

# Who Is Afraid of Group Agents and Group Minds?

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## 1 Introduction

The heyday of the ideas of group mind and group agent seems to be well over. Why dig up these corpses that seem to have been buried ages ago? I will try to give at least a partial answer to this question in this chapter. Yet the main task below is to clarify these notions when viewed from a naturalistic point of view and compatibly with current theorizing in the collective intentionality literature.

The idea of a group mind (collective mind or collective soul) has been employed to account for the kind of mental unity that has been seen in a nation, an army, or in a culture, etc. The term *esprit de corps* (“group spirit”) has been used in this context. Typically, it is not only the mental unity in certain kinds of collectives or groups that is at stake but the reflective self-consciousness of a group. For instance, “we the French people are the bravest in the world” could express this kind of self-consciousness in a group, involving its group spirit and we-feeling.

The notion of group mind has a rather long history. It goes back thousands of years, as ancient myths and tales indicate.<sup>1</sup> These myths are from various parts of the world, especially Asia. Second, there is some discussion in the history and philosophy of law and, more generally, political philosophy and theory. This discussion started in the ancient world (Greece and Rome) and has continued through the medieval times up to now—or in any case until the early decades of the past century. The ancient Romans built into their law the idea of corporate responsibility, speaking of organized collectives that were also referred to by the terms *universitas*, *corporatio*,

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<sup>1</sup> See Cornford (1912/2004).

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and *collegium*.<sup>2</sup> A corporate group in this sense was contrasted with *societas*, a collective based on interaction between individuals who were less tightly connected and did not form an intentional group agent that has been called a “group person” (where the term “person” or *persona* refers to theatrical mask). A *corporatio* thus was understood as a *persona* capable of action and capable of making promises and fulfilling them. Groups as persons have been discussed to an extent (e.g., by Catholic theologians) through the middle ages up to now. Locke and Hobbes can be mentioned as examples of theoreticians who also entertained some kind of group mind and group person idea. Especially in the German-speaking world, idealism was an influential doctrine in philosophy since the eighteenth century, as is well known, especially within German idealism.<sup>3</sup>

Also sociologists, social psychologists, and philosophers of sociality have discussed group minds and group agents at least since mid-nineteenth century. This latter discussion is what I shall at least partly be concerned with in this chapter, although rather selectively and in connection to my own theoretical views.<sup>4</sup>

Here is a basic conceptual classification of group agents<sup>5</sup>:

1. Group agents as *intrinsically* intentional, that is, intentional without dependence on group members’ and/or others’ construal of them as intentional. Here we have, first, the view of the group mind as a societal product of evolution.<sup>6</sup> Second, also metaphysical idealism views group agents as intrinsically intentional.
2. Group agents as *extrinsically* intentional. Basically, here the group members form the group mind collective attitudes (wants, intentions, beliefs), by their collective acceptance (construction) or some related group-internal process or mechanism. Some earlier German and British theoreticians’ views can be included here, with some reservations.

In Sect. 4, I will comment on the “historical” approaches by Moritz Lazarus, William McDougall, Ferdinand Tönnies, and Alfred Vierkandt.<sup>7</sup> However, I will not attempt to give a proper evaluation of these authors’, or any other early theoretician’s, work, but, first, to illustrate the similarity between some older work and current work

<sup>2</sup> See Runciman (1997). Such organized groups can be we-mode groups if at least some of their members adopt a proper we-perspective toward the group—see Sect. 2 below.

<sup>3</sup> My approach eschews strong ontological supraindividualism, which for example, Otto von Guericke (1934) represents.

<sup>4</sup> See Cornford (1912/2004) and especially Hayes (1942/2009) for discussion and for detailed references.

<sup>5</sup> See Hayes (1942/2009), chapters I and II on a resembling classification.

<sup>6</sup> Here we have Spencer, Boodin, and some other theoreticians also viewing the society as an evolved organism-like entity (for precise references, see Hayes (1942/2009), Chapter I). Durkheim’s view seems to fit in here.

<sup>7</sup> For the early accounts referred in this paragraph in the order of mention, see Lazarus (2003), Tönnies (1887), McDougall (1920), and Vierkandt (1928/1975). Also Wundt (1916) is famous for his *Völkerpsychologie* approach, but as I will discuss the similar views by Lazarus, I will leave Wundt out of my discussion. As to current authors’ writing on collective intentionality, see Tuomela (2011) for comments.

concerning collective intentionality matters and, second, to show that some of my recent distinctions had rudimentary ancestors in some of these older views.<sup>8</sup>

The structure of this chapter is as follows. Sections 2 and 3 present my account of collective intention (and “group minds”) and group agents, which discussion should show that there are rather naturalistic views about these matters and thus not much to be “afraid” of. As said, Sect. 4 discusses the historical authors as mentioned in the previous paragraph. Some of my comments there rely on the distinctions made in Sect. 3, and this justifies the presentation of the historical material at the end rather than at the beginning of this chapter.

## 2 Group Agents and the We-Mode Approach

According to our commonsense view, a person can be regarded as an intentional agent, and an intentional agent is conceptually to be understood in terms of our commonsense framework of agency. It contains the following notion as its central elements. Intentional agents can have representational mental states such as beliefs, wants, and intentions, and they can also have emotions and feelings accompanied by relevant bodily phenomena (e.g., shame may involve blushing). On the ground of these kinds of states, agents are capable of intentional action, which at least in central cases is action for a reason. Intentional human agents are assumed to understand normativity and be able to obey (and for that matter, break) norms, for example, the norms involved in promises and agreements and those involved in communal laws and informal social norms. They are accordingly both causally and morally responsible for their intentional actions.

A social group in the sense to be discussed in this chapter will be regarded as a social system consisting basically of individual human beings capable of producing uniform action.<sup>9</sup> The group as a system or entity can, when it acts as a group,

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<sup>8</sup> Emile Durkheim’s (1901/1982) account has often been regarded as postulating a group mind. He makes a distinction between individual and collective representations. The latter are produced and necessitated on people by society—in contrast to individual representations. Durkheim is typically taken to regard the human mind as a collection of individual and collective representations. The collective ones are common to all human beings and form a collective mind. Durkheim takes collective representations to have an existence independent of their manifestations in individuals. They are an external, coercive constraint of people’s thinking. Durkheim even says obscurely that collective consciousness is the highest form of mental life, as it is the consciousness of all consciousnesses.

Durkheim’s controversial views are not close to my very own views, and I will not in this chapter discuss them. See, for example, Hayes (1942/2009) for a traditional, received interpretation of Durkheim’s views. For a modern criticism of Durkheim that I largely agree with, see the strong criticisms by Searle (2006). However, Durkheim, as of course the other philosophers working in the early years of the last century, lacked modern logical and analytical tools and, for example, did not have available a proper theory of propositional attitudes or a theory of norms.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, an organization may also own or otherwise involve various material elements and tools, such as buildings, that it needs for fulfilling its functions, but it does not seem plausible to say that it is partly constituted by this kind of hardware.

normally be described in intentional agency terms. But this is partly metaphorical since the intentional framework of agents and persons conceptually and factually includes, for example, their perceptions, sensations and qualitative experiences, and emotions—thus, features that group persons in the full sense do not properly have. For instance, groups do not blush when ashamed. Groups qua entified actors in my view can never be persons in the flesh and blood sense (that also includes phenomenal experiences) but at best, entities that have some functional features similar to those fully intentional human agents have. At least certain organized groups can thus in a functional sense operate in the space of reasons and justification because of their members' activities.<sup>10</sup>

The upshot is that a group cannot *really* think, want, etc., and is not *really* normatively responsible and capable of making normative agreements, although it is highly useful for people to *view* them as having these capabilities. Thus, we extrinsically attribute wants, beliefs, etc., as well as responsibility to certain kinds of groups. In this sense, the “person-aspect” of groups is functionally and thus predictively useful *collective artifact*. While it exists in the causal realm as a being capable of causing events, it does not literally cause anything qua an intentional agent.

My approach to describing and theorizing about the social world relies centrally on the distinction between group-based “we-thinking” and individualistic “I-thinking.” We-thinking conceptually involves the notion of group viewed from its members' point of view, viz., as a “we” for them. As to the notion of “mode” as used in the present context, mode simply means the way or having a mental state or of acting and is thus, linguistically speaking, an adverbial notion. According to the we-mode approach, to think (e.g., have an attitude) and act in the *we-mode* is to think and act fully as a group member. To think and act in the I-mode is to think and act as an individual as a private person (even in group contexts). One can thus intend in the we-mode and in the I-mode (not at the same time, though). The intention contents can be the same irrespective the mode. This is the “narrow” mode aspect. There are other features relating to the mode of thinking and acting, but they need not be discussed here.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, I distinguish between two kinds of “we-thinking” and accordingly two kinds of collective intentionality: *we-mode* and *I-mode* collective intentionality. While it is hard to express these modes verbally, one can roughly say of a person's we-mode intention that it is based on one's group's joint enterprise that the members have in a sense collectively accepted for the group, for example, it could concern their joint intention to build a bridge or sing a song together, as a group and involve their we-reasoning, viz., reasoning as a group. In the pro-group I-mode case, each individual acts autonomously in terms of his individual reasoning. His question

<sup>10</sup> Recently, List and Pettit (2011) have defended this view of organized groups.

<sup>11</sup> See Tuomela (2011), Chapter 2, for discussion. Briefly, we-mode activity or functioning involves three aspects: (1) the narrow *adverbial aspect* (mentioned in the text), (2) the *teleological* aspect related to benefaction through the *contents of the group's attitudes*, and (3) the *underlying psychological member-level motive* aspect (e.g., altruism or group-centeredness, in the case of fully socialized, group-centered persons, only loyalty seems to qualify).

could be “What should *I* do in this situation?” contrasting with the “we-moder’s” question “What should *we* do in this situation?” Both of these modes express a “we-perspective.” We-mode collective intentionality concerns functioning fully as a group member and is distinguished from weak collective intentionality; I-mode is concerned with functioning as a private person, though as a member of a group functioning for the group. The I-mode divides into the *plain* I-mode that does not require functioning for the use and interests of one’s group, which contrasts with the *pro-group* I-mode that does require functioning for the group.<sup>12</sup>

Let me emphasize that a *group* may act altruistically or selfishly toward outsiders, depending on its attitudes and emotions, but, independently of this, at least in principle its *members* must act out of group-centered motives to be *genuine* we-moder. A genuine we-moder completely sets aside his private interests. In the *pro-group* I-mode case, some group-centered motives need to be involved, but of necessity also the individual interests will play some role. The pro-group I-mode concerns a member’s action (or activity in the sense of holding an attitude) as a private person performed in part for the group—whatever the group’s goals are. The *plain* I-mode concerns any activity by an individual for herself, be the activity selfish or altruistic.

I have elsewhere argued that an adequate description and explanation of social life requires the we-mode in addition to the I-mode and that, furthermore, the we-mode is in several contexts to be preferred to the I-mode (both plain, viz., self-regarding, and pro-group I-mode) on conceptual and philosophical grounds and often also on functional, action-related grounds.<sup>13</sup> “We-thinking” and especially 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 does individualistic thinking, viz., I-mode, thinking (including thinking taking into account the group), and acting. In game-theoretical contexts, we-thinking (both the we-mode and the pro-group I-mode kind) is also capable of resolving collective action dilemmas better than standard game theory. In the case of we-mode thinking, as contrasted with pro-group I-mode thinking, the crucial differences are the change of agency from individual to collective (viz., group agency) and the change from I-mode reasoning to we-mode reasoning.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> I do not use the terms “we-thinking” and “I-thinking” as technical terms of my theory, because they are somewhat unclear and sometimes misleading. Instead, “we-mode” and “I-mode” are key terms in my account. Note that, for instance, a “we-intention,” which for me is a member’s we-mode participation intention, may yet in virtue of its form (e.g., “I will participate ...”) be linguistically viewed as representing I-thinking. However, from the point of view of its conceptual content, it clearly is we-thinking because of being conceptually based on the group, “us.”

<sup>13</sup> See Tuomela (2007).

<sup>14</sup> See Hakli et al. (2010) for arguments for the functional importance of the distinction between we-mode and pro-group I-mode thinking and theorizing. In that paper, my colleagues and I show in effect that we-mode reasoning leads to a different set of action equilibria than does individualistic action. The latter allows for purely individualistic equilibria that the we-mode account does not allow (a simple Hi-Lo coordination situation qualifies as an example). Thus, collective action in the nonreductive we-mode sense can rationally create more collective order than the individualistic, (pro-group) I-mode approach. As one desideratum for a social institution certainly is that it creates collective order that we have here and argument for the we-mode design of institutions.

The we-mode approach is based on the idea that the acting agent in central group contexts is the group analogically and instrumentally viewed as an intentional agent at least as far as the functional aspects of agency are concerned, and from a conceptual point of view, the individual agent is not the primary actor but rather a representative acting for the group. However, in the causal order of the world, the individual members are the only actors. Ontologically a group agent exists only functionally as a social system capable of producing uniform action but—as seen—not as an intrinsically intentional agent or person, and it can only function through its members functioning appropriately.<sup>15</sup> 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, a quasi-agent) that is the intentional—but not the ontological—subject of attitudes and actions attributable to it. One might even claim that a we-mode group has a mind functionally constituted by the collection of attitudes (and other mental states) functionally correctly attributed to it.

I have argued elsewhere that we-thinking, especially we-mode we-thinking, is (a) in some cases conceptually necessary, for example, in contexts where the we-mode constitutes (and thus constructs) full-blown group notions—collective artifacts—such as group beliefs and social institutions, (b) in many contexts functionally required, especially in cases of joint action requiring synergy effects for collectively (and individually) beneficial results, (c) theoretically sufficient for rationally solving (or rather dissolving) central collective action dilemmas (e.g., the prisoner's dilemma) and thus for collectively rationally creating collective order, (d) needed for group-based cultural evolution in “developed” cases, and (e) capable of handling large groups better than the I-mode (in part because functioning on the basis of a uniform group-internally created group reason rather than using as the motivational and reason-basis only intermember dependencies and interaction). It may be argued (although I will not do it in this chapter) that only the we-mode—an essentially positional or role-based notion—can properly account for the generality and member replaceability and alienation that the group level often involves (especially in the case of large groups) while still accounting for group solidarity.<sup>16</sup>

The we-mode framework of concepts is based on *collective acceptance* by the group members of attitudes and other group properties for their group. Especially central here is *constitutive* collective acceptance (“construction”) leading to

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<sup>15</sup> Such a social agent system, viewed as an entity, in general is not reducible to the individuals' monadic or (inter)relational properties. This holds true at least if no “positional” structural elements such as positions, offices, and roles are involved on the “jointness level” (“meso level” as distinguished from the proper “macro level” consisting of group structures). The social agent system is not literally a collective agent (person) because it lacks the ontological features of full-blown human agents—for example, it does not have a body and cannot have “raw feels” and, strictly speaking, a mind. Thus, it lacks the phenomenology of real agents. However, conceptually we may regard it as a functional group agent.

<sup>16</sup> See Tuomela (2007), esp. Chapters 1, 6, and 8 for my treatment of the above topics.

constitutive group properties, attitudes, etc. Collective acceptance in the we-mode requires that the members in an achievement sense (or “performatively”) come to accept certain goals, views, etc., for the group and to be collectively committed to what they have accepted.<sup>17</sup> Thus, for instance, a we-mode group is assumed, through its members, to accept for itself a group “ethos” (certain constitutive goals, beliefs, standards, norms, etc.) and to relevant we-reasoning and we-acting.<sup>18</sup> A paradigmatic we-mode group is a democratic group in the sense of basically governing itself from the inside, that is, by its members. I will below mostly concentrate on such we-mode groups (such as typical families, task groups, sports teams typically are—also organizations and corporations may be we-mode groups). A we-mode group constructs itself as a group in a quasi entifying sense. In a we-mode group, the members ought to act as group members and thus to “identify with the group” and show solidarity toward the group and its members (in contrast to an I-mode group). An I-mode group need not similarly be based on the members’ collective construction of the collectivity as their group but is rather based on the members’ (shared) private goals, beliefs, etc., and what such individualistic states generate in view of the members’ interdependencies and interaction. An I-mode group nevertheless requires pro-group thinking and acting of its (privately committed) members.

In a we-mode group, the group members ought to function as group members on the basis of their acceptance of the ethos: As default, they can normally be assumed to further the ethos of the group and obey the norms it contains.<sup>19</sup> The group’s ethos—qua a central “jointness” element collectively accepted by the group members—gives them a group reason for acting as group members. The reason has legitimate authority at least if the group members themselves have participated in

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<sup>17</sup> Collective acceptance of an item such as an 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. It will also have the mind-to-world direction of fit as giving and being—or being analogous to—an assertion. See also Searle (2010) for the declarations. My most recent account is given in Chapter 5 of Tuomela (2011).

<sup>18</sup> Here is my account in Tuomela (2007), Chapter 1:

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 (viz., their group’s, “our”) ethos and hence, are collectively committed to it, with the understanding that the ethos is to function so as to provide 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).

<sup>19</sup> Notice that not all members of a we-mode group are required to function in the we-mode; see the previous note.



the creation of the ethos by their collective acceptance.<sup>20</sup> 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 is explicated by a special collectivity condition the satisfaction of which comes about through the members’ collective commitment to the ethos and action on the basis of this commitment.<sup>21</sup>

Conceptually, the notion of a group agent thus is based on the three central principles or markers of the we-mode, viz., the reason-giving presence of a *group reason*, the satisfaction of a relevant *collectivity condition*, and *collective commitment* to the ethos and what the members collectively accept.<sup>22</sup> These markers can be argued for in terms of in somewhat intuitive terms as follows: Analogously to intentional action of an individual agent, intentional action of a group agent must be based on reasons for actions. Analogously to an individual having to coordinate the movements of her body parts, the members of a (we-mode) group must coordinate their action, indeed all activities including mental ones, both synchronically and diachronically in order to achieve group goals. Analogously to an individual agent who is committed to her intended actions, the group members must be committed as a group, that is, collectively committed, to the group’s actions. Thus, we get the aforementioned three distinguishing criteria of the we-mode: authoritative group reason, (the satisfaction of a) collectivity condition, and collective commitment. It can also be noted that mainly because of the authoritative group reason and collective commitment to the ethos of the group, the group qua a group is at least in part responsible for its and its members intentional actions qua group members.

To summarize, the we-mode group’s commitment to its ethos (group level) basically amounts to the members’ collective commitment to it (member level). Here, the conceptual starting point is the group’s accepting an ethos with commitment to its satisfaction and maintenance. On the group-member level, this amounts to the group members’ performative and constitutive collective acceptance of an ethos (e.g., a goal) as the group’s constitutive ethos to which they collectively commit themselves, where collective commitment accordingly is justified by the group commitment and where collective commitment also involves the members’ being socially committed to each other to functioning as group members, typically to furthering and maintaining the ethos.<sup>23</sup> We-mode thinking, “emoting,” and acting accordingly presuppose *reflexive* (but not always *reflective*) collective acceptance (construction) of the group’s ethos as its ethos and often also of some other, nonconstitutive content as the object of the group’s attitudes. The collectively accepted

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<sup>20</sup> See Tuomela (2007), Chapter 6, for a discussion and rebuttal of the kind of bootstrapping looming here.

<sup>21</sup> Here, we need not go into detail, but see Tuomela (2007), Chapter 2.

<sup>22</sup> See Tuomela (2007), Chapters 1 and 2, for clarification and discussion of these notions and their central role.

<sup>23</sup> 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 intentional agents). See note 32.



contents must be taken to be for the use of the group. In all, the members are assumed 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.

### 3 Collective Intentions

Partly to make contact with the historical material to be presented later, I will discuss below collective intentions in a broad sense covering especially we-intentions, joint intentions, and group intentions (intentions attributed to groups). For simplicity of expression, I will proceed partly in linguistic terms and assume that the persons are not only language users but that their intention formation can be described in terms of acceptance of linguistic intention expressions. The terms “joint intention” and “we-intention” will be used to mean intentions in the we-mode.

Suppose some agents intend jointly to perform an action jointly—for example, they intend jointly to build a bridge or sing a song together or to write a joint paper. In full-blown cases, they function in the we-mode (“internalized group-mode”) and can be taken to accept the statement “We will perform action X together” as expressing both their joint intention (when collectively accepted by some agents for them considered together) and their individual we-intentions (when the locution concerns a single agent’s acceptance for herself). Commenting on intentions as states of intending, a joint intention can be viewed as a relational property of two or more individuals collectively viewed, whereas a we-intention is a state of an individual participating in joint intention. Joint intentions (viz., joint intended goals) must always have collective content in the sense that the participants are supposed to function *as a group* concerning the satisfaction of the joint intention. Thus, if John and Mary intend jointly to perform an action X together (e.g., to lift a table together), this joint intention is something that they have between themselves concerning the joint action in question. Here, both John and Mary are taken to we-intend X, for example, their joint lifting of the table or their seeing to it jointly that the table gets lifted.<sup>24</sup> In this simple case, the intention to perform X can be attributed to the social dyad that John and Mary form (recall that they were assumed to intend as a group).

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<sup>24</sup> From a logical point of view, we may treat intentions as predicates. Letting “JI” stand for joint intention and “WI” for we-intention, we have roughly this simple equivalence in the case of two agents A and B and an action X:  $Ji(A,B,X) \leftrightarrow Wi(A,X) \& Wi(B,X) \& MB(Wi(A,X) \& Wi(B,X))$ , where “MB” stands for mutual belief. However, this logical formulation is somewhat misleading (although truth-functionally correct), as it ignores the fact that a we-intention *intensionally* (in the content of a we-intention) presupposes the existence of the joint intention (see Tuomela 2007, Chapter 4, for a discussion of this circularity problem). An intention attributed to a group G, viz.,  $I(G, X)$ , is to be distinguished from the joint intention of its members in general, although in the case of simple egalitarian groups, the group intends if and only if its members do.

My account of we-intentions and of joint intentions takes X to be a joint action type, that is, roughly a jointly tokenable action structure based on we-thinking and involving part actions for at least two participants.<sup>25</sup> In a simple choice situation, joint tokening of an action type minimally involves that the participants choose as a unit, their choices thus being in a sense “glued” together. The above considerations indicate that, conceptually viewed, one cannot properly we-intend alone, because there must be a joint intention that is conceptually prior to we-intention, thus there must be a “we” that “intends as a group” for there to be a we-intention by a member of the group of individuals in question. However, there can be “believed we-intentions” in cases of erroneous attribution of a we-intention to some agent(s).

The participants’ joint intention to perform X together can be regarded as a kind of presupposition of their—qua individual participants—having the we-intention to perform the joint action X together with the others. Such a we-intention entails the participant’s intention to participate in the joint performance of X. This is the conative core of we-intention, and it refers to an action that the participant normally can be assumed to be able to do. Note that while the agent typically cannot do X alone, what he still can do is to try to participate in the joint action X.

We can say generally that when some agents intentionally act jointly (or as a group) because of their joint intention, they function as a unit in a strong sense: The action can be described as one that the group (indeed a group agent formed out of them or consisting of them) performed. They can then be taken to have seen to it as a group, thus jointly that the joint intention (which indeed also often amounts to the group agent’s intention) became satisfied. Note that this is compatible with a division of tasks and thus with the agents’ having different kinds of parts to perform, those parts factually generating or, in some case, conceptually constituting the jointly intended action.

To recapitulate, some participants’ joint intention consists of interdependent member intentions (we-intentions) all of which are also expressible “We will do X together.” I believe that the notion of a joint intention must be regarded as a primitive we-mode notion that cannot be noncircularly analyzed in terms of individuals’ mental states without invoking the notion of group in something like a we-mode sense.<sup>26</sup> In spite of that, the notion of full-blown joint intention can be illustrated and clarified and made sufficiently well understandable for agents to function in accordance with it. Consider a group *g* consisting of you and me. The core idea is that we, viz., you and I qua members of *g*, intend jointly to perform X together if and only if you and I both intend to participate in our performing X jointly for us (qua members of *g*) while being collectively committed to performing X jointly, you and I mutually knowing (or correctly believing) all this. That the joint performance of X for *g* involves that there is a group reason consisting of the fact that our group has, through our explicit or implicit agreement or “joining our wills” in a general sense, formed the intention to perform X.

<sup>25</sup> See Tuomela (2007), Chapter 1.

<sup>26</sup> See my discussion of this irreducibility in Chapter 4 of Tuomela (2007) and Chapter 3 of Tuomela (2011).

This group reason is a reason for us to participate intentionally. Because of functioning as group members for this group reason, we are necessarily “in the same boat” concerning the success of our joint performance of X. We stand or fall together, and the joint intention is necessarily satisfied for you and me and our dyad if it is satisfied for either you or for me. We are also collectively committed to satisfying our joint intention. This is seen on the basis of the group analogy: When a group agent intends to do X, it is, in analogy with a singular agent, committed to doing X. Described for the member level, this group commitment amounts to the members’ collective or joint commitment. That we really must have this rather than only aggregated participant commitments can be seen by looking at what a group’s successful action amounts to from the members’ point of view: They must be committed jointly to seeing to it that X really comes about in the planned way, and this may require that they do their parts properly but also that they help or even pressure others, if needed for X’s successful coming about. The upshot now is that that the three we-mode criteria of group reason, collectivity, and collective commitment are appropriate also for the case of joint intention.

Next, I will clarify in relatively precise terms what we-mode joint intentions and we-intentions amount to.<sup>27</sup> I will assume, as before, that they are conceptually group dependent and will not explicitly bring up this matter that the notion of functioning as a group member entails:

(JI) Members  $A_1, \dots, A_n, \dots, A_m$  of group  $g$  jointly intend qua group members to perform X jointly if and only if they collectively accept the truth (correctness) of “We will do X jointly.”<sup>28</sup>

Here, “We will do X jointly, as a group” applies to the members both collectively and individually. In the latter case, it expresses participation intentions, here termed *we-intentions*. These will next be analyzed by my present account, which makes we-intentions strictly dependent on joint intention (and, as we-mode intentions are at stake, on group intention).<sup>29</sup> A we-intention can intuitively be seen as a part or slice of a joint intention.<sup>30</sup> This involves that one cannot we-intend alone, although

<sup>27</sup> Below I draw on Tuomela (2011).

<sup>28</sup> Here, “jointly” is to be understood as signifying we-mode jointness.

<sup>29</sup> This new account involves changes as compared to my earlier account (e.g., in Chapter 4 of Tuomela 2007). The account is now more explicitly geared to joint intentions, and the account can be seen basically to satisfy the much-discussed *own action condition*, *control condition*, and *settle condition*. Here, I will not discuss this issue further.

<sup>30</sup> When realized, this intention must involve a joint action token. Here, we can represent this linguistically by you and I endorsing the same statement expressing joint intention:

I: We will perform X jointly.

You: We will perform X jointly.

We have here two token mental states of intending with the same content. We can stipulate that a single joint token of the joint intention to do X jointly (i.e., a single token of a metaphorical group agent’s intention) requires this together with a doxastic condition like mutual knowledge about our being in these mental states and with some further conditions that relate us, for example, our dispositions to make relevant inferences and our being collectively committed to satisfying the intention content by participating in our joint performance of X. A joint realizing action token can be stipulated to be what results from a token of joint intending.

one may of course hold mistaken beliefs about the existence of a joint intention (hence, about the other agents' we-intentions). One may also mistakenly believe that the intention one has is a we-intention.

We-intentions are in a central sense relational, and thus we may assume that the following stylized account is true of each of the participants  $A_1, \dots, A_i, \dots, A_m$  of group  $g$  who have formed a joint intention to act together:

(WI) Member  $A_i$  of group  $g$  accepts the truth (correctness) of "We will do  $X$  together as a group," that is, we-intend to perform  $X$  jointly, as a group, with the other members if and only if

- (i)  $A_i$  intends to participate in the members ("our") doing  $X$  jointly and to do his part of  $X$  as his part of  $X$ .
- (ii)  $A_i$  correctly believes that the other members similarly accept "We will do  $X$  together" in that context and that thus a joint intention to perform  $X$  jointly exists between the participants, and this fact is his primary reason for (i).
- (iii)  $A_i$  has a true belief to the effect that the joint action opportunities for an intentional performance of  $X$  will obtain (or at least probably will obtain), especially that a right number of the full-fledged and adequately informed members of  $g$ , as required for the performance of  $X$ , and will (or at least probably will) perform their parts of  $X$ , which under normal conditions will result in an intentional joint performance of  $X$  by the participants.
- (iv)  $A_i$  truly believes that there is (or will be) a mutual belief among the participating members of  $g$  (or at least among those participants who perform their parts of  $X$  intentionally as their parts of  $X$  there is or will be a mutual belief) to the effect that the joint action opportunities for an intentional performance of  $X$  will obtain (or at least probably will obtain).
- (v) (i) and (ii) are in part true because of (iii) and (iv).

Clause (i) of (WI) formulates the basic intention content of a we-intention: It refers to the agent's *participation intention*. So a we-intention entails the intention to perform one's part of the joint action in question, or, if we think of  $X$  as the participants' joint goal, to contribute to its achievement. While this intention is an "I-intention" (e.g., "I intend to perform my part of  $X$  as my part of  $X$ "), it is not an individualistic, purely personal intention but rather a we-mode intention derived from a we-intention and thus dependent on a joint intention.<sup>31</sup> Clause (ii) is a presupposition that shows that a joint intention is conceptually prior to a we-intention, that is, "We will do  $X$  together as a group" as accepted by us, thus more than the present we-intender  $A_i$ . Note that as the notion of joint intention appears only in a belief context in (ii), this fact allows that the participants need not know very precisely what a joint intention is, at least in the sophisticated technical sense given by our account (JI). It suffices that they believe that joint intention involves the participants' connected acceptances of "We will do  $X$  jointly," where the

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<sup>31</sup> Some commentators have misunderstood this matter and regarded a participation reason as an I-mode individualistic notion merely because of the linguistic formulation of it as "I intend to perform ..."

connectedness must involve at least mutual belief about the others' similar acceptances. The fact of the existence of a joint intention that  $A_i$  takes part in gives him at least a coordinative reason to form the intention to participate. Clause (ii) involves the veridicality (correctness of belief) assumption that the joint intention in question must really exist, as we are dealing here with central cases where the agents do really function as group members and have the others' participation as their correct reason for their own participation, although psychological errors and mismatch of information are of course always possible in real life.

Clause (iii) makes an agent's intention to perform his part of  $X$  depend on the believed fact that the others are similarly involved in the joint intention and ensuing joint action. More specifically, (iii) states that the right doxastic presuppositions obtain, briefly that the participants believe that the "joint action opportunities" (conditions concerning, e.g., the required number of participants, the presence of some and the absence of some other agent-external conditions, etc.) relating to  $X$  obtain or will obtain. Clause (iv) requires that these beliefs are socially shared in terms of a mutual belief that they are in place. In general, at least social belief loops of the kind expressed in the two-person case by "I believe that you believe that I will do my part" are needed for my being assured in my own part performance. Clause (v) expresses a motivating reason and thus requires the doxastic conditions to be non-idle.

We have discussed above joint intentions and we-intentions and mentioned that in some simple cases of joint intention, the intention can also be attributed to the group or group agent in question. As I have elsewhere given my account of such group intentions, I will not here discuss them.<sup>32</sup>

To illustrate the distinctions that the present account of collective intentions makes, let us consider the following top-down schema on which top-down reasoning from a group intention to a group member's specific action qua a member can be based in the case of a group action such as the group's painting a house and—what here is coextensive—the members' joint action of house painting. We have the following self-explaining sequence of steps:

- (a) Group  $g$  ("we") intends to paint the house (*group intention*).
- (b) We (the members of  $g$ ) accept collectively (in an explicit or implicit sense) that we will paint the house jointly and hence to accept as true for  $g$  the intention expression "We will paint the house jointly" (*joint intention*).
- (c) Each of us accepts the intention expression "We will paint the house jointly" (*we-intention*).
- (d) I, qua a member of  $g$  and a participant in our joint intention to paint the house jointly with the others, intend to perform my part (or contributory share) of our painting the house (*generic part-performance intention, the central intention-component of a we-intention*).
- (e) My part being to paint the front of the house, I intend to do it and set myself to do it. (*specific part-performance intention followed by intention-in-action that initiates action*).

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<sup>32</sup> My latest statement is in Tuomela (2007), Chapter 6.

Here, (a) may be a social, coordinative reason for (b) when (a) is causally and justificatorily prior to (b)—such as it is, for example, in the case of a leader's order entailing (a). However, in simple egalitarian cases without delegation of group tasks to specially authorized members, (a) and (b) can be regarded as truth-equivalent. (b) is a social reason for (c), (c) entails (d) on conceptual grounds, and (d) entails (e) on conceptual and situation-specific informational grounds. In the sense of this schema, group reason requires acting at least partly for the group. As said, a member's group reason of painting the house is meant to be a "coordinative" social reason meant to lead to the kind of coordination that joint action in general requires. Whether such a good one in a substantively justifying sense (e.g., the house badly needs paint) is a different matter that I will not comment on here. In any case, the group reason here has a clear explanatory function, and thus (a) serves in this context as the central explanans of (e).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> A referee of the present volume suggested that I comment on the relationship of my we-mode approach to Margaret Gilbert's well-known "plural subject theory" and especially I will concisely point out what the major differences are. I began to create my theory of sociality in my 1984 book and have since then continued developing it in several books and numerous papers. Both my theory and Gilbert's are living things that have undergone smaller or bigger changes during the course of time. Gilbert's first large work was her 1989 book. Her latest work that I am familiar with is her 2006 book. Our theories are similar in that they reject at least radical conceptual individualism, although both are compatible with ontological individualism. In neither theory are groups and group attitudes individualistically definable (in my account "definable in I-mode terms"). Gilbert's "plural subject theory" regards groups as plural subjects that are collections of individuals who are jointly committed to some items and tend to think in social contexts in terms of "we." This is somewhat similar to what I espoused in my 1984 and in 1995 books by taking certain persons who we-intend the same content to form a group, although in Tuomela (1984), I did not directly speak of joint or collective commitment but of shared we-intentions that yet were assumed to entail joint commitments. My focus then was pretty much on we-intentions, a topic that Gilbert has not really worked on (see Tuomela 1995, 2007).

There are several details in Gilbert's theory that I have criticized elsewhere (see, e.g., my 1995 and 2007 books). The criticisms in general are based on the unclarity of her notions of joint commitment and plural subject. To give an example, she says in her key schema S in her 2000 book basically that for any psychological predicate X, "We X" is true if and only if we are jointly committed to X'ing as a body. This seems to require that joint commitment to X entail X (e.g., we jointly perform act X only if we act as a body). But if that is the case and if "as a body" entails acting jointly, we arrive at the rather circular account saying that we perform X jointly if and only if we perform X jointly, being jointly committed to X'ing jointly. This account of hers also shows that there is no theoretical room for weaker notions, notions that do not require joint commitment.

My recent theorizing has concerned joint action, institutions, and the connections of collective intentionality research to logic, distributive AI, and game theory as well as broader issues like collective activities in large groups, while Gilbert has focused on notions in moral and political philosophy. Since the beginning of this millennium, especially in my 2007 book, I have started viewing we-mode groups, viz., groups that can act and do it on the basis of we-reasoning, as (functional) *group agents* in a conceptually entified sense, as constructed by group members' collective acceptance (see also Hakli et al. 2010). This is a conception different from the conception of groups as plural subjects that Gilbert advocates. In contrast to Gilbert, I have a variety of weaker and stronger social notions (both we-mode and I-mode ones) to offer. Thus, I have given accounts of joint and collective I-mode social entities, states, and events and used them in my theorizing. There are several smaller differences concerning details of collective acceptance and agreement (notions central in both theories), but I cannot here go into them.

## 4 Some Historical Accounts of Group Minds and Group Agents

In this section, I will consider some accounts of group minds and agents in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century literature. As mentioned, there are earlier accounts or at least ideas about these entities in much earlier history, in myths even from thousands of years ago. But I will just discuss briefly some sociologists' and philosophers' views that resemble the account of collective intentionality and social ontology presented in this chapter but will not attempt to give a proper evaluation of their theoreticians' theories. The examples I have chosen show that about a century ago, the same group phenomena (including group agents and group minds) were philosophically discussed that current collective intentionality and social ontology discussions also are concerned with although on a more sophisticated level. What is more, I recently noticed that corresponding to my above distinction between we-mode, plain I-mode, and pro-group I-mode thinking and acting similar, but more rudimentary distinctions, were made by some of the thinkers to be discussed below. This gives further motivation for including the historical material in this section. The historical thinkers to be discussed below are Moritz Lazarus, William McDougall, Ferdinand Tönnies, and Alfred Vierkandt.

1. *Lazarus*. Let us start with Moritz Lazarus who developed the first theory or account of "Volksgeist" or "national spirit" or "spirit of a people."<sup>34</sup> Lazarus was mainly interested in nations partly because they are sufficiently large and many-sided groups to take care of people's basic needs. My historical comments are mostly based on a collection of his papers and especially on Bernhard Schmid's recent book chapter that gives a rather individualistic interpretation of Lazarus's theory.<sup>35</sup> This interpretation will be seen to be compatible also with my view. *Volksgeist* is for Lazarus something that turns a plurality of individuals into a nation. It is not something that somehow hovers above the heads of individuals, but rather it is an internal bond between them. *Volksgeist* is a kind of sum of all mental or spiritual (*geistig*) activities of people that occur in a nation, irrespective of the individuals' particular mentality; one could say that it is the common mental activity that underlies individual mentality.<sup>36</sup> It is not far-fetched to

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<sup>34</sup> In part, he worked together with Heyman Steinthal.

<sup>35</sup> See Lazarus (2003), a work consisting of papers from the period 1851–1865, and see especially Schmid (2009). For a view of Lazarus's philosophy emphasizing more his Hegelian roots, see Karpf (1932).

<sup>36</sup> To give a feel of Lazarus's own way of putting it, let me quote his German text (Lazarus 2003, p. 178, in his original spelling): "Das Leben eines jeden individuellen Geistes besteht in einem Kreis von anschauungen, Vorstellungen, Ideen, Motiven, Gesinnungen, Schätzungen, Wünschen, Gefühlsweisen usw. Denken wir uns nun bei irgend einer Genossenschaft (etwa einem Volke) die Substanz einzelnen Personen, den Träger all dieses mannigfaltigen Inhalts, der ihn zur Persönlichkeit einigt, hinweg: so erhalten wir die ganze Masse alles geistigen Thuns, welches sich im Volke vollzieht, ohne Rücksicht auf persönliche Vertheilung und Ausübung. Diese Summe alles geistigen Geschehens in einem Volke ohne Rücksicht auf die Subjecte, kann man sagen: ist der objective Geist desselben."



suggest that *Volksgeist*, functionally conceived as activity, amounts to we-mode functioning where “we” refers to a people or nation.

Lazarus’s view is that *Volksgeist* has a subjective and an objective mental component, that is, the particular mental states of people and the objective mental contents that they exemplify, both elements being relativized to a certain historical context and life situation. What this precisely means is not fully clear, but my reading of Lazarus (especially its final chapter) suggests that *Volksgeist*, a kind of group mind, still does not involve group agency in the sense of some objective spiritual agent. Rather, it is in part the inner mental activity common to individuals in a nation, and in part it can be compared with a version of something like a historically contextualized Platonic heaven or with a realm of objective thoughts. In that sense, it is not much more objectionable than current philosophical views that postulate propositions, properties, ideas, numbers, works of art, etc., as objective entities. So the nature of group agents and objective mental contents are different matters that should be kept separate: The ontological individualism-collectivism problem differs from the nominalism-universalism problem.

Furthermore, for Lazarus, *collective self-awareness* is central for *Volksgeist*.<sup>37</sup> Yet, the mysterious self-awareness of the nation is simply a matter of the attitudes and perspectives of the participating individuals. Just as in Max Weber’s methodology, collectives come into play only as parts of the content of the intentional attitudes of individuals. For instance, in his account, a group (e.g., the German nation) would exist as a group only because its members take it so to exist. Existence is existence for the group, for “us.” As above, we should distinguish between this kind of mental collective acceptance-based side of group existence from its external side. The external side includes objective characteristics of individuals and the group-external individuals’ (or, better, the society’s) view of the group. The people must have the correct beliefs about such presupposed objective matters, because otherwise collective errors may occur.

Let me indicate how Lazarus’s view of *Volksgeist* would fit in with the we-mode approach. *Volksgeist* exists for the group, for “us.”<sup>38</sup> Collective errors are possible, and to exclude them, objective constraints are needed as above. But the constructed, “groupjective” reality of a nation qua a nation and an institution qua an institution still is a matter of collective acceptance. Nevertheless, there can be unreal and real *Volksgeist* and group mind it seems. For instance, the collective identity of a nation, for example, the (Finnish-speaking) Finns, cannot arbitrarily be based on collective acceptance. It seems to me that it objectively requires the Finnish language, sauna, “sisu” (stamina), some special food items, and so on.

<sup>37</sup> See Schmid (2009), p. 187.

<sup>38</sup> In a more technical sense, the *Volksgeist* exists in the sense of the collective acceptance thesis (CAT) discussed at length especially in Tuomela (2007), Chapter 8.

On the whole, Lazarus makes the group mind irreducible to individual minds but still does not postulate as thick and demanding a metaphysical ontology as, for example, the German idealists (most notably Hegel) nor does he seem to claim that the individual minds are determined by the evolutionarily evolved *Volksgeist*, although individual minds are ontologically dependent on a historically contextualized *Volksgeist*.<sup>39</sup> Today, we have multiculturalism and much interaction and communication between nations and countries, and therefore we have a mix of cultural elements in most nations. *Volksgeist* seems to have become “thinner,” but still in such contexts as war and sports, at least the collective emotions that are part and parcel of the spirit of a nation may be seen.

2. McDougall.<sup>40</sup> I will first consider William McDougall’s famous work *The Group Mind*.<sup>41</sup> His view is not as holistic and mystical as sometimes has been claimed by group mind debunkers. He rejects Hegel’s idea of the Absolute and similar accounts and says that “we are concerned only with the empirical conception of a collective consciousness based on observation and induction” (p. 30). His main conclusion about *collective consciousness* is stated as follows (p. 39). “We may, then, set aside the conception of a ‘collective consciousness’ as a hypothesis to be held in reserve until the study of group life reveal phenomena that cannot be explained without its aid. For it may confidently be asserted that up to the present time no such evidence of a collective consciousness has been brought forward ....”

On the contrary, there definitely are *collective minds* according to McDougall. He takes mind to be an organized system of mental or purposive forces, and hence his notion of collective mind seems to be a functional and scientific one, not a metaphysical one. He claims that, in the sense so defined, every highly organized human society may properly be said to possess a collective mind (see, e.g., p. 9, pp. 46–7). “But it is maintained that a society, when it enjoys a long life and becomes highly organised, acquires a structure and qualities which are largely independent of the qualities of the individuals who enter into its composition and take part for a brief time of its life. It becomes an organised system of forces which has a life of its own, tendencies of its own, a power of moulding all its component individuals, and a power of perpetuating itself as a self-identical system, subject only to slow and gradual change.” This I find largely acceptable as a sociological claim—at least if problematic notions such as “system of forces that has a life of its own” can be given a suitable naturalistic explication.

An example of a component or part of the collective mind is collective volition (or will). “The essence of collective volition is, then, not merely the direction of the

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<sup>39</sup> My presentation of Lazarus’s theory has benefited much from Schmid’s lengthy discussion in his 2009 book. There, several interesting issues are discussed that space does not allow me to comment on here.

<sup>40</sup> Here and in the rest of this section, I draw on Tuomela (2011), Chapter 10.

<sup>41</sup> McDougall (1920).

wills of all to the same end, but the motivation of the wills of all members of a group by impulses awakened within the common sentiment for the whole of which they are the parts" (pp. 55–6). He discusses shared and collective volitions of different strength which would in my terminology cover shared I-mode intentions, pro-group I-mode intentions, and we-mode joint intentions and we-intentions (cf. pp. 56–58 of his book). In simple cases, the participants' joint intentions as a group can in my account be attributed to the group that these participants form.

McDougall considers a group of pilgrims on their way to a city and discusses the following five cases with increasingly strong collective intentions (five modes of conation and five modes of collective action as he says on p. 56):

In the first case there is purely impulsive collective action: Robbers attack a group on its way and the members of the group flee in panic.

In the second case, the individual wills are strengthened by the "community of purpose." There is a certain collectivity of action here. Yet there is no collective volition, and the action is not due to the will of all. Each member cares nothing for the arrival of the group as a whole; he desires and wills only his own arrival. In my terminology, we are dealing with plain (but not purely private) I-mode intention and action that thus falls short of being for the group.

In the third case, McDougall assumes the group members are aware of the danger of robbers and that the group will need its full strength for its members not to get robbed. Each member will then desire that the whole group shall cohere and shall reach the city, and the actions of the group will display a higher degree of cooperation and collective efficiency than above, but the successful arrival of the group will be only privately desired by each member. There is direction of all wills toward the production of the success of the group, but this is not a truly collective volition because the individual volitions are private and individual and diverse. In my classification, this is a case of the pro-group I-mode.

In the fourth case, McDougall lets the group be an army of crusaders composed of various nationalities: All members have the same collective action and desire the same end of that action, and they also have similar motives arising from their sentiment for the city or what it contains. Still their combined actions are not due to a collective volition but only a coincidental collection of individual volitions. We may perhaps speak of a general will here, though, says McDougall. This I classify as a strengthened form of pro-group I-mode intention and action.

Finally, in the strongest fifth case, we let the crusaders be of the same nationality and assume that each member identifies himself with the army and prizes its reputation and desires its success as an end in itself. Here, we have collective will according to McDougall. Here, the participants with the same cultural and social background (cf. the same nationality assumption) share an underlying motive (sentiment) and desire to achieve the same end. In this case, the group (the army) can be taken to have the will to conquer the city. The participants here identify with the group, and this can be seen as a strong feature that in the context of their shared sentiment and desire makes them intend (will) and act as a group.

This final case seems to be interpretable as a strong we-mode case of a group's intention or will. (Note that the we-mode does not in general require sharing underlying sentiments and desires.)

McDougall's account comes very close to what some modern authors (including myself) have said about collective intention and willing.<sup>42</sup> His general view of the existence of a collective mind in a group requires that it be a "highly organized" group (pp. 49–50).<sup>43</sup> On the whole, the account he gives is non-reductionist and taken by him to be supported by science. There is a kind of rudimentary we-mode/I-mode distinction, and there is also the assumption (that I cannot consider here) that the laws of group life are different from those of individual life.

3. *Tönnies*. Ferdinand Tönnies published the first edition of his well-known book *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* in 1887. In his late 1931 paper, also entitled "Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft," translated as "Community and Society," he makes some points that seem to be new as compared with the 1887 book. In particular in that paper, he says the following about groups and the group will: "If the volition of the one [person] meets and combines with the volition of the other, there results a common volition which may be interpreted as unified because it is mutual. This common volition postulates or requires, and thus controls, the volition of A in accordance with the volition of B as well as the volition of B in accordance with the volition of A." "...thus, the will of each single person who belongs to the group is part of and at the same time conditioned by the group's collective will, which is to say he is dependent on it." "Every collective will can represent itself in a single natural person or in a number of those whose common will is conceived as the representation of a higher collective will." (All these quotations come from p. 243.) Tönnies postulates that there is an

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<sup>42</sup> McDougall also makes a rudimentary I-mode/we-mode distinction (pp. 9–10): "... the thinking and acting as each man, in so far as he thinks and acts as a member of a society, are very different from his thinking and acting as an isolated individual."

<sup>43</sup> There are five conditions of principal importance in raising collective mental life to a higher level than the unorganized crowd can reach (p. 49 f.):

- (1) Some degree of continuity in the existence of the group.
- (2) In the minds of the mass of members of the group, there shall be formed some adequate idea of the group, of its nature, composition, functions, and capacities and of the relations of the individuals to the group.
- (3) (Favorable condition:) Interaction (especially in the form of conflict and rivalry) of the group with other similar groups animated by different ideals and purposes and swayed by different traditions and customs.
- (4) The existence of a body of customs and traditions and habits in the minds of the members determining their relations to one another and to the group as a whole.
- (5) Organization of the group consisting in the differentiation and specialization of the functions of its constituents—the individuals and classes or groups within the group.

Would one add to the above list the requirement of identification with the group that McDougall imposes on collective willing, we would be dealing with we-mode groups and would be allowed to say in McDougall's terminology that a we-mode group has a collective mind, although not a collective consciousness.

*artificial, imaginary collective person*, a kind of group agent, as a carrier of the collective will. The collective person and its will gives unity to the group. It unifies its members not only by making them factually dependent on the basis of their knowledge of the shared collective will but also normatively dependent, for the collective will is supposed to give the participants relevant rights and duties. Tönnies does not say more about the normativity aspect, but we can see that he means dovetailing duties and rights that form the participants' normative interpersonal social commitments roughly in the modern sense.

The upshot from these quotations is that Tönnies is saying that under some conditions, a collective will can arise, and a collective person is constructed as its carrier. The collective will conditions the individual wills of the participants, and it also entails (imposes) a moral imperative to realize the collective will jointly with the other participants. The collective person to which the collective will is attributed is said to consist of individual persons in this case (but it might in general also have other collective persons as its parts). So it is a kind of plural person. In all, Tönnies account of collective persons and wills remains somewhat unclear. The main point seems to be the unification of the group—perhaps both in a causal-factual sense and also in a normative sense. Still, one may ask why precisely a collective will and a collective person are required instead of just saying that a collective will is a joint will relationally attributed to the members (as, e.g., that A and B will jointly X). One may think that the group unification, and especially the normative aspect of it, serves to make the members strongly dependent on the collective will and make them function as group members. This would mean that also Tönnies (somewhat implicitly) relies on what clearly resembles the I-mode/we-mode distinction, as the creation of the collective will and person would seem to entail a switch from individualistic I-thinking to we-thinking, that is, from the I-mode to the we-mode. For instance, the individuals A and B originally enter a situation with their private, I-mode wills, but in the process of the creation of the collective will (the group's will), they become “we-moders” acting for the group in a unified sense.<sup>44</sup>

Recall that according to my view, as applied to an egalitarian group without special organization, an intention to perform an action X attributed to a group involves that its members intend jointly to perform actions that are expected to generate an outcome on the basis of which X can in general be attributed to the group, the members being collectively committed to the relevant activities that they perform and all this being mutually known in the group. (In more complex groups, the account becomes a little more involved.) In my account, the group may have a specific reason to form the intention to perform X, and this reason also generates a (we-mode) reason for the members to participate. If the group's intention is spontaneously formed, its members form the intention spontaneously in this egalitarian group—but still as group members with the reason of promoting its ethos as their reason. But once the group's intention exists, it provides a group reason for the members to participate in its satisfaction.

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<sup>44</sup> Tönnies's account then would come rather close to my own 2007 accounts of group intention.

Also recall that in my account, a joint intention involves the participants' we-intentions (and, which is about the same, their intentions to perform their parts of the joint project). We-intentions conceptually depend on the joint intention and according to my account, a fortiori, on a group intention. This is parallel to Tönnies's various dependency relationships. As to the quasi-normative aspects, collective commitment in the standard sense involves "institutional" (or, as I also say, group-based) norms for the participants to act toward X and also to perform their own parts of X in order for the group's intention to become satisfied. They are responsible to each other for performing their parts. The normative (or rather quasi-normative) aspect of my account is a counterpart to Tönnies's normative requirements. Unfortunately, Tönnies's account is not very specific, and thus detailed comparisons are not possible.

4. *Vierkandt*. Alfred Vierkandt's theory in his book *Gesellschaftslehre* contains interesting accounts of group life, although argumentatively, it leaves much to be desired (which is true of many other German authors' writings from that era).<sup>45</sup> Vierkandt postulates a group agent in a subjective sense: The group *seems* to its members to be an objective (super)agent without really being such a group agent or person.<sup>46</sup> In this respect, his account comes rather close to my account. What is more, he also postulates a rudimentary I-mode/we-mode distinction, or at least clearly keeps apart functioning as a private person and functioning as a group member, the members qua members being subjectively bound to the group.<sup>47</sup> Vierkandt also emphasizes that a "we" is needed for analyzing the group. The same also goes for group will.<sup>48</sup> Vierkandt says that a group will is a will that is active in all members (or in the authoritative and leading members) and that the members experience it as "our" will.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Vierkandt (1928/1975).

<sup>46</sup> The group is a unit (Einheit) but not a person. Vierkandt (1928/1975), p. 344. (Below, the references are to this book unless otherwise said.)

<sup>47</sup> "In subjektiver Hinsicht stehen die Gruppenorgane in Ichverbundenheit (d.h. in Gemeinschaftsbewusstsein) zu der Gruppe als Ganzem; und objektiv ist ihr Verhalten, soweit sie eben *als Organe und nicht als Privatpersonen tätig sind*, durch die jeweiligen Interessen, Ziele, Überlieferungen und Sorgen der Gruppe wesentlich bestimmt" (p. 328). The italics are mine. The italicized text makes the distinction between functioning as a group member ("organ") and as a private person. Thus, we have a rudimentary we-mode/I-mode distinction here.

<sup>48</sup> "Als Subjekt der Gruppenangelegenheiten wird die Gruppe ("wir") erlebt. Auch so mit Gruppenwillen: die Gruppengenossen verfolgen ein Ziel, indem sie sich dabei als Gruppe fühlen. Dabei ist freilich zu unterscheiden zwischen dem eigentlichen Träger und dem Organ dieses Willens" (p. 350). Vierkandt says here that in the case of group matters, the members experience the group ("us") as a subject. The same goes for the group will, the members experience themselves as constituting the group. He makes a distinction between the "organ" of the will and the members who are the ones who really will. This is of course very close to my treatment, which has surprised me.

<sup>49</sup> "Gruppenwille bedeutet dabei ein Wille der in alle (oder den massgebenden) Gliedern lebendig ist und von ihnen wiederum als "unser" Wille erlebt wird" (Vierkandt 1949, p. 56). Also cf. the 1928/1975, pp. 352–353. This point just in effect reinforces what was said in the earlier note: The group will is active or lively in the members and is experienced as "our" will.

To go into some detail, Vierkandt discusses McDougall's classification of collective will (recall the above discussion) and in that connection makes a distinction between a will that is shared ("*gemeinsam*") and one that is "societal" ("*gemeinschaftlich*") mainly on McDougall's lines. Vierkandt's societal intention is a rudimentary version of a we-mode group intention in my sense, and his shared intention amounts to pro-group I-mode intention in my sense. Vierkandt's example here goes as follows. When some people aim at shooting at an escaped lion, they may just do it together (*gemeinsam*) based on their personal (private) "affect" while having the same object (the lion) as the physical object of the shooting and while coordinating their activities appropriately according to the demands of the task. This is pro-group I-mode willing and shooting—the subjects of willing are different. In partial contrast, when they (like an army unit would do) form their will and act on it as a group, also the subject is the same, viz., the group. I would say here that the group is the intentional but not the ontological subject, and I think Vierkandt would agree with this. This kind of societal (*gemeinschaftlich*) case covers organized groups that can be viewed as group agents, and we seem to be dealing with a we-mode case here.

Vierkandt's views and account comes rather close to my view and would probably be acceptable to many modern philosophers. Of course, he did not use modern analytic tools and thus did not present detailed analyses and arguments, but still his work contains a wealth of interesting material.

## 5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed group agents both from a systematic and from a historical point of view, and, especially, I have defended a view that takes the notion of extrinsically intentional group agent to be highly useful from a functional point of view. Much of this chapter has consisted in my presentation of the "we-mode" approach to collective intentionality that uses this kind of a group agent as a conceptual tool. This chapter presents a partly new account of collective intentions (especially joint intentions and we-intentions). Finally, some historical and modern approaches to collective intentionality were presented. It was shown that the historical accounts have important connections to current theorizing in the field.

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