Inaugural Address

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Group Belief for a Reason

In this paper I investigate what it is for a group to believe something for a reason. I defend a non-summative account on which a group can believe that *p* for a reason even though none of its members believe that *p* for that reason. By contrast, a summative account would hold that the reason for which a group believes that *p* is a function of the reason(s) for which its members believe that *p*. I argue that the proposed non-summative account deals better with cases in which members of a group believe that *p* for different reasons. I also defend it against a range of objections, including that it conflicts with epistemic norms for assertion and action.

I

Introduction. Many philosophers treat groups as morally responsible agents with beliefs and aims in the light of which they act. Assuming that groups do have beliefs, an important issue concerns what it is for a group to believe something for a reason. The reason for which a subject believes something affects whether her belief is justified and its degree of justification. For instance, even if a detective has excellent evidence for believing that Mr Big committed the crime, if her belief is based instead on wishful thinking, then her belief is not justified. Further, if the detective does not justifiably believe that Mr Big committed the crime, then many would hold that it's not appropriate for her to assert that Mr Big committed the crime or rely on that in her practical reasoning. For it is widely accepted that one ought to assert that *p* or rely on it in one's practical reasoning only if one knows that *p*, or perhaps justifiably believes that *p*. If groups have beliefs, we would expect the same to hold for groups: the reason for which a group believes *p* affects whether the group's belief that *p* is justified and whether it is appropriate for the group to assert that *p* and rely on it in its practical reasoning.

While a number of different authors have recently proposed accounts of when a group believes that *p*, and when a group's belief is justified or constitutes knowledge, there has been much less

discussion of what it is for a group to base a belief on one reason
rather than another (a notable exception is Silva 2019). Indeed, we
shall see that some leading accounts of group justified belief don't
explicitly address the issue. That is surprising given the connections
between the reason for which one believes and whether one's belief
is justified and constitutes knowledge. In the rest of the paper, I as-
sume that groups can have beliefs and reasons in order to explore
what it is for a group to believe for one reason rather than another.
In the next section, I contrast the two main potential approaches to
what it is for a group to believe for one reason rather than another,
namely, summative and non-summative approaches, connecting
them to summative and non-summative accounts of group doxastic
states more generally. In §III, I criticize summative approaches to
group belief for a reason inspired by the leading summative accounts
of group justified belief. In §IV, I defend my own non-summative ap-
proach, on which a group can believe that p for a reason even
though none of its members believe that p for that reason. In §V, I
defend this approach against a number of potential objections,
showing that it is compatible with standard epistemic norms for ac-
tion and assertion. While the main focus of the paper is group belief
for a reason, given the tight connections between the reason for
which an agent believes that p and the justificational status of her be-
lief, the paper has implications for the correct account of justified
group beliefs.

<div align="center">II</div>

Summative versus Non-summative Approaches. There are two main
potential approaches to the question of what it is for a group to be-
lieve for a reason—summative and non-summative approaches. The
distinction between these approaches is familiar from existing dis-
cussions of group belief. Summative accounts of group belief hold
that a group's belief is a function of the beliefs of its members. For
instance, a simple summative account might hold that a group
believes that p if and only if most of its members believe that p, or if
and only if most of its key (or 'operative') members believe that p.
By contrast, non-summative accounts allow that a group can believe

that p even if none of its members believe that p.[1] We can apply the summative/non-summative distinction to the notion of group reason for belief. A summative approach would treat the reason for which a group believes that p as a function of the reason(s) for which its members believe that p. For instance, it might be suggested that a group believes that p for r if some/most of its members believe that p for r. By contrast, a non-summative approach denies that the reason for which a group believes that p is a function of the reason(s) for which individual members believe that p.

Whether one should take a summative or non-summative approach to what it is for a group to believe that p for a reason depends on whether one takes a summative or non-summative approach to other group doxastic phenomena. An agent can believe that p for reason r only if the agent believes that p and r is one of the agent's reasons. As a result, a non-summative approach to group reasons and beliefs needs to be matched with a non-summative approach to group belief for a reason. If one endorses a non-summative view of group belief on which a group can believe that p even if no member believes that p, then one cannot treat what it is for a group to believe that p for a reason as a function of the reasons for which its members believe that p. Similarly, if one endorses a non-summative view of group reasons on which a group can have a reason which none of its members have, then one cannot treat the reason for which a group believes that p as a function of the reasons for which its members believe that p.[2] By contrast, if one embraces a summative view of group belief and reasons, then one might naturally opt for a summative view of what it is for a group to believe on the basis of a reason.

Of course, there is philosophical controversy about both the nature of reasons and the nature of the basing relation. For instance, there is controversy about whether only facts can be reasons, as well as what relation a subject must bear to a potential reason for that reason to be one of her reasons (for instance, knowledge, justified belief, and so on). In addition, there is ongoing debate about the

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[1] Non-summative accounts have been defended by appeal to joint commitment approaches (for example, Gilbert 1989), judgement-aggregation approaches, interpretationism (for example, Tollefsen 2015), functionalist approaches, or hybrid views which combine several of these approaches (for example, List and Pettit (2011) combine functionalism and judgement aggregation approaches).

[2] For instance, Hedden (2019) denies that a group's evidence is a function of the evidence of its members by combining a non-summative view of group knowledge with E = K.

nature of the basing relation, with well-known objections to the standard causal and doxastic views. In developing an account of what it is for a group to base a belief on a reason, I will attempt to stay as neutral as possible on the nature of reasons and basing. However, we will see later that certain ways of developing an account of what it is for a group to base a belief on a reason involve taking positions on these issues.

Although it is controversial what the best philosophical account of the basing relation is, certain counterfactuals and meta-beliefs are plausibly at least defeasible evidence of basing relations.[3] For instance, if the basis of S's belief that p is the testimony of an acquaintance, then *ceteris paribus*, if S hadn't received the testimony she wouldn't have believed that p. Relatedly, we would expect that, *ceteris paribus*, S would abandon that belief if she acquires evidence that the testifier is unreliable. Of course, *ceteris* isn't always *paribus*. In the nearest counterfactual situations in which her acquaintance doesn't testify, perhaps S receives other evidence supporting the belief that p. And in the nearest counterfactual situations in which she receives evidence that the testifier is unreliable, she might irrationally cling to the belief that p or alternatively gain independent evidence that p. Nonetheless, counterfactuals are some defeasible evidence about the basis of a belief. Likewise, we might take meta-beliefs about reasons to provide some defeasible evidence about basing. Consider a subject whose evidence provides a complicated line of reasoning which supports her belief that p. If, owing to its complexity, the subject doesn't appreciate the strength of this line of reasoning and believes that the complicated line of reasoning is not a good reason to believe that p, then this is some evidence that the complicated line of reasoning is not the basis of her belief. Again, this is only defeasible evidence. At least if we understand basing to be an objective metaphysical relationship (for example, causation), we should expect subjects to sometimes be mistaken about the bases of their beliefs since they can be mistaken about such relations. Thus the relevant counterfactuals and meta-beliefs are only defeasible indicators of basing. Nonetheless, they provide some evidence about basing, and will help us assess putative accounts of group belief for a reason in the subsequent sections.

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[3] Indeed, some attempt to build accounts of the basing relation from these factors: doxastic accounts employ meta-beliefs, and accounts in the causal tradition often employ counterfactuals (for example, Evans 2013; Lord and Sylvan 2019).

In conclusion, non-summative accounts of what it is for a group to believe that p for reason r naturally fit with non-summative accounts of other group doxastic phenomena. By contrast, summative accounts of what it is for a group to believe that p for reason r naturally fit with summative accounts of other group doxastic phenomena. In the next section, I start to investigate the best account of group belief for a reason by looking at summative approaches.

III

Summative Accounts of Basing. According to a summative account of group basing, the reason for which a group believes that p is a function of the reasons for which its members believe that p. As a result, summative views can stay neutral on the controversial issue of what it is to base a belief on a reason. In addition, they can remain neutral on some key issues concerning the nature of reasons, for example, whether or not they are factive. In some cases, it may seem quite straightforward to identify the reason for which a group believes that p. For instance, if all the members believe that p on the basis of reason r, it may be suggested that the group believes that p for r. However, it is less obvious what a summativist should say about the basis of a group's belief that p in a case in which the different members believe that p for different reasons. Many writers on group justified belief allow that a group can justifiably believe that p even if its members justifiably believe that p for different reasons (for example, Goldman 2014; Lackey 2016, 2021; Dang 2019; Silva 2019). To examine this issue, let us consider the following Different Bases Case (DBC) modelled on Goldman's museum case (2014, p. 16).

In DBC, 60 out of a group of 100 museum guards justifiably believe that some museum guard is planning an inside theft, but on different bases. Each of guards M_1–M_{20} justifiably believes that guard Albert is planning a theft, and so deduces that some guard is planning an inside theft; none of the other guards believe that Albert is planning a theft. Each of a second group of guards, M_{21}–M_{40}, justifiably believes that guard Bernard is planning a theft, and deduces that some guard is planning an inside theft; none of the other guards believe that Bernard is planning a theft. Each of M_{41}–M_{60} justifiably

believes that guard Cecil is planning a theft, and so deduces that some guard is planning an inside theft; none of the other guards believe that Cecil is planning a theft. Furthermore, suppose that the belief that some guard is planning an inside theft is not undermined by evidence members of the group have or should have had.

What should a summativist say is the group's reason for believing that some museum guard is planning an inside theft (or g)? It's important to have an answer to this question. After all, the different reasons which members have to believe that g may provide different levels of justification for the claim that g. In addition, these different reasons may be affected differently by new information. For instance, if the group receives evidence that, say, Albert isn't planning a theft but a surprise birthday party for a fellow guard (and that's what explains his unusual behaviour), then this undermines the group's reason for believing g if it is based on the claim that Albert is planning a theft, but not if it is based instead on the claim that Bertrand or Cecil is. Notably, some leading summativists about group justified belief don't explicitly address this issue. For instance, although Lackey argues that in DBC the group justifiably believes that g, she isn't explicit about what the group's reason is for believing that g.[4]

In DBC, it would seem arbitrary to identify just one of the reasons for which individual members believe that g as the reason for which the group believes that g. For the description of the case seems to provide no reason to identify just one of these reasons rather than another as the group's reason. Instead, it might seem more plausible for a summativist to suggest that in DBC, the reason for which the group believes that some guard is planning an inside theft is the conjunction of the reasons for which individual guards justifiably believe that some guard is planning an inside theft; that is, the conjunction, Albert is planning a theft and Bernard is planning a theft and Cecil is planning a theft. Further, this conjunctive approach seems in keeping with the spirit of the leading summative account of justified

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[4] Lackey (2021, p. 13) describes her account as neither strictly summative nor non-summative. On her account, whether a group justifiably believes that p is a function, not only of whether enough operative members justifiably believe that p, but also of the interrelations between the epistemic positions of members of the group. However, if forced to choose between categorizing her account as summative or non-summative, it seems fairest to describe it as summative, since she denies that a group can justifiably believe that p if none of its members justifiably believe that p. Nothing in the paper turns on this terminological issue.

group belief provided by Lackey. On Lackey's approach, the epistemic standing of a group's belief that p doesn't turn just on whether some operative member of the group believes that p on a justifying basis, but also on the interrelations of the epistemic positions of different members of the group, both operative and non-operative. In outline, she holds that a group justifiably believes that p if and only if: a significant percentage of the operative members of the group justifiably believe that p; the bases of their justified beliefs are coherent; and full disclosure of the evidence that both operative and non-operative members either do have or should have had doesn't undermine that p (Lackey 2021, p. 97).

The claim that, in DBC, the reason for which the group believes that some guard is planning an inside theft is the conjunction of the reasons for which individual guards justifiably believe that some guard is planning an inside theft could be generated by a variety of summative accounts of the basis of group belief. This would include both a simple conjunctive account on which the basis of a group's belief that p is the conjunction of the bases of its members' beliefs that p as well as Silva's more complex account. On Silva's account, where different members of a group believe that p for different reasons, the group's belief that p is based on the conjunction E_1 & E_2 & ... & E_n if enough operative members believe p on the basis of some subset of $\{E_1, \ldots, E_n\}$ and $E_1, \ldots, E_n$ are each part of the basis of enough of the operative member's beliefs in p (Silva 2019).[5] These conditions are met in DBC: 60 per cent of the members believe that g on the basis of some subset of {Albert is planning a theft, Bernard is planning a theft, Cecil is planning a theft}; further, each of these reasons—Albert is planning a theft or Bernard is or Cecil is—is a reason for 20 per cent of the members to believe that g.

Of course, r can be a subject's reason for believing that p only if r is one of the subject's reasons. Thus in DBC, for the group's reason for believing that g to be the conjunction of the members' reasons for believing that g, each of the members' reasons for believing that g must be one of the group's reasons. One way to secure this result would be to hold that a group's reasons consist in the conjunction of the reasons of its members. As Buchak and Pettit (2015) put it,

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[5] Silva's account, unlike the simple conjunctive account, has the result that E_1 is part of the basis of the group's belief that p only if E_1 is part of the basis of enough of the operative member's beliefs in p. So, for instance, if just one member believes that p on the basis of E_1, then the group's belief isn't even partly based on E_1.

perhaps we can regard the members of the group as evidence channels by which the group receives evidence. Just as an individual receives evidence through her senses, perhaps groups receive evidence through their members. On this view, if e is part of the evidence of some member of a group, then it is part of the evidence of that group. Thus in DBC, the group's evidence includes: guard Albert is planning a theft and guard Bernard is planning a theft and guard Cecil is planning a theft.

We have seen, then, that it's natural for a summativist to argue that in DBC, the group's reason for believing g is the conjunction of the reasons for which its members believe that g. Furthermore, this conjunctive account of the group's reasons for believing g would naturally be paired with a conjunctive account of group reasons. We might have concerns about the conjunctive account of group reasons. Is it really plausible that if p is part of a member's evidence, it is thereby part of the group's evidence, even if she keeps her evidence private or her evidence is irrelevant to the group's interests? A further concern about the conjunctive view is that it is in tension with the popular view that p is one of a subject's reasons only if that subject believes or knows that p. That some member of a group knows that p and has p as one of her reasons doesn't entail that the group believes that p or knows that p. That is so even on summative approaches to group doxastic states, which standardly hold that a group believes that p only if a majority of the group's members believe that p. There is good reason for the latter requirement: a group would too easily end up with contradictory beliefs if it is sufficient for a group to believe that p that, say, 20 per cent of its members believe that p. For it is possible that 20 per cent of a group's members believe that p and 20 per cent of them believe that not-p. So a conjunctive account of group reasons seems to allow that a group can have p as one of its reasons even without believing or knowing that p. (Notice that this concern is not obviously ameliorated even if it is suggested that it is sufficient for a proposition to be part of a group's evidence that the group is in a position to know it. For even though the group could ask its members for their evidence, being in a position to know that p is usually understood so that it excludes the idea that one could come to know that p by further investigation such as testimony. Rather, on the standard approach, a subject is in a position to know that p if she can learn that p on the basis of her existing

evidence without a significant change in her epistemic position; see, for example, Lord 2018, pp. 91–3.)

Even setting aside the worry that the proposed account is in tension with a popular view about the nature of reasons, it faces the further concern that it fails to take account of factors which plausibly provide evidence about the basing relation. To see that, consider a variant of DBC which we will call the Different Methods Case (or DMC). Suppose that a team of 100 scientists are investigating an issue but employ different methodologies. Of the 100 members, 60 believe that p for different but compatible justifying reasons: M_1–M_{20} believe that p for reason r_1; M_{21}–M_{40} for reason r_2; and M_{41}–M_{60} for reason r_3. Furthermore, we will suppose that the belief that p is not undermined by evidence members of the group have or should have had. Given its structural similarity to the original DBC case, the summativist would hold that the group justifiably believes that p on the basis of the conjunction of reasons for which the members believe that p, namely, r_1, r_2 and r_3. However, if we add further details to the case, then it may not seem plausible to suppose that the group believes that p on the basis of the conjunction of those three reasons. For instance, perhaps the first two subgroups don't even grasp r_3 and so have no beliefs either way about whether r_3 is a reason to believe that p. So most of the group don't believe that the conjunction r_1 and r_2 and r_3 is a good reason to believe that p. So, on the summative approach we are assuming, the group lacks the meta-belief that the conjunction is a good reason to believe that p. Further, if evidence comes in which defeats the first two reasons but not the third, then M_1–M_{40} would no longer believe that p, and so there would no longer be a majority of operative members who believe that p. Thus, on the summative approach to group belief, the group would not believe that p. That's not what we'd expect if the group believes that p on the basis of the conjunction of all three reasons. In these circumstances, I suggest that it would be implausible to suppose that the basis of the group's belief is the conjunction of the three reasons, since the relevant meta-beliefs and counterfactuals don't support the claim that the group's belief that p is based on the conjunction. Even though meta-beliefs and counterfactuals are only defeasible evidence about whether a subject believes that p for a certain reason, it is troubling that the summative account makes no room for these conditions to affect whether a group believes that p for a certain reason.

   We have now seen that there are problems facing summative accounts of a group's reason for belief. Summative accounts want to allow that it's possible that a group justifiably believes that p when its members believe that p for different reasons. For instance, it's plausible that they would hold that in DBC the group believes that p for the conjunction of reasons for which its members believe that p. We have seen that this view would naturally be held with a conjunctive view of a group's reasons. But the latter view is in conflict with the popular view that a proposition can be one of an agent's reasons only if she believes or knows that p. Furthermore, treating a group's reason for believing that p as the conjunction of the reasons for which its members believe that p makes the basis of the group's belief independent of factors which are plausibly evidence about its basis, for example, relevant counterfactuals and meta-beliefs.

   It might be suggested that these problems could be overcome by incorporating facts about relevant group-level counterfactuals and meta-beliefs into a summative account of group reason for belief. Of course, by incorporating these facts, group reason for belief would no longer be purely a function of the reasons for which its members believe that p. But to the extent that the notion of belief employed in the relevant meta-belief and counterfactuals is understood in a summative way, it might be hoped that the resulting account would be amenable to a broadly summative approach to group epistemic states. Even so, the resulting summative position is inelegant. It makes group belief a function of member belief but group reason for belief a function not only of member reason for belief but also of group meta-beliefs and certain counterfactuals. Even setting aside this inelegant disunity, I will argue that incorporating information about the relevant counterfactuals and meta-beliefs into the account undermines the summativist's desired result in DBC. Recall that, in DBC, it seems arbitrary to identify any one of the reasons for which some member believes that g as the group's reason for believing that g. So instead the summativist claims that the group's reason for believing g is the conjunction of the members' reasons for believing g. But on a summative view of group belief, in DBC the group does not believe that the relevant conjunction is a good reason to believe that g for no member does. For instance, guards M_1–M_{20} believe that Albert is planning a theft, but don't believe that either Bertrand or Cecil is. So guards M_1–M_{20} don't believe that the following conjunction is a good reason to believe that g: Albert is planning a theft and

Bertrand is planning a theft and Cecil is planning a theft. A similar argument applies to the other groups of guards. Furthermore, the desired counterfactuals don't hold. If a group believes that g on the basis of the conjunction, then we would expect that, *ceteris paribus*, if it receives evidence that undermines the claims that Albert is planning a theft and that Bertrand is planning a theft, but which doesn't undermine the claim that Cecil is planning a theft, then it would still believe that g. But this isn't what we observe in DBC. If the guards receive evidence which undermines both the claims that Albert is planning a theft and that Bertrand is planning a theft, but which doesn't undermine the claim that Cecil is planning a theft, most of the guards would no longer believe that g. For only 20 of the guards believe that g on the basis that Cecil is planning a theft. But on a summative account, if most of the guards no longer believe that g, the group no longer believes that g.

Adding facts about the group's meta-beliefs and relevant counterfactuals to the proposed account of group belief for a reason would not only undermine the summativist's desired claims about DBC, but would also require significant revision of existing summative accounts of group justified belief. For instance, consider Lackey's account on which a group justifiably believes that p if and only if (1) a significant proportion of operative members justifiably believe that p, (2) the bases of their beliefs are coherent, and (3) the total evidence which members of the group do and should have, when combined with those bases, sufficiently supports that p. As DBC illustrates, Lackey's three conditions for group justified belief can be met even though the relevant conditions regarding meta-beliefs and counterfactuals are not. So, if she were to incorporate the relevant conditions into an account of when a group believes for a reason, she would need to substantially modify her account of group justified belief. That shouldn't be surprising. On the standard view, the reason for which a subject believes that p affects whether, and the extent to which, she is justified in believing that p. So what view of group reason for belief one adopts affects one's account of group justified belief.

I conclude that it's hard for a summativist to provide a satisfactory account of group reason for belief. A key issue facing summative accounts is what to say about the basis of the group's belief in quotidian cases, like DBC, in which the members of the group believe that p for different but compatible reasons. Summativists have claimed that in such cases the group justifiably believes that p. It seems that the

most plausible option consistent with this is for the summativist to say that, in DBC, the basis of the group's belief is the conjunction of the reasons for which the members individually believe that p. This fits well with leading summative accounts of group justified belief. However, this suggestion is in tension with popular accounts of the nature of reasons, and also fails to take account of factors which plausibly affect the reason for which a group believes, for example, meta-beliefs and counterfactuals. As a result, the suggestion gives implausible results in a variant of DBC, the Different Methodologies Case. Given the problems facing summative accounts of group reason for belief, I turn in the next section to consider non-summative accounts of what it is for a group to believe that p for a reason.

A Non-summative Account. Let us now turn to focus on developing a non-summative account which denies that a group's reason for believing that p can be understood as a function of the reasons for which its members believe that p. As we saw earlier, such a non-summative approach would be a natural fit for those taking a non-summative approach to group doxastic states. There are a variety of potential non-summative approaches to group belief and group evidence. Non-summative approaches to group belief include joint acceptance accounts, premiss-aggregation approaches, functionalist and instrumentalist approaches (or hybrids of these). Non-summative approaches to group evidence could be developed by combining the view that r is part of a group's evidence if and only if the group bears a certain doxastic attitude to r (knowledge, say) with a non-summative account of that doxastic attitude (for example, Hedden 2019). Of course, different non-summative accounts of group belief and evidence face a variety of objections. My project here is not to defend a non-summative approach to either group belief or group evidence, but rather to craft a non-summative account of the basis of group belief which would naturally fit with such non-summative approaches to group belief and evidence. Thus I will leave aside any discussion of objections to non-summative accounts of group belief and evidence, and focus on developing a non-summative account of the basis of group belief.

In contrast to summative accounts, non-summative accounts deny that the basis of a group's belief that p is a function of the bases of member beliefs that p. As a result, non-summativists cannot stay neutral on what it is for a group to base a belief on some reason. So they need to defend a general account of basing and then apply it to the group level. The correct account of basing is highly controversial, and I cannot hope to address it properly here. Instead, I sketch how the two main styles of account—doxastic and causal—could be employed by non-summativists. Of course, the difficulties in providing a philosophical account of the basing relation have led to variants and hybrids of standard causal and doxastic views. Those who endorse such accounts can adapt the following discussion accordingly.

In the case of individuals, doxastic accounts hold that S's belief that p is based on r if and only if S believes that r is a good reason to believe that p. Applying this to groups, the doxastic account would hold that G's belief that p is based on r if and only if G believes that r is a good reason to believe that p. One could then plug into this account one's favoured non-summative account of group belief, whether a joint acceptance account, judgement aggregation account, functionalist account, and so on. However, well-known problems plague the doxastic account of basing. In particular, in the case of individuals, it seems that even if S has evidence for p which she truly believes to be a good reason to believe that p, she may instead believe that p on some bad basis, for example, wishful thinking, which she doesn't believe to be a good reason to believe that p. Similar problems will likely affect any attempt to extend the doxastic account to the case of groups. Given the objections facing doxastic accounts, it is more popular to embrace some version of a causal account.

At the heart of causal accounts is the idea that a subject's belief that p is based on reason r if and only if r causes the subject's belief that p. Of course, one key worry for the sufficiency direction of causal accounts arises from deviant causal chains. Rather than offering any particular solution here, I will assume that an account of group justified belief can employ any satisfactory general account of what it is for a causal chain to be non-deviant.[6] Thus we will have: a group believes that p on the basis of reason r if and only if the

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[6] One popular contemporary solution appeals to dispositions. For example, Turri (2011, p. 393) says that 'R non-deviantly causes B if and only if R's causing B manifests (at least some of) your cognitive traits'. See also Evans (2013), Lord and Sylvan (2019), and Neta (2019).

group's belief that p is non-deviantly caused by r. Crucially, causal accounts, unlike doxastic accounts, can allow that a subject believes that p for a reason r even if the subject doesn't believe that p is a good reason. This point holds whether the causal account is applied to individuals or groups. For instance, a government might have scientific evidence supporting the claim that its coronavirus restrictions can be eased, while it is also in the government's political self-interest to believe that. The causal account of basing would allow for the possibility that the government's belief that coronavirus restrictions can be eased is caused by the government's political self-interest even if the government believes that the scientific evidence, but not its self-interest, is good reason to suppose that the restrictions can be eased.

In the case of groups, the relevant causal relationship between the group's belief and the reason that is its basis can be established in a variety of ways. For example, it might be established through a group discussion in which the group considers the evidence it has for or against p and then forms a belief on the matter. (Note that that's not to endorse a joint acceptance account: that we say that we believe that p for r doesn't establish the relevant causal relationship for either an individual or a group.) Alternatively, it might be established through the division of epistemic labour. For instance, a group might divide some epistemic enquiry up into sub-parts, and assign different parts to different members or subgroups. To the extent that some member of the group is given responsibility for determining the group's view about whether p in light of the group's evidence concerning p, the relevant causal connection might be forged within the mind of this individual member of the group.

The proposed causal account of the basis of group belief would allow that a group could believe that p for a reason r_1 even if all of its members believe that p for a different reason, r_2. For instance, consider a company which has two motivations to believe that it is not polluting the local river: the bottom line, and evidence supporting the claim that it is not polluting. Let us also suppose that its operative members have the same two motivations to believe the company is not polluting the local river. In principle, the cause of the group's belief that it's not polluting need not be identical to the cause(s) of member beliefs that it's not polluting. For instance, it might be that all individual operative members believe that it's not polluting because of the evidence, whereas the group may believe that it's not

polluting because of the bottom line. These causal relationships may be indicated by relevant counterfactuals: in a counterfactual situation in which the evidence supports pollution yet dealing with the pollution would be very costly to the company, the operative members would believe that it is polluting, whereas the group would believe that it is not polluting. That's a possibility on a variety of non-summative accounts of group belief which allow that a group can believe that p even if none of its members believe that p.

I have now sketched a non-summative account of what it is for a group to base a belief on some reason r. Unlike the earlier summative accounts considered, the proposed account does not treat the reason for which a group believes that p as a function of the reasons for which its individual members believe that p. Thus it can allow that a group believes that p for a reason r_1 even if all its members believe that p for a different reason, r_2. In the next section, I consider objections to the proposed non-summative account of group belief for a reason.

<div align="center">V</div>

Objections. According to the proposed non-summative account, the reason for which a group believes that p can come apart from the reasons for which its members believe that p. As a result, the proposed account allows that a group can justifiably believe that p, or even know that p, yet none of its members do, since only the group, but not the members, believes that p on a justifying basis. Given this, the non-summative account of the basis of group belief might be thought to be open to an objection which Lackey (2021) levels at certain non-summative accounts of group knowledge, namely, that such accounts cannot accommodate the widely accepted view that knowledge is sufficient for action (or *Sufficiency*); that is, if a subject knows that p, then she is in a good enough epistemic position to rely on p in her practical reasoning. Lackey's argument exploits her Group/Member Action Principle: for every group G and act a, G performs a only if at least one member of G performs some act or other that causally contributes to a (Lackey 2021, p. 116). Given this principle, it might seem that the non-summativist about group reasons for belief will have to deny *Sufficiency*. For in a case in

which a group knows that p, but none of its members do, it may seem that the group is not in a good enough epistemic position to act on p because the group can act only through its members but none of them know that p.

However, contra Lackey, it seems that a group can be in a good enough epistemic position to act on its knowledge that p through the action of some of its members, even when those members don't know that p. To see that, consider a company whose production process is safe to go ahead only if a certain condition, p, is met. Suppose that the company acquires the knowledge that p without any of its members individually acquiring that knowledge (perhaps p is a complex conjunction, with different members of the company feeding in different conjuncts and an automatic system putting all this information together). Since the company knows that p, it is in a good enough epistemic position to act on p, say by starting the production process. The company may have set things up so that when the automated system registers that p, it sends an instruction to relevant workers to start the production process. When one of the company's workers starts the production process as the result of an explicit instruction to do so, the company acts. However, for a worker, say Jones, to be in a good enough epistemic position to start the production process, she doesn't need to know that p. Perhaps her role is simply to follow instructions regarding starting up and shutting down the process, and she doesn't have any general understanding of the conditions in which this would be safe or risky. As we might put it, that's 'above her pay grade'. Correlatively, it wouldn't be appropriate to challenge her flicking the switch to start the process by saying, 'You shouldn't have started the process since you didn't know that p'. An appropriate challenge to the propriety of her action would instead be a challenge to the claim that she knew that she'd been instructed to start the process. Thus she is in a good enough epistemic position to start the process if she knows she's been instructed to do so, even if she doesn't know that p. It seems, then, that a non-summativist about group knowledge can embrace *Sufficiency* even while acknowledging that groups act only through the actions of their members. The key point to note is that a group can act on some proposition p through the action of a member of the group even though that member does not themselves act on p. In our example, the group acts on its knowledge that the safety condition, p, is met by the relevant automated process instructing Jones

to start the production process, where Jones does not act on *p*. Indeed, Jones need not even understand the proposition *p* that the group knows.

Having seen how the proposed account is compatible with *Sufficiency*, I turn to consider what the proposed non-summative account says about the Different Bases Case (DBC), which caused difficulties for the summative approach to the basis of group belief. As described, in DBC most of the members of the group of guards justifiably believe *g* (that some guard is planning an inside theft), but do so for different reasons. Guards M_1–M_{20} believe it on the basis that guard Albert is planning a theft; none of the other guards believe that Albert is planning a theft. Guards M_{21}–M_{40} believe it on the basis that guard Bertrand is planning a theft; none of the other guards believe that Bertrand is planning a theft. Guards M_{41}–M_{60} believe it on the basis that guard Cecil is planning a theft; none of the other guards believe that guard Cecil is planning a theft. What should a non-summativist say about the basis of group belief say about this case?

It is worth noting to start with that it's not clear that a non-summativist need accept that the group even believes that *g*. As originally described, the case doesn't involve the members jointly accepting that *g*; nor does it involve the group having an established mechanism whereby the judgements of members are aggregated into some group judgement. So, on joint acceptance and premiss-aggregation views, it's not clear that the group even believes that *g*. Similarly, it's not clear that a functionalist or dispositionalist about belief would need to hold that the group believes *g*; for it's not clear how the group would be in a state playing the required causal/dispositional role. Of course, on non-summativism, it's compatible with the group's failing to believe that *g* that most of the members individually justifiably believe that *g*, and that if the evidence of the members were combined, the resulting set of evidence would provide justification to believe that *g*. Thus a non-summativist can properly acknowledge the doxastic achievements of the members of the group even while arguing that the group itself doesn't believe that *g*.

Of course, we could add details to the case so that a non-summativist would allow that the group believes that *g*, and does so justifiably. For example, we could suppose that after their initial investigations, the various museum guards come together in a joint discussion in which they share their reasons to suppose that some

guard is planning an inside theft. As a result, the group may come to justifiably believe that g on the basis that all of Albert, Bertrand and Cecil are planning a theft. Or suppose that a certain member of the group is allocated the task of determining the group's view on the matter and she believes that g on the basis that, say, Albert is planning a theft. Alternatively, the case might be filled out such that although the group does not believe g on the basis of a reason, the belief is the product of a reliable process of group belief formation. Thus, to the extent that the non-summativist endorses reliabilism, she could argue that the group belief is justified even if not based on reasons. (Some inflationists about group doxastic states have embraced reliabilist accounts of group justification, for example, Schmitt 1994; List 2005; Dunn 2019.)

It seems, then, that there is a range of possible views which a non-summativist might take about DBC, depending on how it is filled out. On some ways of filling it out, a non-summativist may reject the suggestion that the group of museum guards believes that g. Compatibly with that, the non-summativist may recognize the epistemic achievements of the members of the group who justifiably believe that g. On some other ways of filling out the case, a non-summativist may argue that the group of museum guards does justifiably believe that g, either because the belief is the result of a reliable process or because the group believes that g on the basis of a justifying reason.

Even if the proposed non-summativist view of the basis of group belief can offer a defensible account of DBC, it might be argued that it faces objections from recent work in the philosophy of science about when a group of scientists involved in a scientific collaboration are justified in asserting a claim. Dang (2019) has recently argued that a scientific collaboration can be collectively justified in asserting that p even if its members fail to reach consensus over the reasons for p. At the heart of her argument is the idea that diversity of justifiers within a scientific collaboration has important epistemic value, saying, 'Different methods may be associated with independent sources of errors, which can be controlled for by employing different methods' and 'scientists with different background theories will be better at exposing problems with each other's assumptions, reasoning and justifications' (p. 1035). Thus she argues that although a scientific collaboration can be collectively justified in

asserting that p only if it is in consensus about p, it needn't be in consensus about the reasons why p.

One might think that there is some conflict between Dang's claims and mine. Many have argued that one is in a good enough epistemic position to assert that p only if one justifiably believes or knows that p. Furthermore, it might seem that the kinds of scientific claim on which Dang focuses are the kinds of claim which are justified on the basis of reasons or evidence. Putting these claims together, we would have the result that the scientific collaboration is justified in asserting that p if and only if the group justifiably believes that p on the basis of reasons or evidence. But one might worry that, given the lack of consensus, the proposed non-summative account would have the result that the scientific collaboration does not believe the result for any of the reasons why members of the collaboration believe the result. But then it might seem that the group's belief in the result is unjustified. If that is so, and one is justified in asserting p if and only if one justifiably believes that p, it would follow that the scientific collaboration is not justified in asserting that p, contrary to Dang's suggestion.

However, on further reflection, there may be no tension between the proposed non-summative view of group reason for belief and Dang's claims. First, the proposed non-summative view may allow that in Dang's no-consensus case, the collaborative team justifiably believes that p for a reason. As Dang allows, even if there is no consensus among the members of the scientific collaboration on the reasons why p, the collaboration may have a certain kind of hierarchical structure. For example, perhaps a senior member of the collaboration has been assigned the task of determining the group's belief about whether p and judges that p on the basis that r. In that case, on the non-summative approach proposed above, the group believes that p on the basis of r.

Second, it seems that in Dang's sense, a group could have justification to assert that p even if it doesn't have justification to believe that p. To see that, note that Dang's defence of the idea that a collaboration is justified to assert that p even if it's not in consensus about the reasons for p appeals to instrumental considerations. In particular, she argues that having members of collaborations pursue different methodologies is instrumentally good for epistemic ends. But the fact that a certain process of enquiry is instrumentally good for epistemic ends doesn't entail that the product of that process has some

particular epistemic standing, whether knowledge or being epistemi-
cally justified. To see a toy example of this, suppose that a truth fairy
offers that if you believe that p against the evidence on this one occa-
sion, she will shower you with epistemic virtues and epistemically
conducive conditions for the rest of your life. Believing that p might
well be the right thing to do instrumentally for epistemic ends, even
though believing that p against the evidence would not make your
belief that p epistemically justified. Likewise, that it's instrumentally
good for epistemic ends that collaborations assert that p when they
are in consensus about p, but not about the reasons why p, does not
show that such collaborations have epistemic justification to believe
that p. Indeed, elsewhere Dang suggests that the conditions for
group belief and group publication come apart and that we should
not suppose that it's appropriate for a collaboration to publish that
p only if the collaboration believes that p (Bright, Dang and Heesen
2018).

    In conclusion, it seems that the proposed non-summative account
of group reason to believe is not in conflict with epistemic norms for
action and assertion, or with recent work on the epistemic norms of
scientific publication. In addition, it can provide an adequate ac-
count of DBC, which caused difficulties for the summative account.

VI

Conclusion. In this paper I've examined an issue which has so far re-
ceived rather little attention in the group literature, namely, what it
is for a group to believe that p for a reason. It is surprising how little
attention this issue has received given that the reason for which an
agent believes that p affects whether her belief is justified, its degree
of justification, and how it is rational for her to respond to new evi-
dence that undermines that reason. Despite this, leading accounts of
group justified belief don't explicitly discuss what it is for a group to
believe that p for a reason. I started by examining the kind of sum-
mative account of group reason to believe which might seem to fit
leading summative accounts of group justified belief. But we saw
that such summative accounts yield implausible results, especially in
cases in which the members of the group believe that p for different
reasons. Relatedly, these cases cause difficulties for leading

summative accounts of group justified belief. Instead, I have proposed a non-summative account of group reason for belief on which a group can believe that *p* for a reason even though none of the members believe that *p* for that reason. I argued that this non-summative account makes more plausible claims about cases in which members of a group believe that *p* for different reasons, and can be defended against a range of objections, including that it conflicts with epistemic norms for action, assertion, and scientific publication.[7]

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