

# Proprietary Reasons and Joint Action<sup>+</sup>

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## Abstract

Some of the reasons one acts on in joint action are shared with fellow participants. But others are proprietary: reasons of one's own that have no direct practical significance for other participants. The compatibility of joint action with proprietary reasons serves to distinguish the former from other forms of collective agency; moreover, it is arguably a desirable feature of joint action. Advocates of "team reasoning" link the special collective intention individual participants have when acting together with a distinctive form of practical reasoning that purports to put individuals in touch with group or collective reasons. Such views entail the surprising conclusion that one cannot engage in joint action for proprietary reasons. Suppose we understand the contrast between minimal and robust forms of joint action in terms of the extent to which participants act on proprietary reasons as opposed to shared reasons. Then, if the team reasoning view of joint intention and action is correct, it makes no sense to talk of minimal joint action. As soon as the reason for which one participates is proprietary, then one is not, on this view, genuinely engaged in joint action.

Keywords: joint action, proprietary reasons, group reasons, acting for a reason, we-mode, team reasoning

## 9.1. Proprietary Reasons

Joint action involves the sharing of reasons and aims amongst those engaged in it. This is a natural thought, at least if we understand intentional action in terms of the reasons or aims that rationalize or make sense of it.<sup>2</sup> For example, the raising of my arm is intentional insofar as it is done toward some end, or for a reason – such as getting the attention of the speaker in order to ask a question. The same would seem to be true for joint or collective action: our  $\phi$ -ing is intentional insofar as it is directed toward an end, or done for a reason. And since we're  $\phi$ -ing *together*, the reason or aim that makes the  $\phi$ -ing intentional presumably is something that we share. Thus, there is in joint action a meeting of minds, a sharing of the reasons and goals that makes what we're doing together the intentional act that it is.

But how much sharing of reasons can there be? More importantly for my purposes here, how much sharing *must* there be? How little overlap or convergence of reasons is necessary for joint action of a minimal sort?

You might think that some of the *subsidiary* aims that an individual has in connection with a joint endeavor – those she adopts as part of how she goes about making her contribution to it – must inevitably be shared with fellow participants. For example, if we share a ride

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<sup>2</sup> Davidson 1980, Anscombe 1963.

downtown, we cannot each aim to get there using incompatible routes. At least, we would seem to be subject to some sort of rational criticism were we engaged in the joint action and yet failing to reconcile our differences about how to go about it.<sup>3</sup>

What about our reasons or aims for going downtown in the first place? It would seem that here there is room for significant divergence of aims. Maybe I want to get to the museum, and you want to get to the ballpark, both of which are downtown. Sharing a ride doesn't seem to require that we share reasons for doing so. Call a reason or aim had in connection with engaging in joint action *proprietary* when it is not shared with other participants. My proprietary reason (getting to the museum) has immediate or direct normative significance for what I do; it is, after all, my reason for action. But insofar as it is proprietary, it doesn't have that sort of immediate significance for you.<sup>4</sup>

Joint action does not preclude proprietary reasons on the part of some or all of the participants. Bratman articulates this point forcefully when he says

The sharing of intention need not involve commonality in each agent's reasons for participating in the sharing. You and I can have a shared intention to paint the house together, even though I participate because I want to change the color whereas you participate because you want to remove the mildew...though we participate for different reasons, our shared intention nevertheless establishes a shared framework of commitments; and this can happen even if these differences in our reasons are out in the open...much of our sociality is *partial* in the sense that it involves sharing in the face of – in some cases, public – divergence of background reasons for the sharing. (Bratman 2014, 91)

Bratman points out that such a conception of shared intention and joint action resonates with a liberal pluralism:

It is an important fact about our sociality that we manage to share intentions and act together in the face of substantial differences of reasons for which we participate. We work together, we play together, and we engage in conversations together even given substantial background differences in our reasons for participation and our reasons for various sub-plans. This is especially characteristic of a pluralistic, liberal culture. This is the *pervasiveness of partiality in our sociality*. It is a virtue of the basic thesis that it makes room, in a theoretically natural way, for this pervasiveness of partiality. (Bratman 2014, 91)

From a more narrowly action-theoretic perspective, it seems that the compatibility of proprietary reasons with joint action is a mark of the phenomenon that is our focus: that of distinct individual agents coming together to act jointly. It stands in contrast to a form of agency exercised by some highly integrated group – something that is arguably more like

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<sup>3</sup> We might allow for what Bratman (1992) calls the mesh of sub-plans. Participants need not have the same sub-aims, so long as carrying out the differing sub-plans is compatible with the success of both.

<sup>4</sup> Of course, it might be relevant in other ways. For example, it might have a moral significance for you; and that's something that you would presumably have to take into consideration.

an individual agent, albeit on a large scale. Precluding proprietary reasons would, if anything, undermine joint action and leave in its stead some more monolithic form of individual agency.

So there are things to be said in favor of the compatibility (and perhaps even the necessity) of proprietary reasons for joint action. These reasons notwithstanding, I think it will be illuminating to explore some considerations that could lead us to think otherwise. Might there be at least some tension between joint action and the presence of proprietary reasons?

## 9.2. Against Propriety

For a start, consider how Tuomela criticizes Bratman for neglecting the *collective* reason that is necessary for joint action. He says (2007, 100–101) that on Bratman’s analysis “The agents have their personal intentions on the basis of their private reasons.” Tuomela objects that this “does not entail a full-blown group reason, namely, that the agents have their intentions of the form “I intend that we J” (for each participant) necessarily because of a group reason satisfying the Collectivity Condition.” Tuomela says “Formulated for the special case of goal satisfaction, [the Condition] necessarily connects the members as follows. Necessarily (as based on group construction of a goal as the group’s goal), the goal is satisfied for a member if and only if it is satisfied for all other members.” (Tuomela, 4).

It’s clear enough that Tuomela objects to the absence in Bratman’s account of a common or shared reason as a requirement on joint action; indeed, Tuomela speaks of a ‘group reason’ requirement on joint action (4, 13). It’s less clear, however, what his attitude is toward proprietary reasons and whether their presence is somehow antithetical to joint action. Do Tuomela’s group reason and collectivity conditions entail anything about what proprietary reason an agent may or may not have? Must proprietary reasons be set aside in the ‘we’-mode, which for Tuomela is the perspective of participants in robust, paradigmatic forms of joint agency? Or does adopting the perspective of the we-mode simply add group considerations to the personal or proprietary reasons one may already have for participating? How easily do shared or collective reasons for our  $\phi$ -ing sit along side of proprietary reasons for engaging in joint action?

Some of what Tuomela says suggests that proprietary reasons are *not* compatible with joint action. Thus, his collectivity condition indicates that “the depersonalization that occurs in social groups shows up in the basic structure of group life (in its we-mode content) and thus is not a mere contingent feature of groups” (Tuomela 2007, 50; see also 4, 10, 48). It’s not entirely clear what is meant by ‘depersonalization’, but it connotes that personal or proprietary reasons are distinct from group reasons (4), and set aside in joint action. If so, Tuomela would be insisting not only on the necessity of group reason, but also the exclusion of proprietary reasons. Tuomela confirms this sort of reading with a passage that contrasts someone acting in we mode and hence for some collective reason with someone who outwardly behaves that way but acts for a very different sort of reason. Thus,

“a member can instrumentally function (or, better, quasi-function) as a group member just by doing his “work,” even if not for the ethos-serving reason (that

satisfies the Collectivity Condition). He would then, so to speak, be exhibiting the right actions, but his *reason* for performing a group-task T would be, roughly, the I-mode reason expressible by “I perform T because it is conducive to my personal interests” and not the we-mode reason expressible by “I perform T at least in part because it is my duty and furthers, or at least does not contradict, the group’s ethos.” (Tuomela 2007, 50)

What seems to be important for Tuomela is that in *paradigmatic* joint action, one is *acting for* a group reason. And this is contrasted with other cases where one is acting for some personal reason. Perhaps one can possess personal reasons, but as far as robust forms of joint action are concerned, one is not acting for them and but from the group reason instead.

But, having put forth the strong thesis seemingly excluding acting from proprietary reasons in paradigmatic joint action, Tuomela concedes that “in real life one often acts both for group reasons and private reasons when performing an action” (98; see also 130). What are we to make of this? Is the suggestion that group action is compatible with proprietary reasons? Or is it rather that there is a spectrum of cases? On the latter proposal, there are many instances of joint action involving both group and proprietary reasons, and to the extent that the motives are mixed, the case is not one of fully collective or joint action. If that’s the view, then it’s not quite a compatibilist thesis. Tuomela says,

To think (e.g., believe, intend) or act in the we-mode is to think or act as a group member in a full sense, thus for a group reason. Thinking and acting in the we-mode expresses collective intentionality in its full sense. In contrast, to think or act in the I-mode is to think or act as a private person—even if a group reason might contingently be at play. (Tuomela 2007,7)

It’s the group reason and *not* the proprietary reason that has authority over what the agent does in joint action:

Thinking and acting in the we-mode basically amounts to thinking and acting for a group reason, that is, to a group member’s taking the group’s views and commitments as his authoritative reasons for thinking and acting as the group “requires” or in accordance with what “favors” the group (namely, its goals, etc.). (Tuomela 2007, 14)

...the we-mode was said to involve the idea of one’s functioning because of a group reason *rather than* a private reason. (Tuomela 2007, 47, emphasis added; see also a passage on 44-5 that similarly draws a contrast between acting on group vs. private reasons.)

For Tuomela, then, any concession that allows for proprietary reasons would seem to be a falling away from some ideal of joint action. This is not really a *proper* compatibilism of the sort we find in Bratman – one that allows that some element of proprietary reason that *does not in any way* compromise joint action. (Indeed, a fully compatibilist view would insist that without some proprietary reason, there is the risk of losing the sense that we, a *plurality*,

share agency; joint action is not the doings of some monolithic individual agent.) Tuomela, in contrast, seems to favor a mixed view that allows that one might have proprietary reasons, but to the extent that one does, the action is less than fully joint.<sup>5</sup>

What is it about a proper compatibilism that might put one off? Why does Tuomela think that to the extent that one is acting for the group reason, this is *at odds* with acting on a proprietary reason? There doesn't seem to be anything in the very notion of acting for a reason that would rule out acting for *multiple* reasons. Why couldn't one, in a case of joint action, have a proprietary reason, as well as a group reason, and act for both of them? To get a better sense of the sort of consideration that might move one away from compatibilism, let me turn to team reasoning.

### 9.3. Incompatibilist Team Reasoning

Team reasoning provides a solution to certain games (especially Hi-Lo) that pose difficulties for orthodox game theory. The details have been discussed extensively; what I want to emphasize here is that the proposed solution involves departing from the standard view that assumes that the only practical or deliberative perspective one can take is that of the individual: the only relevant locus of agency is the *individual*. Whereas, on the team reasoning proposal, each player thinks, not from her own perspective – where she asks, “What should I do, given what other players do?” – but from a larger, collective perspective, where she asks what *we together* should do. From this perspective it can be obvious what should be done; that is, it will be clear what the *collective* should do. If one can take on this point of view, then the thought is that this reasoning will give a straightforward answer regarding what one should do: namely, one's part in the collective activity that the reasoning recommends.<sup>6</sup>

I have some reservations regarding how team reasoning is implemented. In particular, I feel that standard presentations of it owe us more of an explanation of exactly when it is reasonable to use team reasoning. Moreover, the answer to this question had better not collapse into a form of individual reasoning.<sup>7</sup> It will not be necessary, however, to address such worries here. I will take it for granted that some form of team reasoning is viable as a rational or normative theory, and that it's distinctive – i.e. doesn't collapse into a form of individual rationality.

What is important for my purposes is the characterization of the intentions of participants in joint action in terms of the distinctive team reasoning that issues those intentions. Gold and Sugden say

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<sup>5</sup> See a passage at Tuomela 2007, 101 that suggests the possibility of private or proprietary reasons. I take this not as evidence for a proper compatibilism but for the possibility of mixed cases that are less than fully ideal instances of joint action.

<sup>6</sup> There are many discussions of team reasoning, and some variety in what exactly is encompassed by the term. See Bacharach (2006), Sugden (1993), Gold and Sugden (2007), Anderson (2001) and Hurley (1989), as well as more recent discussion such as Pacherie (2018), Hakli, Miller and Tuomela (2010), and Roth (2012).

<sup>7</sup> Roth (2012).

Team reasoning was originally introduced to explain how, when individuals are pursuing collective goals, it can be rational to choose strategies that realize scope for common gain. But it also provides an account of the formation of collective intentions...It is natural to regard the intentions that result from team reasoning as collective intentions.” (Gold and Sugden 2007, 126)

“It is an implication of our analysis that a given pattern of behavior can be intended either individually or collectively, depending on the reasoning which led to it.” (Gold and Sugden 2007, 128)

So far, I’ve mentioned team reasoning and how collective intentions at the heart of joint action might be characterized in terms of such reasoning. It is not far now to the *Exclusion Thesis* – the thought that joint action is at odds with proprietary reasons. One idea we still need is that team reasoning is a way of gaining access to a type of reason for action – one that is had primarily by a group. Although the literature of team reasoning tends to present itself as a theory of reasoning rather than of reasons, it seems that when you take on the more expansive deliberative perspective demanded by this form of reasoning, you gain access and sensitivity to reasons or considerations that you otherwise would not have.<sup>8</sup> For Gold and Sugden, an individual who engages in team reasoning starts from premises and concludes with an intention to perform his or her component of the joint action. Crucially, an individual “who accepts [these premises] and draws the inference ‘has a reason to form the intention to choose that component’ and presumably has a reason so to act.” (Gold and Sugden 2007, 126).

Let me elaborate on this last remark. When one acts on an intention, one will be acting for the reasons that went into forming it. Take the case of an ordinary intention. When I decide to go for a bike ride this weekend, I usually have reasons for doing so: getting exercise, enjoying the weather, etc. The matter is now settled, so when the appropriate time comes, I don’t normally have to re-deliberate. I just go for the ride. Since I don’t have to deliberate at the time of action, I don’t necessarily have to think about the reasons in favor of going for a ride. Nevertheless, when I go for the ride, I’m doing so for reasons: normally, the reasons that went into my decision several days ago. Intentions thus serve to *preserve* reasons from a prior episode of decision making so that when one acts on the intention, one acts for those reasons.

According to Gold and Sugden, collective intentions are formed by a distinctive kind of reasoning undertaken by an individual, one that involves taking on the perspective of a larger group of which the individual is a part. In so doing, one departs from the individual perspective; the reasons that one has access to in team reasoning needn’t correspond to those available in individual practical reasoning. There may be some overlap. Some considerations might be relevant from both perspectives. However, *proprietary* reasons won’t be retained at the collective level. (This just follows from their being proprietary.) If we follow Gold and Sugden in thinking that engaging in team reasoning leads to forming the relevant collective intention, then when one subsequently acts on that intention one is

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<sup>8</sup> For example, Jackson 1987.

acting for the distinctive collective or group reasons one accessed through team reasoning. Insofar as one is acting on the collective intention, one is *not* acting on proprietary reasons.

In sum, if in joint action one is acting on collective intentions, then the distinctiveness of team reasoning ultimately explains why it is that in joint action one acts on group reasons to the exclusion of proprietary or personal reasons. Given the preservative role of intention and its origin of the intention in team reasoning, to act on the collective intention is to act for group reasons accessed through team reasoning, and not for proprietary reasons.<sup>9</sup>

Suppose we agree at this point that when one acts on a collective intention stemming from team reasoning that one acts for the corresponding group or collective reasons. Might it be possible nevertheless to be acting on a proprietary reason as well? Even if the team reasoning offers a deliberative perspective that is different from individual perspective, and puts the agent in touch with reasons she would otherwise not have, why must this entail that she lose her handle on her proprietary reason? It's quite possible that on some occasion, I can recognize that to engage in team reasoning and to act in accord with its recommendation can satisfy some proprietary reason of mine. (After all, in the Hi-Lo case, it is certainly in one's *personal* interest to be able to coordinate on Hi-Hi.)<sup>10</sup> So what stops me from acting on the proprietary reason as well?

The worry is going to be something like this. To regard the matter of what to do from the deliberative perspective within which one's proprietary reason has an exigent presence – and, moreover, to *act* from that perspective – is to *distance* oneself from the joint perspective from which the matter was supposedly settled. It is, perhaps, fine to recognize in the abstract that one may have proprietary reasons for engaging in joint activity. But if one is taking on the individual perspective to seek out the relevant proprietary reasons and to act

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<sup>9</sup>On my understanding, intentions formed when one undertakes team reasoning are quite distinct from ordinary individual intentions. The origin of the former attitude makes an important difference, such as the fact that when one acts on the intention one acts for group reasons – reasons that are not necessarily available as such to one from the individual perspective. For a contrasting view of intentions resulting from team reasoning, see Kutz (2000). Kutz argues that joint action should be understood in terms of participatory intentions – an intention each participant has regarding his or her contribution to the collective action or outcome. Kutz argues for his participatory intention account of joint action in part by invoking team reasoning. But Kutz characterizes participatory intention as an ordinary individual intention, albeit with collective subject matter. I think that the upshot of my discussion is that Kutz is not entitled to this characterization of participatory intention; at the very least he needs to say more to justify it. Downstream causal/functional role might have tempted Kutz to disregard the difference in provenance between individual and collective intention. Consider for example snap judgment vs. judgment arrived at through deliberation and weighing of reasons. Both count as judgments presumably because of their downstream roles, despite their very different origins. However, both snap and deliberative judgments are subject to critical assessment by the same sorts of reasons or considerations. Whereas, individual and collective intentions arrived at through individual and team reasoning respectively seem not to be subject to assessments by the same standards or reasons; indeed, the point of team reasoning was to take on a perspective quite distinct from the individual perspective; indeed, to take up the individual perspective and to act from reasons from within that perspective, would undermine the commitment embodied in the collective intention stemming from team reasoning. (And if we were to ensure that the individual consideration were merely to ratify the collective intention, then it's not clearly an efficacious consideration.)

<sup>10</sup> I'm setting aside the debate as to whether team reasoning might collapse into a form of individual reasoning. I will assume that it does not. Nevertheless, one might wonder whether one can for personal reasons become a team reasoner.

for those reasons, it seems that one's grip on the collective reasons and team reasoning has become tenuous. In taking up the question of what, from an individual perspective, might be said in favor of or against acting in accord with team reasoning, is to re-litigate a matter that was supposed to have been settled through team reasoning and collective intention. It's in this sense, then, that acting from proprietary reasons is in tension with acting on a collective intention derived from team reasoning.

One might, nevertheless, wonder why one cannot *on the basis of a proprietary reason* undertake team reasoning and form the corresponding intention. And, in acting on it, couldn't one also be acting *for* the proprietary reason that prompted the undertaking in the first place? I agree that proprietary reasons can be part of what explains much of what we do, including the undertaking of certain forms of reasoning. But a consideration that figures in the history that leads up to an action in this way is not necessarily a consideration that is a reason for so acting. It might help in explaining the conditions or circumstances under which one acts, but not necessarily the action itself. That's to say that unlike the reasons-preserving process of acting on a prior intention, the process of undertaking team reasoning on the basis of proprietary reasons is not preservative, but transformative.

Perhaps a familiar example would help. I might recognize that my selfish egoistic outlook is actually hindering my relationships with people and working against my own interests. So I decide for selfish reasons to give up on normative egoism, and become more altruistic. A selfish motivation might have led me to transform myself into someone who is not selfish. This does not mean that my altruistic acts are selfishly motivated. It means that selfishness had a role to play in my becoming non-selfish.<sup>11</sup> Another example: I may have practical reasons for engaging in some form of theoretical reasoning. But this doesn't mean that those practical considerations can count as reasons for the beliefs generated by that theoretical reasoning.

If we are on the right track with this line of thought, then it would appear that an understanding of joint action that ties collective intention to team reasoning points to an incompatibility between joint action and proprietary reason.

#### 9.4. Accommodating Subordinate Proprietary Reasons

Is there, nevertheless, a way for the team reasoning conception of joint action to countenance participants acting on proprietary reasons? In one sense, the answer is easy, as we've already seen: the mixed view allows that there are proprietary reasons – with the upshot, however, that the action is less than *fully* joint. But there remains the intuition that joint action at least in some circumstances is perfectly compatible with proprietary reasons.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, it's unclear how joint action could be sustained or stable

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<sup>11</sup> Parfit (1984) argues that the fact that an egoist might have reasons to become altruistic is not an argument against egoism. This may be right. However, I don't think that this shows that one's actions subsequent to the transformation are done for egoistic reasons.

<sup>12</sup> And indeed, proprietary reasons might be necessary if we're to avoid turning joint action into monolithic individual agency.

if *nothing* could be said in favor of the joint effort from the personal or proprietary point of view. It is likely, after all, that participants in joint activity – especially when it is long term – will on some occasion fall into an individual perspective regarding what they are doing. It is unrealistic and likely undesirable (stifling and oppressive) to think that the team or group perspective of the collective intention can *never* loosen its grip on the agent’s practical point of view.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, joint activity is often engaged in precisely because it serves the individual interests of the individuals involved. Given the ever-present possibility of seeing things from the perspective of the individual agent, we might welcome the possibility that sometimes that perspective could be taken within the context of joint activity. So it would be worthwhile for one who places team reasoning at the center of her account of joint action to investigate this possibility.

The case of competitive games is suggestive.<sup>14</sup> This is a form of joint activity, and yet when you and I engage in it, much of what I do is aimed at winning against you. This is a reason not shared with you, so it seems to be proprietary.<sup>15</sup> But it is a proprietary reason that is, nevertheless, very much a part of engaging in that sort of joint activity. We might speak of such proprietary reasons as *constitutive* of the particular joint yet competitive activity in question.<sup>16</sup>

But what about non-competitive activity? Is it possible to act on proprietary reasons in such contexts? Notice that someone might be engaged in a non-competitive joint action, and yet have his own reasons for what he’s doing. For example, how well he contributes to some joint effort will have reputational effects (how good a team player is he?), and open up possibilities for collaborations not only with current partners, but with *other* partners as well. Another example: a particular task falls to me in the context of joint activity; there are several ways of doing it all perfectly adequate, but I choose one because it is particularly enjoyable for me, or because doing it that way will afford me an opportunity to develop skills or know-how useful for me in projects outside of the joint activity. Thus, an agent might have reasons for how he conducts himself within the joint action that are not shared with other participants in joint activity: it needn’t be one of your aims in joint action that I gain a good reputation and secure future opportunities.<sup>17</sup> So long as the current activity is not undermined or compromised by being motivated by such perks, it seems that this is an instance of a proprietary reason for what I’m doing in joint action.

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<sup>13</sup> This is not to say that sometimes you don’t want this perspective, as in the case of temptation.

<sup>14</sup> Searle (1990).

<sup>15</sup> If you are also aiming for me to win, then you are not in the fullest sense playing this game.

<sup>16</sup> Some might be tempted to think that one cannot even act on such a proprietary reason (defined in terms of the aim of winning against you) outside the framework established by some joint activity. But can I not have this reason and act on it outside such a framework? After all, might it explain why I seek to play the game with you? This is indeed a proprietary reason, but it’s not clear that this is the reason one is acting on when one is really playing the game. I want to beat you at a game. And this might explain why I seek out the opportunity, and why I engage in it. But when we play the game – really play it together – then it’s no longer clear that this is the relevant reason that explains my particular moves within the game. It seems now that I have a new *framework defined* goal and reason for action. It’s a mistake to run together reasons inside and outside the framework of the game, even if they are superficially similar.

At least, this is true for joint activity engaged in through team reasoning. There may be forms of joint action that are more individualistic and don’t require team reasoning.

<sup>17</sup> Though I might explicitly take on this end.

Does this contradict what I said earlier about the incompatibility of team and individual reasoning? I don't think so. The proprietary reason in question only figures as a reason for how one acts *within* a framework established by the team reasoning that leads to collective intention and joint activity. In particular, one needn't think that in participating in joint action in the first place one is acting on that proprietary reason. Moreover, the proprietary reason is one that promotes one's engagement in the joint activity in question; after all, it's a consideration for being a good team player, or encourages one to do one's part with greater relish. Such a proprietary reason is not constitutive in the sense introduced above in connection with competitive games. But it would be natural to regard such proprietary reasons as permitted or sanctioned and, along with those that are constitutive, entirely compatible with joint action.

In sum, the fundamental idea here is that team reasoning conception of collective intention is supposed to settle the matter of one's participation in joint action. This committal element of the collective intention (along with the idea that intentions serve to transmit reasons) entails that when one acts on the collective intention, one is acting for collective reasons, not the proprietary reasons. To act on the individual intention and for proprietary reasons implies that the matter of whether to engage in the joint action has been reopened even though no relevant defeater has been triggered; this would undermine the committal element of the collective intention.

The only sort of proprietary reason that one could act on in a way that is compatible with the committal force of collective intention would be those that are *subordinate* to the collective reason. In contrast, one cannot act for what we might refer to as *coordinating* proprietary reasons – that is, those proprietary reasons that are not subordinate, but stand alongside of the collective or group reason (in favor of the joint activity). Thus, although the team reasoning conception of joint action is fully compatible with *some* proprietary reasons, this accommodation is significantly circumscribed and limited to subordinate reasons.

## 9.5. Concluding Remarks

I hope to have articulated certain underappreciated aspects of the team reasoning conception of collective intention that suggest that acting on non-subordinate proprietary reasons is incompatible with fully joint action. Some might find this to be a problematic upshot of the team reasoning view of collective intention. I will not try to assess whether this amounts to a serious critique of the view. At the very least, it points toward the distinctiveness of the team reasoning view. There is a significant chasm between this view and theories of joint action that are more reductive in seeing collective intentions as a form of individual intention – and thus are friendlier to the possibility of proprietary reasons.

I want to turn finally to implications for more minimal joint action. There are different respects in which one might imagine joint action or shared agency to be minimal. For example, one might imagine participants that are quite incompetent in coordinating with one another. Although each is very much committed to a joint project, one can imagine

that their collective bumbling would at best merit the label of *minimally* joint action if it counts as joint at all.

Another sense of minimality is closer to the concerns of this paper. Joint action might be minimal insofar as it is very opportunistic. Each participant finds it in her interest to cooperate because of a highly contingent circumstances. Individuals might have very divergent goals, but circumstances happen to be such that some immediate aim serves the purposes of each. As soon as circumstances change, cooperation ceases in part because no other aim is shared so as to serve as a further focal point for sustained interaction. Joint action can thus be minimal in the sense of being more contingent, more opportunistic, and less stable. Correspondingly, one might imagine joint action being more robust, stable, and sustained the more reasons are shared, with fewer proprietary reasons that figure as reasons for joint action.

That, I think, is an intuitive way to understand at least *one* way in which joint actions might range from the minimal to the robust. But if what we've been saying about the team reasoning conception of collective intention and joint action is on the right track, then this view doesn't offer a dimension along which we find a gradient from minimal to robust forms of joint action. It would therefore make no sense to talk of minimal forms of joint action. As soon as proprietary reasons of the coordinating, non-subordinate variety figure as reasons for which one is acting, one is no longer genuinely acting *with* others. On the team reasoning view, joint action, at least in the ideal, is all or nothing.

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