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# The sense of agency in human-human vs human-robot joint action

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**Abstract:** Kinesthesia pertains to the perception of moving body parts, while the sense of agency refers to the experience of controlling one's action-effects. Based on previous work, we hypothesized that the sense of agency would decrease in joint action with a robot compared to a human partner. Pairs of participants were jointly manipulating two interconnected haptic devices enabling them to feel each other's forces. Unbeknownst to participants, their partner was sometimes replaced by a robot. The sense of agency was assessed using intentional binding, which refers to a contraction of perceived time between an action and its effect for intentional actions, and participants' judgment of their contribution to joint action. Participants judged their contribution as higher when they were initiating action and when they were paired with the robot. By contrast, intentional binding occurred only with a human partner. This outcome supports the hypothesis that human-robot joint action hinders intentional binding.

**Keywords:** sense of agency; joint action; kinesthesia; haptic; robotics

# The sense of agency in human-human vs human-robot joint action

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## 1. Introduction

Joint actions are observed when different agents coordinate their goals and movements to act together (Pacherie, 2014). Agents can be humans or robots and human-robot joint action has drawn increasing attention in recent years due to the technological progress of automated systems (Sahai, Pacherie, Grynszpan, & Berberian, 2017). The sense of agency can be defined as one's experience of controlling one's own actions and their effects on one's environment (Haggard & Chambon, 2012). Cognitive sciences have expressed growing interest in joint action for the last two decades and, at the same time, the sense of agency has been extensively studied. Yet, researchers still lack a clear understanding of how the sense of agency operates in joint action. Experimental evidence showed that disambiguating who is responsible for an action was not straightforward when the action was performed jointly with another person (Wegner & Wheatley, 1999). Current accounts of the sense of agency emphasize the contribution of both explicit and implicit mechanisms (Synofzik, Vosgerau, & Newen, 2008). The explicit mechanisms involve high-level cognitive reasoning, while the implicit mechanisms refer to pre-conceptual lower-level processes closely linked to sensorimotor monitoring (Blakemore, Wolpert, & Frith, 2002) and proprioception. Explicit reasoning about one's agency is usually captured by asking participants to judge whether they caused the action-effect (Wegner & Wheatley, 1999). Regarding the implicit sense of agency, researchers commonly rely on phenomena such as Intentional Binding (IB), which refers to a binding effect whereby the perceived time interval between an action and its effect is reduced when the agent acts intentionally to produce the effect (Haggard, 2005; Haggard, Clark, & Kalogeras, 2002).

As emphasized by Pacherie (2014), the sense of agency in joint action not only requires predicting and perceiving the effects of one's own actions, but also those of the co-actor's actions and how these effects combine. Pacherie hypothesized that the ability to accurately predict the co-actor's actions associated with a decreased ability to distinguish one's action-effects from those of the co-actor favored a shift from a sense of individual self-agency towards a joint sense of "we-agency". One way to investigate this question is to attribute distinct sequential roles to the co-actors in performing the action. In the study by Capozzi, Becchio, Garbarini, Savazzi and Pia (2016), participants triggered a tone that served as a go signal for a co-actor's action. Participants' sense of agency as measured by IB

44 was effective for the first tone that was the direct product of their action, but not for the co-actor's  
45 action effect. The same pattern of sequential actions was used by Pfister, Obhi, Rieger and Wenke  
46 (2014) who additionally attributed social roles to the two co-actors (leader and follower). They  
47 showed that the leader experienced a sense of agency for the follower's action, but not for the tone  
48 effect resulting from the follower's action. Notwithstanding, it has been shown that when  
49 participants had to judge the loudness of self- and other-generated tones, they experienced sensory  
50 attenuation, that is, a reduced perception of loudness intensity, not only for self-generated tones but  
51 also for other-generated tones (Weiss et al., 2011). Sensory attenuation has been linked to  
52 individuals' sense of agency, yet it seems to follow trends that do not correlate with intentional  
53 binding and explicit judgments of agency (Dewey & Knoblich, 2014). Taken together, these results  
54 suggest that the sense of agency is manifold. Characterizing the sense of agency may therefore  
55 require more than one measure. Unfortunately, the experimental procedures in the above  
56 mentioned studies did not allow the examination of the explicit judgement of agency, because each  
57 co-actor's degree of control over action was pre-determined by the instructions.

58 Additionally, analyzing sequential sub-actions performed individually by each co-actor does not  
59 enable capturing the sense of agency in simultaneous joint actions. Yet, the latter is very relevant to  
60 everyday life experience, as exemplified by the case of two people moving furniture together  
61 (Pacherie, 2014). Few studies have addressed the issue of simultaneous joint actions: Van der Wel,  
62 Sebanz and Knoblich (2012) designed a task where participants had to pull cords attached on each  
63 side of a pole to move it back and forth. This action was performed individually or jointly with  
64 another person. They were asked to rate how strongly they had experienced being in control. The  
65 authors found that the degree of control that participants reported was similar whether they  
66 performed the task alone or with a partner. Obhi and Hall (2011a) conducted two experiments where  
67 pairs of participants were instructed to press a spacebar together. In the first experiment, each  
68 participant could initiate the press, but if her/his partner was the first to act then she/he had to join  
69 in immediately. In the second experiment, the initiator and follower roles of each participant in the  
70 pair were assigned beforehand. Results showed that IB occurred whether participants thought they  
71 initiated the action or followed their partner's action, thus leading authors to support the "we-  
72 agency" hypothesis. In a complementary study, Obhi and Hall (2011b) compared joint action with a  
73 human being versus a computer. Participants were paired either with an unseen human confederate  
74 or a computer, and had to perform a tapping action that was followed by a tone. They were told that  
75 their partner also performed a tapping action that could trigger the tone, but they were actually  
76 performing the action alone. IB occurred for the human co-actor but not for the computer, even  
77 when the participant believed she/he had initiated the action first. Joint action was nevertheless  
78 implemented as a mere belief manipulation in this experiment. It was contingent on top-down  
79 processes driven by the verbal instructions provided to participants. To our knowledge, no study has  
80 yet investigated bottom-up processes by manipulating the kinesthetic component of joint action,  
81 which conceivably plays a major role in the sense of agency. Our goal was to fill in this gap by further  
82 investigating joint action with an artificial agent.

83 In the experiment reported here, pairs of participants were to jointly turn handles that were  
84 mechatronically connected to each other: The forces applied on one handle were fed back on the  
85 other handle. Unbeknown to the participants, the handles would sometimes be controlled by a robot  
86 instead of the co-actor. This procedure enabled us to investigate the bottom-up influence of the  
87 kinesthetic component on agency judgment and IB, while maintaining participants' belief that they  
88 were interacting with a human partner. The experimental design was inspired by the study of Obhi  
89 and Hall (2011a) where pairs of participants cooperated to perform a joint action. Based on the work

90 by Obhi and Hall (2011b), we hypothesized that the sense of agency would decrease in joint action  
91 with a robot compared to a human.

## 92 2. Method

### 93 2.1 Participants

94 Twenty-six right-handed participants (17 women, mean age 21.73 years [ $SD=3.80$ ]) were recruited  
95 for this experiment. We had estimated the minimum sample size beforehand as being 16, with a  
96 power analysis based on data reported by Obhi and Hall (2011a) using the G\*Power application (Faul,  
97 Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) with a significance threshold set at 0.05 and power at 0.9.  
98 Participants were free of any known psychiatric or neurologic symptoms, non-corrected visual or  
99 auditory deficits and recent use of any substance that could impede concentration. Participants were  
100 grouped in pairs. There were 5 woman-woman pairs, one man-man pair and 7 woman-man pairs.  
101 This research was reviewed and approved by an institutional ethics committee. Informed consent  
102 was obtained from each participant. One participant had to be excluded, because the debriefing  
103 interview suggested that he had some doubts about his partner being a robot (see participant 26 in  
104 Table 1 of the Appendix). The analyses were thus based on 25 participants.

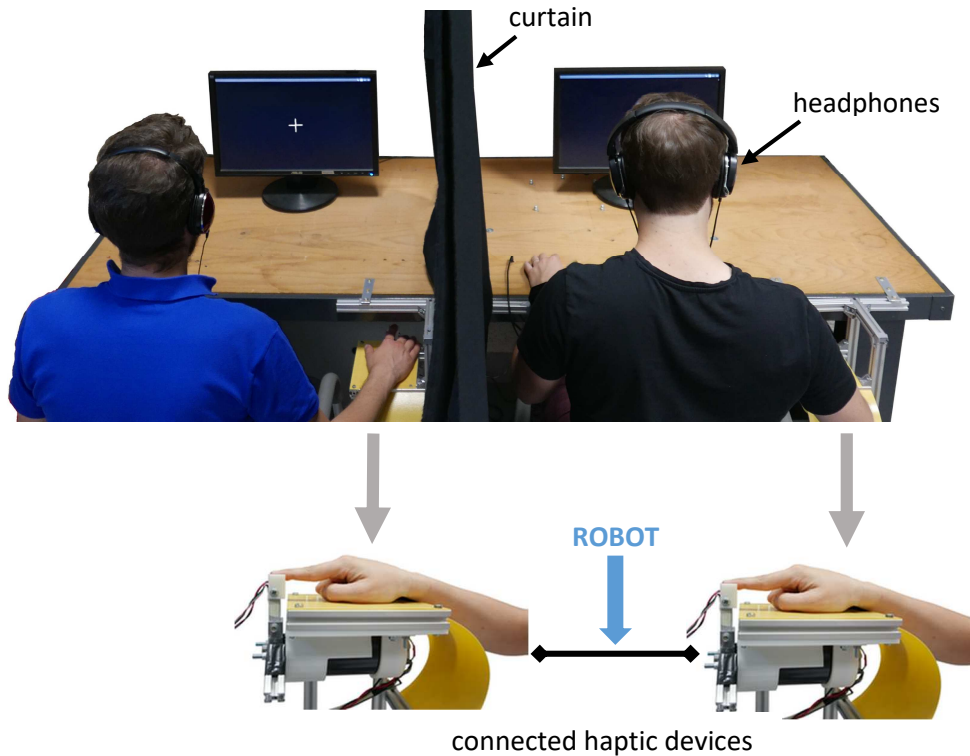
### 105 2.2 Material

106 The handles were custom-made haptic interfaces that could be manipulated with the index finger.  
107 Technical details are described in (Roche, Richer, & Saint-Bauzel, 2018). The system design was based  
108 on prior experimentations involving human-human interaction (Roche & Saint-Bauzel, 2016). Both  
109 handles were controlled by the same embedded controller. This controller was a four channel tele-  
110 operating controller that was simulating a high stiffness spring damper link as explained in (Roche &  
111 Saint-Bauzel, 2018). The sampling rate of the controller was 5kHz and the teleoperation lag between  
112 handles was 0.2ms. The handles were 80mm long and could rotate 28.8° leftward or rightward until  
113 they bumped into stoppers. Forces applied to the handle could be measured and a tactile receptor  
114 was located where participants would place their finger. Each handle could either reproduce the  
115 forces applied to the other handle or be controlled by a robot (Figure 1). The robot was programmed  
116 to randomly turn right or left after a random delay between 0 and 3s. If the participant had started  
117 moving the handle before the robot, then the robot would follow her/his lead. If the robot had been  
118 the first to move, but the participant exerted forces in the opposite direction above a given threshold  
119 of 2N, then the robot would change direction to follow the participant. This guaranteed safe use for  
120 the participant. The threshold was determined based on (Roche & Saint-Bauzel, 2016). The robot  
121 simulated human motion using minimum jerk optimization (Flash & Hogan, 1985). Forces in Newton  
122 measured by sensors on each handle and the handle orientation in radian were timestamped and  
123 recorded for later analysis.

124 To evaluate intentional binding, we used two audio signals as action-effects. They were a high-  
125 pitched beep (2000Hz) and a low-pitched beep (1000Hz) that each lasted 120ms. A leftward turn of  
126 the handle was associated with the high-pitched beep and a rightward turn with the low-pitched  
127 beep. Different sound pitches were associated with the leftward and rightward turn to give  
128 participants control over the identity of the effect of their action as recommended by Hughes,  
129 Desantis and Waszak (2013). Participants' agency would therefore not only determine the timing of  
130 the sound effect, but also its identity.

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Figure 1: The experimental setup: Two participants were sitting side by side, separated by a curtain and wearing noise-cancelling headphones. They were manipulating handle haptic devices with their index finger. Each handle could either reproduce the forces applied by their partner on the other handle or be controlled by a robot. Movement and force data were collected by the device.

## 150 2.3 Procedure

151 Pairs of participants sat side-by-side, separated by a curtain, each facing their own computer screen  
152 (Figure 1). Each participant had their own mouse and handle placed on their right side. As a cover  
153 story, they were told that they would be jointly manipulating a pair of connected handles and thus  
154 led to believe that they were always interacting with a human partner, even when their partner was  
155 actually a robot. They wore headsets playing pink noise to prevent them from receiving any sound  
156 cue from their partner. The experiment consisted of two training blocks and three experimental  
157 blocks separated by short pauses.

### 158 2.3.1 Training blocks

159 Participants performed two training blocks individually. During the first training block, participants  
160 gained practice in estimating time intervals. It comprised 30 trials. Each trial started with a message  
161 on the screen to request participants' attention. This message was displayed for 500ms. Then, a  
162 white fixation cross over a black background was displayed. Five hundred milliseconds after the  
163 fixation cross appeared, participants heard a sequence made of the two above mentioned beeps in  
164 their headphones and they had to estimate the time interval separating them. The order of the  
165 beeps in the sequence was randomized across trials. The interval duration between the two sounds  
166 was a random delay ranging from 300ms to 1700ms. Participants had up to 5s to provide an answer  
167 by moving a slider on a horizontal Likert scale. This scale extended from 0 to 2000ms. Once they  
168 validated their answer, participants were shown the correct interval length on another Likert scale  
169 that appeared below the one they had used.

170 The goal of the second training block was to have participants learn the action-effect association  
171 between the movement on the handle and the subsequent sound. This block contained 20 trials. To  
172 tag the end of the handle turn, a click sound (duration 120ms) was emitted in the headphones when  
173 the handle reached the stopper. As in the previous block, each trial started with a message lasting  
174 500ms that requested participants' attention. The fixation cross then appeared and the participant  
175 had up to three seconds to initiate a turn. The time count before the sound effect was emitted began  
176 as soon as the participant reached the stopper. The interval duration between when participants  
177 reached the stopper and when the sound was emitted varied randomly between 300ms and 1700ms.  
178 At the end of the trial, the handle automatically returned to its central position. The next trial began  
179 as soon as the receptor located on the handle was able to detect the participant's finger.

### 180 2.3.2 Experimental blocks

181 There were three experimental blocks: a baseline block, a human-human joint action block and a  
182 human-robot joint action block. Their order was randomly counterbalanced across participants. The  
183 baseline block comprised 40 trials and was similar to the first training block, except that (1)  
184 participants were not given any feedback about the correct interval duration, (2) the interval  
185 between the two sounds lasted either 700ms or 1300ms. A pseudo-random sequence was used to  
186 ensure that the number of trials was the same for either interval duration. The human-human and  
187 human-robot joint action blocks were the operant conditions and they each contained 120 trials. The  
188 only difference between these two blocks was that in the human-human block, the two participants  
189 moved the handle together, whereas in the human-robot block, the partner for each of the two  
190 participants was the robot. As in the other blocks, the joint action blocks started with a request for  
191 attention lasting 500ms, followed by the fixation cross. Once the fixation cross appeared, participants  
192 had up to 3s to turn the handle. The two participants were asked to cooperate together and equate  
193 the number of times they each initiated the move. If their partner initiated the move first, they were  
194 instructed to follow her/his lead. For every individual trial, the role (initiator vs follower) of each co-  
195 actor was determined a posteriori when analyzing the movements and forces applied on the handles.  
196 In each trial, the initiator role was assigned to the first participant to apply a 0.2N force on her/his  
197 handle. This criterion was based on prior experimentations (Roche & Saint-Bauzel, 2016) with the  
198 system where it was observed that this value was a threshold discriminating involuntary micro-  
199 movements. The beep sound was delivered either 700ms or 1300ms after the handle reached the  
200 stopper, according to the same pseudo-random procedure as in the baseline block. As in  
201 the associative learning block, the high-pitched beep was associated with a leftward turn and the low-  
202 pitched beep with a rightward turn. Participants had to estimate the interval duration on a Likert  
203 scale ranging from 0 to 2000ms as in the training block. They also had to rate on a Likert scale how  
204 much they thought they had contributed to causing the beep sound by moving a slider on a ruler  
205 representing the percentage of their contribution from 0 to 100. The data collected for every trial  
206 included participants' estimation of the interval duration, participants' rating of their contribution to  
207 the action-effect, the number of times the movement of the handle changed direction and the  
208 average of interaction forces applied to the handle (i.e. the sum of interaction forces averaged over  
209 the time taken to turn the handle).

### 210 2.3.3 Debriefing interview

211 At the end of the experiment, each of the two co-actors were individually interviewed to verify they  
212 believed that they had been interacting with one another during the entire experiment. They were  
213 asked the three following questions: (1) "Do you have any comment about the experiment?" (2) "Did  
214 you notice a difference between the two blocks where you interacted with your partner?" (3) "In  
215 fact, you were interacting with a human partner in one block and with an automated artificial system  
216 in the other. Did you realize that?" The answers of the participants were recorded and analyzed by

217 two independent raters. Those raters had to judge whether participants realized that they had been  
218 interacting with a robot. If the two raters disagreed, the judgment of a third rater was requested.  
219 There was perfect agreement between the two initial raters for 24 participants and, of the two  
220 remaining participants, one was excluded. The answers to those questions are listed in Table 1 of the  
221 Appendix. Note should be taken that as the second question focused on the comparison between the  
222 human and robot partner blocks, the way it was formulated could lead participants to suspect that  
223 there actually was a difference between those two blocks. Furthermore, the third question revealed  
224 the truth about the manipulation. So participants were likely to reconstruct their experience after  
225 these two questions, while answers to the first question could be regarded as more authentic and  
226 spontaneous.

## 227 2.4 Data analysis

228 The data were analyzed using Statistica software. As in the first experiment of Obhi and Hall (2011a),  
229 our experimental design did not force roles upon participants during each trial. Indeed, we wanted to  
230 investigate joint action in which there was dynamic emergence of an initiator and follower. This  
231 would not have been possible had specific roles been assigned to participants in each trial. Yet, the  
232 drawback of our design was the possible risk of an imbalance in how participants would share roles.  
233 To account for this risk, we included the role (initiator/follower) in the statistical analyses as an  
234 adjustment factor. A within-subject analyses of variance (ANOVA) with the partner (human vs robot)  
235 and the role of the participant (initiator vs follower) as factors was used for participants' rating of  
236 their contribution to the action-effect, the number of times the movement of the handle changed  
237 direction and the average of interaction forces applied to the handle. There were two additional  
238 factors for participants' estimation of the interval duration: The presence/absence of an action  
239 (baseline vs joint action) and the action-effect delay (700ms vs 1300ms). One outlier was removed  
240 from the dataset of the analysis of intentional binding, because her time estimations were always  
241 beyond two standard deviations from the mean of the group. Post-hoc *t*-tests were conducted using  
242 Tukey's procedure (Jaccard, Becker, & Wood, 1984), with an a priori alpha value of 0.05. As a  
243 preliminary data check, we computed the percentage of left and right turns in the joint action  
244 conditions. We conducted an ANOVA for the percentage of turns with partner, role and side (left vs  
245 right) as within-subjects factors. It did not yield any significant effect or interaction:  $F(1,24) < 10^{-5}$   
246  $p = 1$  for the partner factor,  $F(1,24) < 10^{-5}$   $p = 1$  for the role factor,  $F(1,24) = 3.20$   $p = 0.09$  for the side  
247 factor,  $F(1,24) < 10^{-5}$   $p = 1$  for the partner  $\times$  role interaction,  $F(1,24) = 3.04$   $p = 0.09$  for the partner  $\times$   
248 side interaction,  $F(1,24) = 1.03$   $p = 0.32$  for the role  $\times$  side interaction and  $F(1,24) = 1.61$   $p = 0.22$  for  
249 the partner  $\times$  role  $\times$  side interaction. So the percentage of right and left turns were considered to be  
250 matched across conditions. To evaluate whether participants were able to follow the instruction to  
251 balance initiator/follower roles between them and their partner during joint action blocks, we  
252 computed the percentage of time they initiated joint action. We then applied a paired *t*-test on those  
253 percentages to compare the human partner condition with the robot partner condition.

## 254 3. Results

### 255 3.1 Role sharing within pairs

256 The percentage of times participants initiated joint action was 50% ( $SD = 20.4$ ) in the human partner  
257 condition and 33.8% ( $SD = 13.7$ ) in the robot partner condition. The difference between the two  
258 conditions was significant,  $t(24) = 3.96$   $p < 0.001$ . To check if the imbalance in the number of initiator  
259 trials in the robot partner condition could have influenced the subsequent results, we applied a  
260 verification procedure whereby the data was re-analyzed after matching the number of trials across  
261 conditions, using random selection, on the individual participant level.

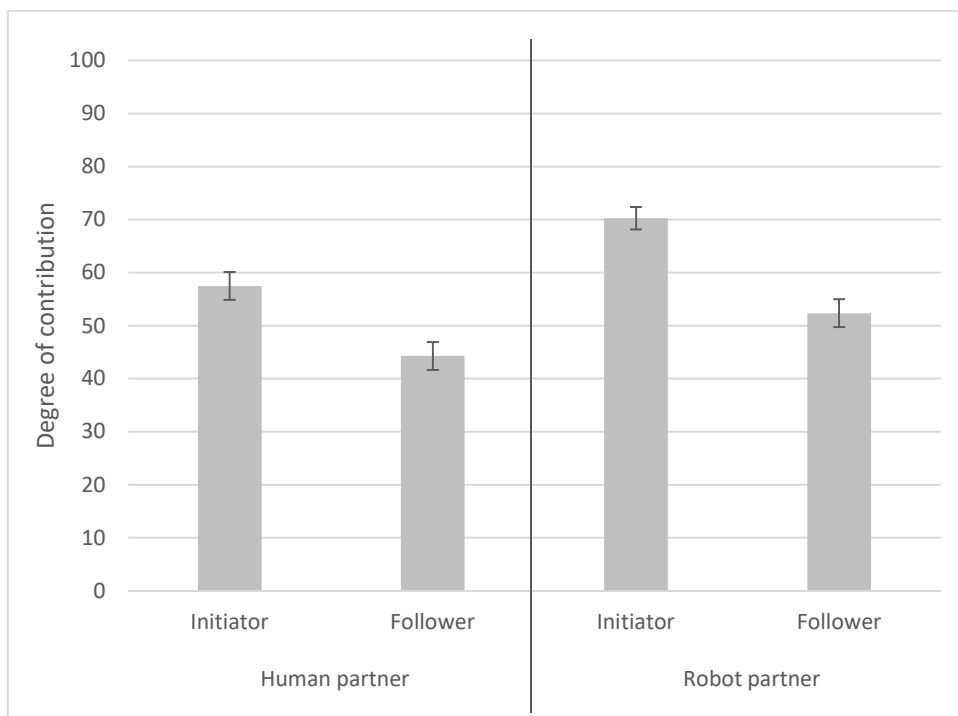


262 3.2 Judgment of agency and intentional binding

263 Regarding participants' rating of their contribution, the ANOVA indicated a main effect of the  
264 partner,  $F(1,24) = 12.76 p = 0.002 \eta^2 = 0.35$ , and of the role,  $F(1,24) = 67.37 p < 0.001 \eta^2 = 0.74$  (see  
265 Figure 2). The participants judged their contribution as significantly higher when they were partnered  
266 with the robot [ $mean = 61.3 SD = 2.0$ ] than with a human being [ $mean = 50.9 SD = 2.3$ ]. They also  
267 judged they contributed significantly more when they were initiators [ $mean = 63.8 SD = 1.9$ ] than  
268 followers [ $mean = 48.3 SD = 1.8$ ].

269 The same pattern of results was found when we applied the verification procedure: There was main  
270 effect of the partner,  $F(1,24) = 6.58 p = 0.017 \eta^2 = 0.22$ , and of the role,  $F(1,24) = 8.86 p = 0.007$   
271  $\eta^2 = 0.27$ .

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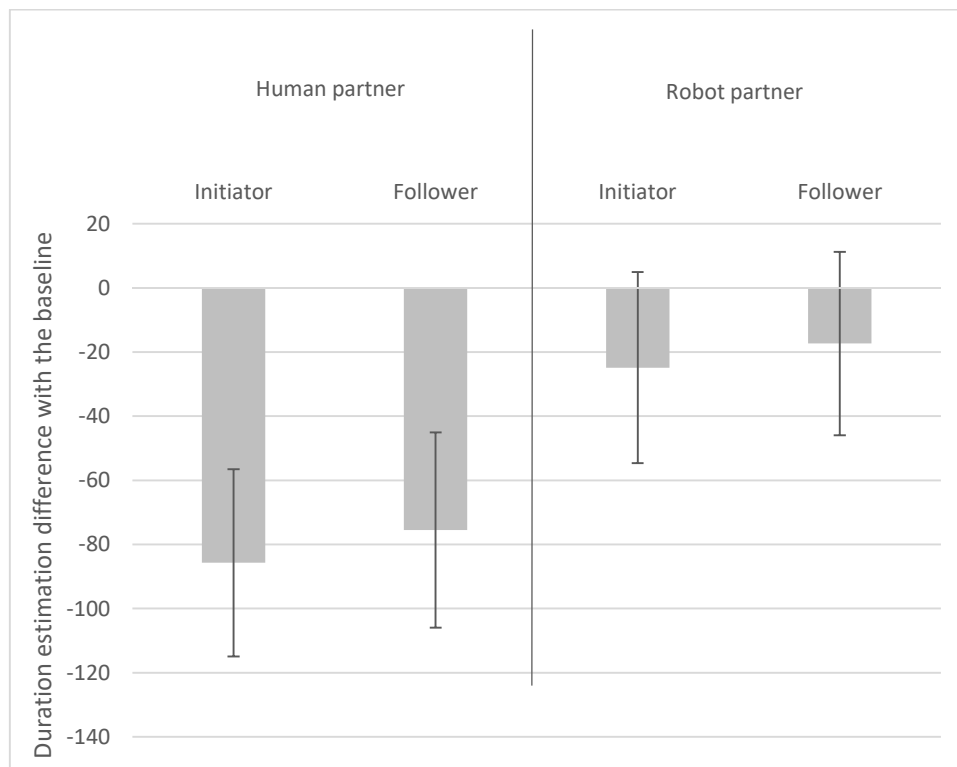
274 *Figure 2: Judgment of degree of contribution in each condition. Participants rated their contribution as higher when they*  
275 *were partnered with the robot. They also judged that they contributed more when they initiated the action compared to*  
276 *when they followed their partner. Error bars represent the standard error.*

277 The intentional binding effect was assessed by analyzing participants' estimation of interval duration.  
278 The ANOVA yielded a main effect of the partner factor,  $F(1,23) = 8.27 p = 0.009 \eta^2 = 0.26$ , a main  
279 effect of the delay factor,  $F(1,23) = 241.89 p < 0.0001 \eta^2 = 0.91$ , an interaction between the action  
280 and partner factors,  $F(1,23) = 8.27 p = 0.009 \eta^2 = 0.26$ , and an interaction between the action and  
281 delay factors,  $F(1,23) = 105.43 p < 0.0001 \eta^2 = 0.82$ . There was no other main effect or interaction,  
282 including for the role factor,  $F(1,23) = 0.30 p = 0.59$ , and the interaction between the action, partner  
283 and role factors,  $F(1,23) = 0.22 p = 0.64$ .

284 The estimations of duration were higher for the 1300ms delay [ $mean = 1117 SD = 113$ ] than for the  
285 700ms delay [ $mean = 738 SD = 71$ ]. Participants estimated the interval duration as longer when they  
286 were paired with the robot [ $mean = 943 SD = 74$ ] than with another human being [ $mean = 911$   
287  $SD = 82$ ]. Regarding the interaction between the action and partner factors, post-hoc tests showed a  
288 significant difference between the joint action condition and the baseline only for the human partner

289 ( $p = 0.001$ ) and not for the robot partner ( $p > 0.98$ ) [human-human joint action:  $mean = 877$   $SD = 127$ ;  
 290 human-robot joint action:  $mean = 940$   $SD = 101$ ; baseline:  $mean = 946$   $SD = 83$ ] (see Figure 3).  
 291 Concerning the interaction between the action and delay factors, post-hoc tests revealed that  
 292 estimations of duration were significantly lower in the joint action condition compared to the  
 293 baseline when the delay was 1300ms ( $p < 0.001$ ) [joint action:  $mean = 1005$   $SD = 137$ ; baseline:  
 294  $mean = 1230$   $SD = 134$ ] and that they were significantly higher than the baseline when the delay was  
 295 700ms ( $p < 0.001$ ) [joint action:  $mean = 813$   $SD = 101$ ; baseline:  $mean = 663$   $SD = 98$ ]. Estimations of  
 296 duration for the 1300ms delay were nevertheless significantly higher than those for the 700ms delay  
 297 even in the joint action condition ( $p < 0.001$ ). In other words, in the joint action condition,  
 298 estimations of duration for the 700ms and 1300ms delays were closer to the middle of the scale  
 299 while remaining significantly different.

300



301

302 *Figure 3: The difference in interval duration estimation between each condition and the baseline. Interval duration*  
 303 *estimations were significantly larger than the baseline only when the partner was human. There were no differences*  
 304 *whether the participant was initiator or follower. Error bars represent the standard error.*

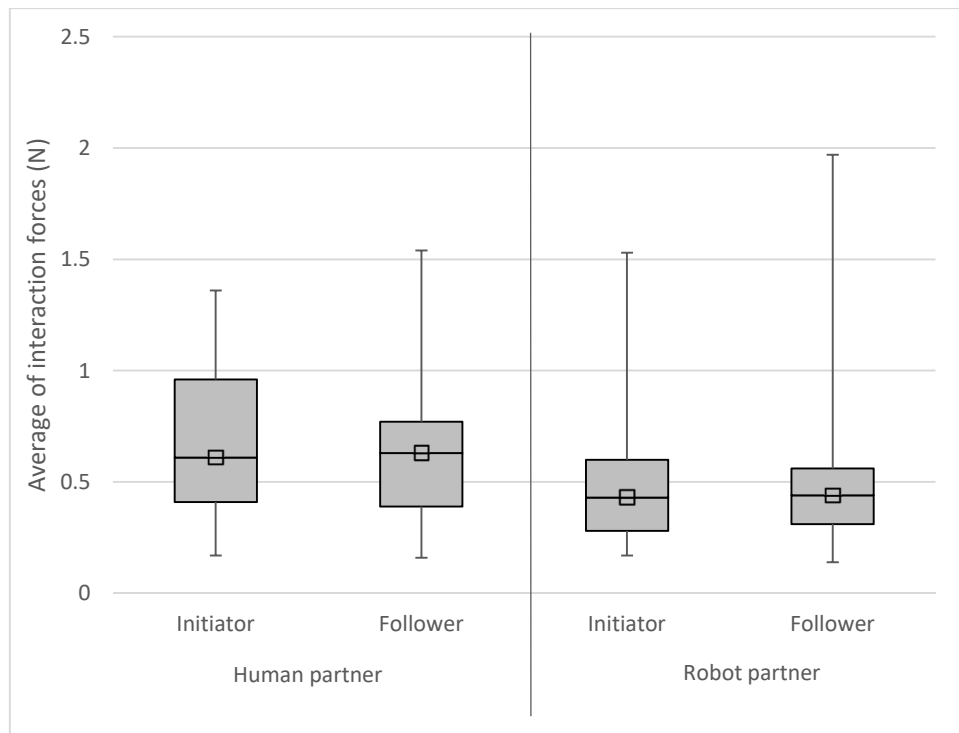
305 The significant main effects and interactions were the same when applying the verification procedure  
 306 on estimations of duration: We found a main effect of the partner,  $F(1,24) = 5.09$   $p = 0.033$   $\eta^2 = 0.17$ ,  
 307 a main effect of delay,  $F(1,24) = 227.41$   $p < 0.0001$   $\eta^2 = 0.90$ , an interaction between the partner and  
 308 action factors,  $F(1,23) = 5.09$   $p = 0.033$   $\eta^2 = 0.17$ , and an interaction between the action and delay  
 309 factors,  $F(1,23) = 112.25$   $p < 0.0001$   $\eta^2 = 0.82$ .

### 310 3.3 Movement data

311 The data for the average of interaction forces did not conform to the assumption of normality due to  
 312 a floor effect, so we applied a Box Cox transformation (Sakia, 1992) that yielded a normal  
 313 distribution. The ANOVA for this variable showed a main effect of the partner,  $F(1,24) = 9.51$   
 314  $p = 0.005$   $\eta^2 = 0.28$ , and a main effect of role,  $F(1,24) = 4.68$   $p = 0.04$   $\eta^2 = 0.16$ . The average of

315 interaction forces was significantly higher with the human partner [ $mean = 0.66N$   $SD = 0.06N$ ] than  
 316 with the robot partner [ $mean = 0.50N$   $SD = 0.07N$ ]. It was also significantly higher when the  
 317 participant was the initiator [ $mean = 0.60N$   $SD = 0.05N$ ] than when she/he was the follower  
 318 [ $mean = 0.56N$   $SD = 0.06N$ ]. There was no interaction between the partner and role factors. Figure 4  
 319 shows boxplots of the data.

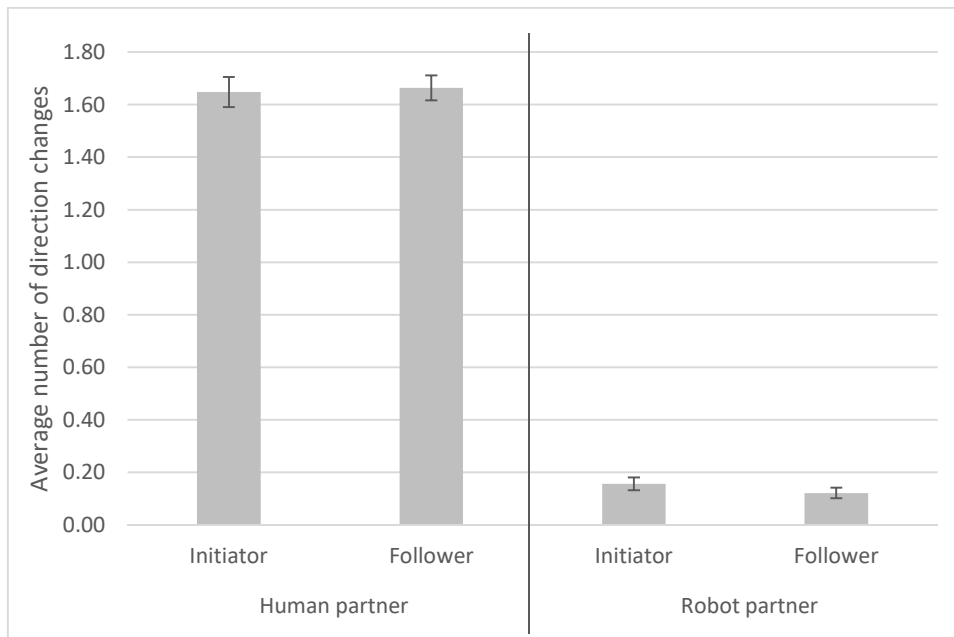
320 Once again, we found the same pattern of results when the verification procedure was applied on  
 321 the average of interaction forces: A main effect of partner,  $F(1,24) = 8.33$   $p = 0.008$   $\eta^2 = 0.26$ , and a  
 322 main effect of role,  $F(1,24) = 5.56$   $p = 0.027$   $\eta^2 = 0.19$ .



323  
 324 *Figure 4: Average of Interaction Forces applied by the participants. As the data were not normally distributed, boxplots were*  
 325 *used to display the medians, the interquartile intervals and range of values in each condition. Participants applied more*  
 326 *forces when the partner was human. When initiating action, they also applied more forces.*

327 For the number of direction changes, we had to remove an outlier whose data was beyond two  
 328 standard deviations from the mean, to conform to the assumption of normality. The ANOVA yielded a  
 329 main effect of the partner,  $F(1,23) = 1231.99$   $p < 0.0001$   $\eta^2 = 0.98$  (Figure 5). There were significantly  
 330 more direction changes with the human partner [ $mean = 1.66$   $SD = 0.05$ ] than with the robot  
 331 [ $mean = 0.14$   $SD = 0.02$ ].

332 The verification procedure showed the same pattern of results, that is, a main effect of partner for  
 333 the number of direction changes,  $F(1,23) = 187.08$   $p < 0.0001$   $\eta^2 = 0.89$ .



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*Figure 5: The average number of direction changes in each condition. Participants changed the direction of movement more often when the partner was human. Error bars represent standard errors.*

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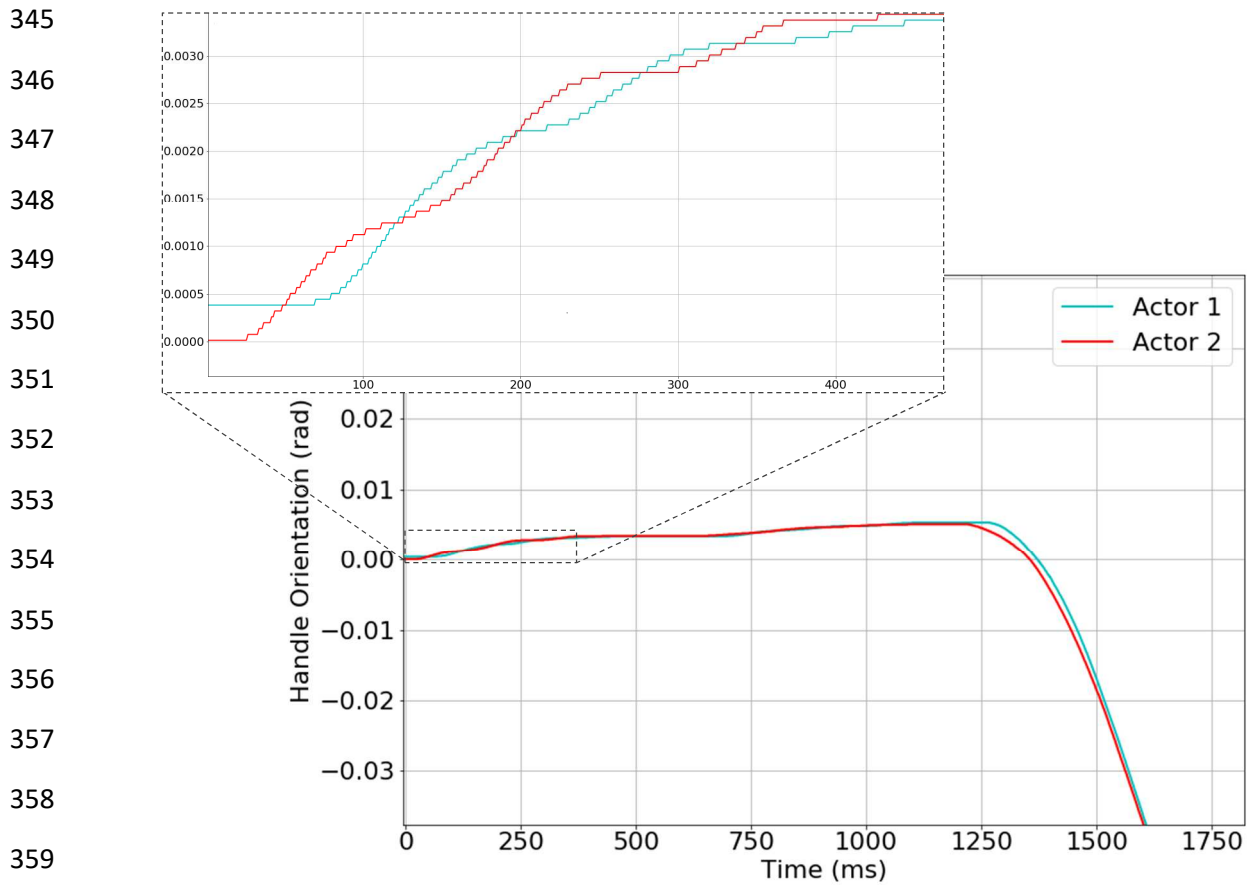
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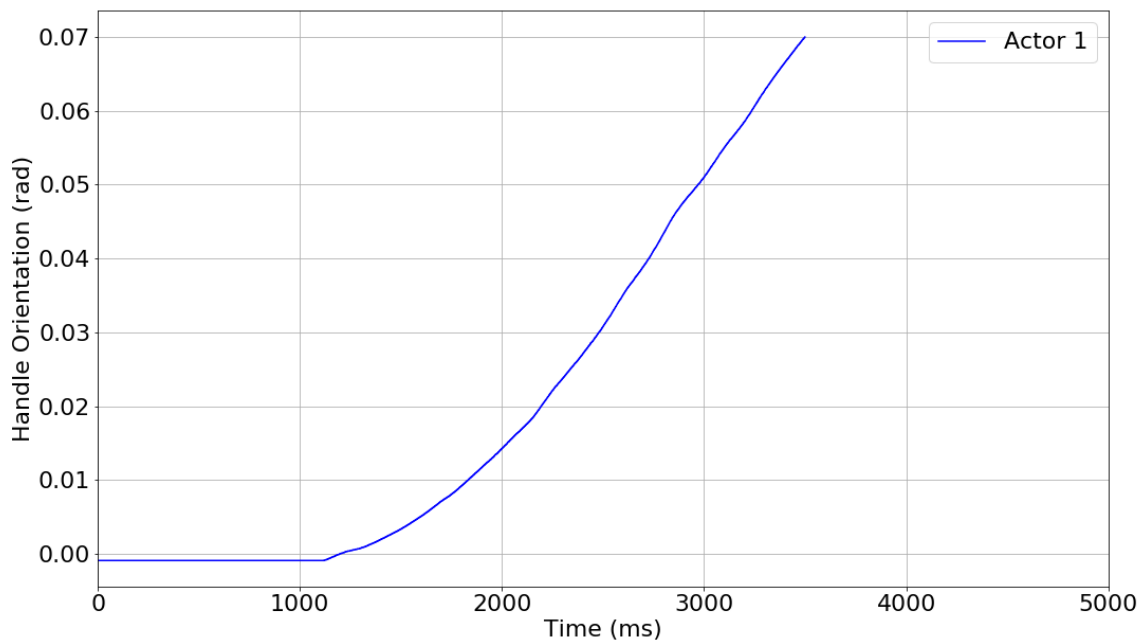
343

344

Figure 6 shows exemplar plots of the movement trajectories to provide readers with visual illustrations of the differences between the human-human and human-robot conditions. The plot in the human-human condition was zoomed at the point of time when the pair of participants started to move in a specific direction. This zoom shows how one co-actor initiated the move, waited for the other to catch up, was overtaken by the latter, had to catch up and so forth. Then, they eventually decided to change direction and moved together in the opposite direction from the one they had started with.



359



360 *Figure 6: Trajectories of the handles during a trial where the Y-axis represents the angle orientation. Positive angles are*  
 361 *rightward turns. Top: a human-human trial where actor 2 was the initiator. The handles were first turned rightwards and*  
 362 *eventually leftwards. The beginning of the joint action was zoomed. This zoom shows how actor 2 started to turn rightward,*  
 363 *and then waited for actor 1; actor 1 overtook actor 2, who had to catch up and so forth. Eventually, the two co-actors*  
 364 *changed direction and turned leftward together until they reached the stopper. Bottom: a human-robot trial where the*  
 365 *human participant was the initiator (as the robot partner controlled the same handle as her/him, only one trajectory was*  
 366 *represented). The handle was turned rightwards and did not change direction.*

## 368 4. Discussion

369 The present experiment showed a dissociation between the explicit agency judgment and the  
370 implicit IB measure. Dewey and Knoblich (2014) had previously reported a lack of correlation  
371 between these measures, but without specifying what differences there were between the  
372 underlying cognitive mechanisms that these measures tapped into. Our experimental design created  
373 a contrast between what participants were drawn to believe about their partner and her/his true  
374 nature. Except for one participant who was excluded, the change in kinesthetic/tactile reafferences  
375 yielded by the robot did not prompt them to revise their belief in the cover story when they were  
376 debriefed. Despite being unaware that their partner had changed, participants judged their  
377 contribution to the action-effect as higher when they were paired with the robot, while IB occurred  
378 only with the human partner and not the robot. This suggests that agency judgments and IB were  
379 attuned to the kinesthetic/tactile reafferences rather than to participants' belief, and that they  
380 varied in opposite directions. Such an interpretation is in line with the idea that IB is more closely  
381 linked to sensorimotor processes than agency judgments that are also influenced by contextual cues  
382 and reflective thinking (Synofzik et al., 2008). The estimation of interval duration used to assess IB  
383 was significantly higher for the longer delay than the shorter one, which lends support to  
384 participants' compliance with the task. Participants' tendency to rate time intervals differently in the  
385 joint action condition compared to the baseline may be explained by the graphical interface of the  
386 Likert scale. Indeed, when the Likert scale was displayed on the screen, the cursor was initially placed  
387 in the middle of the scale. As the task demands were higher in the joint action condition compared to  
388 the baseline, which was similar to the training block, participants may have tended to hesitate more  
389 in the joint action condition due to increased workload and not move the cursor as far from its initial  
390 position than in the baseline condition. This would explain why ratings were closer to the middle of  
391 the scale in the joint action condition. Notwithstanding, the delay was not an effect of interest in the  
392 present study and was merely used as an adjustment factor in the analysis.

393 The lack of IB when participants performed joint actions with the robot brings additional evidence  
394 supporting the previous report by Obhi and Hall (2011b). In their study, however, participants did not  
395 feel their partner's action and merely received a feedback about who had acted first once the action-  
396 effect had occurred. The joint action with a computer was created by a belief manipulation and  
397 participants were actually performing an action alone. The approach of Obhi and Hall (2011b) was  
398 therefore purely top-down. By contrast, participants in our experiment believed they were acting  
399 with another human while in fact it was a robot that controlled the handle. We thus opted for a  
400 bottom-up approach where kinesthetic and tactile sensory reafferences were the only source of  
401 information about the change of partner. We nevertheless ended up with the same outcome as Obhi  
402 and Hall (2011b) that human-machine joint action suppresses IB.

403 At the explicit level, participants' agency judgment was also higher when they initiated joint action  
404 than when they followed it, whereas there was no such difference for IB. This dissociation between  
405 agency judgment and IB in joint action had also been pointed out by Obhi and Hall (2011a), although  
406 a limitation of their study was that their apparatus could not discriminate who had indeed initiated  
407 the action, and thus they could not ascertain that agency judgment reliably identified the initiator  
408 and follower. Our study shows that participants had a clear perception of whether they had initiated  
409 or followed the joint action and that IB was unaffected by who was the initiator. Hence, the "we-  
410 agency" hypothesis that posits a joint sense of agency for the two co-actors is consistent with our  
411 results for IB, but not for agency judgement. The "we-agency" construct should thus be regarded as  
412 relevant for the implicit level of the sense of agency, but not to the explicit level.

413 This dissociation between participants' agency judgment and IB brings about new insight regarding  
414 the notion of IB. First, our results suggest a weaker link between IB and the sense of agency than  
415 commonly reported in individual actions (Haggard, 2005). Indeed, IB decreased with the robot  
416 partner, even though participants were still producing action-effects and that their judgment of  
417 agency was actually higher than with the human partner. In addition, the initiator/follower roles  
418 endorsed by participants had an observable influence on participants' judgment of agency but not on  
419 IB. Second, the IB effect occurred only when participants were paired with a human being. Somehow,  
420 the underlying neurocognitive processes associated with IB were sensitive to the presence of the  
421 robot even though participants did not know about its existence.

422 Furthermore, when paired with the robot, participants did not display IB even when they initiated  
423 action and they initiated action less often. Although they received instructions to do so, participants  
424 had difficulties in balancing the initiator role with the robot partner. The nature of the partner thus  
425 influenced IB and turn-taking abilities. Although the robot could perform goal directed actions that  
426 simulated human movements, it did not have the ability to form an intention based on anything else  
427 than a randomly generated command. Neither was it endowed with the ability to communicate its  
428 intention by using its movements. By contrast, recent research suggests that human beings are able to  
429 convey information on their intention using body language during joint action (Gaziv, Noy, Liron, &  
430 Alon, 2017; Noy, Dekel, & Alon, 2011). We thus tentatively suggest that IB relies on mechanisms that  
431 detect intention in action, whether action is self-generated or generated by a partner. Hence, IB  
432 appears to be more of a marker of intentionality, as its name suggests, rather than of the sense of  
433 agency per se. Following this line of thought, we suggest that a "we-intentionality" hypothesis might  
434 be more relevant than the "we-agency" hypothesis.

435 One could argue that the lack of IB in the robot condition may be due to the lower percentage of  
436 initiator trials compared to follower trials. Such an argument is based on the premise that  
437 participants would not be agents to the same extent when they were following action than when  
438 they were initiating it. However, the initiator/follower roles were attributed a posteriori based on  
439 whether participants were the first to reach a force criterion. It did not mean that followers were  
440 passive or did not take part in the decision to act. Participants were actually asked to follow their  
441 partner when she/he initiated the action, which meant that followers had to actively turn their  
442 handle jointly with their partner. As a matter of fact, followers did show the IB effect when they were  
443 paired with a human partner. Figure 6 illustrates this point. It shows a zoom of an example of the  
444 trajectories of two co-actors when they started the action. One can see that the initiator began to  
445 turn the handle and waited for the follower to catch up. Then, the follower overtook the initiator  
446 who had to catch up and so forth until the two co-actors ended up changing direction. This example  
447 highlights how the follower could take an active part in the decision process. In addition, we  
448 performed a verification procedure to account for the imbalance between initiator and follower roles  
449 in the robot partner condition and the outcome of the analyses remained unchanged.

450 Movement data collected via the handles might shed light on why IB was suppressed when  
451 participants interacted with the robot. Interaction forces were higher and participants changed  
452 direction more often with the human partner than with the robot. Hence, there seems to have been  
453 some kind of standoff or negotiation taking place at the kinesthetic level between human co-actors  
454 that disappeared when the partner was a robot. This kinesthetic negotiation between co-actors  
455 might be crucial for IB to occur in the context of joint action. It could conceivably be instrumental in  
456 forming a joint intention that will enable IB. We tentatively suggest that it could facilitate  
457 communication of intention between partners. Incidentally, it could ease turn taking, which would  
458 explain why participants were better at balancing the initiator role when paired with a human being

459 than with the robot. More research in robotics is needed to model human-human kinesthetic joint  
460 action and the paradigm that we used here offers an adequate way to evaluate those models.

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525

## 527 Appendix

528 *Table 1 : Answers of participants to the questions of the debriefing interview. These answers were transcribed and*  
 529 *translated from French into English.*

Participant index number	Question 1: Do you have any comment about the experiment?	Question 2: Did you notice a difference between the two blocks where you interacted with your partner?	Question 3: In fact, you were interacting with a human partner in one block and with an automated artificial system in the other. Did you realize that?
1	Sometimes, we often disagreed. One of us started, the other one did not follow and finally we sometimes would run out of time. Well, only two or three times, otherwise it was ok. The white noise was tiring after a while.	No, I did not notice any differences	Not at all, but then, it's more straightforward because actually in block B [ed: human partner] we disagreed more often than in block A [ed: robot partner], so it's logical but, no, I did not realize it at all.
2	I do not know. I thought it was always the same time between the small click and the beep. Well, except in some cases when it changed. Otherwise, I believe it was fun.	Yes, maybe a bit, well, I had the impression that I felt more where she wanted to go in block B [ed: human partner]. I had the impression to be able to play more – between quotation marks – with her and know where she wanted to go when it was starting again each time. She was less shy at the beginning and she was going straight to the place.	No, well, no, no, well, I did not wonder, I did not ask myself this question actually.
3	I thought the noise was disturbing.	She was doing more in the second block [ed: human partner].	No
4	No, not really. But then, I still do not understand the purpose of the experiment. But I find it interesting. We want to know; we want to go deeper. Because, after a while, we know what we are doing but we do not know the goal of the experiment. We believe things and then we are waiting for an answer. And then, no, I have nothing to say.	I felt that as we got used, but without really being aware of it, I have the impression, that, we tried to be synchronized to the best. I mean that in block A [ed: human partner] there was really a difference and we tried to think in the same way on the handle's level.	No, not at all.
5	The noise, it's not super nice. It gets tiring to do all those repetitions. That's all.	Yes, well during block A [ed : robot partner] I did not feel her and in block B [ed : human partner] I felt her	No, no
6	Yes, actually, in this part, after we act, there are two choices, that is, estimating the duration between the stopper and the sound and then estimating responsibility. I think that the longer I evaluated the duration to be, the lesser I felt responsibility.	No	I didn't know.
7	Nothing particular	Yes, I felt that there was more emptiness in block A [ed : robot partner] whereas in block B he had a tendency to take the lead and I was	For the second block, I knew it was my partner. For the first block, as there weren't a lot of

		following. And in block A, I was taking the lead. I felt that. Otherwise, I felt that he was doing more of the opposite of what I was doing when he was pulling to the left for instance, I tended to pull in the opposite direction.	conflicts, it's not a big surprise.
8	We lose track of time a bit, especially when time has to be evaluated. I had the impression that when the sound came faster, I would rate each of us as 50/50. I had the impression that when we were more together, the time was shorter. I noticed that I would often move the two gauges similarly. I mean... well... or the opposite, the longer it was, the more I felt he was leading.	I had the impression that on the 1st block [ed : human partner], he was always going to the right and I did not make the same comment to myself about block 2 [ed : robot partner].	No, I did not suspect that at all.
9	Not right now. It's true that it was a bit repetitive. In the beginning, I wasn't sure I understood the instructions and what was expected from me. Then it was ok. The first phase of the experiment was useful to actually understand what was expected in terms of instructions.	I do not know. It's complicated, because in block A [ed : human partner] there was a phase where I wondered if it was really my partner that I felt in terms of coordination of movements or if it was just my own influence. And in block A [ed : human partner], I was more focused and in the second phase of block B [ed : robot partner] I was maybe more confident of the fact that he was the one moving. But, I was maybe a bit more tired, so, all in all, I am not sure that my impression was really relevant.	No. The only thing is that I had the impression that my human partner was allowing me to be in charge more often in block B [ed : robot partner], but I would not have been able to guess if I hadn't been told that it was not him. I did not have a different feeling or a feeling that could have hinted me that it wasn't him.
10	Nothing	No	No
11	Not really. Well, actually, I did not really have the impression of feeling what he was doing on the handle. Sometimes, I felt it clearly and sometimes I had an impression as if his finger was not placed on it.	Yes, in block B [ed: human partner], I had a better sense of what he was doing and also I had the impression that he was taking the initiative more often. In block A [ed: robot partner] I did not feel the same. I felt he was cooperating more. I first felt a force and then it would go in the same direction as me.	No, no idea, not at all.
12	Well, I find that estimating time is difficult. Mainly, this is what I found was not easy to find.	Not really. Sometimes, I felt like she wasn't following me or that I was moving alone in block A [ed: human partner] mostly, a little less in block B [ed: robot partner].	No, no, no.
13	I think that the noise... Well, then, it might just be me, because I rarely listen to music with headphones.	Yes, enormous. Sometimes in block B [ed: robot partner] I felt like there was nothing anymore on the other side. In block A [ed: human partner], I felt that she was very quick. I was sometimes waiting in block B and I had the impression that the	I was wondering. It wasn't quick enough for my partner. She was super quick.

		movement came after a few seconds but slowly, not at all like during the other block.	
14	For the two experiments that lasted more than 20 minutes, I would say that from the middle onwards my concentration was often less important than at the beginning. I could not concentrate on the two elements, that is, on the duration and whether it was really me who initiated the movement or not. However, when only duration had to be estimated, then I felt more comfortable, for instance.	I thought the feedback or the feeling was less important in block B [ed : human partner], whereas it was quicker in block A [ed : robot partner].	Well, I was puzzled sometimes as the movement was so fast on block A that it wasn't possible to respond so fast. But I wasn't focused on it.
15	No that's it. Difficult to concentrate on the long run. Well, after some time I felt tired. This is why I had the impression of not being as concentrated. That's all.	No, not really. He was maybe hesitating more in the second block [ed: human partner], but I'm not sure. And rarely, but sometimes, he was going against my direction, even though the instructions required to go in the same direction.	No, not at all.
16	The only thing is related to the sound system. Regarding the exercise and the experiment itself, the training is not adequate. I found it harder when we did the combined experiment together than during training. Apart from that, it's ok.	She was less passive in block B [ed: robot partner].	Seriously! I didn't realize at all.
17	I think I noticed something: When we were together and we had to concentrate on following the other or not, I found that the time between arriving at the end and the beep was shorter. It never went very far. Well I think, just that.	The effort that I was applying on the device was greater in the first case [ed: human partner] than in the second [ed: robot partner]. I thought it was freer as if she was always following me. In the second block [ed: robot partner], it was more fluent, there was less resistance.	No, I did not notice.
18	No. Tiredness is annoying. I had the impression that the effect was the opposite of what was expected. If the goal is that we would become more and more synchronous, then the exact opposite happened.	Yes, in the B [ed: robot partner], he was slower.	No, but I felt there was a change in the person in front of me.
19	I had the impression that I was always the one to choose whether the sound was high or low. Even when my partner decided to go toward the high pitch sound, if I decided to go for the low, I went back to the low.	For me, there wasn't really any difference, but I felt that in block B [ed: human partner] we bickered more, whereas in block A [ed: robot partner] it was more monotonous.	No, even if I nevertheless felt a difference between the two.
20	I was less able to focus on the sound. I preferred focusing on the distribution of reactions rather than the sound. Therefore, I was more concentrated on this. Then, I wonder how this will be useful for you.	I thought that in block B [ed : human partner], she tended to take the lead more and move in one shot. In block B [ed : human partner], I felt the sound came later.	No, I don't think I could have guessed who was who.
21	No	Yes, I felt that we were often not parallel. Sometimes in block B [ed: robot partner], we felt that one of us was going on one side while the other was going the other way.	Not at all.

22	Not really. Well, the part with the sound was more complicated. This is the thing where it was the hardest for me to really give the right one.	Yes, in block A [ed: robot partner] I was leading whereas in block B [ed: human partner] my partner was the one leading more.	No, not at all. Well, at the end, I thought it was weird that at the end of block A [ed: robot partner], it was always me leading. I thought she was sleeping or what.
23	It becomes more and more difficult to perceive the time scales. I was thinking about a clock. I imagined the clock hand. Truly, when it happens like that. I think that I didn't estimate as well at the end. Then, regarding the finger, I think that following or generating the movement changes our perception of the noise.	Yes, in block B [ed: human partner], she was quicker, whereas in block A [ed: robot partner] it would take a second before she reacted.	No, I did not suspect that, but it makes sense.
24	During the first part, I was leading. In the second part, I noticed that, even if I didn't put my hand, it moved. Especially in the second part, when I was responding, as soon as I took a little bit of time to adjust, he would take over.	Yes, in block B [ed: human partner] I collaborated better with the person than in block A [ed: robot partner]. In block A [ed: robot partner], I was almost always taking the decision and I think he was just complying.	No.
25	It was mostly when we had our finger on the handle, when we had to reach the stopper, at the beginning, it was not very easy to differentiate whether the other participant or myself was going in one direction or the other. As the experiment continued, it became clearer and clearer that he was pushing in one direction or that I was pushing in one direction. I do not know if this is because he started pushing more rapidly or with more conviction.	Yes, sometimes there were hesitations on who was going to go toward one side or the other. So I had the impression to push harder. Because sometimes when he was pushing harder, I felt that I wasn't the one pushing, so I could figure out if I was going in one direction or if he was. There were even two or three times when I tried to go in one direction and he directly said "no, we're going in the other direction". So that was clear. That was in block B [ed: robot partner].	No, I was just wondering why my partner had changed the way he thought.
26*	I thought maybe the frequency of the sounds influenced me. Because, maybe you wanted to see what influence the frequency had. What I wanted to know was if it was maybe not my partner that was moving but if it was really the machine. Actually, I wanted to know if I was being manipulated. Maybe I'm talking nonsense. I figured you had something planned. I was led to believe that my partner was the one who was doing this. But, actually, no, it was the machine that was doing that. For a while, I thought it often went to the right. I figured it wasn't possible. Always going to the right is necessarily something that is quite embarrassing. I wanted to know if it was the machine that was making the movement or if it was really my partner.	Partner? That's still the question. Was it my partner or was it the machine?	Well, I asked that question to myself after a while.

530 \* Excluded participant

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