

The social contract in miniature: Virtual Bargaining and the theory of joint action, meaning and fairness

This talk will be an informal introduction to a theory of social interaction that a group of us (including me, Jennifer Misyak, Hossam Zeitoun, Tigran Melkonyan) have been developing over the last 10 years or so. The intuitive idea is that social interaction is underpinning by implicit negotiation---we are each trying to work out what we would agree (who should do which action, what is socially acceptable, what is the meaning of a gesture) if we were to communicate explicitly. Where this mutual agreement is 'obvious' we interact smoothly; when it is not, we clash, and may need to repair the interaction. Virtual bargaining can provide a foundation for theories of joint action, meaning, team behaviour, and even moral psychology.