

Response to Kirk Ludwig's paper *Methodological Individualism, the We-mode, and Team reasoning*

In his paper Ludwig argues for methodological individualism and, in a novel way, against my we-mode approach.ⁱ According to him (I) the irreducibility of the we-mode to the I-mode (as claimed in my Social Ontology (SO)) does not entail that methodological individualism is to be rejected.ⁱⁱ He also argues that (II) the three central criteria for we-mode activities, viz. the group reason, collectivity, and collective commitment criteria, that I present and defend in SO can plausibly be satisfied by a reductive account. Furthermore, he argues that (III) the arguments in the book do not give reason to think that a reductive account cannot be adequate to the descriptive and explanatory requirements of a theory of the social world. In turn I will below argue that theses I, II, and III are not acceptable.

Ludwig characterizes his methodological individualism as follows (p. 2): “The basic idea of methodological individualism in the social sciences is that we can understand social action and individual action ultimately in terms of concepts we deploy in understanding individual action.”ⁱⁱⁱ This is an unclear criterion, for “we” (e.g. ordinary people and theoreticians) understand and explain individual action in different ways, including causal and religious as well as generally spooky entities and processes. What Ludwig seems to include as potential individualistic explanantia are groups that are reducible or “neutrally describable” (with respect to the I-mode/we-mode distinction): “We can refer to groups, in particular groups of agents, and their properties and relations (so long as they aren't irreducibly social), compatible with methodological individualism. But what we don't allow are notions in our theoretical and explanatory practices that cannot be understood in terms of notions that apply in the first instance to individuals and groups neutrally described with respect to whether they form a group oriented toward joint intentional action.”

This criterion refers to a group of individuals who intend to perform a joint action. A neutral description of the group seems to mean in concrete terms that we can equally well speak about some individuals doing something together and, as a matter of the language, their group doing it. (E.g. the sentences “the boys watched the match” versus “the group of boys watched the match” seem to coincide in terms of the facts making them true.)

Yet, this kind of equivalence or neutral describability seems not to apply to all important cases. Ludwig's criterion seems to exclude e.g. corporations (think of "Apple sold a big amount of I-pads last year" or "The bank bought a large amount of state bonds"). There seems to be no individualistic and group-neutral way (or at least no feasible way) to describe such corporate actions. Ludwig's criterion excludes or seems generally to exclude irreducible groups (which is probably what he purports).^{iv} This follows from the redescription criterion which in effect seems to be a demand for reduction (in the case of any group action).

Furthermore, groups in Ludwig's sense are said to be "simply collections of objects", and this certainly is not what is generally meant, for social groups are much richer entities involving interactions and dependencies – and in my account also an ethos (central goals, beliefs, practices, etc., see my SO, chapter 2). In my account of the we-mode, we-mode groups *as social constructs* are also involved (see below). Such constructs have a special social or institutional status for the members e.g. in creating normative authority for the group to guide the members (comparable to the status and authority of e.g. a leader).

Note in the way of comparison that my approach in SO in some cases uses *prima facie* irreducible groups for explaining individual action – see the spy example in Chapter 2 where a state is offered as an explanans of individual action. A democratic state may be viewed as a complex, normatively structured social group with a government. However, Ludwig's above redescription criterion seems to exclude states and corporations from the scope of his methodological individualism and thus blocks social science from dealing with one of its central notions.^v

As to Ludwig's individualistic reduction program, it seems somewhat modest as it is not a full-scale one. He is looking for individualistic analogs only for the central we-mode criteria (the group reason, collectivity, and collective commitment conditions). These analogs should be compatible with the original we-mode ones. (Compatibility just means absence of contradiction – but something like extensional equivalence would seem to be a better requirement.) He does not take a stand on whether we-mode *states* (or *notions*, to use Ludwig's term) are reducible to I-mode states (notions), reducibility understood in terms of the possibility of individualistic (or I-mode) reducts of the we-mode notions at stake (see p. 6 of his paper).

He says on pp. 6-7 about his purported reductive account: "If a reductive account is possible, then it will not disturb any of the claims made about the importance of we-mode groups or their functioning. It may still be maintained, so far it goes, that there is a contrast between we-mode groups and I-mode groups, and that we-mode groups lead to more efficient forms of group action, solve or dissolve collective action dilemmas, and so on." At least the first of the quoted claims seems not to be right. Considering a we-mode group, its members must generally satisfy the three

we-mode criteria to be a we-mode group.^{vi} But if those criteria have been individualistically reduced there is no functioning we-mode group but only a group that perhaps cannot truly act as a group and thus not as a we-mode group can. The result of reducing just the we-mode criteria seems to lead to an odd mixture of I-mode features and we-mode features. Such an individualistic reduct of the we-mode group (or any other we-mode notion) fits rather poorly together with such central features of a we-mode group as functionally having the top-down nature and the capacity to act as a unit (in contrast to I-mode groups where individuals are the basic actors). The reductive account of the we-mode criteria thus seems after all to be related to a (partial) reduction of we-mode notions – e.g. a we-mode group whose members after the reduction only satisfy the reduced individualistic criteria and can hardly any more be and act as a we-mode group. (See the discussion below on Ludwig’s reductive account of the we-mode criteria.)

Of course the onus probandi is on methodological individualists to show in concrete terms how the relevant reduction can take place. My present view is that the task is hard if not impossible to perform fully – not only in practice but also in theory – e.g. due to emergent group properties and the top-down feature of we-mode groups and their capacity to make choices. Ludwig’s methodological individualism in my view is too strict an ontological doctrine as it seems to leave out many central kinds of social groups and structures that are normally thought of as individualistically irreducible. We can do better by combining such methodological individualism with a modicum of collectivism by accepting irreducible, normatively structured social groups and institutions, some of them having fictitious (artificial) features, et cetera.

Note that, in contrast to Ludwig’s view that nevertheless accepts groups satisfying the redescription criterion, classical methodological individualists (as advocated by e.g. Schumpeter, Weber, von Hayek, Popper, Watkins, and Elster, as well as newly Bratman – see SO, p. 11 and Udehn, 2001) generally do *not* accept social groups, and on this score Ludwig’s doctrine seems not to tally with the history of the doctrine in spite of his neutral describability requirement.

Ludwig objects to my way of “defining” the we-mode as distinct from and contrastive to the I-mode. Yet I nowhere in SO speak of *definitions* of modes but only of *elucidations*, which do *not* generally result in sufficient and necessary conditions in the way definitions do, and thus e.g. it is not true that my account definitionally blocks reduction to I-mode (as Ludwig claims). E.g. my basic accounts of I-mode notions on p. 70 of SO do not mention the we-mode and the elucidation (WMI) on p. 68 gives only a sufficient condition for a general we-mode intention.

We can say roughly and intuitively that we-mode thinking and acting is acting as a we-reasoning group member, where we-reasoning and the resulting we-action satisfies the three basic criteria for the we-mode. In contrast, I-mode thinking and acting is thinking and acting as a private

person. Already this makes it clear that I-mode and we-mode concepts are different and in some contexts contrast with each other, as Ludwig points out. But I-mode notions are not *defined* by assuming that they strictly exclude we-mode notions. We can compare this case with the physical case that the notion of temperature is not *conceptually* reducible to mean kinetic energy even if it is *ontologically* reducible to it. Note, too, that I argue in the book especially in chapters 3 and 7 (and below) that there is functional behavioral difference between I-mode and we-mode notions and that we-mode notions and states hence also are ontologically different from I-mode notions and states.

My account allows that one can have mental attitudes and act either in the I-mode or in the we-mode but acting in the I-mode and in the we-mode at the same time through the same action token is not possible due to the different satisfaction conditions of these two action modes. Which mode is at stake depends respectively on the fulfilment of the we-mode or the I-mode criteria. In the we-mode case the three we-mode criterial requirements (that are at least necessary conditions for the we-mode) must be satisfied. However, an important feature of the we-mode is that it relies on the “we-perspective” as its background and on we-thinking with a *non-distributive* and properly collective (and conceptually and ontologically) irreducible “we” as its source. The I-mode is analogously based on the “I-perspective” and I-thinking and typically (e.g. in Bratman’s (2014) individualistic account) on the employment of a *distributive* notion of “we”. Accordingly, these basic underlying differences between the we-mode and the I-mode concern not only the psychological generation of the states in question but, centrally, also their conceptual and ontological content, especially whether an attitude is non-distributive (think of a group’s goal) or distributive (amounting to the members’ shared goal).

As said, Ludwig aims at effecting a reductive account of the aforementioned three criteria for we-mode activities (see also Tuomela, 2007, Chapter 4). It is not quite clear what this involves. Consider first collective commitment. Suppose that some persons are collectively committed to performing an action X. An individualist may want to have some kind of individualistic (or I-mode) conditions to represent collective commitment. Can they amount to full individualistic truth conditions for we-mode states? Hardly, as my arguments in SO and as e.g. the generally accepted argument against the definability of group notions making them *multiply realizable* indicate, this gives an argument against the strict individualistic reducibility of collective commitment.

In broader terms, we can say that the claimed fact that collective commitment (and indeed the other two aforementioned criteria) are not reducible hangs in part on the strong bonds that my group-centered we-mode account imposes on the interrelation between the participants’ psychological states (through the non-distributive notions of “we” and notions conceptually involving “we”). For argument for this kind of connectivity between the individuals’ states, recall

the above remarks on the non-distributive “we” and the underlying we-perspective and we-thinking as well as the important role of groups. As to we-mode collective commitment specifically, I claim that it is stronger than shared private commitment (even when Bratman’s (2014) well-known conditions – such as the meshing subplans and mutual responsiveness conditions – are in place in the analysis), and this holds in part because we-mode collective commitment is properly *group-based* (see SO, pp. 43-46)), which is not the case in the individualistic approach – not even in the pro-group I-mode case.^{vii}

When discussing we-mode groups, we must either be dealing with a pre-formed group or the people in question must at least be thinking that they form or will form a (we-mode) group and are disposed to act jointly to satisfy the group’s ethos (its central goals and principles) or ethos-to-be. We can say that the members (“we”) construct the group in the sense of making a collection of people “*our group*”.^{viii} Such a group is a group agent that is capable of action as a group at least in principle, even if it is largely based on collective acceptance or construction. A group in this sense is a *social or institutional status* much in the sense that Searle has thought of social statuses.^{ix} Such a social status is usually either conceptually or contingently connected to a web of functions and deontic power considerations and it seems to be *prima facie* individualistically irreducible in that it is not individualistically definable. The multiple realizability point gives an argument also here – e.g. a we-mode group will generally preserve its social status with changes in membership.

The fact of the members’ strong interconnections in a we-mode group also bears on the claimed irreducibility of the members’ collective commitment to the group’s goals (especially its ethos). This also applies to the group’s commitment, given that the members act as group members and fulfill the general normative recommendations and obligations ensuing from the group’s ethos.

Let us assume here that we are dealing with a pre-formed we-mode group, for simplicity. If we are able to argue in terms of this case that collective we-mode commitment and shared I-mode commitment are relevantly different e.g. in that collective commitment has emergent features, we have blocked reduction. Now, assume that the we-mode group is committed to a joint action X. The group’s commitment involves that its members must participate in the group’s commitment and thus be collectively (or, here equivalently, jointly) committed to X as group members. The group members’ collective commitment can be argued to be emergent in the sense that the members are committed to the group (*viz.* to other group members and also to furthering its ethos) in relation to the content, X, as compared with the case of shared I-mode commitments. No single member can alone be collectively committed to X, if the other members do not participate in the collective commitment (nor in satisfying its joint intention that entails collective commitment). Collective commitment thus seems irreducible in the present sense of emergence.^x

Furthermore, in the we-mode case the members act as parts of a whole (the group), and, as argued in chapter 7 of SO in the context of discussing team reasoning, have group-based reasons to abstain from free-riding: when acting as group members they view interaction situations holistically, in a sense seen (and transformed) from the group's point of view. This differs from the standard game-theoretic individualistic sense. They thus come to have fewer incentives to give up the group's action than there are in the (pro-group) I-mode case. There will eventually in some cases then be concrete differences in relevant action (examples are given in terms of collective action dilemmas in SO, also cf. below). This means that the attempted individualistic reduction of collective commitment to shared I-mode intention seems not to work: we-mode collective commitment tends in some cases to lead to different actions than shared I-mode commitments. Collective commitment is irreducible not only in that it is emergent in comparison with shared I-mode commitments but also because the former and the latter may differ as to the kinds of action they respectively lead to (e.g. to more free-riding in collective action dilemmas in the pro-group I-mode case – see the final section of this response).

It is central, too, that in the context of we-mode joint action (or as one can say, joint action as a group), the group members generally commit themselves to the action through their joint intention (expressed e.g. by “We will do X together as a group”, where “we” is a collective non-distributive notion expressing group-based togetherness). The group will thereby become committed, and the members are accordingly taken to be collectively committed to X. A single member is said to take part in the members' non-distributive collective commitment, which is not reducible to individual commitments or to shared I-mode commitments.

As emphasized, the notion of collective commitment is *group-based* in contrast to shared I-mode commitments and for this reason more resistant to change than the latter notion.^{xi} This in turn is because the action here is group action and not merely a collection of individuals' actions. *To be part of a group* is in itself a way to unite with others in addition to *acting as a part of that group*. It gives a stronger bond between the members than acting with others toward a mere shared goal. This feature concerns not only a quantitative difference but a qualitative one due to the just mentioned facts.

In normal cases a member needs the group's permission to give up his participation in the collective commitment, and this makes it harder for the members to give up their commitment than in the individualistic case unless the latter is based on normative agreement. Collective commitment thus seems to differ from shared individual commitments with respect to persistence.

Note that if the members are rationally collectively committed they will have compatible intentions to carry out their participatory actions and will thus have meshing subplans in Bratman's,

2014, sense.^{xii} A participant cannot realize her intention without the entailed compatibility between the participants' intentions and resulting actions and without the right kind of intentional action related to the agents' shared aim. (My aforementioned 2000 account gives at least a partial response to Ludwig's criticism in note 3 of his paper.)^{xiii}

Given the above arguments, I conclude that the individualistic reduction attempt of collective commitment by Ludwig is at best partly successful.

Group reasons in SO are group-based and group-centered facts such as the one expressed by "the group has collectively accepted to have the house painted" or "the group's goal is to paint the house". This kind of fact together with relevant means-end beliefs will generate what the members are to do as their parts of the group's action. A group reason is not to be confused with a group's reason, viz. the reason that a *group agent* has for performing its intended action, but the latter tends to generate the former (see SO, chapter 4, for more details). Unfortunately Ludwig does not keep these two notions separate, and this causes some confusion (see p. 6 of his paper).^{xiv} A group reason is not to be confused with group members' shared private (viz. I-mode) reasons either, which do not deal with the group as a whole that involves positions for individual members and that makes change of members possible without the group losing its intertemporal identity. Motivating group reasons are irreducible to private reasons basically because they are geared to the group's interests and not only to individual members' shared individualistic, I-mode interests. When functioning as a group member in the full ethos-respecting sense the ethos gives we-based group reasons to the members, e.g. the fact that the group's plan is to paint its club house can be a group reason for a member's participation, although the members need not privately have this reason. Thus the group reason need not supervene on private, I-mode reasons, for a change of the group reason might not involve a change in the members' I-mode reasons (assumed to be nonexistent here). The group reason thus would be irreducible in the supervenience sense.

In his discussion of group-based reasons Ludwig seems to have in mind only individualistic counterparts of we-mode group reasons – perhaps because that is (or seems to be) the best that the individualistic account can give (because it does not seem to accept irreducible groups). There can only be individualistic private interests and reasons. Such shared reasons fall short of being group reasons based on reasons that group agents can have and that generate group reasons for participation in the sense of SO. His claim on pp. 9-10 that Bratman's account satisfies my three central criteria of the we-mode is at best inaccurate as he does not seriously look for Bratmanian counterparts, if any, to my specific accounts of the aforementioned central criteria (group reason, collectivity, and collective commitment) in chapter 2 of SO; and in any case he fails to take into account the fact that my criteria are group-based, which is not and cannot be the case in Bratman's

account because it does not accept groups and group notions in the same ordinary sense as *prima facie* irreducible primitive notions as my theory does.

As to authoritative reasons, Ludwig argues as follows for his reductive view p. 6: “And finally since joint intending to X involves at least tacitly agreeing that we will have as our goal X-ing ... we secure also that we act for a group reason in the sense of acting for group interests.” (Note the ambiguity here, as both the group agent’s reasons and group reasons in my sense serve group interests). Ludwig’s and Bratman’s kind of individualistic shared reasons can be authoritative for the individual members if based on their agreement. But yet they do not relate to the group as a whole (something that arguably can presumably exist only in the group agent sense).

Especially in the hierarchical power-involving we-mode case the group’s collectively accepted intention, decision, order, or instruction typically is the basis for the members’ group reason to perform their participatory actions. In my account we can say that the members of a we-mode group will of course have the belief that they belong to the group and will see (and accept) the group’s goals (and more broadly its ethos) as their reasons for acting as group members.^{xv}

Group reasons seem in general to be irreducible because of the group-psychological facts that they are based on. If those facts are irreducible as I think they in principle normally are – cf. e.g. a group’s intention, which need not supervene on the members’ I-mode intentions or on we-mode joint intentions (although the latter generally do supervene on the members’ non-joint we-mode intentions).

Note, however, that the members of an I-mode group may share a goal such as an ethos based on the group members’ agreement or contract.^{xvi} Thus the members’ shared goal here is authoritative for each member but yet a goal shared by the members cannot be regarded as the group’s goal in the proper sense but at most in an attenuated sense.

To illustrate, consider a case where a group’s goal is to build a bridge. The basic difference between the we-mode and the I-mode approach is that in the we-mode case there is only the single goal to build the bridge, and it applies to every member as her goal as a group member (each participating member accepts for herself “our goal is to build the bridge”). In the I-mode case the group’s goal consists of the participants’ shared goals to build a bridge together. The group’s goal here is constructed out of the members’ shared goals in contrast to the we-mode case with its non-distributive group goals. The members’ group reason in the we-mode case is the fact that the group has accepted for itself the goal of building the bridge. In the I-mode case we are dealing with a group goal only in the weak sense of shared personal goals.

To return briefly to the *collectivity* condition, Ludwig says this about Bratman's account (p. 6): "... on Bratman's account we share an intention to J *only if* each of us intends that we J by way of meshing subplans associated with our intending that we J. Thus the account clearly satisfies the collectivity condition." I may accept this point for an individualistic account such as Bratman's where a distributive goal and a distributive "we" is employed – but only with the remark that I have not given a detailed account of the collectivity condition for the I-mode case in SO. In the corresponding we-mode case the group is seen as an integrated whole, a team, which tends to make the group's attitudes generally non-distributive and irreducible. The necessity involved in the formulation of the collectivity condition in the we-mode case is quasi-conceptual necessity due to the fact that there is only one goal – the group's basically non-distributive goal.

In the above quote from Ludwig's paper the sharing of the intention seems necessary due to purely linguistic or logical reasons (if I intend and you intend, then we on logical grounds necessarily "weakly" share the intention, viz. you-and-I intend). On the other hand, if you are part of our we-mode group we have the result that any satisfied group goal in the we-mode case quasi-conceptually necessarily satisfies the collective same-content group goal (e.g. that we have painted our house that was our group's goal) that the members have and also their participant-specific subgoals (e.g. to paint the window panes). The analogous point applies to the bridge building case in the we-mode case.

In the I-mode case the personal goals of the participants to build a bridge are only externally and contingently connected in the first place, and the joint satisfaction property comes to hold generally only upon the participants' or a theoretician's having definitionally – but only "externally" and stipulatively – put together the participants' goals to become the group's goal. The members did not internally construct a goal for their group. So a kind of externally imposed necessary satisfaction property comes to hold after all, but it clearly differs from the internally constructed necessity in the we-mode case. But if in the I-mode case the participants have made an agreement to build a bridge, then the collectivity condition applies to them in a form at least resembling the we-mode case.

However, what the individualistic reduct of an agreement is, is not clear in the present discussion, partly because Ludwig actually seems not to include such reduction in his program that only concerns the reduction of the we-mode criteria not the states or, as he says, notions in question.

My general conclusion is that Ludwig's reductive argument is not successful in the case of the collective commitment and the group reason criteria of the we-mode. While it may apply to simple applications of the collectivity condition (concerning e.g., attitude satisfaction), what

happens in the case of necessity in more general cases (such as collectivity in the case of participatory action) remains unclear and open (see Tuomela, 2007, esp. p. 50, for such cases).

However, in general Ludwig has succeeded in showing that something analogous to the we-mode case can be achieved in the I-mode case and that the we-mode criteria in this sense can to an extent be imitated by, and understood in terms of individualistic reduction conditions.^{xvii}

The argument from Team Reasoning

As to the alleged irreducibility of we-mode attitudes and activities Ludwig briefly considers a few of the arguments in SO, viz. the arguments from collective commitment, group reason, collectivity condition, explanation, and the argument from team reasoning, and I have above commented on his account.^{xviii} As team reasoning (or, in my account, group-based reasoning) is a central topic here, I will discuss it in some detail below.

The most interesting notion of irreducibility in general is ontological irreducibility (e.g. irreducibility in the sense of emergence), while philosophers generally work with conceptual reducibility – perhaps partly because in that case all the data are in principle available while ontological irreducibility is something that in general cannot be decided about without leaving one’s ivory chamber and resorting to scientific research and information. The discussion below of team reasoning purports to show that, relative to some (perhaps controversial) assumptions, we-mode activities are functionally and ontologically irreducible.^{xix}

Ludwig’s critical review of my game-theoretic arguments in Chapter 7 is interesting and contains many good points, but is yet a bit one-sided, as will be seen. Let me discuss some of its central elements and then say why I think my approach still has not been refuted as claimed by Ludwig. Why my account still stands has to do with the fact that my group-based view differs somewhat from Bacharach’s and others’ (e.g. Sugden’s) views of “team reasoning” or, equivalently “we-reasoning”.

A central point in my response is that I am assuming that the participants of a we-mode group in the game-theoretic situations are members of the group and act as we-reasoning group members, where the group acts through its members’ performances of their parts of the group’s action. I build on this general idea also in what I say about group identification, group thinking and reasoning and apply it even when dealing with simple game-theoretic examples that are far from typical real life situations.

My argument for the functional difference between the we-mode approach and the (pro-group) I-mode approach as well as indeed for the irreducibility of we-mode states and actions (and more broadly in a way for the we-mode approach) in SO relies on the fact that there are at least some cases in which this holistic approach fares better on “rational-structural” grounds related to action equilibria than does the I-mode approach. This applies especially to many cases of collective action dilemmas. That will suffice for my present purposes. I am thus not claiming more in my team reasoning arguments in SO and below than that the former at least in *some cases* is better than the latter.

Let me now go to Ludwig’s discussion of collective action dilemmas, focusing on the simple two-person Hi-Lo game. However, my main argument actually rests on Bacharach’s Theorem 2 of his 1999 paper, but unfortunately Ludwig does not focus on this theorem. This theorem shows that in some cases *uti* (unreliable team interaction) structures can have a different number of action equilibria than corresponding Bayesian games (i.e. “Harsanyi games”, Bacharach, p. 128). I will return to this below.

We consider the following standard Hi-Lo game that has two equilibria, HiHi and LoLo:

	Hi	Lo
Hi	3,3	0,0
Lo	0,0	1,1

Here is a practical reasoning schema related to this game. It was originally presented in Hakli & al. 2010, p. 300, and reproduced on p. 187 of SO:

(I)

1. We intend to maximize group utility.
2. Outcome HiHi uniquely maximizes group utility.

Therefore,

3. I will perform my component in HiHi, that is, Hi.

Premise 1 can also be written in group terminology because the we-mode is essentially group-dependent and because “we” in this case refers to a collective, non-distributive notion.^{xx} The important thing here is that the group is the conceptually primary chooser (which makes its choices via its members acting as group members). The group ranks the joint outcomes and rationally prefers HiHi to other joint outcomes and chooses it as its goal, and to maximize the group utility the members all are to choose Hi because of being bound by their group’s choice to bring about outcome HiHi and its taking that to maximize group utility.^{xxi} The we-mode approach in effect transforms the original individualistic game into a game where the group has to choose between

HiHi, HiLo, LoHi, and LoLo, and where the result will be its choice of HiHi that uniquely maximizes the group utility (giving the 6 as the sum of utility points to it).

This contrasts with pro-group I-mode we-reasoning, where by assumption the participants reason individually and independently and intend to further the group's goal. However, I see several possibilities to interpret the notion of a pro-group I-mode reasoner (Bacharach's "group benefactor") as well as the circumstances in which they operate. Thus, at one extreme the group benefactors may form a *social I-mode group* capable of acting as a group in addition to the already existing we-mode group of team or group reasoners. However, as long as individualism is accepted e.g. in the recent sense of Bratman (2014), in such a group the individuals cannot make binding agreements and cannot give away some of their authority to act (which they do in the we-mode case).^{xxii} This constraint makes we-mode reasoning and (pro-group) I-mode reasoning different also in game-theoretical contexts where binding agreements are not allowed. Even if binding agreements were allowed, in the I-mode case the basic actor and chooser is the individual and not the group (as in the we-mode case) and this affects the choice situation: In collective action dilemmas there is temptation to defect especially for individualistically reasoning participants, and there will always be some uncertainty concerning the other's choice in a coordination case. Furthermore, the pro-group I-mode participants are not as tightly connected as the participants in the we-mode case are – due to the holistic nature of the non-distributive "we" and collective commitment in that case in contrast to the distributive "we" in the (pro-group) I-mode case. Recall that conceptually the main chooser in the we-mode case is the group and the members are to take its choices into account while the individual members independently and autonomously make the choices in the I-mode case.

In the individualistic pro-group I-mode case we have the alternative that in effect was used in the Hakli & al. 2010 paper and in SO. In it the group benefactors may be unknown to each other and reason fully independently from others but yet share the goal to act for the best circumstantially obtainable group good. The central point here is that the participants generally do not have at least full reason to trust that the other will choose Hi. It is assumed that there will be no or only some communication between the participants and no agreement making. Some risk concerning the other participant's choice will always be present in partial contrast to the we-mode case (where the group is the primary chooser and the members typically trust that the other will cooperate (choose Hi) on the basis of the group's intention to choose HiHi (recall premise 1 in schema (I)).^{xxiii}

Consider thus this schema from the Hakli et al. paper and from SO:

(II)

1. You and I intend to maximize group utility.^{xxiv}
2. If you choose Hi, my choosing Hi maximizes group utility.
3. If you choose Lo, my choosing Lo maximizes group utility.

Therefore,

4. I will perform what?

Here you and I both intend to maximize group utility (the sum of the participants' utilities), but we individually and independently choose our participatory actions. This way of reasoning is said to lead to an impasse in Hakli et al. (loc.cit.) in the sense indicated by 4 above.

Ludwig's basic point concerning these schemas is this (pp. 27-28):

“There is an initial puzzle here. If premise 2 is true in the first argument, then there is a unique outcome that maximizes group utility that is determined by the payoff structure in the matrix. In that case, premise 3 of the second argument is false, and premise 2 seems to have a false presupposition. Instead, we should replace 2 and 3 in the second argument with 2 in the first, and then it seems that the problem is solved, even if the participants can't communicate with one another. *For if they know that both intend to maximize group utility, and there is a unique way to do it, they know what each needs to do, and know that the other knows that and so on* [my italics]. We could insist that 2 and 3 in the second argument are correct, but then 2 in the first would be false, and we-mode we-reasoning would be faced with the same problem. We might try to avoid this by saying that ‘maximizing group utility’ means different things in the first argument and in the second, but then we would not be comparing reasoning about the same goal. The problem here seems to me to be difficult to avoid. If you and I *intend* to promote some interest of the group, and we both know that, and there is a unique, or unique best, way to do it, then that determines our choice. If there is not, then we-mode we-reasoning is not going to help.”

As to schema (II), its premise 2 could be improved by adding to it after the second “Hi” the phrase “and our choices leading to HiHi maximize group utility” and in the third premise instead after the second “Lo” the phrase “and our choices leading to LoLo maximize the group utility achievable under the present conditions”.) Now Ludwig's criticisms in the italicized passage do not hold true.

To rehash, we are here dealing with two different kinds of cases, the (we-mode) group case and the individualistic case with pro-group I-moderers. In the we-mode case the group chooses HiHi and hence the members choose Hi. If in the pro-group I-mode case the participants are able to keep together they may collectively arrive at HiHi. Such keeping together seems to need special contingent social psychological assumptions about the participants. But in all cases the coordinative result is risky and uncertain to some extent (and thus in the second schema no rational single action recommendation is strictly possible).

A somewhat different route to solving the Hi-Lo and other collective action dilemmas (e.g. the PD) is provided by Bacharach's 1999 theorem 2 (see SO p. 193). The application of this theorem is in fact my main way to solve collective action dilemmas. According to Bacharach's theorem, utis in some central cases have a different number of equilibria from what the corresponding Bayesian game entails (see Bacharach, 1999, pp. 128-130, for the Bayesian game). Applying this theorem to Hi-Lo and the improved version of the above schema (II) for Hi-Lo gives the result that when the joint probability of the participants to act jointly equals 1, both HiHi and

LoLo will be equilibria in the Bayesian game that the individualistically reasoning group benefactors are participating in, but in the we-mode team reasoners' uti game HiHi is the *sole* equilibrium (Bacharach, 1999, p. 130). This result means that there are circumstances in which we-mode reasoning leads to the recommendation for the participants to choose Hi, but no specific recommendation concerning the best choice in the individualistic Bayesian game can rationally be made. These remarks related to the difference between the sets of equilibria hold true provided that, on the one hand, we-mode reasoning and team reasoning (performed by a team that can truly act as a team) lead to the same action recommendations and that, on the other hand, pro-group I-mode reasoning and individualistic Bacharachian group benefactor reasoning lead to the same action recommendations. (See the discussion in chapter 7 of SO.)

We-mode reasoning has been shown theoretically to fare better than I-mode reasoning in some cases in the sense of leading to the group's choice of HiHi (through each member's choice of Hi) in contrast to the Bayesian case that gives no definite recommendation for the individualistically reasoning participants. Thus, contrary to Ludwig's claim on p. 14 of his paper, Bacharach's theorem, through leading to different action recommendations in the we-mode case and its individualistic pro-group I-mode counterpart, does support the claim of the irreducibility of we-mode reasoning in comparison with I-mode reasoning, given the bridge assumptions made above.

My discussion indicates that the we-mode approach is irreducible and functionally better than pro-group I-mode acting in some cases such as Paretian collective action dilemmas and generally in the case of large organized groups (on the latter point see my SO book). We recall that my account is a partly holistic top down approach where the group chooses its goal (and in the game-theoretic case a certain joint outcome from among all possible joint outcomes) and where the group acts through its members' actions to satisfy its goal.

The present approach contrasts with individualistic approaches such as Ludwig's and Bratman's where individuals are the primary choosers. I have claimed above that we-mode team reasoning is irreducible to individualistic accounts because of its inbuilt holistic group-features and its (partial) top-down functioning.^{xxv} Individualistic reasoning can, however, at least sometimes fare equally well in prediction and explanation tasks with contingent auxiliary assumptions as also Ludwig's reduction attempt of the we-mode criteria seems to show, although his attempt was earlier in this response argued to be problematic and not to be very successful. In contrast, it was argued above that group-based we-mode reasoning and action is irreducible on rational-structural grounds, i.e. due to leading to differences in the respective equilibrium sets in the we-mode and the pro-group I-mode cases.

Every group that can choose as a group or team (instead of the individuals autonomously and independently making their choices) has this advantage: when it chooses as a team it chooses a joint outcome as its goal and acts to satisfy it through the members doing their parts of its action as group members and not as mere individuals (who can never be very sure of what the others will do).

In the last section on team reasoning I have responded to and, I believe, rebutted Ludwig's criticism of my claims about the irreducibility of we-mode attitudes and activities. My use of Bacharach's game-theoretic theorem shows that we-mode reasoning leads to a rational-structural difference between individualistic pro-group I-mode reasoning and group-based we-mode reasoning – centrally because the we-mode creates more coordination than the I-mode approach between the participants and consequently yields different sets of action equilibria in the two cases. Bacharach shows that this result holds for all Paretian games (those having a joint outcome that is Pareto-preferred). E.g. in Hi-Lo it results in the structural and functional difference that HiHi is the only equilibrium while the pro-group I-mode approach accepts also LoLo as an equilibrium. The we-mode group as the only (primary) chooser ends up choosing the utility-maximizing joint outcome HiHi while in the two-person pro-group I-mode case the two individuals are the primary choosers that are acting under some uncertainty about the other's choice and one unified agent normally functions better than two agents acting in the I-mode. However, as noted, the pro-group I-mode approach can sometimes in real life produce the same effects as the we-mode approach even if perhaps with less functionality. This requires that extra contingent features apply to the participants and especially to their interaction (e.g. agreements that are kept).

As to Ludwig's theses I, II, and III that I presented in the very beginning of this response, I will here only briefly say what this response has achieved in my view. As to I, we-mode thinking and acting is not relevant to everything in the social realm, for there is of course much that belongs to people's private personal realm that is not connected to group thinking. At least that realm can be left to methodological individualism. However, when social groups and collective activities and structures (e.g. institutions and corporations) are centrally involved (as they are in the we-mode approach), methodological individualism is not sufficient for theorizing in the social sciences and not even for explanations of individual action (e.g. action on the ground of social norms, action in institutional context, such as cashing checks or university teaching). Thus, thesis I can be seen to be (only) partially true, but the structural and emergence-based irreducibility of the we-mode does entail the inapplicability of methodological individualism. As I have argued, the reduction attempts of Ludwig, while interesting, are only partly adequate – and thus thesis II is not right. As to III, if team reasoning is mainly meant it is not acceptable, but this thesis is a broad one and I do accept

that an individualistic account may be appropriate to many descriptive and explanatory tasks concerning the social world. Thus III may be partly acceptable.

In the previous sections I have argued that Ludwig's attempt to individualistically reduce the we-mode criteria is not successful. But his attempt is still interesting and worthwhile in that it shows rather precisely an approximate connection between the we-mode approach and individualist theorizing and generally advances the reduction discussion at hand.

In all, in his critical evaluation Ludwig has presented an interesting reductive attempt to refute my account of the fundamental differences between we-mode and I-mode thinking and action. I do appreciate his attempt. This is the kind of well-informed and skilled criticism an author does not too often receive.*

* I wish to thank Raul Hakli, Kaarlo Miller, and Maj Tuomela for good critical comments related to the topic of this response.

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Notes

ⁱ See SO, especially chapters 1-3 for the basic notions of the we-mode account.

ⁱⁱ In this response I will speak of irreducibility of groups in a general sense allowing for three subcases: a) Irreducibility as non-definability (e.g. supervenience makes a group irreducible in this sense), b) irreducibility as “emergence”, viz. causally emergent holistic properties of groups that none of the individuals have, c) irreducibility in the rational-structural sense of Bacharach’ theorem as applied e.g. to Hi-Lo entailing a different number of equilibria for two competing approaches. E.g. the we-mode approach is claimed to be irreducible to the individualistic pro-group I-mode account in this sense.

ⁱⁱⁱ What Ludwig’s notion of understanding amounts to remains somewhat unclear. Would e.g. individualistic truth conditions for we-mode statements entail relevant understandability? I assume this to be the case. But my points in SO, especially multiple realizability indicate that such strict truth conditions cannot be found.

^{iv} Ludwig accepts the existence of groups e.g. on p. 7 when discussing we-intentions. When one says that we-intentions entail the existence of groups as he does, it is not excluded that also irreducible groups are involved and not only groups that fulfill his criterion of neutral describability.

^v In Bratman’s and Ludwig’s accounts there seem to be no irreducible groups but only ones straightforwardly formed out of individuals and their interactions. We see two individuals carrying a table and infer that the dyad formed of them is doing it. What do these individualistic theoreticians say of conceptually or ontologically irreducible groups – that they do not exist or that they are rejectable because of not fitting the canons of methodological individualism?

^{vi} A partial exception to this requirement is given by “prospective” we-mode groups (see e.g. pp. 6, 48, 131-133 of SO).

^{vii} Note that Ludwig’s account seems not to allow irreducible groups – recall his “neutral description” criterion discussed above. E.g. pro-group I-mode intenders (or believers, etc.) can be viewed as a group if there is some social awareness among them of their shared attitudes. Such a group would in general not be individualistically irreducible but rather reducible. However, a we-mode group is irreducible (at least *prima facie*) in virtue of the non-distributive “we” it involves. I regard irreducible social groups as the normal case and reducible ones to be exceptions (this is, however, and empirical task to show).

^{viii} See the phenomenological paper by Schmid and my response to it in the present anthology.

^{ix} See SO, chapter 5 for collective acceptance and construction as well as SO, chapter 8 for social and institutional statuses. Note that group agents (in my functional sense) are real, although they do have some fictitious features, e.g. that they are social constructs, thus artefacts. But they are capable of bringing about concrete outcomes in the world (e.g. cleaning a park) through their members’ actions as group members.

^x See my account of collective commitment in SO, p. 83. That account makes joint intention sufficient for collective commitment but does not give a necessary condition for it. This of course leaves it open that full-blown collective commitment sometimes is not generated by joint intention but e.g. by another kind of practical attitude with world-to-mind direction of fit.

^{xi} Indeed, while the word ‘shared’ is fine for the I-mode case, in the we-mode case it is not because as we-mode attitudes are joint generally in a stronger sense involving the satisfaction of the central we-mode criteria.

^{xii} See the discussion in Tuomela (2000), chapter 3.

^{xiii} Collective commitments (as practical commitments based on binding oneself to a content with the world-to-mind direction of fit) according to my account do not invariably entail proper *social obligations* – e.g. simple “technical means-end oughts” sometimes are fine (e.g. we ought to do what our joint intention requires for its satisfaction). See my discussion in Tuomela (2007), Chapter 1. When discussing Bratman’s account Ludwig argues that collective commitment depends intimately on joint intention. That accords with my account (see p. 83 of SO). In my theory, collective commitment intuitively is formed out of some people collectively binding themselves to a content, and this generally involves their forming a joint intention to realize (or, in some cases, to uphold) that content. Collective commitment may be fully normative, in a prudential, legal, or moral sense. In any case, it always involves at least a weak “ought” for the group members either collectively or individually. (See my discussion in Chapter 1 of Tuomela, 2007).

^{xiv} Ludwig says on p. 6: “A group acts in the we-mode only if it acts for a group reason But, first, a group cannot act in the we-mode, only the group members can”. A clear distinction is made in SO between a group’s acting as a group and its members acting as group members. Second, a group cannot act for a group reason – this is a category mistake. Its members can act for group reasons, which are reasons for their performing their parts of the group’s action. (See Chapter 6 and especially the account of a group’s reason on p. 107 and the one of the members’ group reason on p. 112.)

^{xv} The members do not act fully autonomously as they have given part of their natural authority to the group. The group restricts their autonomy but also enables them to perform new kinds of actions.

^{xvi} The ethos may specify who is to do what, when, and how.

^{xvii} On p. 8 Ludwig (implicitly) criticizes my accounts of joint and we-intention for partial circularity. I have not commented on the issue above but have commented in Tuomela (2007), pp. 96-98 on the present issue.

^{xviii} As to explanation, I will not in this response add to my earlier short discussion in SO (see esp. pp. 50-51).

^{xix} A full-blown team can be viewed as a we-mode group, but there may be weaker teams that do not satisfy the we-mode criteria.

^{xx} As in game-theory in general the participants should mutually know or have the correct belief about the content of the preference matrix and the main strategic features it involves. Premise 2 involves their true mutual belief about its content. As Ludwig emphasizes in his commentary, the beliefs should be justified in order for the matrix to give a solid basis for action.

^{xxi} Schema (I) can be made clearer by reformulating premises 1 and 2 of (I) for clarity as follows:

1*. Our group intends (and thus you and I intend) to maximize group utility.

2*. Our choice of HiHi (through your and my choices of Hi as group members) uniquely maximizes group utility.

These formulations are meant to make it clear that the group chooses the group goal (to maximize group utility by HiHi) through its members’ choice of Hi.

^{xxii} Two persons can form a dyad having a goal, etc., yet a theoretician rather might like to theorize about larger groups. However, the combinatorics soon get practically too difficult to handle in many-person groups.

^{xxiii} Note that if this were a real life situation, the group would be regarded as responsible for a member’s choice of the right part action (and means for it) and to an extent responsible also for its successful performance.

^{xxiv} Premise 1 is assumed to be read so as to be equivalent with: “You intend to maximize group utility, and I intend to maximize group utility.” This advice should help a reader not to think that this premise refers to a group in a non-distributive sense. (My thanks here go to Raul Hakli for emphasizing this matter to me.)

^{xxv} Note that Bacharach’s theorem does support the irreducibility of we-mode reasoning given the assumptions made. It also supports the irreducibility of analogous top-down group reasoning that would resemble we-mode reasoning in being top-down and lead to the group’s choice as a group while yet failing to satisfy some or even all of the we-mode criteria. It is worth noting that the mathematical result involved in Bacharach’s theorem does not specifically take into account the three we-mode criteria. Thus the theorem does not uniquely support we-mode reasoning as such without further arguments (see Hakli et al. 2010). Group-based reasoning in the I-mode will not satisfy the top-down group action and acting as a group requirements and hence falls out of consideration here.