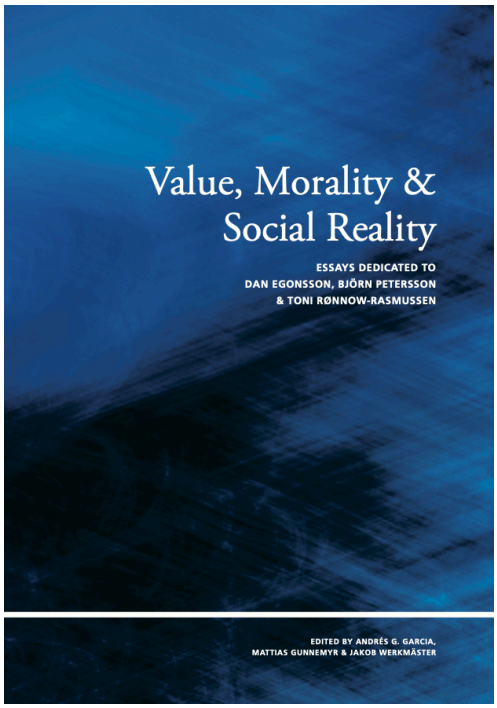
Team Reasoning, Mode, and Content

Olle Blomberg

In: Garcia, A., Gunnemyr, M. & Werkmäster, J. (2023) *Value, Morality & Social Reality: Essays dedicated to Dan Egonsson, Björn Petersson & Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen.* Lund: Department of Philosophy, Lund University. DOI: https://doi.org/10.37852/oblu.189

ISBN: 978-91-89415-65-2 (print), 978-91-89415-66-9 (digital)



Published by the Department of Philosophy, Lund University.
Edited by: Andrés Garcia, Mattias Gunnemyr, and Jakob Werkmäster
Cover image by Fabian Jones. Cover layout by Gunilla Albertén.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.37852/oblu.189.c512

Team Reasoning, Mode, and Content

Olle Blomberg

Abstract. A "we-intention" is the kind of intention that an individual acts on when participating in joint intentional action. In discussions about what characterises such a we-intention, one fault line concerns whether the "we-ness" is a feature of a we-intention's mode or content. According to Björn Petersson, it is an agent-perspectival feature of its mode. Petersson argues that content accounts are incompatible with theories of so-called "group identification" and "team reasoning". Insofar as such group identification and team reasoning are commonplace in many joint action situations, such an incompatibility would be a serious problem for content accounts. I here argue, however, that Petersson's incompatibility thesis should be rejected.

1. Introduction

Recently, Björn Petersson and I wrote a paper together. The paper is an expression of *our* collective view on collective moral obligation. While this view could be completely discontinuous with our respective personal views on the subject matter, I believe there is much continuity and agreement between our collective view and our personal views. However, I will here focus on an assumption that we make in our co-authored paper regarding which at least our levels of credence differ.

In the paper, we argue that, for it to make sense to ascribe a moral obligation to a group, each member must have a context-specific capacity to group-identify—to view their situation from their collective perspective—and at least have a general capacity to deliberate about what they together ought to do (to "team reason"). This assumes that, *in some sense*, "an individual agent can have attitudes that are held

from her group's viewpoint" (Blomberg & Petersson, 2023: 11). But how should this idea be understood?

A salient fault line in discussions about shared agency is how the attitudes required of participants who intentionally act together should best be characterised, where some argue that the collective nature of the participants' intentions is a feature of the intentions' contents while others argue that it is (also) a feature of their mode (Schweikard & Schmid, 2021). Petersson (2015; 2017) has articulated and defended the view that intentions are mental states that allows for perspectival variation, so that an individual agent can, as philosophers in this area sometimes put it, intend in the "I-mode" or in the "we-mode". According to Petersson (2017), the contrasting content approach to we-intention is incompatible with, and cannot make sense of, the capacities for group identification and team reasoning that I and Petersson argue are necessary for making sense of the idea of collective moral obligation.

In this paper, I critically examine Petersson's arguments for what I will refer to as his *Incompatibility Thesis* concerning the content approach to we-intentions. I argue that his arguments for it fail: The content approach is compatible with the group-identification and team-reasoning framework that I and Petersson draw on.

My aim here is not to argue against Petersson's mode account. I find his mode account both coherent and appealing, and it is arguably congenial for characterising the attitudes of team reasoners. I am thus not retracting from our assumption "that a version of the perspectival understanding of group identification is the most promising candidate for capturing the notion that would fulfil the role assigned to it in the 'team reasoning' framework (Petersson, 2017)." (Blomberg & Petersson, 2023: 12 fn. 16)[1] However, given that there is room in the content approach for distinguishing between explicit and implicit content, Petersson's mode account does not have a substantial advantage over content accounts of we-intentions. Because of this, my level of credence in our assumption is lower than Petersson's.

In the next section, I briefly introduce Petersson's mode account of "we-intentions" and the view of mode and content of intentional states which underpins it. I contrast the account with Michael Bratman's (2014) influential content account and what is arguably the mainstream view of content that underpins it. In section 3, I briefly introduce what team reasoning is and how it is or can be related to questions about shared agency and we-intentions. In section 4, I go on to present and critically discuss Petersson's argument(s) as well as potential additional arguments and considerations that could be advanced in favour of the *Incompatibility Thesis*. I conclude that the arguments do not succeed and that the *Incompatibility Thesis* should be rejected. Nevertheless, I suggest in the Conclusion (section 5) that the mode approach is nevertheless congenial for the team-reasoning framework.

[1] Within the team-reasoning framework, group identification is a mechanism for *agency transformation* (see section 3).

2. Petersson's Account of We-Intention

Accounts of shared agency are motivated by the ubiquity and importance of joint action in our lives. When we do things together, we do not merely perform actions in parallel or in strategic interaction. What is missing does not seem to lie in the agents' behaviour, but in the participants' attitudes. After all, judging from their behaviour, two snowboarders riding down a slope in close proximity may either be strangers who simply try to keep an appropriate and safe distance from each other, or friends snowboarding together. What makes the attitudes they would have if they were friends snowboarding together distinct from the attitudes they would have if they were strangers interacting strategically? On one type of account, it is their contents. Put in the jargon of the field, a "we-intention" is an ordinary intention with a distinct type of content. A we-intention is here the attitude that explains and rationalises an individual's participation in a joint intentional activity. On Bratman's (2014) content account, for example, each friend's we-intention would at its core be, roughly, an intention that they snowboard down the slope by way of this very intention and the other's intention that they snowboard down the slope and by way of their meshing sub-plans for snowboarding down the slope.[2]

On a different type of account, having a we-intention is not (mainly) a matter of having an intention that is about "us" or our joint activity; rather, it is a matter of having an intention that is "ussy", of having the intention in a collective way or mode (Schmid, 2014: 12). But what could this mean? Petersson's perspectival account of we-intention provides one possible answer to this question.

It is common to think that the content of an intentional state with a direction of fit—a perception, intention or belief for example—determines that state's conditions of satisfaction, such as the conditions under which the perception is veridical, the intention successfully executed, or the belief true (Ludwig, 2016: ch. 7). But according to François Recanati (2007), whose work Petersson draws on, the content of an intentional state does not determine the conditions of satisfaction on its own. Petersson relies on an "informal characterisation" and "common sense notion of 'content'" (2017: 211), where the content of an intentional state is what the state is directed at or about: "The thing that is believed, perceived, desired, intended, etc." (ibid.) On this notion of content, the conditions of satisfaction are partly determined by aspects of the intentional state's attitudinal mode. For example, if your intentional state is a perception, then for it to be veridical, what you perceive must then and there cause your perceptual experience. This self-referentiality of the perceptual experience and the reference to the subject of experience that it involves

[2] Bratman only provides jointly sufficient conditions for an interpersonal pattern of intentions and beliefs that could fulfil the functional role that he identifies "shared intention" with. However, necessary conditions for each participant's we-intention can plausibly be extracted from Bratman's account of shared intention (see Ludwig, 2016: 249-250). While I disagree with Bratman on some details, I believe that he has provided a powerful and illuminating reductive account of we-intention.

are, according to Recanati, not part of the content of your perceptual experience. Instead, it is part of the mode of the intentional state of perception.

By contrast to the attitudinal mode of perception, there is no self-referential and subject-referential condition in the attitudinal mode of belief. Your belief that your cat is on your hallway mat can be true even if the fact that the cat is on the mat does not play any role in the genealogy of your belief. Nevertheless, given the common sense notion of 'content', the truth conditions of your belief are not exhausted by its content. Your belief comes with a tacit perspective that determines how the content of your belief should be evaluated, such as that it is you in particular who has this belief and that it concerns whether the cat is presently on the mat that is now lying in your hallway. That my cat was on my hallway mat yesterday morning before I sold both cat and mat to you at noon is irrelevant to whether or not your belief today is true. Here, the truth conditions are determined partly by the circumstances of the agent and the way that the belief state is embedded in the agent's psychology and body. We can think of what the attitudinal mode contributes to the conditions of satisfaction as reflecting facts about the functional role of the attitude within the cognitive architecture of the agent as well as about the circumstances in which the agent is embedded (cf. Roth, 2000).

An intention is arguably self-referential in a way similar to a perception: a subject's intention is not successfully executed unless the intended action is (non-deviantly) caused by that very intention of the subject (see Roth, 2000). Petersson's innovative development of Recanati's view is the idea "that the subject of intention is a perspectival feature of intending rather [than] an element in its content" (2017: 212). Like in the case of perception, the self-reference to the subject's intention is, Petersson (2017: 212-213) argues, part of the attitudinal mode of intention rather than part of its content. The *subject of intention* is here a property of the attitude: it is the agent perspective in which the intention is held, and it is distinct from the *ontological subject* who has the intention. This thus allows for the possibility that participants who engage in joint intentional action each have an intention directed at the joint action which is held from their we-perspective. This we-perspective then partly determines how the content of such an intention should be evaluated, that is, what the intention's success conditions are. According to Petersson then, a state of intention has an agent-perspectival mode (2015: 30; 2017: 213-214).[3]

Petersson notes that classifying his perspectival account of we-intention as a mode account is misleading insofar as it suggests that we-intending is a distinct attitudinal mode along with perceiving, remembering or I-intending: "It would be less misleading to say that my approach assigns an additional, agent perspectival, feature to some kinds of attitudes, besides mode and content, and that some kinds of attitudes permit perspectival variation, not only when it comes to temporal and

[3] Petersson (2017: 214 n. 17) suggests that this framework could also be applied to perceptual states, allowing for a we-mode account of joint attention. I critically discuss such accounts in (Blomberg, 2018).

spatial perspectives, but also of agent perspectives." (2017: 213) With this qualification in mind, I interchangeably refer to Petersson's account as a perspectival account and as a mode account of we-intention.

Content and mode accounts need not differ regarding what the conditions of satisfaction for we-intentions are. Petersson's extension of Recanati's framework is itself compatible with the conditions of satisfaction for we-intention that is implied by Bratman's theory of "shared intention" for example (where a shared intention is an interpersonal pattern of we-intentions and beliefs that functions to coordinate participants' joint intentional action).[4] However, the accounts differ regarding to what extent the conditions of satisfaction are determined by the we-intentions' "contents" and to what extent they are implicitly determined by the functional role of the we-intention and the circumstances in which the participant (the ontological subject) is embedded. This is not an uninteresting difference. A mode account will arguably be less conceptually and cognitively demanding than content accounts such as Bratman's, which, for example, require participants to have higher-order intentions. One could also argue that it is better in line with our typical experiences as participants in joint activity. When engaged in joint activity, one is usually not focused on one's own and other's intentions. Except when things go wrong, one's intentions seem to rather simply be directed at the activity itself.

However, here things get slippery. Proponents of the content approach sometimes point out that when it comes to an account of we-intention, "the complex content of the intentions […] may be only tacit or implicit" (Bratman, 2014: 104). Furthermore, like Petersson, Michael Schmitz (2017) argues that agent perspective is part of the mode of an intention, but Schmitz takes the mode to be *part of* the intention's content. Similarly, Recanati (2007: 55) himself distinguishes between "the strict content of an intentional state . . . and its 'overall' or 'complete' content which includes the aspects of content determined by the mode."

It would be unfortunate if the dispute between proponents of mode and content accounts were merely verbal. In light of this, it is especially interesting that Petersson has argued that there is an important functional difference between perspectival (we-mode) we-intentions and I-mode we-intentions (intentions 'that we J'). Before examining Petersson's arguments for this in section 4, I need to briefly introduce the notions of group identification and team reasoning.

3. Team Reasoning and We-Intention

According to theories of team reasoning, individuals sometimes reason practically directly about the question "What should we do?", where this question is not

[4] Petersson (2007) has reservations regarding the conditions of satisfaction implied by Bratman's account, but these reservations are independent of the choice between a mode and a content approach.

equivalent to each individual asking the question "What should I do in light of my expectations about what you will do?" Team reasoning involves two stages. In the first stage, each individual (each team member) considers what it is best for the team to do. Given that there is one unique answer, this yields a judgement regarding what the team ought to do (a joint action). In the second stage, each then considers what he or she should do as part of that joint action. One reason for thinking that human beings sometimes do engage in such team reasoning is that it is arguably the best explanation of how individuals find the obvious and uniquely rational solution in a so-called Hi-Lo game.

To illustrate a Hi-Lo game, I will consider "the footballers' problem" (Sugden, 2003): Two players on the football team are trying to make a pass play. In the heat of the game, they cannot communicate. The pass play can be made to the left or to the right of the receiving player. A pass to the left would be preferable. A pass play to the left will be brought about if player 1 passes the ball to the left while player 2 runs to the left to receive it. Least preferable is a failure of coordination. The "game" can be represented as follows, where numbers represent utility for each player:

	Player 2	
Player 1	Left	Right
Left	10, 10	0, 0
Right	0, 0	5, 5

Orthodox game theory provides no determinate rational solution to this game. Each player is supposed to choose the best response to whatever she believes the other player will do. The theory tells each player: If the other plays left, then play left; if the other plays right, then play right. But whether the other plays left or right depends on what the other thinks that the player himself or herself will do. There is no factor that can rationally tip the players' expectations about whether the other will go left or right. But, for each player, passing/running left is intuitively the rational thing to do! Indeed, without viewing the situation through the theoretical lens of game theory, it is hard to see that there is a problem at all here.

The problem is not that players are acting egoistically, acting so that their own private preferences are satisfied. Indeed, it is natural to think that each player on a football team evaluates the outcomes in light of her "team preferences", that is, in light of her team's standard of success. (A player's private preferences need not always be aligned with her team preferences—what best furthers a football player's individual career goals need not always be what best furthers the shared goal of her team. Nevertheless, it is typically assumed that players (participants) share a single shared team utility function that is common knowledge between them, and that the team utility is equal to the average of their expected private utilities.) However, that the players have and act such that the shared team utility is maximised does not

solve a Hi-Lo problem. If the players are restricted to best-reply reasoning, who ask "What should I do for us?", then they arguably cannot rationally solve this coordination problem.

What is needed for the football players to overcome the problem is an *agency transformation*: the unit of agency presupposed in each player's practical reasoning must be changed from herself considered as a private individual ("I"), to themselves considered collectively as a team ("we"). Each player first selects the outcome that is best for the team (the first stage of team reasoning). The team reasoning footballers' problem could thus be represented like this:

	Player 2	
Player 1	Left	Right
Left	10	0
Right	0	5

Each then (in the second stage of team reasoning) intends to do his or her own part of the action profile—in this case pass/run left—that is likely to bring about the outcome that is best for the team.

According to Michael Bacharach (2006), whose account Petersson draws on, team reasoning is the result of "group identification" and the framing of a decision problem as a problem facing the group or team. As a result of identifying with the group, a team reasoner frames the coordination problem as a problem for himself or herself and the other agents considered as a team. The notion of group identification is taken from the social identity approach in social psychology (for a review, see Hogg, Abrams and Brewer 2017). In Bacharach's and Petersson's view, an agent does not voluntarily choose whether or not to identify with a group. Rather, group identification is rather arationally triggered by circumstances and situational cues that make group identity salient. One such cue, speculates Bacharach (2006), is the strong interdependence that exists between individuals' interests in a social dilemma such as the Prisoner's Dilemma or Hi-Lo.

Like Petersson (2017), I will simply take Bacharach's account for granted. I take it that we do group identify and often tacitly or explicitly do engage in team reasoning. Given that situations involving joint action will often be situations that resemble Hi-Lo in that there is a need for coordination and a scope of mutual advantage, joint action will often involve group identification and team reasoning. If this is right, then an account of we-intention should at the very least be compatible with a theory of team reasoning.

It is not obvious where in the team-reasoning framework that one should locate the we-intention. Petersson identifies the conclusion regarding what we should do as the we-intention. In his view, a participant's we-intention is thus the output of the first stage of her team reasoning. But Natalie Gold and Robert Sugden (2007: 126,

128) instead identify the we-intention with the intention to do one's own part in the optimal profile—that is, with the output of the second stage of team reasoning. This suggests that a we-intention is simply an ordinary individual intention with a distinct etiology. Since Petersson takes the intention to do one's part to be an ordinary individual (I-mode) intention, there is no substantive disagreement here.[5] Further others identify the we-intention with a commitment that is found upstream of the team reasoning, so that the we-intention establishes the group identification (Bacharach, 2006: 199 n. 7; Hakli, Miller, & Tuomela, 2010; cf. Bratman, 2014: 181-182 n. 19). Similarly, while Gold and Sugden (2007) identify the we-intention with the intention to do one's part, they suggest that a Bratmanian shared intention can "set the framework within which" (136), and provide "the background circumstances in which" participants' team reasoning can occur (117). But if Petersson's *Incompatibility Thesis* is true, then whatever this suggestion comes to, a shared intention could not directly and rationally prompt the participants to engage in team reasoning.

4. Assessing the Case for the *Incompatibility Thesis*

Petersson's (2017) arguments for the thesis that content accounts of we-intention are not compatible with Bacharach's team-reasoning framework is set out in a critical discussion of Bratman's (2014) and Raimo Tuomela's (2007; 2013) accounts of we-intention.[6] In the next four subsections, I will consider different strands of Petersson's discussion.

4.1 The Mode-Mirroring Assumption

What appears to be Petersson's core argument for the *Incompatibility Thesis* is expressed briefly in the following key passage:

> Unlike 'we intend to J' phrases of the form 'I intend that we J' are not commonly used in ordinary language, but if there is a question to which such a phrase is the answer, this seems to be a question I may ask myself when I am about to form my intention concerning us. Like in the intention that is expected to result from this deliberative process, 'we' figures in the content of the question but it is asked from my perspective rather than ours. In this framework, my intention that we do this rather than that would presumably result from what I want for us, my caring for how well we do. So, it seems reasonable to assume that the Bratmanian co-operator would not

[5] Petersson explained this in an email sent to me on April 26, 2022.

[6] Tuomela's general approach is not exclusively content-based, but Petersson argues that Tuomela's definition of a we-intention implies that participants having ordinary intentions and beliefs with certain contents appear to be sufficient for having a we-intention.

> be asking what we should do in Bacharach's distinct sense. Being a Bratmanian co-operator would not help in the potential Hi-Lo game.
>
> […] I believe […] that the explanation of her [the Bratmanian co-operator's] failure is that the group merely figures in the content of her attitudes, and that this content is conceived from an individual perspective. No *agency transformation* occurs. (Petersson, 2017: 205, emphasis in original)

An intention of the form 'I intend that we J' is here referring to a we-intention according to a simple content account. What Petersson is saying here is that if his intention 'that we J' is formed as the result of his conscious deliberation (rather than acquired spontaneously in response to his situation), then the deliberation must be prompted by "a question I may ask myself when I am about to form my intention concerning us." (ibid.) Further, Petersson suggests that the *only* question that he may ask himself when forming such an intention 'that we J' is a question of the form "What should I do?" But why could he not rationally form an intention 'that we J' as a result of deliberation prompted by the question "What should we do?" We need some reason for thinking that he could not.

The assumption that a Bratmanian co-operator would deliberate and act in accordance with what "I want for us" may suggest that Petersson thinks that the problem is that the Bratmanian co-operator cannot act in accordance with the team's preferences. On this reading, "from my perspective" would thus mean something like "given my standard of success". However, Petersson is not excluding the possibility that the Bratmanian co-operator is guided by the group's standard of success. Petersson thus accepts that a Bratmanian co-operator could ask "What should I do for us?", where 'us' merely figures in the content of the question, and adopts the standard of success of the co-operator's team in working out the answer. I may want what is best for us, where this is different from what I want us to do: When snowboarding with a group of friends, I may personally want us to take the shortest and steepest route down to base camp together, but I may nevertheless reason and act based on a stronger desire that we do what is best for the group, where this may be finding a route that takes everyone's skill level, time constraints and scenic preferences into account. This is not in tension with the content approach.

While the Bratmanian co-operator can make decisions in light of what is best for the team or group, she cannot, according to Petersson, make decisions from her team's *agential perspective*. There is no room for a "genuine agency transformation" in the content approach (Petersson, 2017: 214, 216). In critically discussing Tuomela's view, Petersson writes:

> My suggestion is that to treat the switch from I-mode to we-mode as an agency transformation of the required sort, we need a *perspectival* condition on the we-mode, a condition requiring a collectivistic feature of the way in which an intentional state (in the head of an individual) is held, rather than just requiring certain kinds of contents in her goals and beliefs. (Petersson, 2017: 210)

This is suggestive but what exactly is the problem for the content approach supposed to be? In the following, I offer a diagnosis of why Petersson thinks that there is a problem here.

Suppose that I raise the question "What should we do?" aloud out in the open between us. There is uptake of this question on your part, and we start to deliberate about what we ought to do. This deliberation unfolds in a conversational mode, with you and I talking to each other. In this case, the posing of the question, the establishment of the audience's uptake, and the deliberation that follows are all part of an interpersonal activity carried out by *us* (see Clark, 1996). The subject who deliberates, "we", is here identical to the agent of the intended action that the deliberation results in—also "we". This is a recognisable phenomenon of shared deliberation that the content approach can readily make sense of (Bratman, 2014: ch. 7). Indeed, on the content approach, one might think that this is the only way in which the question "What should we do?" can be asked as a practical deliberative question. That is, one might think that the question must be publicly asked and addressed to ourselves (that is, to us) in this way. Without shared deliberation that is carried out through social interaction between us, it may seem that "I", the deliberating agent, could not really pose the practical question about what "we", the agents whose collective options are supposed to be under consideration, should do (unless I have decision-making authority over the others). At most, one might think, I could ask "What should I do concerning us?" This question would prompt best-reply reasoning, not team reasoning.

This line of thought builds on the assumption that the subject who deliberates cannot be distinct from the agents of the joint action that is intended as a result of the deliberation: only *I* can practically deliberate about *my* actions; only *we* can practically deliberate about *our* joint actions. Christopher Woodard (2011) calls this *the mirroring assumption*. According to the mirroring assumption, "the unit of action always matches, and is determined by, the unit of agency" (263). In the footballers' problem, the unit of action consisting of both players' component actions could, according to the mirroring assumption, only be the focus of deliberation and reasons for action for the unit of agency consisting of both players, where the players would have to make up something like a joint agent or group agent.[7] Bacharach's team-reasoning framework is clearly inconsistent with the mirroring assumption (Woodard, 2011). When team reasoning, each player is a separate unit of agency who deliberates about and responds to reasons that concern an extended unit of action that includes the contributions of both players.

Petersson is thus clearly not making the mirroring assumption. On his view, the ontological subject who asks and deliberates about what we should do is an individual. However, Petersson is arguably making an analogous assumption regarding "the subject of intention" and the agents of the joint action that is intended as a result of team reasoning. (Recall that the subject of intention is distinct from

[7] Petersson uses the term "unit of activity" rather than "unit of action" (2015: 32; 2017: 200).

the ontological subject, that is, from the agent having the intention.) He is making what I will call *the mode-mirroring assumption*: The agential perspective of an intention matches, and is determined by, the agential perspective of the practical reasoning that results in the intention being formed. Given this assumption, if agents are restricted to having intentions in the I-mode—ordinary individual intentions 'that we J'—then they can only deliberate effectively from the I-perspective. They could thus only ask "What should I do for us?", not "What should we do?"

If we reject the mirroring assumption, then we should arguably also reject the mode-mirroring assumption. As far as I can see, the plausibility of the mode-mirroring assumption piggybacks entirely on the plausibility of the mirroring assumption. I suspect it seems plausible due to the same (attractive but mistaken) line of thought that I sketched above to illustrate the mirroring assumption. Given that the very idea of team reasoning depends on rejecting the mirroring assumption, those of us who believe that team reasoning is a valid form of practical reasoning should arguably reject both the mirroring assumption and the mode-mirroring assumption. At any rate, Petersson does not provide any argument for why the mode-mirroring assumption should be accepted. Hence, it is unclear why I could not rationally form an intention 'that we J' as a result of deliberating about what we should do (rather than about what I should do for us).

4.2 Prediction and Deliberation

Those who argue for the possibility of intentions 'that we J' have argued that an agent can intend 'that we J' because the agent can make reasonable assumptions or conditional predictions about what others will intend and do if she manifests that she intends that they, she and the others, J (Bratman, 2014: 73-75; Ludwig, 2016: 208-210). For example, shared background assumptions may enable such intentions to be formed, or an agent can often reliably predict that another agent will do their part of their joint J-ing when the other recognises the agent's intention that they J. These assumptions or predictions about others' behaviour or participation is comparable to assumptions or predictions about other non-agential parts of nature: e.g. just as my rational intention to light a match depends on my assumption that there will be oxygen in the room, so my rational intention that we dance depends on my assumption that there is a reasonably good chance that you will accept my invitation to dance. This involves a stance toward other agents that is different from the stance towards others presupposed by team reasoning. Team reasoning involves the idea that an agent can directly deliberate about what "we" should do, where one takes a deliberative stance not only toward one's own actions, but also toward the actions of the other team members. In light of this, one might think that the content approach to we-intentions and the team-reasoning framework are incompatible.

However, it is not clear that there is any real tension between intentions 'that we J' and the deliberative stance toward others involved in team reasoning. Proponents of the content approach such as Bratman and Ludwig offer arguments for how best-

reply reasoners can rationally intend 'that we J' because they are not making the assumption that team reasoning is possible. But once team reasoning is on the table, it arguably provides a new route to rationally forming intentions 'that we J'.[8] (I examine this possibility further in the next section.) Unless one has reasons to reject the very possibility of intentions 'that we J', we have no reason yet to think that only a perspectival (we-mode) account of we-intentions can make sense of the sort of agency transformation that is part of the team-reasoning framework.[9]

4.3. Agency transformation and voluntary control

Even if the content approach to we-intentions is compatible with a team-reasoning framework, this does not mean that a content account such as Bratman's provides an explanation or account of "genuine agency transformation". One could thus criticise content accounts for being incomplete. Petersson follows such a softer line of criticism against Tuomela's definition of a "we-mode joint intention". About this definition, Petersson raises the warranted complaint that

> there is no explicit condition in this definition [of we-intending] *preventing* the Tuomelian we-mode reasoner from framing the situation as a Bacharachian team benefactor rather than as a team reasoner, i.e. in terms of what I should do for us, rather than in terms of what we should do. (Petersson, 2017: 208, my emphasis)

This complaint could certainly be raised with respect to Bratman's account as well. So, perhaps we should read Petersson as articulating a challenge to the content approach: it must make sense of the agency transformation required for team reasoning.

But why would not Petersson's complaint also be warranted against his own perspectival account? I have argued that it is not clear why team reasoning could not give rise to intentions 'that we J'. But I think it is equally unclear why ordinary individual reasoning could not give rise to Petersson's perspectival we-intentions. Take Bratman's example of the members of an audience at a wonderful concert acquiring intentions that we applaud. Bratman describes the circumstances in which these intentions are formed as follows: "each of these intentions in favour of the group's applause is formed on the assumption that the others also so intend, an assumption grounded in common knowledge of the kind of person who attends such concerts" (2014: 73). Given my reasonable assumptions about what the others will do, and given my desire of bringing about what is best for the whole audience, I ask

[8] When each has formed an intention 'that we J', there is rational pressure for each to intend to do their own part of their J-ing (Bratman, 2014: 64; Ludwig, 2016: 103-104). The transition from intending 'that we J' to intending to do 'my part of our J-ing' corresponds to the second stage of team reasoning.

[9] For scepticism about intentions 'that we J', see e.g. (Schmid, 2008). For responses, see (Bratman, 2014: 60-64; Ludwig, 2016: 102-104). Petersson is not sceptical about such intentions.

myself, "What should I do?", and arrive at the answer: I should clap as part of our applauding. On the basis of this answer, I could arguably then permissibly form the we-intention in favour the group's applause given that I desire that the whole audience applauds and my expectation that they will do so partly by way of the support of my we-intention in favour of the audience applauding. If there are perspectival we-intentions, and if Bratman's account of how intentions 'that we J' can arise is successful, then I do not see why this account could not also describe a route by which perspectival we-intentions could be rationally formed. This account does not require the participants to be team reasoners; they can be mere "team benefactors". It is thus not clear why Petersson's perspectival account of we-intention is just as incomplete as the content account when it comes to making sense of the agency transformation that is part of team reasoning.

If we can both intend that we applaud in the I-mode and intend to applaud in the we-mode, my suggestion that ordinary I-reasoning could lead one to rationally form either sort of we-intention would require that the agent had the capacity for voluntary shifts of agent perspective, a perspective that is supposed to be a feature of the mode. After all, practical reasoning can be a consciously controlled activity. If it is rationally permissible for me to either form an intention in the I-mode or an intention in the we-mode from the same premises, then it would be odd if I could not choose which we-intention to form.

Petersson would resist this. His view is that while we have much voluntary control over the *contents* of our intentions, the matter is different when it comes to control over the *mode* and agential perspective of our attitudes:

> [W]e do not seem to have the same capacity for voluntary shifts of attitudinal modes or perspective. I do not deliberately switch from fearing that p to believing or hoping that p. […] The same appears to for perspectival differences within an attitudinal category. It seems that I cannot directly choose how distant in time the object of a certain episodic memory should appear to me, for instance. (Petersson, 2017: 215)

If this is right, then we could not choose whether to form a perspectival (we-mode) we-intention or an I-mode we-intention. While this would not establish that group-identification and taking a deliberative perspective toward the group's joint action always leads to a perspectival we-intention, nor that ordinary best-reply reasoning always leads to an I-mode we-intention, such a match between modes of reasoning and the agential perspectives of the intention does seem natural. Perhaps this is just a fact of how our psychology works. There need be no deeper explanation of how different modes of reasoning and different modes of we-intending match up.

However, Petersson is mistaken about what is outside the agent's direct voluntary control. True, I could not directly transform the intentional state of fearing that p to a state of believing that p. But the agential perspective is supposed to be a perspectival feature that can vary within one and same attitudinal mode, in this case within the attitudinal mode of intention. Even if it is true that I cannot directly shift

the temporal perspective of my episodic memories, this is arguably not due to the perspective being part of the mode rather than the content, but rather due to the attitudinal mode being that of remembering. Consider that I also do not have voluntary control over the *content* of my memories. When it comes to the attitudinal mode of intention though, I *do* have voluntary control of what I intend, the intention's content. In light of this, I could arguably also have voluntary control of the agential perspective of my intention. Nothing follows regarding the agent's voluntary control over the agential perspective from the discovery that the collectivistic feature of we-intentions is part of their mode rather than their content.

I nevertheless find it to be a plausible hypothesis that group identification, and the switch between I-reasoning and team reasoning, is not under an agent's direct voluntary control. But this issue is distinct from whether the agential perspective and the contents of our intentions are under our voluntary control. Proponents of content accounts can, just as proponents of mode accounts, appeal to the socio-psychological theory of group identification and theories of team reasoning in order to make sense of agency transformation and the extent to which it is under our control. I-reasoning and team reasoning could both, it seems, result in either (I-mode) intentions 'that we J' or in we-mode we-intentions.

5. Conclusion

I have critically discussed Petersson's arguments for the thesis that a content approach to we-intention is incompatible with Bacharach's (2006) team-reasoning framework. The allure of his core argument can, I believe, be explained away once we see that if we accept the validity of team reasoning, then what I have called the mode-mirroring assumption, and not only the mirroring assumption, should be rejected. Furthermore, a proponent of the content approach can make use of the same ideas from social psychology and team reasoning theory to make sense of agency transformation as a proponent of the mode approach. To sum up, Petersson's arguments for the *Incompatibility Thesis* are unsuccessful.

My arguments do not bear directly on the plausibility of Petersson's own positive account of we-intention. In my view, his account is the clearest and best-developed version of a mode account available. I also think that there is an allusive fit between his account and Bacharach's theory of team reasoning. Petersson's account and Bacharach's theory both make salient the possibility of joint deliberation and joint intentional action in which agents are not explicitly thinking about and acting with respect to their group, but where the collective feature of the deliberation and action enters the experience of the participants in a more implicit way. In the case of Bacharach's theory, the collective feature is part of the players' framing of the decision situation; in the case of Petersson's account, the collective feature is implicit in the functional role of the we-intention. While such joint deliberation and

joint intentional action are not incompatible with the content approach, they are not the kinds of cases that this approach puts centre stage.

If an agent can intend from an I-perspective or a we-perspective, then it seems intuitively plausible that the mode of her practical reasoning—I-reasoning or team reasoning—should "colour" the perspective of the intention that this reasoning concludes in. Nevertheless, the explanation of agency transformation consists at its core of the group identification mechanism and the patterns of inference mandated by team reasoning (see Pacherie, 2013: 1834). Arguably, the introduction of a switch to a we-perspective in the intention's mode is an appealing embellishment to the theory rather than a required component of it.[10]

References

Bacharach, Michael (2006) *Beyond individual choice: Teams and frames in game theory* (N. Gold & R. Sugden, eds.). Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Blomberg, Olle (2018) "We-Experiences, Common Knowledge, and the Mode Approach to Collective Intentionality". *Journal of Social Philosophy,* 49(1): 183–203.

Blomberg, Olle, & Björn Petersson (2023) "Team reasoning and Collective Moral Obligation". *Social Theory and Practice.* Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.5840/soctheorpract2023120177

Bratman, Michael E. (2014) *Shared agency: A planning theory of acting together*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Clark, Herbert H. (1996) *Using Language*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Gold, Natalie, & Robert Sugden (2007) "Collective intentions and team agency". *Journal of Philosophy*, 104(3):109–37.

Hakli, Raul, Kaarlo Miller, & Raimo Tuomela (2010) "Two Kinds of We-Reasoning". *Economics and Philosophy* 26(3): 291–320.

Hogg, Michael A., Dominic Abrams, & Marilynn B. Brewer (2017) "Social Identity: The Role of Self in Group Processes and Intergroup Relations". *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 20(5): 570–81.

Ludwig, Kirk (2016) *From individual to plural agency – Collective action: Volume 1.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Pacherie, Elisabeth (2013) "Intentional joint agency: Shared intention lite". *Synthese*, 190(10): 1817–39.

Petersson, Björn (2007) "Collectivity and circularity". *Journal of Philosophy*, 104(3): 138–56.

[10] Thanks to Mattias Gunnemyr, Kirk Ludwig and Abe Roth for helpful feedback on a draft of this chapter. The research was funded by the Lund Gothenburg Responsibility Project (PI: Paul Russell), which is in turn funded by the Swedish Research Council.

Petersson, Björn (2015) "Bratman, Searle, and simplicity. A comment on Bratman: Shared Agency, A Planning Theory of Acting Together". *Journal of Social Ontology*, 1(1): 27–37.

Petersson, Björn (2017) "Team Reasoning and Collective Intentionality". *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 8(2): 199–218.

Recanati, François (2007) "Content, mode, and self-reference" in S. L. Tsohatzidis (Ed.) *John Searle's Philosophy of Language: Force, Meaning, and Mind* (49–63). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Roth, Abraham Sesshu (2000) 'The Self-Referentiality of Intentions'. *Philosophical Studies* 97(1): 11–51.

Schmid, Hans Bernhard (2008) "Plural action". *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 38(1): 25–54.

Schmid, Hans Bernhard (2014) "Plural self-awareness". *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 13(7): 7–24.

Schmitz, Michael (2017) "What Is a Mode Account of Collective Intentionality?" in G. Preyer, & G. Peter (Eds.) *Social Ontology and Collective Intentionality: Critical Essays on the Philosophy of Raimo Tuomela with His Responses* (37–70). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Schweikard, David P. & Hans Bernhard Schmid, "Collective intentionality", in E. N. Zalta (Ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2021 Edition), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/collective-intentionality/>.

Sugden, Robert (2003) "The logic of team reasoning". *Philosophical Explorations*, 6(3): 165–181.

Tuomela, Raimo (2007) *The Philosophy of Sociality: The Shared Point of View.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Tuomela, Raimo (2013) *Social Ontology: Collective Intentionality and Group Agents*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Woodard, Christopher (2011) "Rationality and the Unit of Action". *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 2(2): 261–77.