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0521818605 - The Philosophy of Social Practices: A Collective Acceptance View

Raimo Tuomela

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL PRACTICES

This is the first systematic philosophical and conceptual study of the notion of a social practice. Raimo Tuomela explains social practices in terms of the interlocking mental states of the agents; he shows how social practices (for example customs and traditions) are “building blocks of society”; and he offers a clear and powerful account of the way in which social institutions are constructed from these building blocks as established, interconnected sets of social practices with a special new social status. His analysis is based on the novel concept of shared “we-attitudes,” which represent a weak form of collective intentionality, and he makes instructive connections to major topics and figures in philosophy and the social sciences. His book will be of interest to a wide range of readers in philosophy of mind, philosophy of social science, psychology and sociology, and artificial intelligence.

RAIMO TUOMELA is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Helsinki. His recent publications include *The Importance of Us: A Philosophical Study of Basic Social Notions* (1995), and *Cooperation: A Philosophical Study* (2000).

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BY

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[More information](#)

To my friend, Wolfgang Balzer

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>		x
Introduction		I
1 Collective intentionality and the construction of the social world		5
1.1 Wide and narrow social constructivism		5
1.2 The contents of this book		9
2 Collective intentionality		17
2.1 Introduction to collective intentionality		17
2.2 Collective intentions surveyed		18
2.3 Shared we-attitudes		22
2.4 Collective intention to act together		26
2.5 Mutual belief		33
Appendix: the we-mode and the I-mode		36
3 Conceptual activity, rule following, and social practices		40
3.1 Introduction		40
3.2 Sellars on conceptual activity		43
3.3 Can conceptuality be noncircularly characterized?		48
3.4 Elementary conceptual activity		52
3.5 Collective pattern-governed behavior		55
3.6 Are social practices required for conceptuality?		64
3.7 Conclusion		76
4 An account of social practices		78
4.1 Introduction		78
4.2 Collective social action		80
4.3 What are social practices?		89
4.4 Theses regarding core social practices		99
4.5 Presuppositional and motivational reasons		108

viii	<i>Contents</i>	
4.6	Customs and other kinds of social practices	113
4.7	Conclusion	121
5	A Collective Acceptance account of collective-social notions	122
5.1	Introduction	122
5.2	The basic features of the Collective Acceptance account	125
5.3	The Collective Acceptance account made precise	136
5.4	Collective commitment	141
5.5	Qualifications and additions	144
5.6	Collective acceptance as shared we-attitude	151
5.7	Conclusion	154
6	Social institutions	156
6.1	Social institutions introduced	156
6.2	The basic ideas	162
6.3	The final account	167
6.4	Searle on social institutions	183
6.5	Social organizations and institutional social practices	186
6.6	Conclusion	192
	Appendix: Institution concepts as reflexive concepts	194
7	Social practices in a dynamic context: a mathematical analysis	201
7.1	Introduction	201
7.2	Preconditions of social practices	203
7.3	States and sentences	205
7.4	Frames	208
7.5	Social practices mathematically analyzed	211
7.6	Towards a social dynamics	214
7.7	The individual level	218
7.8	An example of a social practice	220
7.9	Social norms, task-right systems, and social institutions	221
7.10	Conclusion	232
	Epilogue	234
	<i>Notes</i>	237
	<i>References</i>	266
	<i>Index</i>	272

Figures

1	Collective social action	<i>page</i> 90
2	Pattern of a social practice	212
3	Flowchart of social dynamics	216
4	Developed flowchart of social dynamics	217
5	Social institution model	230
6	Normatively admitted practices	231

Cambridge University Press

0521818605 - The Philosophy of Social Practices: A Collective Acceptance View

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgments*

I have worked on philosophical and, more broadly, theoretical problems related to joint attitudes, joint action, cooperation, and related topics for a couple of decades. Therefore it is somewhat difficult to say when and where the basic ideas presented in the present book were conceived. Nevertheless, the Collective Acceptance model, which is central to the account of social practices and institutions, was mainly developed only a few years ago; the more technical parts of it were conceived in Munich in relation to my joint work with Professor Wolfgang Balzer of the University of Munich.

Some of the chapters of this book make use of my earlier papers. More precisely, I use revised versions of some passages of the following articles of mine with appropriate permission from the publisher: “Collective Acceptance and Collective Social Notions” (authored jointly with Wolfgang Balzer), *Synthese* 117 (1999), 175–205; “Collective Intentionality and Social Institutions,” in G. Grewendorf and G. Meggle (eds.), *Speech Acts, Mind, and Social Reality* (Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, forthcoming); “Collective Intentions and the Maintenance of Social Practices” (authored jointly with Wolfgang Balzer), forthcoming in *Autonomous Agents and Multi-Agent Systems*; “Social Institutions, Norms, and Practices” (authored jointly with Wolfgang Balzer), in R. Conte and C. Dellarocas (eds.), *Social Order in Multiagent Systems* (Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht and Norwell, Mass., forthcoming); “From Social Imitation to Teamwork” (authored jointly with Maj Bonnevier-Tuomela), in G. Holmström-Hintikka and R. Tuomela (eds.), *Contemporary Action Theory* 2 (Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht and Boston, 1997), pp. 1–47.

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Cambridge University Press

0521818605 - The Philosophy of Social Practices: A Collective Acceptance View

Raimo Tuomela

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgments*

xi

this book uses passages from our two joint papers and it is closely based on our joint research. I am grateful to Wolfgang for permission to use this material in the present book.

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