of help, the others are under pressure to help insofar as this is demanded by the very aim of satisfying their intentions as in (2a) and (2b). So, again, if help were given in a directly intentional way, then it would be so thanks to additional reasons or motivations. Were this line of argument correct, then all instances of directly intentional help in interaction would have to be explained by means of a two-factor explanation.

Yet, these considerations ultimately have to be dismissed. To see why, let us first evaluate conditions (1), which is about the group's intention, and (2), which is about the member's participatory intentions, in the current example. Here, the crucial elements are the following: first, Alba and Simon would not have had their individual intentions (2a) and (2b) if their group had not had intention (1); and second, as long as (1) exists, Alba and Simon have a reason to form, or maintain, intentions (2a) and (2b). This shows that the relation between the two intentions cannot be one of interdependence as previously defined. It cannot be because neither Alba nor Simon have the unilateral power to rescind their individual intentions, even in the case the other in fact does so[13] (which is the very feature that defines interdependence of individuals' intentions). As opposed to the interdependence case, here the fact that one of them drops their intention is not sufficient for others to also drop it without being at fault. Rather, they should hold on their intentions as long as the group does. We call the relation between the individual intentions in the collective case 'co-dependence.' Two individual intentions are co-dependent if they are sustained by a group's intention: individuals are rationally required to hold on their intentions as long as the group holds on its intention.

The difference between independence and co-dependence seems clear enough in the case where Alba and Simon belong to a large community: in this case, even if Alba or Simon have dropped their participatory intentions, the individual intentions of other members are an indication that the group's intention still persists. But does the difference also hold for informal dyads—groups, i.e., that are formed only by two individuals, e.g., and are not formally or institutionally organised? In this case, so the thought could go, a simple change in the mind of one member necessitates the collapse of the group's intention and, therefore, releases the other's individual intention. This scenario appears analogous to the distributive one.

However, it only *appears* so as the difference between interdependence and co-dependence should be maintained even for dyads. The idea is that, if an intention has been created by the dyad's two members collectively, then that remains a reason to act even when either of the members drops their intention. To put this differently, reasons that are formed collectively should be dissolved collectively. Of course, in actual practice dyads might know each other just too well to know that it is permissible for one to drop their intention once the other has dropped their intention as well: one member's action of renouncing the intention, in the context of an informal dyad, could already convey that they have collectively dissolved the group's intention. Still, it is only under the understanding that the collective intention has changed that one is licensed to drop the individual intention one has formed on the basis of that collective intention. Whether these intentions are formed as a result of a formal or informal decision process, or whether the group is formed by two or more members, therefore appears to be beside the point (although it is usually the case that intentions formed by

[13] That means that it is not acceptable for Alba and Simon to rescind their intentions, unless the group intention extinguishes. This is not to say that Alba and Simon cannot as a *matter of fact*, give up intentions (2a) and (2b), but rather that they *should* not do it, given their membership to the group. This means that consequences would have to be expected if they do so – they could be penalized, blamed, ostracized, etc. by the other members of their group or group representatives.

means of a formal decision process will involve a formal action to be dissolved, whereas informal decisions usually will not, and that groups of two tend to be more informal that larger ones).

Now, whereas in our first example the intentions have been qualified as 'distributively shared' and their interrelation as 'interdependence,' in the current example there is one intention (1), which can be said to be 'collectively shared,' and the resulting interrelation between the agent's intentions (2a) and (2b) is 'co-dependence'. In contrast to the distributive scenario, here there is only *one* intention, which is had by the community and, granted the rationality of its members and the absence of defeaters that count against the group's decision, also endorsed by the members of that community in the sense that they have formed corresponding participatory intentions. The co-dependence of intentions in condition (2) will prove to be crucial for the characterization of the kind of help at stake in this scenario.

Against this background, one can appreciate an important divergence between the current and the previous case: there, the problem Alba is trying to solve is hers, period. Here, by contrast, it is hers insofar as it is ours. The intention of building the bridge is, in fact, a collective intention she endorses with other members of the group – and this is something she is well aware of. To put it differently, in trying to solve the problem Simon faces, she is intending to solve *our* problem – which is strictly required by the very collective nature of the intention she aims at satisfying. Against this background, one can argue that, when Alba intends to solve *our* problem, she intends to solve *Simon's* problem – for Simon is a member of us. Said another way, if intending a whole is intending its parts (see Salice 2015), and if Simon's goal is a part of our goal, then to intend to solve our problem means intending to solve *Simon's* problem – e.g., to help provide the materials for building the bridge – *qua* part of *our* problem, i.e., to make sure all contributions are provided for building the bridge. If these considerations are correct, then Alba has an intention to contribute to Simon's goal. It should be noted that Alba has the intention to solve the problem Simon has, insofar as Simon is a group member; what is essential in this case is that Simon is helped "qua member of the group", and as such Alba has an intention to help him: help is here directly (not obliquely) intentional. But what is more, this conclusion can be extended to Alba's stance vis-à-vis all in-group's members: any other member of the group would become the target of Alba's direct help.

Note that this analysis is orthogonal to the issue of whether Alba is also motivated by pro-social or selfish reasons for helping others. For instance, she could contribute to Simon's goal for further reasons, e.g., because she is concerned about her reputation. However, such additional reasons are 'over and above' the motivational structure of the intention shared by Alba with her community, and these additional motivations are not required for collective actions of this kind to take place nor to motivate members of a group to help each other when they aim at satisfying a collective intention (which is a motivation that, to reinforce the point, springs from the internal structure of the intention they share). This remark squares with the one made in section 1: the analysis of helping behavior we have put forward in these sections is independent from questions on how to assess such behavior in light of altruism and egoism.

Let us take stock. One way to highlight the main point of divergence between our three examples is by looking into the relations that the individual agents' intentions enter into. In all cases, the intentions are interrelated. However, in the first and second scenario, the interrelation is interdependence in the sense that one agent's intention is interlocked with another agent's intentions and, as such, the two intentions remain subject to the individuals' interests: the individuals have unilateral power to dissolve the shared intention, by dropping their intentions. By contrast, in the third example, the agent's intentions 'co-depend' – and this is due to the fact that the agents endorse one, i.e., one single intention, which is the intention had by the group the agents belong to. The individuals' intentions spring from or originate in the intention that the group has (or is accepted to have) as a whole. In this third scenario, individual intentions – if they are formed – depend on the collective intention. In this case individuals have no unilateral power to dissolve the collective intention.

It is by looking into the intentions (singular and collective) at issue in different forms of collaboration and joint activity that one is able to shed light on the forms of help the agents are committed to providing when they engage in corresponding episodes of shared agency. In the first example, when Alba intends to solve the problem that has arisen from Simon's contribution, it is her intention she seeks to satisfy, not Simon's; thus, she intends to solve *her* problem. Therefore, she is not required to form an intention to help Simon. Such an intention could certainly also be formed, but this is conditional on further motivation, as seen in the second

example. In the third example, Simon's problem is framed by Alba differently – it is not framed as merely her problem (insofar as it is perceived as a problem in satisfying her intention); rather it is framed as their or, perhaps better, as *our* problem (insofar as it is perceived as a problem in satisfying *our* – that is our group's – intention), as a problem for us as members of a group that has an intention. In this case, Simon's problem is Alba's problem, it is *their* problem.

Although help is intentional in both scenarios, it is only involvement in the latter kind of shared agency that puts the agent under rational pressure to form an intention to contribute to the other's goal. Any analogous intention in the first scenario would have to be traced back to some additional reasons. But this means: direct help can be explained in distributively shared agency only by appeal to two different factors, namely the shared intentions and an extra motivating factor, whereas in collectively shared agency it is explained by a single factor, i.e., solely by the collective intention that steers the interaction.

3. On the Emergence of Helping Behavior in Ontogeny

In this section, we briefly explore the consequences that the distinction between help in distributively shared agency and help in collectively shared agency has for some recent debates in the ontogeny of human helping behavior. Although at first glance our distinction might appear to be a purely technical matter, this section shows that the arguments developed in this paper offer useful conceptual tools to debates about the ontogeny of shared intentions. We start by reviewing research on shared agency among young infants, we then highlight the significance of our distinction between a single-factor and a two-factors explanation of direct help, and we conclude by showing how this distinction can contribute to illuminate different forms of helping behavior among pre-school children.

In recent years, Tomasello has offered an encompassing account of humans' capacity for shared intentionality, placing it at the center of his account of what makes humans unique (see Tomasello 2014, 2016, 2019). Within this theoretical framework, Warneken and Tomasello (2006, 2007) have studied joint action and helping behavior in young children. These studies investigate children' early understanding of shared intentions by focusing on two different kinds of cooperative behavior prominent in infants between 14 and 24 months:

1. the child's tendency to help others achieve their goals, which is manifested in their engagement in further pursuing incomplete actions of adults;
2. the child's ability to engage in shared cooperative activities, where the roles of each agent's actions are complementary and where all the interactors (children and adults) are pursuing the same goal together (Warneken/Tomasello 2006, 2007).

According to Warneken and Tomasello, the first kind of cooperative behavior is to be found in children starting at around 14 months of age. The authors explain this behavior in terms of an innate altruistic tendency[14] that children have to act upon others' incomplete or impeded goals, together with a correlated rudimentary capacity to understand someone else's intentional actions. Importantly, in their view, this is not yet a case of shared intentionality, because even if children are acting to achieve another person's goal, they are not coordinating their activities with the adult. The second kind of behavior, emerging at 18 months of age, is the one that, according to these researchers, can properly be called 'joint intentional activity.' Such activities are claimed to satisfy Bratman's conditions for shared intentional activity and, thus, to qualify as instances of shared intentionality ('joint intentionality,' in Tomasello's technical terminology, see Tomasello 2014: 38-40[15]).

[14] This tendency is explained in turn as an ancient phylogenetical adaption, related to kindship and friendship, that is already found in chimps (see Tomasello 2014, 2016).

[15] Tomasello's use of philosophical literature is not always consistent (see Pettit 2020) and it can be claimed that his reliance on Bratman should not be interpreted as a theoretical commitment. While we are not interested in exegesis here, it might be noted that Tomasello's characterization of joint intention endorses if not the letter, certainly the spirit of Bratman's theory: "We may characterize the formation of a […] joint intention in more detail as follows (Bratman 1992). For you and me to form a […] joint intention to pursue a stag together, (1) I must have the goal to capture the stag together with you; (2) you must have the goal to capture the stag together with me; and, critically, (3) we must have mutual knowledge, or common ground, that we both know each other's goal." (Tomasello 2014: 38, see also the next footnote)

Warneken and Tomasello (2006, 2007) observed that this second sort of activity is consistently and spontaneously carried out by 18- to 24-month-old children and becomes more skillfully and expertly performed over time.

In summarizing their results, Warneken and Tomasello characterize spontaneous helping behavior (the first kind of behavior described above) as an example of individual (not shared) intentionality: contributing to another person's goal manifests an understanding of the other person's goal directed behavior, but it is not yet a case of sharing intentions with another. This comes as no surprise since they explicitly state that shared intentional activity is to be understood in terms of Bratman's analysis of shared intentionality, that is, as a coordinated mesh between individual's numerically different intentions with the same content, of which agents have common knowledge (see Warneken et al, 2007: 291).[16] The authors conclude that helping behavior in young children—the kind of behavior that they engage with firstly—is a precursor of the kind of shared activity that is exhibited later, when children engage with adults in coordinating activities of a Bratmanian style.

The general picture that emerges, thus, is the following: on the one hand, when children engage in altruistic behavior at an early age, they do not share intentions with the helpee, but have intentions to help grounded in innate pro-social tendencies. On the other, when children begin to engage in joint action later in development, they distributively share intentions (à la Bratman) and cooperate with the adult by bringing about a jointly envisaged outcome. This commits Tomasello's explanation to a two-factor explanation of direct help and social cooperation in young children, according to which the mutual help and support provided by children in the interaction—the second kind of cooperative behavior, that is—is indirect (that is, it is independent of whether or not they are also altruistically inclined to help the adult) and any instance of direct help would have to invoke additional motivational factors, e.g., innate pro-social tendencies.

The account provided by Tomasello and Warneken has not been without criticisms. One of the crucial issues that various authors have pointed out is that using the Bratmanian theoretical model commits the view to a cognitively very demanding account of early cooperative behavior (see Tollefsen 2005, Brownell et al. 2006, Michael et al. 2014, Pacherie 2013, Salice/Miyazono 2019, Satne/Salice 2020, Zahavi/Satne 2015).[17] In particular, the account needs to presuppose a very early understanding of the notion of intention, as applied to herself and others, which is implausible for such an early age, especially so since that understanding might be thought to spring from early interactions with other agents rather than being presupposed by them. Because of this, it has been claimed that Bratman's theory (and by extension: Tomasello's theory, as one could further contend) may not be best suited to explain joint actions performed by infants. Thus, it has been suggested that less cognitively demanding cognitive abilities must be operative to explain infant's engagement in shared activities (see ibid). For example, it has been claimed that a sense of 'us' can be generated by group identification (Pacherie 2013, Salice/Miyazono 2019), emotional attunement, joint attention, and abilities for bodily coordination (Satne/Salice 2020, Satne 2020). These factors have been claimed to account for children's abilities to share goals with others by bypassing the need to understand the notion of intention and to manipulate mutual representations satisfying recursive clauses for common knowledge (which involve third or four level order intentional states), as required by Bratman's and Tomasello's account of joint action (see Tomasello 2014, 38-9).

It is at this point in the debate that the analysis of help developed in previous sections could be used to provide a model for further investigation into the development of helping capacities in young children. Recall that our analysis correlates direct help with collectively shared agency and indirect help with distributively shared

[16] It is to be noted that not every joint action will involve a recursive structure for common knowledge because in some case there may be sufficient information in the situation available for the agents to know that they both want to J. In such cases, the agents know their mutual goals because they stand on 'common ground.' Nevertheless, Tomasello argues that a capacity for recursive mindreading needs to be presupposed on the part of the agents to make sense of the very possibility of them engaging in this kind of interaction. He argues that this is shown buy the fact that in conflicting situations, we draw back to recursive reasoning, showing that our capacity of knowing that we both want to J has "an underlying recursive structure" (Tomasello 2014: 38), see Satne/Salice 2020 for further discussion.

[17] See Satne/Salice 2015 and Satne/Salice 2020 for a thorough analysis of the shortcomings of Warneken/Tomasello's account of helping behaviour in young children.

agency and shows that direct help in the latter form of agency requires a two-factor explanation. This distinction provides tools to support the hypothesis that children not always, and maybe not even firstly, frame their cooperative behavior in ways that fit the Bratmanian account of shared cooperative activities.

Following the analysis of help as motivated by group membership (developed in section 2), one can claim that the earliest form of helping behavior discussed by Warneken and Tomasello (and listed above under '1') is explained not in terms of a primitive altruistic tendency (as Tomasello suggests, see Tomasello 2014, 2016), but because children conceive of these early interactions as 'group' activities, groups that they form with their interactants. In this vein, children' cooperative tendencies at around 18 months can be thought to be based on a previous capacity for collectively sharing intentions with others to complete envisaged outcomes rather than the other way around, as Tomasello would have it.[18] According to this suggestion, the help children provide in these collective interactions would thus be direct, but explainable by invoking one single factor: the group's intention. The hypothesis being that, when completing actions of the adults, the 14 month old child frames the adults goal as a group's goal ('we are doing this') and, thus, as an indication of a group's intention, which s/he is under pressure to pursue due to (seeming) affiliation to the group to which the other agent is perceived to belong. Following this line of thought, early forms of direct help in 14 month old children could be seen as an innate evolutionary adaptation coming from group membership and group-based life in the hominids' linage (see Satne/Salice 2020), and not only directed to kin and friends, but to other members of one's group more generally[19].

Two lines of research in early infancy speak in favor of these hypotheses. The first line relies on studies into cultural modulations of cooperation that are found in 14 month old children, who modulate their tendencies to cooperation and imitation according to the cultural group of the adult they are interacting with, privileging in-group to out-group conditions (see Buttelmann et al. 2013; Over/Carpenter 2009, Dunham 2018). The second hinges on studies on "social reach" at 8 months, where children initiate and coordinate their actions with adults to obtain an object at a distance (Ramenzoni and Liszkowski 2016). This last example, as summarized by the authors, can be seen as a non-cognitively demanding account of joint activity, from which the ability to engage in Bratmanian cooperative activities, and the understanding of the concept of intention and agency that comes with it, might later develop. As Ramenzoni and Liszkowski put it: "[…] we do not wish to make the claim that infants in their first year of life have a differentiated understanding of shared plans and goals. Rather, this latter understanding may be a later developmental achievement that builds on further social interactional experiences", and further: "Earlier in development, *infants may simply assume that other individuals participate in their everyday perceptual and action experiences*, such that […] they *come to expect a helping hand* when their own falls short of reaching a goal" (Ramenzoni and Liszkowski 2016: 7, our emphasis). These remarks fit well with our suggestion above that less cognitively demanding abilities must be operative to explain infant's engagement in shared activities and among them, our analysis suggests, especially those involving a sense of us or group identification.

To summarize this section, our distinction between a single factor and a two-factors explanation of direct help can provide theoretical tools to offer an alternative picture of the emergence of helping behavior in ontogeny. In contrast to Tomasello et al. who put innate pro-social tendencies at the core of their explanation of young children' spontaneous help of others, the conceptual distinctions offered in the previous sections allows to suggest that children might frame the activities of others in collective terms, as group's endeavors steered by collective intentions, which they share as group members. If this were the case, help provided in these contexts could be thought to be direct and find a natural explanation in ancient inclinations for group membership. For on this account, help is direct all the way through ontogeny and is solely explained by a single factor, i.e., the collective intention.

[18] Tomasello (2014, 2016) distinguishes a third kind of capacity related to shared intentionality ('collective intentionality' in his terminology) that he describes as the capacity to act on behalf of a group. According to Tomasello, it is between 2 and 3 years of age that children start to act as members of a group. In his view this involves a very explicit form of group affiliation, for discussion see Satne 2016 and Satne/Salice 2020.

[19] Note that if the origins of children's altruism where related to kinship and friendship only, they could not explain why the children do this spontaneously with an adult they just met (as it is in Warneken/Tomasello 2006, 2007 experimental settings). See Kern/Moll 2017 for a criticism of Tomasello's view for not being collective 'all the way down' to the most basic capacities.

We are aware, however, that these are substantial suggestions that we cannot explore further in this context (see, however, Satne 2016 and Satne/Salice 2020 for further discussion on the ontogeny and phylogeny of shared intentionality), but which point to the relevance and potential use of the distinction between two kinds of help in interaction developed in previous sections. While both kinds of help might be thought to be present in everyday life, investigation into the early development of helping behavior might show interesting and unexplored links between the two and challenge some ways in which empirical research has so far connected them.

4. Conclusions

In this paper, we have argued that help in interaction comes in at least two importantly different forms: help is indirect, when the contribution to the other agent's goal is foreseen, but it is not aimed at by the agent; help is direct when the agent forms an intention of helping the other agents that are involved in the same activities. The first form of help in interaction correlates to distributive joint action, when two agents act together driven by distributively shared intentions. The second form of help takes place within activities that are aimed at by groups. Only in this last case, the individuals involved in the action are under rational pressure to forms intentions to contribute to the goals of others—these are others with whom they collaborate *qua* members of a group. But this is to say: when acting as part of a group, the rational pressure we are under to help our partners is different if compared to when we only contingently join others to satisfy a distributively shared intention. We have argued further that these distinctions and conceptual frameworks are useful for investigation into the roots of helping behavior in human beings. Being precise about how these forms of help in interaction differ, we surmise, might put us in the position to have a deeper understanding of how humans' pervasive tendency to social cooperation emerged and develops.

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