

GROUP THINKING

Raimo Tuomela

University of Helsinki and University of Munich

I Sociality, the We-mode, and the I-mode

Humans are social beings living and adapted to living in groups, indeed, to functioning in several different groups during their lives. My general underlying assumption, indeed a commonplace fact, which gives ontological grounding for the motivation of human sociality is this: Human beings need, and tend to desire, to live in orderly groups for enhancing the well-being of their members. This need, involving as an obvious consequence also the need to be recognized and respected by others, motivates people to seek institutional and other collectively satisfactory solutions to collective action dilemmas, viz. dilemmas where individual and collective interests are in conflict. While all humans may be taken to have the mentioned need, not all of them do obey the created social order, viz. social rules and norms (including fairness norms), precisely because of their opposing, often selfish desires and perhaps their desires to distinguish themselves and be different from others. Yet, orderly group life on a local, as well as on a global, level is a must in a world of growing dependence between peoples and, indeed, despite some free-riding and non-cooperation, human groups tend to succeed in maintaining social order. I claim below that this is due not so much to e.g. altruism towards others or their other prosocial motivation as to their group-based motivation and commitments, i.e. the authoritative reasons their memberships in their social groups give them for their action that promotes the group's interests. They are thus typically disposed to think in terms of "we", their group, and to act for the benefit of the group, where the group's views and attitudes give them a reason to act so.

I distinguish between two kinds of "we-thinking" and accordingly two kinds of collective intentionality: we-mode and (pro-group) I-mode collective intentionality. Building on the above motivational idea, I will argue that "we-thinking" and collective intentionality in its full, "we-mode" sense forms the core of human sociality and indeed takes better into account the above main motivational idea than individualistic thinking or "I-mode" thinking (including thinking taking into account the group) and acting. In game-theoretical contexts we-thinking (both the we-mode and the progroup I-mode kind) is also capable of resolving collective action dilemmas that standard game theory seems not to be able to resolve.¹

The we-mode approach is based on the intuitive idea that the acting agent in central group contexts is the group viewed as an agent, and the individual agent is not the primary actor but rather a representative acting for the group. To go into some detail, according to our intuitive view the group can be regarded as an agent from a conceptual and justificatory point of view, but ontologically it exists only as a social system, not as an agent, and it can only function through its members' functioning appropriately.² The ontological and causal work is done by the members' actions and joint actions and what these produce. My conceptually and psychologically holistic starting point is simply that there is a group (an instrumentally viewed agent) that is the intentional—but not the ontological—subject of attitudes and actions attributable to it. The group, which is assumed to be a “we-mode group” in my terminology, is assumed to commit itself to a group “ethos” (certain constitutive goals, beliefs, standards, norms, etc.) and to acting accordingly.³ This intuitive picture can be explicated for the group-member level and seen to involve three central ideas to be called “authoritative group reason,” the “collectivity condition,” and “collective commitment” (see below). In contrast, in the I-mode case the individual is the sole acting agent. This is a crucial difference, which my we-mode approach tries to make sufficiently clear and ontologically palatable.

Translated into the group-member level the above holistic view gives this: The group members function as group members as if they were cogs in a machine, viz. the group agent capable of action. Because of this, the group's ethos, as a central “jointness” element assumed to be (extensively) accepted by the group members, gives them their central reason for acting as group members. The reason is an authoritative one if the group members themselves have participated in the creation of the ethos by their collective acceptance.⁴ Similarly, because of being members of a group (qua agent), the group members will necessarily “be in the same boat” when acting as group members. This will be explicated by the collectivity condition, the satisfaction of which comes about through the members' collective commitment to the ethos and action on the basis of this commitment.

The we-mode group's commitment to its ethos basically amounts to the members' collective commitment to it. Here the conceptual starting point is the group's accepting an ethos with commitment to its satisfaction and maintenance.⁵ On the group-member level, this amounts to the group members' performative collective acceptance (indeed, collective construction) of an ethos (e.g. a goal) as the group's ethos (goal) to which they collectively commit themselves, where collective commitment accordingly is “reasoned” by the group commitment and where collective commitment also involves the members' being directedly socially committed to each other to functioning as group members, typically to furthering and maintaining the ethos.⁶ We-mode thinking, “emoting”, and acting accordingly presuppose reflexive collective acceptance (“construction”) of the group's ethos and often also of some other, nonconstitutive content as the object of the group's attitudes. The collectively accepted contents must be taken to be for the benefit and use of the group. In all, the members' are taken to view and “construct” their (we-mode) group as an entity guiding their lives

when their group membership is salient, and it also requires them to function as ethos-obeying and ethos-furthering group members thus as “one agent.”

To recapitulate, the we-mode is taken to involve the notion of a social group in a strong sense involving the strongly interconnected features of an (*authoritative*) *group reason*, *collective commitment* of the members to the group’s reason-giving ethos (reflecting, as we may say, the group’s commitment to its ethos) and the resulting group uniformity making the *collectivity condition* satisfied on the member level. See Sections II, III, and IV for these notions.

II Group Reason

A group reason is a reason based on what the group believes, intends, wants, and what it conceptually constructs (accepts) for itself, etc.. Group attitudes are basically understood in terms of what the group members jointly believe, intend, want, and what they collectively construct for the group.⁷ In general, group reasons are publicly available to group members. A we-mode group may accept leaders who are authorized to give orders and directives, thus reasons to act, to the members. The conceptual direction in the we-mode is typically *top down*, viz. group level to member level, whereas in the I-mode the conceptual direction is *bottom up*, viz. from the member level to the group level.⁸

Acting as a group member in a we-mode group is based on what the group decides, orders, or requires (etc.). Here the group members give some of their “natural” authority to act to the group. The group members form (we-mode) attitudes for their group by constructive collective acceptance. Examples are given by “We will build a bridge together as a group” (group intention), “We believe that stars determine our fate,” or “We believe that euros are our money” (group beliefs). Such attitudes can serve as group reasons. Thus, that the group believes or intends—or, equivalently, given the strong “we,” that we believe or intend something—can serve as a group member’s reason to act in appropriate ways amounting to his part of the group’s action. For example, in the case of the joint action of painting a house the chain of justification is from a group’s intention to paint the house to the members’ joint intention to see to it that the house gets painted by them *in toto*. In this sense group reason requires acting at least partly for the group. The joint intention normally justifies each member’s intention to perform his part and also his performing it.⁹

An important divide here is between a group thinking and acting as one agent (we-mode group) versus some agents acting and interacting, perhaps in concert, in pursuit of their (possibly shared) private goals (I-mode group). Group reasons (we-mode reasons) and private or I-mode reasons for acting and having attitudes thus are different in kind, and the group level (containing group reasons) is not reducible to and might not be even supervenient on the private, I-mode level. Only the we-mode can properly account for the generality that the group level involves relative to group members (think

of fluctuating membership, the historical dimension of the group, the stability of attitudes that e.g. helps to make group responsibility possible) and the kind of (partial) depersonalization that group life involves.

In the I-mode case some people can agree to build a bridge together but still function as private persons in the sense that their private desires and beliefs are decisive—while they can accept e.g. compromises, etc. Individual rationality basically guides their activities although also moral considerations may get involved. Their “collective commitment” is different from the we-mode case, as it is not necessarily based on functioning for the benefit of the group but rather at least normally in part for their private individual benefit. Group-based reasons, goals, utilities, beliefs, norms, etc. can be involved but only in the sense based on private acceptance (which does not amount to we-mode collective construction, see Section V).

III Collective Commitment

To elaborate the notion of collective commitment, in order for a group member to act as a group member, she must be required to be committed (bound, typically voluntarily) to performing actions that further the group’s ethos and other matters that the group is pursuing. Indeed, the members should be collectively committed, viz., committed as group members and in the we-mode sense, to participating in group activities. This can be justified in terms of its being an entailment of group membership and the assumption that the group is relevantly committed.¹⁰ The group’s commitment to a goal, for instance, translates into the members’ collective commitment to it, and this entails that they are together committed in a group-based sense to the goal and, especially, to its satisfaction. It is also entailed that they are normatively, in a group-based sense committed to each other to perform their parts of the members’ attempts to achieve the goal for the group. This can be called directed group-social commitment. The collective commitment here thus is essentially a group-involving idea, and it also entails that a group member in general cannot give up her commitment to a joint project without the group’s consent.¹¹

Consider the example where the members’ group reason, a group goal, in a we-mode group is represented by “G is our, viz. our group’s, goal”. This involves the members’ having and sharing goal G as their group’s goal and their being collectively committed to it. The group goal is one that they have jointly chosen for their group, or one that the leaders (“operative” members or group-authorized representatives) have decided upon, or perhaps a goal that the group has accepted and codified to be its goal a long time, e.g. a century ago, but accepted as a goal also by the present members. Their being collectively committed to G amounts, roughly, to saying that ideally each

member has bound herself to the members' seeing to it jointly that G will be satisfied, given normal conditions, and that each member is prepared to do his share of the group's achieving G and being committed to the others to do his share.

Two basic features that distinguish collective commitment from collective or "aggregated" private commitments in the I-mode case are these:

(i) We-mode collective commitment is derived from a group reason (recall the top-down feature of the we-mode).

(ii) Qua being based on the group's commitment, a member cannot give it up without other group members' consent. This is because it is a ground principle that both on conceptual and functional grounds all the group members ought to be collectively committed when the group is committed to some content p—where the group's commitment is based on its intending to bring about p or to uphold p, depending on the case.

Commitment here needs to be normative only in a "technical" sense relating to the case of an agent's having intentionally adopted a goal. The members accordingly are committed in the meant technical sense to doing whatever they reasonably can to achieve the goal. They ought to perform the requires means actions, but here "ought" only means technical normativity, not proper normativity.¹²

Collective commitment has two basic, intertwined roles. First, it strongly "glues" the members together around an ethos. This serves as a partial ground for the unity and identity of the group.¹³ Secondly, collective commitment serves to give joint authority to the group members to pursue ethos-related action. They can and must in their own thinking and acting take into account that the group members are collectively committed to the group ethos and to the group members and that they are jointly responsible for furthering the ethos. Every group member is accountable not only to himself for his participatory action but also to the other members. All this shows how group unity (and "identity," if you like) as formed by collective commitment to the ethos relates to action as a group member.

Functioning as a group member is clearly different from functioning as a private person, viz. in the I-mode, even in cases where group reasons become involved. The I-mode is concerned only with private personal and interpersonal reasons and relations as well as with groups involving such ingredients. In the case of I-mode groups the members can in an "interindividual" sense e.g. jointly

paint a house on the basis of their shared intention to do it. They can also have representatives or delegates for them. In this case a group member, in principle, is fully in charge of whatever she undertakes, although she and the others can still agree (in an I-mode sense) to delegate group tasks to some members. Group reasons in a weak sense (directly reductively based on the members' private reasons in contrast to the we-mode case based on the group's beliefs or goals or normative commitments, etc.) may contingently be involved. When they are, we are dealing with I-mode collective intentionality, viz. with the *pro-group I-mode*.¹⁴ Shared attitudes had and shared as a private person represent I-mode collective intentionality (in contrast to core or we-mode collective intentionality).

People sharing an interest or being in other ways interdependent can come to believe that they form a kind of group, although this kind of group, an I-mode group, in contrast to the we-mode case, is not based on their having reflexively and “performatively” constructed it as their group, as the group it is for them.¹⁵ While mental group entification is possible in the I-mode case, it need not exist, while in the we-mode case group entification is entailed. In the we-mode case, in contrast to the I-mode case, the collective construction is based on constitutive collective acceptance of an ethos content involving the members' collective commitment to it, and other group entities such as goals or beliefs are analogously collectively constructed.¹⁶ If the members' act together in the I-mode case they must act in part for the shared group goal that their privately shared goals in a broad aggregative sense (but interdependently) constitute. Here we are dealing with a (pro-group) I-mode group. Both the members of we-mode groups and those of I-mode groups can reason in terms of a “we.” But, in contrast to the I-mode case, the “we” is thick and also collectively constructed (with the entailed collective commitment) in the we-mode case. This indicates why e.g. lifting a table jointly in the we-mode sense is different and stronger than lifting it in the I-mode sense: it is based on a thick “we” (we-mode social group) and the members' construction of the joint action from the group's point of view as the group's action.

Examples of joint activities are jointly painting a house, lifting a table, singing a song together, and collectively constructing a social institution. Most joint action types, like lifting a table together can be performed in the I-mode and in the we-mode, although each token of table lifting is either an I-mode action or a we-mode action (but not both). In the case of I-mode joint action the participants can normally be assumed to intend roughly in the way “I intend that we do something X (e.g. lift a table) together and I will perform a relevant part of this jointly performed action X.” Here doing X together amounts to each participant doing his part because of his private goal (e.g. to get the table jointly lifted and to participate in the joint lifting of the table) as a private person but with the understanding of the dependencies in question. The participants need not view or “construct” the situation as their group's (“our”) doing something, as is the case in a reflective we-mode performance of the action. In the we-mode case the participants see themselves as a group that is acting as a unit, trying to see to it

that a certain jointly intended outcome will be realized. They participate for a group reason (e.g. the group intention) that recommends or demands a certain action for the benefit of the group. They are collectively committed to the action—because of their joint intention based on or derived from the group reason. In the I-mode case the participants are not similarly collectively committed and do not mutually view and collectively construct themselves as acting as a group. Rather they view themselves as an “aggregate” of interdependent individuals and intend to achieve a certain result on the basis of their private personal (and e.g. promise-based) commitments to the joint task at hand. In the pro-group I-mode case they intend the result to be at least in part for the use of their group, too.

IV Group Action and the Collectivity Condition

It is often useful to view a group as an agent capable of acting as a unit. This was already done above. Thus a group can be taken to accept views, form intentions, act, and be responsible. However, it is not an extra agent over and above the group members. When a group acts, its members must act as group members. One can thus redescribe the group’s functioning and acting at the group member level, in terms of the group members’ functioning in appropriate ways as group members. This is basically we-mode activity. It follows from the idea of a group acting or functioning as one agent that the members ought to function in line with this. They can be said to be necessarily “in the same boat.” Here the (strong) *collectivity condition* is satisfied. Formulated for the special case of goal satisfaction it necessarily connects the members as follows: Necessarily (as based on the group members’ reflexive construction of a goal as its goal), the goal is satisfied for a member if and only if it is satisfied for all (other) members.¹⁷ Thus, if you and I have the goal to go to Alfonso’s for lunch, this goal as a jointly accepted we-mode goal is satisfied for me only if we both go to Alfonso’s (and similarly for you). However, if the goal is had by us as a plain I-mode goal, it becomes satisfied for me if I go to Alfonso’s—irrespective of what you do.

Yet, in the pro-group I-mode case with privately shared goals a weak kind of collectivity condition will be satisfied. For example, some persons may happen to share a (private) goal or intention where the goal or intention requires all the participants’ contribution. Then, when the goal is satisfied for them, it is satisfied on contingent grounds—in contrast to the conceptual (or quasi-conceptual grounds (viz. on the basis of the participants’ collective construction) in the we-mode case. In the I-mode case the participants act as autonomous agents and it is a contingent matter if they continue in a joint project. So, if an I-mode group succeeds in building a bridge, the goal is not satisfied for those members who gave up the project. Also, consider the case of you and me both sharing the goal to go the movies given that the other one goes or perhaps the goal to go to the movies in the company of each other but still not as a group. This is an I-mode case in which the goal can be expressed (in my case) by “I have the goal that I go to the movies with you.” Then, if I do go to the

movies with you this goal is satisfied for me, and the analogous remark applies to you given that you do go to the movies with me (already assumed in the case of my goal getting satisfied). Your goal and my goal are interdependent and can only be satisfied together in the interdependence sense. Thus a kind of collectivity condition based on contingent matters is satisfied here (see below). This collectivity condition is not based on the assumption that our private goals are goals of a we-mode group that we might have formed here (but didn't). We did not collectively construct the goal as our group's goal that the group satisfies by its action (by you and me going to the movies together as a group). Suppose there would have been a third agent who also was part of our group, now assumed to be a we-mode group, The Movie Group. This third agent actually could not come with us to the movies, and we accepted his reason as a valid excuse. Still, The Movie Group went to the movies even if not all its members did and satisfied its goal "The Movie Group will go to the movies tonight." This goal was satisfied for all of its three members, and the strong collectivity condition is satisfied here. In the corresponding I-mode case the absent member's goal to go to the movies with the others would not have been satisfied.

In general, I-mode cases can be made more complex by taking representatives and delegates of agents into account, but the point is that there will yet be no a priori giving away of part of one's authority to act to the group and thus no conceptual connecting of agents to the group in such cases in the sense directly analogous to the we-mode case. Notice that in the I-mode case a kind of contingent collectivity condition can be present. To illustrate the matter in terms of the movie case, I could get tickets for the two of us (i) for my own sake, (ii) for your sake, (iii) for your and my sake, or (iv) for the group's sake. Here the I-mode group is of course one formed by the two of us and conceptualized in group terminology rather than speaking merely of you and me. As all the possibilities (i) – (iv) are available in the I-mode in general, but in the pro-group I-mode case only (ii) – (iv) fully qualify as some progrouppness obviously is required. The point is that it thus is a *contingent* matter what the agents choose. In the we-mode case the agents *necessarily* function at least in part for their we-mode group. Notice also that in the I-mode case the "group reason" and the pro-grouppness it entails is much weaker as the we-mode requirements of strong authoritative group reason, the satisfaction of the collectivity condition, and collective commitment fail to be there.

It can be noted that in the I-mode case the goals and intention in typical cases are not unconditional—because private rationality may prevent it (as it does e.g. in the case of collective action dilemmas such as the Prisoner's Dilemma). Thus from a rational point of view, the promises and agreements in the (pro-group) I-mode case will typically be conditional on others' actions or perhaps action promises (or the like). In contrast, the we-mode is based on the presupposition (not condition in the ordinary sense) that sufficiently many will participate or something of the kind. Such a presupposition is a kind of default condition on which the members act on the ground of being group members, but it is not an ordinary condition such as "given that the others act in a certain

specific way” or “given that the weather is fine”. This presupposition is entailed by a version of the collectivity condition that covers acting as a group member—very roughly, the idea is that a member cannot act as a group member unless others also do.¹⁸

Let us still consider the central differences between acting in the we-mode and acting in the pro-group I-mode from the point of view of the subjects’ “phenomenology.” The basic feature in the case of we-modes is that they think in group terms and view the group entitatively as a collective agent. They also view the external social situations they face from the full we-perspective and not from the I-perspective in the first place. In the we-mode case a participant thus has a belief to the effect that he is acting for an authoritative group reason and participates in the members’ collective commitment to acting for it and its relevant consequences. This takes place under conditions in which the participants’ relevant belief related to the strong collectivity condition is expressible by “we are in the same boat in virtue of our having collectively constructed the situation so to be in it.” The phrase “to the effect that” above is meant to indicate that the participants’ ways of conceptualizing and verbalizing the situation may take place in their idiosyncratic ways. In the pro-group I-mode case the participants’ relevant shared (private) beliefs, not proper group beliefs, and their commitments are “thinner.” They do take themselves to be acting at least in part for their group in terms of their shared private beliefs about which there often is (and sometimes on functional grounds has to be) mutual knowledge. They are only privately committed to act for the reason, because the “group reason” here is based on their private choice and, furthermore, has no group authority for them, whereas in the we-mode case the members have given part of their authority to the group and thereby bound themselves to act for an authoritative group reason. The “I-modes” thus have much more social or group-based freedom to give up participation in the joint task in question. Typically the private personal costs are decisive here—if they become “too big” relative to the private gains from achieving the intended outcome, they will give up. In the we-mode case there will be more persistence against giving up participation in an action because that in principle requires more group consultation and the disposition to subject oneself to stronger group sanctions than in the I-mode case.

V Collective Acceptance and Institutionalality

Many social (and especially “collective-social”) properties and notions are collectively man-made, and I will below focus on this kind of constructed sociality. There are two important features of the collective creation of some central aspects of the social world that previously have been emphasized in the literature. The first feature of conceptual relevance and import is that of the (collectively) *performative* and *constructive* character of many social notions such as that of an institution. Example: The collective acceptance of squirrel pelt as money by medieval Finns can be

understood to have entailed that for them squirrel pelt has the institutional status of money. The second is the *reflexive* nature of many social concepts. Example: Squirrel pelt is not money unless collectively accepted to be money. My account adds a third feature, a full-blown *group reason* that justifies the collective availability and *for-groupness* of collective social items.¹⁹ The group reason (hence for-groupness) requires that the members of the group in question (recurrently) *act as group members* and hence tend to respect and promote the ethos and are acting for the group. This shows that a social institution is a *group-level*, we-mode matter rather than an *individual-level*, I-mode matter. Indeed, if institutionality is understood in a wide sense, it can even be taken to amount to the we-mode.²⁰ Given this, institutional reality can be regarded as basically generated (and also as largely constituted) by we-mode groups and acting as a group member in them (although also I-mode activities take place in institutional contexts, but only in a nonconstitutive sense).

Typically, institutions are “collective responses” to human need satisfaction in a group, where disorder and collective action dilemmas would otherwise threaten the functioning of the collective in question. Social institutions, qua collective responses to collective action dilemmas tend to offer cooperative solutions to them and to create order both on the collective and the individual level (the latter by offering group reasons—we-mode reasons—for action). They also make new kinds of behaviors conceptually possible relative to the preinstitutional situation (cf. functioning as a professor).

We-mode collective acceptance creates, and is required for, institutional entities and practices and serves to create collective sociality.²¹ As for money—for example, in the medieval case of squirrel pelt being money among Finns—collective acceptance can be taken to have created it and to have been required. However, the group members must of course have had some understanding of what money in general is (that it is a medium of exchange and storage of value). While money might have come about due to a trial-and-error learning process, ultimately “performative” collective acceptance must have been in place for squirrel pelt to become money (*our* money for the group members, including also future members). As soon as the members ceased to collectively accept squirrel pelt as money, it lost its status and function as money. Squirrel pelt as money is a “token” institution depending on the “generic” institution money. Also money in the generic sense (money as an institutional predicate) is based on collective acceptance and thus construction.

Generally, at least some amount of we-mode collective acceptance is needed in the case of social institutions and institutional facts, because institutions are basically full-blown group phenomena: The participants share a “common fate,” and the collectivity condition must be satisfied. A distinction will here be drawn between full-blown content-constitutive and plain constitutive we-mode collective acceptance (construction). What will be called fully *content-constitutive* collective acceptance or construction is we-mode collective acceptance wherein also the *content* of collective acceptance is fully collectively constituted or constructed—this applies to purely institutional cases, like the squirrel pelt example in which the group members correctly take it to be entirely up to them to make squirrel pelt their money. Such full-blown constitutive we-mode collective acceptance of a content always has the world-to-mind direction of semantic fit (wmdf). In the squirrel pelt case, the constructed belief content, and the belief is made true simply by the group members’ treating squirrel pelt as money in their thoughts and activities. No input from the group-external world is relevant to the truth of the belief. It is the group members’ own activities that socially “validate” the belief and make it true for the group. This is what is meant by saying that group beliefs based on constitutive construction in the purely institutional case (where the content is being created) have the world-to-mind direction of fit—but they also have the mind-to-world direction of fit (for instance, the belief that squirrel pelt is money also represents the group fact that squirrel pelt is money). While the group members can fully validate the belief in the purely institutional case, this is not (at least fully) possible in the case of *stereotypic* and *dogmatic* group beliefs that at least partly concern the natural world but are still constitutive of the group’s mental state. An example is given by the belief that stars determine people’s fate. Here the group members incorrectly believe or take it to be the case that it is up to them to construct (the truth or satisfaction of) a content, as here—in contrast to the purely institutional case—there is an objective truth in the matter: stars do not determine people’s fate. Yet the group members can by their activities partly (but only partly) validate the belief—for example, by interpreting the horoscopes in a suitable way that seemingly concurs with reality. Here we are not dealing with content-constitutive construction, although the fact that the group believes thus and so does get constituted here.

The general form of purely constitutive collective acceptance thus is this: a group collectively accepts and constructs, in a truth-determining way, a content for the group with collective

commitment.²² This kind of thick, group-level collective acceptance (or construction) is not available in the corresponding I-mode cases, where only a kind of aggregative private acceptance of a content by the participants in suitable interdependence and knowledge conditions takes place. However, social institutions require collectively constructed contents with a special group status. To put the matter bluntly, social institutions in the full sense are a group-level rather than a private, individual-level matter. They can only be constructed by we-mode collective acceptance (construction). Group members' appropriate we-mode functioning can adequately take the group level into account. Functioning as a group member in the we-mode is the operative force here: it brings about the changes on the group level. The we-mode, in contrast to the I-mode, in principle involves *generality* and *interchangeability*. Generality means here that what is created for the group level holds for all members, including future ones, and interchangeability involves relevant disregard of individuality (hence possibly depersonalization and anonymity).

Constitution is conventional, in the sense that the group members could in principle have made something else their money, but here they did not. Due to this, we are here at bottom dealing with a case of pretending and make-believe (that something is the case), but as the pretense is socially shared, it will work. The performative element in this kind of institutional pretending can be highlighted by saying that here collective acceptance theoretically *could* have taken place by the members of the group declaring: "We, qua group members, hereby take squirrel pelt to be money in our group, with the understanding that money is a medium of exchange and storage of value." That squirrel pelt thus comes to count as money is a constitutive belief content—with the world-to-mind and also the mind-to-world direction of fit—g to all possible contexts in the group's realm of concern. This kind of collective performative speech act is my central theoretical model for explicating the *conceptually* central features of the social construction and maintenance of those parts of the social world that are taken by the participants to be up to them correctly to "decide" on and create. The "hereby" in the above declaration indicates the performative character of the involved speech act. The performative sentence is reflexive (as seen from the entailed "by *this very* declarative utterance") and self-validating for them, as discussed above. Of course, it is essential here that the group members follow up by the right kind of action (e.g., exchange involving squirrel pelts as money).²³

I will now discuss in more detail the collective acceptance account of social facts in relation to constitutive collective construction in a group (that was seen always to result in group-relative wmdf acceptance) and to (broad) institutionality. What the group members may—correctly or not—take to be up to them to construct includes cases of collective artifacts such as pure institutions (e.g., the squirrel pelt case with full content construction) but also such group-reflected facts as that the group has certain stereotypes and dogmas about the natural world—in these latter kinds of cases the world of course will have the ultimate say as to what is the case “out there” although the “sociological” group fact about the group’s normatively binding belief state itself still is something constituted by the group. The account to be given states a necessary and sufficient criterion for something being (or having been) actually accepted by the group in question from among the fact-expressing propositions that the group takes to be entirely up to it to correctly accept as true (or correctly assertable). In the purely institutional case, the account to be given makes the content collectively social, whereas in the case of “natural” group beliefs, only the belief state qua a kind of quasi-mental group state (but not its content as such) is made collectively social. The groups that will be concerned are groups that can act, in effect we-mode groups.

The collective acceptance account in the constitutive case covers social institutional contents such as the belief content that squirrel pelt is money and also some other constituted social facts (like facts concerning what attitudes a group has). It is based on the following general and important thesis elucidating collective sociality—equivalently, group-sociality—that a group constructs or creates.

Collective acceptance thesis (CAT): Proposition *s* is *collectively social* (or group-social) and expresses a collectively social or institutional state of affairs in a primary sense in a group *g* if and only if (a) the members of group *g* collectively accept *s* for the group, and (b) necessarily, they collectively accept *s* for *g* if and only if *s* is correctly assertable for the members of *g* functioning as group members.

Clause (a) requires strong collective acceptance that is intention-like in having the world-to-mind direction of fit (recall note 22). Like more usual kinds of joint intentions collective acceptance entails collective commitment, also here collective commitment is entailed. Furthermore, I have

argued in precise terms that collective acceptance in the sense of (CAT) entails the satisfaction of the (strong) collectivity condition.²⁴ We can thus see that the central ingredients of the we-mode (group reason, collective commitment, collectivity condition) are involved in the strong collective acceptance dealt with here. According to (b), collective acceptance entails “premissibility” and correct assertability of *s* for the group members when they act as group members; the necessary equivalence “if and only if” expresses both conceptual and metaphysical necessity. It is conceptual, as we are speaking of collectively constructed and constituted parts of reality, and it is metaphysical in a group-relative sense because the construction is basically “self-validating” if obeyed. What is thus constituted necessarily exists as a practice-involving fact for the group.

Clause (b) entails that a collectively social *s* is reflexive: for example, squirrel pelt is not money unless it is collectively accepted as money (the converse also holds). Thus collective sociality is intrinsically based on collective acceptance, which rationally entails common belief in the accepted content. (For example, the ethos of *g* is collectively constructed by the members.)

In logical terms, the CAT formula can be rendered as follows.

(CAT*) *s* is social (in a primary sense) in *g* if and only if
 $FG(CA(g, s)) \ \& \ FG(N(CA(g, s) \leftrightarrow s))$.

Here *N* stands for artifactual conceptual and metaphysical necessity (recall the above comment); $FG(CA(g, p))$ means that group *g* collectively accepts *p* for the group. Thus, if *s* is social, it will satisfy what comes after “if and only if” in (CAT*), and conversely. Condition $FG(p)$ entails that *p* is correctly assertable (thus premissible or true in a perspectival sense in the group) in *g* with a certain direction of fit based on its meaning or interpretation. *CA* must be a performative achievement-expressing notion, and “acceptance” is general enough to cover both the creation and upholding of *s* and has achievement conceptually built into it. Thus the equivalence in (CAT*) expresses a kind of conceptually necessary, and thus constitutive, connection. I will assume that FG distributes over necessary equivalence, equivalence that holds in all situations within the group’s realm of concern.²⁵

(CAT) also applies to the fact that a group believes thus and so (this can be expressed by *s* here).²⁶ When the group reflects on this matter it becomes institutional in the present sense.²⁷ Now

we have obtained the result that both purely institutional propositions (those whose truth is completely up to the group) and social stereotypes and dogmas viewed as mental states rather than as contents of mental states qualify as collectively social. In the mentioned kinds of stereotypes and dogmas, in contrast to the purely institutional beliefs, it is not up to the group correctly to decide about the truth of the contents.

The above “constructivist” account elucidates the distinction between what is and what is not up to the group members to make true or correctly assertable, and thus premisable, for the group members qua group members. Those and only those propositions that satisfy the analysis of (*CAT*) are in a constitutive sense social and express social (broadly institutional) artifacts. The thesis (*CAT*) applies both to generic institutions (e.g., to what money is) and to token institutions such as what is money in a group (recall the squirrel pelt example). In our example, the proposition “Squirrel pelt is money” (= *s*) qualifies as a (possibly idealized) actual case of a collectively social proposition among medieval Finns. It was collectively accepted for the group. Had it not been, it would at best have expressed a social state of affairs among some subgroup. Next, *s* satisfies the criteria that (a) it is necessarily collectively made and upheld, and (b) its collective acceptance entails its correct assertability or premisibility for *g*, and conversely. Thus *s* is premisable for the group members when acting as group members, and this kind of premisibility for *g* on metaphysical (and group-dependent) grounds entails collective acceptance in the case of any constructivistically social proposition *s*.

In our example, the connection between an object’s being a squirrel pelt and its being money can be regarded as ontologically significant, part of the ontology of the institution of money. It is the sociality (or institutionality) of *s* here that makes (*CAT*) satisfied. The thesis (*CAT*) elucidates the elements that go into collective construction and shows how exactly the sociality element functions in a group. Had *s* been a true “natural” statement such as “Grass is green,” it would potentially have been correctly assertable and premisable as such, but by itself such an *s* would not have entailed collective acceptance for the group and (*CAT*) would not have become satisfied.

The (*CAT*) account holds true equally well of leadership, marriage, property, financial, educational, and religious institutions (thus banks, universities, and churches as institutional

systems), and so on. We can also speak of derived sociality. Roughly, a fact-expressing proposition is collective-social (or broadly institutional) in a *derived* sense if it is not social in the above primary sense but *presupposes* for its truth (for the group) that there are some relevant true (for the group) propositions that are collective-social in the primary sense. For instance, sentences using “power,” “unemployment,” or “wealth” are, at least in some cases, candidates for constructively social sentences in the derived sense.

Many (nonconstructive) social propositions fail to satisfy (*CAT*) and may even fail to be social in the derived sense. Thus sentences expressing latent or unilateral social influence are social features of the social world that would *not*—and correctly so—be cases of even derivatively social features in the constructivist sense (not even when many agents are concerned). The same holds for “natural” emotions such as fear often are.²⁸

The above account indicates that (*CAT*) is applicable to all basic collective attitudes, namely, to the belief-family and the proattitude-family of concepts, which are directly relevant to constructivist collectivity. To put it as a slogan: *The only (full-blown) notion of collectivity in the social world that a theorist needs is that provided by (CAT).*

VI Group Thinking and Game Theory

The motivational assumption related to group belongingness that I started this paper with (see the very first paragraph of the paper) can be explicated as follows to show its relation to the we-mode—I-mode distinction. If individualistic thinking and acting were prevalent, individuals often could not cooperate at all (especially in single-shot cases). This is the case in collective action dilemmas involving the possibility of satisfying the participants’ shared (private) interests (preferences, desires) such as situations with the preference rankings of the Prisoner’s Dilemma (PD), Chicken, and the Hi-Lo coordination dilemma. The above group-belongingness assumption entails that people tend to seek solutions to their collective action dilemmas, usually by normative means. This is what the term “orderly” above refers to in it. The term “well-being” is taken broadly to mean well-functioning or optimal in more or less the Paretian sense (entailing that all individuals would at least eventually gain from cooperation). I claim that the best the participants can do is to adopt we-thinking (including we-mode interests as contrasted with I-mode ones) and we-acting at least in the above kinds of dilemmas and form a social group capable of acting as one agent. Indeed, the best theoretical account of cooperation can be argued to require the we-mode approach, thus looking at the problematic social

situations from the group's point of view.²⁹ This dynamic switch to group thinking, the “we-mode switch,” together with the Paretian assumption can be seen to lead to group-rational mutual cooperation in such common private interest games involving mutual interdependence as the PD and Chicken, to the High joint outcome in the Hi-Lo situation, and so on. In other words, it leads to optimal choice for the group and tends to enhance its members' well-being, *ceteris paribus*.³⁰ Especially interesting is the fact that even such a “nasty” conflict-involving structure as the PD is amenable to a group transformation. Here group thinking shows its power.³¹

Let me present some simple cases to illustrate my general claim about the importance and explanatory power of the we-mode approach. First we consider a two-person two-choice Prisoner's Dilemma (PD):

	C	D
C	3, 3	1, 4
D	4, 1	2, 2

In PD the CC joint outcome is Pareto optimal for the participants but this outcome is not a Nash equilibrium. The only equilibrium is given by DD, and D is also the dominant choice. Yet the we-mode approach—which adopts the group's perspective views the present situation as one in which the out-of-equilibrium joint outcome CC is to be preferred to DD by the group (consisting of the two participants) and thus chosen. When the group chooses CC, it is of course assumed that in such circumstances the group members acting as proper group members choose C (e.g. based on the intra-group norm that everyone ought to choose C in the present kind of circumstances), which results in mutual cooperation by the members. In some cases the members' we-mode (*viz.* their “personal” but non-private utilities derived from the group's utilities) can be assumed to be obtained from their private or I-mode utilities by a suitable averaged jointness transformation (based e.g. on summation or multiplication). Summation would give participants the averages 3 and 2 in the case of CC and DD, respectively, and 2,5 for the diagonal cells. There is no free-rider effect and incentive here. This kind of transformation is available also to a pro-group I-moder to make, but the we-mode approach is not committed to connecting we-mode utilities to I-mode utilities in this (or any other particular) way in the short term case—a group's utilities and well-being need not relate in such a simple fashion to its members' private utilities and well-being.

Consider next a simple Chicken game:

	C	D
C	3, 3	1, 4
D	4, 1	0, 0

Here DC and CD are equilibria. In our particular matrix CC is the most optimal outcome for the group if one views cooperativeness or acting similarly as being important or if a jointness transformation of I-mode utilities is used. Thus, the group will in such circumstances choose C over D and require that its members act accordingly. Here again, the we-mode recommends an out-of-equilibrium solution—in contrast to standard individualistic game theory.

Consider now an Assurance game:

	C	D
C	4, 4	1, 3
D	3, 1	2, 2

This game is cooperative in its basic nature, so to speak. However, it involves two equilibria, namely CC and DD, and thus it involves the choice between them. If the persons trust each other enough they will each choose C, but if they do not because of the risk of getting only 1 utile, they might each choose D. The we-mode approach entails trust as default and makes it easy for the group to decide to do C, each member doing CC.

A coordination situation that has been often discussed in recent literature is the Hi-Lo game:

	C	D
C	4, 4	0, 0
D	0, 0	1, 1

As has been noted many times over in the literature, standard individualistic choice theory cannot select between the two equilibria 4, 4 and 1, 1 although common sense clearly favors 4, 4, of course. The joint payoff dominance principle (a collective one), also available to the pro-group I-moder, does solve the game in favor of 4, 4. The we-mode approach also will end up with this Pareto optimal and group optimal alternative.

The upshot is that the we-mode approach is able to deal well with situations of interdependence (in the sense of interdependence between individualistic I-mode utilities) especially when they involve clear common interest and Pareto optimality. Pareto optimality actually is not required in the short term, but in the longer term it seems a good adequacy criterion for a well-functioning group: The group should try to improve the well-being of its members at least in the long run. The we-mode approach often recommends out-of-equilibrium choices from the point of view of the participants' I-mode utilities, but not from the point of view of their we-mode utilities. The we-mode approach that I have sketched here also explains in part the well-known fact that people tend to cooperate more in dilemma situations than standard individualistic rational choice theory predicts (when descriptively

interpreted). The explanation consists in the experimentally supported assumption that people indeed often act for we-mode reasons in collective action dilemmas.³²

One may ask more generally which of the modes works better in actual life and what kinds of arguments one can present for and against the we-mode and, respectively, the I-mode.³³ Here I will be particularly interested in comparing how the we-mode fares in comparison with the pro-group I-mode concerning the group's functionality. I have argued in my recent book in terms of an example that the we-mode will in some cases lead to cooperation in the sense of maximization of the members' (expected) we-mode utilities while maximization of the members' pro-group I-mode utilities leads to defection.³⁴

It is worth emphasizing that my approach has clear points of connection to the "team-reasoning" approach of Bacharach. A couple of brief comments will have to suffice here. First, Bacharach's approach is not a clear cut we-mode approach but rather it combines the we-mode and the pro-group I-mode approaches.³⁵ Secondly, and quite interestingly, one can show, by means of an adaptation of a mathematical game-theoretical theorem proved by Bacharach, that the pro-group I-mode and the we-mode do not entail quite the same equilibrium behaviors. This can be seen by comparing standard Bayesian games in which the players share the group's utility function (that each is trying to maximize individually) with games in which the players acting as a group try to maximize (expected) group utility in the we-mode sense (that is, by each selecting the best outcome in terms of group utility and then inferring their own part-actions). Even when the choices, utilities and the probabilities of the players acting for their own benefit instead of the group's benefit are the same, the resulting outcomes may differ since the former case admits Pareto-suboptimal equilibria that will not be equilibria in the we-mode case. To take a simple example, in the Hi-Lo game also the DD (or low-low) outcome will qualify as kind of fallback solution (equilibrium) in the individualistic Bayesian game but not in the we-mode game involving maximization of (expected) group utility. This functional advantage of we-mode groups over I-mode ones also makes it possible to give an evolutionary argument for the development of we-mode "psychology."³⁶

Let me note that we get from the mentioned mathematical result by Bacharach an additional argument for the claim that *a social institution must be in the we-mode* (cf. Section V). This is the case at least when a perfect institution is at stake. Recall that a central function of a social institution is to resolve collective action dilemmas by providing a cooperative collective solution creating order that is beneficial for the group. The mentioned result by Bacharach is compatible with and, indeed, supports the assumptions that in a collective action cooperation dilemma such as the PD we have this (for simplicity's sake, my formulation only concerns a two-person two-choice game situation):

(a) CC is a dominating outcome and goal which is collectively accepted (in the reflexive we-mode sense of collective acceptance) as the group's (here typically only as an instrumental) goal, and here

collective acceptance need not involve communication (and can be "implicit") while still being in the we-mode (recall section V). Furthermore, not all members but only sufficiently many (as needed for the group's achieving its cooperative goal) need to participate in the collective commitment to the goal or intention content, viz. participate in the we-mode joint intention that the group is to satisfy by choosing CC.

(b) The acceptance of CC as the group's goal gives the group members a group reason to choose C, where this strong group reason is assumed to satisfy, and be mutually known to satisfy, the collectivity condition.

To briefly also consider the situation from the point of view of the members' I-mode utilities, let us discuss a collective good example, e.g. building a bridge. Participating in the building is normatively governed and sanctionable action in the context of a we-mode group context, we assume. The norm functions to give a we-mode transformation of the underlying I-mode PD into a Hi-Lo game. But note that the transformation function here takes I-mode utilities as its input and gives we-mode utilities as its output. The I-mode utilities may get closer to the we-mode utilities due to sanctioning and "socialization," but there will still in general exist the possibility to free-ride. Accordingly, sanctions against free-riding are needed for getting at least intentionally performed C action if not genuinely "willing" obedience to the institutional norm.

VII Concluding Remarks on the We-mode versus the I-mode

The we-mode forms the central core of social group life. The we-mode conceptual framework consists of interconnected concepts that are not reducible to I-mode concepts. I will below give an extended summary of the main features of the we-mode framework, especially those features that distinguish it from the individualistic I-mode framework. Some of those features are completely missing from the I-mode framework and some others are in some functional sense more desirable or better than their I-mode counterparts.

The we-mode has the following central features (discussed or at least mentioned in the above text) missing from, or at least are not present to the same extent in, the I-mode framework:

- The we-mode approach is based on the intuitive idea that the acting agent in central group contexts is the group viewed as an agent, or rather as a quasi-agent, and conceptually the individual agent is not the primary actor but rather a representative acting for the group, while the individual still ontologically is a primary actor. This intuitive picture can be explicated for the group-member level and seen to involve the central ideas of an *authoritative group reason*, the *collectivity condition*, and *collective commitment*. In contrast, in the (pro-group) I-mode case the individual is the sole acting

agent. This is a dramatic difference, which my we-mode approach tries to make sufficiently clear and ontologically palatable. Most of my theorizing has concerned member-level features of the we-mode.

- In the we-mode the conceptual and justificatory direction for theorizing and conceptual construction typically is “top down” rather than “bottom up.
- The we-mode involves reflexive performative collective acceptance, i.e. collective construction, and accordingly takes the notions of social group, their group-based “we”, and group goal, belief, etc. to be collectively constructed notions irreducible to the I-mode.
- The group members’ actions as group members are, qua a framework feature, *necessarily* based on a strong authoritative and uniformly motivating group reason, created by the group for itself. In the corresponding I-mode cases the members’ agreements may on contingent grounds be needed either to select a leader for deciding about goals, beliefs, etc for the group or, in other cases, direct intermember agreements may have to be employed. Accordingly, the we-mode conceptually requires the adoption of the full group perspective, but in the (pro-group) I-mode case the adoption of the group perspective is a contingent matter. (Of course, in the latter case the group perspective is much weaker as the requirements of strong authoritative group reason, the satisfaction of the collectivity condition, and collective commitment fail to be there.)
- The we-mode involves the collectivity condition. Formulated for the special case of goal satisfaction this condition connects the members strongly as follows: Necessarily (as based on the group members’ reflexive construction of a goal as its goal), the goal is satisfied for a member if and only if it is satisfied for all (other) members.
- The group members are collectively committed to the group’s ethos, viz. to its constitutive values, goals, beliefs, emotions, standards, norms, practices, etc., and are accordingly disposed to act appropriately and take account of the social and physical environment’s feedback. This collective commitment involves directed “social” commitment connecting the members.
- The members’ we-mode (thus group-based) goals, beliefs, etc may differ from their private goals, beliefs, etc, and generally are not even supervenient on them. In the *pure* we-mode case the private desires are necessarily completely set aside—because the group is the agent—so that e.g. there is in principle no incentive for properly functioning group members to free-ride, which incentive does exist in the (pro-group) I-mode case.

- A we-mode group is responsible especially for its intentional actions and their relevant intended or anticipated consequences (qua a group), including actions performed by predecessor members.³⁷ An I-mode group cannot be similarly responsible. The we-mode also guarantees the group's responsibility for its members' actions as group members—independently of their individuality (new and future members as well as nonoperative members are thus covered). This makes deals with groups possible.

In addition to the above central features distinguishing the we-mode from the I-mode, there are many aspects in which the we-mode arguably either is indispensable or at least functionally fares better than the I-mode. Let me list some of them.³⁸

- The we-mode framework adequately explicates the core concepts of cooperation and social institution

- The we-mode involves a “historical” dimension: the group's temporal consistency concerning its central attitudes and actions. (Consistency here is taken to be compatible with minor reformulations of the group ethos.) The historical dimension makes a group fit for cooperation with other agents.

- Because of having decision-making and action capacity, we-mode groups can negotiate and make agreements and cooperate with other parties.

- The group members' functioning is public by “conceptual default” inside the group in a we-mode group, in contrast to an I-mode group.

- The we-mode group's members have the “group-social” right and responsibility to monitor and sanction ethos-opposing actions and to help others when needed and possible—this entails “strong reciprocity” relevant to successful cooperation.³⁹

- Mainly because of the feature of collective commitment (involving directed social commitment), the we-mode tends to create order both on the group level and the member level that is better than the I-mode generally is capable of.

- As compared with the pro-group I-mode, the we-mode—because of being based on group authority—tends to give more stability and persistence. It also may give flexibility in contexts of collective action. These features are conceptually presupposed default features based on the group members' thinking of the group's benefit and their collective commitment to such for-groupness. Superior stability, persistence, and—in many cases also—flexibility are partly due to the fact that the computational requirements in the we-mode are not as demanding as in the I-mode and to the

fact that these features are better maintained by collective commitment (and directed social commitment) than collective I-mode commitment. The members perform their actions being responsible for doing their share and are also flexible in new situations. Accordingly, their responses to such situations typically go by default and do not require new intermember agreements. Here again the computational requirements of the we-mode are less demanding.

- The we-mode is sometimes more rewarding even in a utility-maximizing sense.⁴⁰

- As mentioned, the we-mode may make we-mode groups more stable in a rational, game-theoretical sense of creating a different set of equilibria than do corresponding I-mode groups in similar cases. Accordingly, the we-mode in principle avoids collective action dilemmas (e.g., PD) at the ingroup level by changing agency from individual agency to group agency.⁴¹ (However, the real dilemma here rather is whether to be a “we-moder” or an “I-moder”.)

- The we-mode functions much better in the case of large groups, as no pairwise contacts and relationships between individuals are needed; indeed the we-mode provides for more generality, for instance, by covering, in principle, also future members and by tending to treat the group members as interchangeable and partly “depersonalized.”

- Members in we-mode groups share authority over the reformulation of ethos, over group decisions and actions (also those delegated to operatives) and the same goes for the choice and control of operatives and, in general, matters concerned with the group’s life (as contrasted with the members’ private lives or their activities in other groups).

- While the members are group-socially obligated to stay in joint projects until collectively excused or until the project has been terminated, there is only a group-social obligation to inform the members when exiting the group in other conditions.*

* I wish to thank Maj Tuomela for good comments on this paper.

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¹Notes

See Section V for what the we-mode resolution amounts to. As to the we-mode approach, see Tuomela (1984), (1995), (2000), and (2007). This paper summarizes the main ideas included in the we-mode approach and also presents some new results and elucidations. For lack of space, the reader is referred especially to the 2007 book for detailed analyses and arguments. I will here deal only with the case of democratic or quasi-democratic groups in which the leaders, or as I also say “operative” members or representatives, have been given their power to form attitudes for the group, to act for the group and to give orders and directives to the members. The leaders’ power is based on authorization by the members (thus internal authorization).

² Such a social agent-system, viewed as an entity, in general is not reducible to the individuals properties because of its highly relational nature. It is not literally a collective agent because it lacks the ontological features of real human agents—e.g. it does not have a body and cannot have “raw feels” and thus lacks the phenomenology of real agents. However, from a conceptual point of view we might speak of it as a quasi-agent.

³ Here my account in Tuomela (2007), p. 19:

A collective *g* consisting of some persons is a (*core*) *we-mode social group* if and only if

(1) *g* has accepted a certain ethos, *E*, as a group for itself and is committed to it. On the level of its members, this entails that at least a substantial number of the members of *g* have as group members (thus in a broad sense as position-holders in *g*) collectively accepted *E* as *g*’s (namely, their group’s, “our”) ethos and hence are collectively committed to it, with the understanding that the ethos is to function as providing authoritative reasons for thinking and acting qua a group member;

(2) every member of *g* “group-socially” ought to accept *E* as a group member (and accordingly to be committed to it as a group member), at least in part because the group has accepted *E* as its ethos;

(3) it is a mutual belief in the group that (1) and (2).

⁴ See Tuomela (2007), chapter 6, for a discussion and rebuttal of the kind of bootstrapping looming here.

⁵ Collective acceptance of the ethos can here be taken conceptually to be analogous to a performative (or “declarative”) speech act that has the world-to-mind direction of fit of semantic satisfaction and thus makes the ethos goal-like. At the same time it will also have the mind-to-world direction of fit as giving and being—or being analogous to— an assertion. (See e.g. Searle, 2002, Chapter 10, for performatives.)

⁶ Cf. the somewhat different account and defense of the importance of joint commitment by Gilbert in her 1989 book and later works. Her approach otherwise bears similarities to mine, although she seems to regard collective agents as ontologically existing (as agents).

⁷ A central case illustrating the indispensability of group reasons is provided by *social institutions*, to be commented on in Section V.

⁸ The ontological direction in the we-mode is only partially top down, as there are no group agents in a literal ontological sense although groups can ontologically be viewed as social systems in a sense not reducible to the individual or even to the “jointness” level.

⁹ A more detailed account of the justificatory inferences is given in Tuomela (2007), Chapter 4.

¹⁰ That the group is so committed can come about in various ways, e.g. through its leaders' effecting it or the group members previous or current (and sufficiently extensive) collective acceptance, or by means of e.g. some previously agreed upon institutional mechanism.

¹¹ See e.g. Gilbert (1989), Tuomela (2002, 2007).

¹² The present features can be partly clarified in terms of the kind of practical reasoning the members are supposed to be disposed to perform in the present case. See e.g. the schemas (W1) and (W2) and other schemas in chapters 2 and 7 of Tuomela (2007).

¹³ Especially social psychologists tend to speak of group identification in the present kind of context. Obviously, this does not mean literally identifying (or partially identifying) oneself with a group—a whole of which members are parts. In my account identification with a group basically amounts to functioning (thinking and acting) in the we-mode—as a full-blown group member—relative to the group in question.

¹⁴ For instance, the philosophical theories by Bratman (1999) and Seumas Miller (2001) qualify as pro-group I-mode theories.

¹⁵ See Tuomela (2007) chapter 8, for performative collective construction conceptually modeled in part on performative speech acts.

¹⁶ See Tuomela (2007), chapter 8, for detailed discussion.

¹⁷ See Tuomela (2002), chapters 5 and 6 for the reflexive nature of collective acceptance in my construction sense.

¹⁸ See Tuomela (2007), chapter 2.

¹⁹ See Tuomela (2007), chapter 8, from which the present section extensively draws. In it, the we-mode is shown to be extensionally equivalent to the collectivity condition (that involves collective acceptance for the group) and that thus my present third feature amounts to adding the we-mode into the account.

²⁰ See Tuomela (2007), chapter 8.

²¹ For a game-theoretical argument for the we-mode nature of social institutions, consider the investigations based on group or team reasoning that show common interest games often to be insoluble by individualistic means (Bacharach, 2006).

²² The members' (we-.mode) collective acceptance of a "content," roughly, amounts to coming to hold a relevant "group-reasoned" joint intention or belief (or the like) with that content and being collectively committed to the content as well as acting appropriately to the held joint attitude. We-mode collective acceptance of this kind clearly differs from the members' private, I-mode acceptance (where the three central features of the we-mode are missing).

²³ My account of institutions has central affinities with Searle's (1995) theory. For a detailed comparison, see Tuomela (2002), chapter 6. A major difference is that my account does not require that all institutions give deontic powers to the participants.

²⁴ See Tuomela (2007), appendix 1, for the precise connection.

²⁵ See Tuomela and Balzer (1999) for a simple attempt to give a formalization and logic of collective acceptance.

²⁶ In general, in propositions of the kind "We collectively accept that s," the iteration of the collective acceptance does not logically give new entailments, as $CA(CA(s)) \Leftrightarrow CA(s)$, but the reflective collective acceptance involved here makes the fact expressed by $CA(s)$ collectively constructed and institutional. (CAT) will be satisfied, given that the other required conditions are in place.

²⁷ As to proper social institutions, they will not be discussed at length in this paper. Let me just say that we can take a social institution to be a set of collectively accepted norms regulating relevant social practices such that (CAT) is satisfied. Suffice it here to state my simplest “official” account in Tuomela (2007), chapter 8 (see the book for the technical notions involved):

(SI) Proposition *s* expresses a *social institution* (in the “standard” sense) for group *g* if and only if

(1) *s* expresses or entails the existence of a *g*-based social practice (or a system of interconnected social practices) and a norm or a system of interconnected norms (including some constitutive norms conferring a special institutional status on some instituted item) in force in *g*, such that the participant of the social practice obey the norm (or norm system);

(2) the members of *g* rationally collectively accept *s* for *g* with collective commitment; here it is assumed that collective acceptance for the group entails and is entailed by the correct assertability of *s*.

²⁸ I argue in my mentioned 2007 book that the following extensional equivalences are tenable basically on conceptual grounds:

We-mode ↔ collectivity ↔ (collective) sociality ↔ (broad) institutionality.

²⁹ This is argued in Tuomela (2007), chapter 7.

³⁰ Actually, the interdependence assumption in the sense of Bacharach (2006) seems not to be needed here. This is because, independently of the interdependence structure of a situation, the adoption of the group perspective and acting according to it is both conceptually and factually possible and can be based on the participants’ voluntary acceptance (voluntarily entered dependence).

³¹ That the commonality of goals, interests, and preferences is central for cooperation has been argued for in Tuomela (1985, 2000), chap. 9, where a technical index of correlation, *corr*, is used to measure the correlation or correspondence in question. This measure is a normed Pearson coefficient ranging from -1 to +1 and defined by $corr = 2cov(A, B)/(s_A^2 + s_B^2)$, namely, the covariance of utilities normalized by the variances of these utilities. The statement $corr > 0$ represents, roughly, cooperation, and $corr < 0$ represents conflict. In Tuomela (2000) the following *Commonality Thesis* is defended: Other things being equal, the more commonality of interest (as measured by the index *corr* and preferences) there is in a situation, the more likely cooperation is to be initiated and carried out successfully and—speaking of reward-based cooperative situations—to give the expected rewards, understanding this to mean rewards from acting together (relative to not acting so). Interestingly, the research by Zizzo and Tan (2007) has recently given strong confirmation to this thesis despite the fact that *corr* largely ignores strategic considerations. In general, a PD has a highly negative *corr*-value and the agents control (in an absolute sense) each other’s utilities to a large extent and also control them conditionally. (See Tuomela, 1985, 2000 for a treatment of the kinds of structural control over utilities that are possible in game situations and of measures of interdependence.)

³² See e.g. Colman et al. (2008) for such evidence.

³³ See Tuomela (2008), chapters 2 and 7, for summaries of evidence for the we-mode.

³⁴ See Tuomela (2007), chapter 7.

³⁵ See Bacharach (2006). It seems, however, to be possible to interpret some of Bacharach’s mathematical results in terms of the we-mode approach as I will just do.

³⁶ See Bacharach (1999) for the theorem in question and see Tuomela (2007), chapter 9, and Tuomela and Hakli (2007) for the point on the evolutionary advantage of the we-mode approach over the I-mode approach.

³⁷ See Tuomela (2007), chapter 10, for a precise analytical treatment of group responsibility.

³⁸ These conjectural claims have been defended at least in bypassing in my 2007 book.

³⁹ See e.g. Gintis & al. (2005) for the notion and its central role in sustained cooperation.

⁴⁰ See Tuomela (2007), chapter 7, for a detailed argument.

⁴¹ See the comments at the end of the previous section.