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S.I.: GROUPS

What are social groups? Their metaphysics and how to classify them

Brian Epstein[1]

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Abstract This paper presents a systematic approach for analyzing and explaining the nature of social groups. I argue against prominent views that attempt to unify all social groups or to divide them into simple typologies. Instead I argue that social groups are enormously diverse, but show how we can investigate their natures nonetheless. I analyze social groups from a bottom-up perspective, constructing profiles of the metaphysical features of groups of specific kinds. We can characterize any given kind of social group with four complementary profiles: its "construction" profile, its "extra essentials" profile, its "anchor" profile, and its "accident" profile. Together these provide a framework for understanding the nature of groups, help classify and categorize groups, and shed light on group agency.

Keywords Social groups · Metaphysics · Ritchie · Group agency · Shared intention · Functionalism · Identity · Sociality · Norms · Committees · Organizations · Constitution · Anchoring

When we catalog the innovations that make contemporary life possible, social groups are hardly the first things to come to mind. We think of artifacts, technologies, and infrastructure—things like wheels, forms of shelter, the printing press, networks of paths and roads, mechanized agriculture, antibiotics, refrigeration, microprocessors.

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✉ Brian Epstein
brian.epstein@tufts.edu

[1] Tufts University, Medford, MA, USA

No doubt, these are nice to have. But at least as crucial to the modern world is how we design and set up groups of people. Social groups have innumerable functions and purposes. They arise from a combination of conscious invention, unconscious habits, repeated patterns, routines, practices, and environmental features. And they come in staggering variety. Among the kinds of groups are *sports teams, baseball teams, major league baseball teams, minor league baseball teams, college baseball teams, intramural baseball teams, pickup baseball teams, research groups, musical groups, pop bands, symphony orchestras, marching bands, social classes, races, genders, demographic cohorts, psychographic cohorts, geographic cohorts, corporate marketing groups, corporate HR groups, boards of directors, rioting mobs, marching platoons, processions of mourners,…* we could go on and on, listing kinds and sub-kinds.

A chaotic list like this cries out for order and explanation. What, if anything, do social groups have in common? What sorts of entities are social groups, how are they individuated, and what are their persistence and identity conditions? How are they set up, and what do they do for us? How can we best construct a classification or typology of groups?

In approaching these questions in this article, I have two aims. First is to challenge the idea that they have simple answers. There seems to be a powerful drive among theorists to unify and simplify the endless diversity and variation among kinds of groups. Many people, for instance, try to draw simple lines between social groups and mere collections of people, or else to divide groups into a few fundamental varieties.[1] I hope to show that this is a non-starter. Too much faith in parsimony misleads an investigation of social groups from the outset.

The second aim is to present a practical and systematic approach for analyzing and explaining the nature of groups. Instead of thinking mainly about the umbrella category of social groups, I propose to investigate their details from a "micro" or "bottom-up" perspective, constructing profiles of the metaphysical features of groups of specific kinds. I propose that we can characterize any given kind of social group with four complementary profiles:

1. Its "construction" profile. This profile characterizes how groups of a given kind are built out of their members, how they persist over time and can be identified across worlds, and when they exist in the first place.
2. Its "extra essentials" profile. This characterizes other essential properties of groups of a given kind, in addition to their construction features. Typically it includes abilities, powers, rights, responsibilities, and norms that we set up or "anchor" groups of a given kind to have.
3. Its "anchor" profile. This gives the facts that answer the question, *why* does a group of a given kind have the properties it does? What makes the conditions for membership, identity conditions, and so on, what they are? The anchors are the facts that metaphysically set up, or put in place, various properties of groups of a given kind.

[1] For a number of approaches to this question see Greenwood (1997). See also Sartre (1960), Held (1970), Gruner (1976), French (1984), McGary (1986), May (1987), Gilbert (1989), Harré (1997), Graham (2002), Brewer (2003), Greenwood (2003), Pettit (2003), Sheehy (2006a, b), Meijers (2007), Tuomela (2007), List and Pettit (2011), Ritchie (2013), Tollefsen (2015).

4. Its "accident" profile. When it comes to explaining and classifying groups, we are not only interested in their essential properties. This profile gives salient accidental properties of groups of a given kind, which can be equally or more important to understanding what groups are, and to classifying them or developing typologies.

I begin the paper by considering a prominent approach to social groups in the literature. Subsequently, I introduce several examples of groups, and show how the four profiles can be assembled for each. In the course of characterizing the profiles, I also discuss how questions of group agency—groups that can take actions or have intentional states—fit into the analysis of groups. Finally, I turn to the question of how we can classify groups or develop typologies, and what good it does to analyze the metaphysics of groups in the first place.

Despite my best efforts, this is a long paper. My central goal is to organize and explain, in four profiles, how to systematically analyze the metaphysics of any given kind of group. Social groups, at first blush, seem so simple that it may come as an unpleasant shock that a proper analysis turns out to be complex and multi-faceted. But on reflection this should be no surprise at all. We have had thousands of years to develop and elaborate kinds of social groups, for innumerable purposes. The shock would be if, after all that time, every social group fell into one of a few categories.

Yet for generations theorists have relentlessly oversimplified the analysis of groups. Even today, this hobbles our understanding of such things as group agency, the composition of groups, how they are generated, and how we should model them. The good news is that—despite the initial complexity—it is within our powers to tame and systematize their analysis.

1 Some troubles with simple typologies

To motivate the approach I am taking, I will briefly discuss Katherine Ritchie's influential theory of social groups. Ritchie divides social groups into two categories.[2] Type 1 groups (or "organized groups") have structures that reflect functional organization, with replaceable people filling in roles at the "nodes" of the structures. Groups of this kind also have collective intentionality, and members choose to be members—membership is "volitional." Type 2 groups (or "feature groups"), in contrast, are unstructured. People are members in virtue of possessing some feature, not because they occupy nodes of a structure. Feature groups lack collective intentionality, and people may or may not choose to be members.

With this distinction, Ritchie refines a contrast that many theorists have found intuitive and developed variations of.[3] These categories, however, are problematic,

[2] Ritchie (2013, 2015). Ritchie also notes that there may be other categories of groups, such as mobs, queues, and non-human groups. The main categorization, though, is between organized groups and feature groups, and similar categorizations are put forward by many other theorists. My aim in challenging this categorization is to cast doubt on the utility of attempts to classify social groups largely, even if not exclusively, into broad categories like these. In this paper, I do not discuss non-human groups. I am grateful to Ritchie for comments and clarifications on these and subsequent points.

[3] Many authors propose similar categorizations of groups. See, among others, Sartre (1960), French (1984), McGary (1986), May (1987), Harré (1997).

even if they are meant to be ideal types. One problem is that it is unclear that these two categories are distinct at all: it all depends on how the notion of "feature" is elaborated, and this is not a simple matter. Second, if we limit the "feature groups" so that they do not include all of the organized ones, we find that even taken together the two categories leave out nearly all actual social groups.

A key challenge for this approach is how to understand a "feature" in the latter category. Which sorts of features that members possess count for such groups, and which are ruled out? Ritchie needs to balance this carefully: if we include all properties, including extrinsic ones, then even the property *being a person filling in a node of such-and-such a structure* counts, so all groups would be feature groups and the intended contrast between the categories would collapse. If, on the other hand, the "features" were restricted to only intrinsic properties, then we would leave out the archetypal groups Ritchie highlights, such as races and genders.[4] So Ritchie proposes to understand feature groups as grouping people according to "socially constructed properties," and characterizes such properties in a very accommodating way. One characterization she mentions, for instance, is Haslanger's definition of constitutive social construction: "*X is socially constructed constitutively as an F* iff X is of a kind or sort F such that in defining what it is to be F we must make reference to social factors."[5]

Unfortunately, while this is a plausible analysis of constitutive social construction, using it to characterize "feature groups" would mean that *all* the organized groups fall within the category of feature groups. Consider, for example, structured properties such as *being on the Microsoft board, being a member of the Supreme Court, and working at the State House.* All of these make reference to social factors in their definitions. And they all come along with norms and roles and structures, so the division between feature groups and organized groups breaks down.[6]

Even bigger troubles arise with "organized groups." To make these distinctive, Ritchie proposes a set of criteria that fail to be possessed by most groups that seem as though they ought to belong to this category. On her characterization, for instance, organized groups must have collective intentionality. How one understands this, of course, is sensitive to one's theory of collective intentions. But according to most prevailing theories, many organized groups do not have them.[7] For instance, legislatures, corporate organizations, and many other groups are organized of people working at odds with one another, having divergent projects and failing to satisfy the conditions of collective intentionality. If prevailing accounts of collective intentions are correct, none of these counts as an organized group on Ritchie's characterization. The same

[4] Gender properties and racial properties are widely understood to be extrinsic, involving social and historical characteristics. See, among others, Haslanger (2000), Blum (2010), McPherson (2015).

[5] Haslanger (2003, p. 318), Ritchie (2015, p. 317).

[6] I am not claiming that there is no possible distinction between groups manifesting some sort of organization and those that do not. As I discuss below, however, there are so many cross-cutting lines to group design and organization that I doubt the utility of any one way of making the distinction. And in any case, if there is such a distinction it is far more complex to draw than it might first appear.

[7] For this reason, certain accounts of shared intention (e.g., Bratman 2014) expressly limit the scope of their accounts to very special kinds of groups. In Bratman's case, the category of "modest sociality," which involves fairly substantial and symmetric attitudes on the part of all the members of the group.

problematic results arise from the other proposed conditions on organized groups. Many structured groups, for instance, do not have unified functions: some have a variety of functions, complementary and competing, and some have none, or once had functions that are now defunct, even as the organization lives on. Even the volition condition is too strong. Groups of workers on a slave plantation (consisting of hierarchies of masters and slaves) are organized structured groups, yet individuals do not have volitional control over their own membership. We may also be members of social groups with "latent functions," in which we play roles but are unaware even of the existence of the group to which we belong.[8]

It is not just that the lines are vague, or that marginal groups fail to fit neatly into these categories. Rather, categorizations of this sort focus our attention on two small and rather arbitrary clusters, and risk distracting us from the analysis of broader cross-sections of groups.

A key virtue of Ritchie's approach is the precise formulation of a theory of organized groups in particular, going so far as to introduce a criterion of identity. This precision, however, also enables us to see where the proposal is not successful, and why even a refined version could not be: different kinds of groups have sharply different criteria of identity, so we need a much finer breakdown of kinds of groups, if we are to formulate such criteria at all.

Ritchie's criterion of identity for organized groups is this: take any pair of organized groups G_1 and G_2. For all times t and worlds w, if G_1 has the same structure as G_2 at t and w, and if G_1 has the same people occupying the structure in the same roles as G_2 has at t and w, then that implies that $G_1 = G_2$.[9] That is, if G_1 and G_2 have the same structure and same structure-ordered-members at all times and worlds,[10] then $G_1 = G_2$.

Unfortunately, this condition is too weak for many organized groups and too strong for many others. In the following sections I will discuss several criteria of identity, but to illustrate the problem here are a couple of examples:

[8] Merton (1957). Merton gives numerous examples, including kinship groups, social strata, and others (pp. 53ff). Some of the illustrations Merton gives are of groups that members are aware of but that have latent functions, while other illustrations are groups that members need not even be aware of.

[9] Specifically, this is Ritchie's expression of the criterion of identity: (Ritchie 2015, p. 316)
(IDENTITY) A group G1 and a group G2 are identical if, and only if,

1. for all t and all w, the structure of G1 at t at w is identical to the structure of G2 at t at w, and
2. for all t and all w and all x, x occupies node n in the structure of G1 at t at w if, and only if, x occupies n in the structure of G2 at t at w.

As with all criteria of identity, all the interesting work is done in the right-to-left implication; the left-to-right implication is trivial. (If $G_1 = G_2$, then they have the same properties at all times and worlds, so *a fortiori* they will have the same structure and structure-ordered-members at all times and worlds.)

[10] An additional problem with Ritchie's characterization of organized groups is that this criterion admits that a group's structure can change from any time to any other, and from any world to any other. In fact, (IDENTITY) is compatible with a group having a radically discontinuous and changing structure at *every* moment in time and in *every* world. This seems bizarre, but the criterion gives us no constraints on structural change, nor does it give us any information about the persistence of a group over time. If there is to be any force at all to the idea that organized groups are structured, then Ritchie needs to give constraints on structural change.

Too weak: Many kinds of groups plausibly have essential origins.[11] Consider, for instance, the Senate, or the Supreme Court, or a corporate board, or a sports team. Groups like these are formed with a particular action; and the property *having been formed by that particular action* is essential to the group. In addition, for many groups, it is essential to them that their memberships too have specific historical origins—i.e., that their members are elected or initiated or appointed in a particular way. It is not enough that two groups have the same members playing the same roles, in order for them to be the same group.

Too strong: For many kinds of groups, we can get identity with weaker conditions. Typically, we understand criteria of identity as giving minimal conditions to guarantee the identity of a pair of objects of a given kind, but Ritchie's proposed criterion is far from minimal. Some types of groups, for instance, have their members essentially. Such groups do not persist through changes of members. Such a group may be organized, with roles, structures, and the rest—but there are no substitutions. For kinds of groups like these, a minimal criterion of identity is much weaker: two groups of this kind that have different members at any time or world are different groups.

Despite the present criticism, Ritchie's approach does ask the right questions. We need to give clear characterizations of the essential properties of kinds of groups, analyze distinctions between kinds, and formulate criteria of identity among other characterizations. The underlying problem, however, is the idea that the highly structured, organized, and voluntaristic groups are a basic paradigm rather than a minor variant in the vast ecosystem of social groups.

2 Approaching the question

It might turn out that all the various kinds of social groups share key characteristics, or can be organized into a simple typology. But there are so many different kinds of social groups—committees, boards, legislatures, classes, among others I mentioned at the outset—that we should at least be open to the possibility that *social group* is just a generic umbrella, and that the real interest lies in the details of particular kinds of social groups.

Let me kick off with a small but important point: the topic of our inquiry and classification is *kinds* of social groups, not just particular groups in the amorphous category of social groups overall. In analyzing groups, that is, we should focus on the kind *board of directors,* not just the Microsoft board; the kind *gender groups,* not just the group women; the kind *social classes,* not just the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. And equally for other kinds of groups. It seriously damages an analysis of social groups to overlook this.

For one thing, criteria of identity are criteria for kinds. This is what a criterion of identity does: it starts with a kind K and instances x and y of K. Then it gives minimal conditions for x and y to be identical. So a given criterion is a criterion for a kind K. This is clear when we think about the familiar search for criteria of identity for

[11] On origin essentialism, see Salmon (1981), Kripke (1972/1980).

persons: we are looking for a criterion for the kind, not one specific to Brian Epstein. Similarly for kinds of groups versus an individual group.

A second reason this is important is that many of the kinds we are interested in are functional kinds. Analyzing the function of a kind, as we will see, can be of importance for analyzing the metaphysics of the kind. But a well-known feature of functional kinds is that their instances can malfunction.[12] In fact, something can be an instance of a functional kind even if it *never* properly functions. Only if we explicitly analyze the kinds, not just the individuals, can we discern the place of the function, the conditions for membership in the kind, the identity conditions, and other features.

We do, of course, want to analyze particular groups and investigate their properties. We want to understand the Microsoft board, the group women, and the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in particular. For those individual groups, we may want to know when they come to exist and when they cease to, whether they have intentions or take action, whether they have norms essentially associated with them, or whether they are deserving of praise or blame.

To do so, however, we cannot avoid thinking about the kinds of which the particular groups are instances. Often it is not even determinate which group we are interested in until we hone in on a kind. Consider, for instance, the intuitive idea of a "feature group." It seems that for some groups, people are members in virtue of having some property, and that is all there is to the group. The group is just made up of people who have that property. In discussing Ritchie, I pointed out that we run into trouble distinguishing feature groups from organized groups. But what if we abandon that aim of marking off the feature groups from other kinds of groups? What if we just allow any property—being a woman, being middle-income, being an adult—to mark off a group? Why not simply analyze that group, without worrying about *kinds* of groups?

The problem is this: suppose we choose a particular property P_g, the possession of which is necessary and sufficient for membership in group g. Even given that property, that does not suffice to determine the *other* essential properties of group g. Under what conditions, for instance, does g persist? Suppose ten people have property P_g from April to June, then no one has the property from June to September, then eleven people have the property from September to November. Do the ten members in the spring belong to the same group as the eleven in the autumn? Was that one group, or two distinct groups? Furthermore, suppose there is another property Q that has the same extension as P_g. Maybe even the same extension in all possible worlds. Is the Q-group distinct from g, or identical to it? Even though property P_g determines how the group is constituted—that is, how its membership is fixed—it does not answer these questions and others. Rather, their answers depend on the kind of group g is.

Here, instead, is a more satisfactory treatment of groups like these. We can agree that the *dominant characteristic* of certain groups is that they are constituted by and only by people having property P_g. But that dominant characteristic is not their only characteristic, and there is not just one way of filling out the rest. Not all such groups, therefore, will fall into one single kind. Instead, there is a family of kinds of groups, all of which have that dominant characteristic, but whose answers to the additional

[12] See, for instance, the articles in Ariew et al. (2002).

questions vary. I will call this family the "constitution-dominated" kinds. The groups in some of the kinds, within this family, are essentially continuous: these groups cease to exist as soon as no one has the relevant property. Others admit discontinuity: these groups persist even if there are breaks in the property's exemplification. Other kinds in this family have different persistence conditions: kinds that persist through three breaks but not four, or that persist through breaks so long as they are brief. And persistence is not the only issue: kinds within the constitution-dominated family vary along different dimensions as well.

In short, there is no single default kind of group that is "features only." In a moment I will introduce a particular kind in the constitution-dominated family as one of the working examples for us to profile.[13]

Once we focus on specific kinds of groups, it is easy to get off and running. To analyze a kind of group K, we need to answer a variety of questions. When and how does an instance of K come to exist? Given a group *g* of kind K, under what conditions is a collection of people the membership of *g* at a given time? Under what conditions are instances of kind K identical to one another? What are the rights, obligations, and hierarchies associated with groups of kind K? Where do these come from, and for that matter, where do the conditions come from pertaining to the existence, membership, and identity of groups of that kind? And finally, once we have these characterizations of many kinds of groups, what kinds of kinds are there? How should they be classified?

To begin, let us consider several kinds of groups as working examples. If we are to get a sense of the inadequacies of simple models, and see how to analyze diverse kinds, we cannot start with just one or two. So here is a range of kinds:

K1 *Groups of street musicians.* A group of kind K1 is formed when musicians gather together on the street, standing or sitting relatively close to one another, and start playing. Players can join the group or leave the group, with membership dependent on their being in close proximity to the others, joining in, and being responded to appropriately. A group of this kind terminates when it stops playing for more than a few minutes.

K2 *Tufts University College of Arts, Sciences and Engineering elected standing faculty committees.* There are about fifteen actual committees instantiating kind K2. Groups of this kind are created by a process of voting and setup by the faculty, with members nominated and voted on by the faculty. The terms are staggered so that each year only a fraction of the members rotate out and are replaced; replacements are nominated by the faculty and voted in by the faculty. The structure and functions of the committees are dynamic over time, with proposed changes made by the dean or faculty members and voted on by the faculty. Sometimes committees perform their intended functions, and sometimes the members are at odds with one another for long stretches of time.

K3 *Capitalist social classes.* Groups of kind K3 are formed when a world's economic system becomes structured in a particular way, with groups of this kind playing particular roles. The groups exist so long as that role is played at all. Membership

[13] In thinking about these, I have benefitted greatly from discussions with Katherine Ritchie and with the participants of MANCEPT 2016.

in the group involves ownership and deployment of capital in certain ways, and standing in certain social relations to other people.

K4 For this example, I will choose one member of the "constitution-dominated" family of group kinds. To some extent, this choice is reverse-engineered: only by thinking through the profiles does it become clear what options there are, so the nature of this group will become clearer as we examine the profiles. I will assign this group-kind a name based on its characteristics: it is the *discontinuous intensionally-individuated constitution-dominated (DICD) groups.* A horrendous name, but it does highlight that this is one among the family of "constitution-dominated" kinds. (I will explain the "discontinuous intensionally-individuated" part below.) And despite its name, it is likely to be a fairly common kind of group. It may, for instance, be reasonable to regard groups like *middle-income people* and *adults*—inasmuch as they are determinate groups at all—as being groups of this kind.

These four examples are nothing more than a sampling of kinds of groups. In the following sections, I use them to explain and fill out the "profiles" for characterizing kinds of social groups.

3 The construction profile

The first task for understanding the nature of groups is to analyze how they are built out of their members, how they persist over time and can be identified across worlds, and when they exist in the first place. These are characterized in what I will call the "construction profile."

3.1 Analyzing groups in terms of their "stages"

To treat the constitution and identity of groups, I will center the discussion on "stages" of groups—how stages constitute groups at a given time and how they are related to one another.[14] Talk of stages is familiar from the metaphysics of ordinary objects, and of persons. A stage of a person, for instance, is an instantaneous snapshot of material that typically includes a head, a torso, arms, hands, legs, feet, etc. Similarly, a stage of a group is an instantaneous snapshot of that material that constitutes the group. That is, it is a collection of people in a world at an instant in time.[15]

A given stage *s* exists at and only at a moment in time and in a particular world. I will not assume that a given stage must be a stage of a group of any kind. Stages

[14] This is not the only way to approach groups. In fact, it has some shortcomings, because it biases our understanding toward assuming that groups must always have members and that they cease to exist when they are empty. That assumption would be a mistake; in Epstein (2015, chapters 11–12), I discuss broader ways of treating and identifying groups.

[15] I use the term 'collection' reluctantly, without intending to make a strong commitment as to how we should interpret collections. I intend collections to have their members essentially, much like a set but without some of the mathematical baggage. I think it is also preferable to speak of collections rather than fusions, since both Alice and Alice's hand are parts of the fusion of Alice, Bob, and Carol, while Alice's hand is not a member of the collection of Alice, Bob, and Carol, even though Alice the person is.

are merely snapshots of collections of people, and might be able to exist on their own without being constituents of groups.[16]

Throughout this paper, I will speak of groups being *constituted* by stages at a given time and in a given world.[17] In Sect. 4 I discuss the constitution view of groups directly, but my aim in analyzing and profiling social groups is to be fairly ecumenical about what groups "really are." Essentially the same profiles can be constructed, with slight variation in terminology, whether groups are real or fictional, whether they are continuants that persist in time or are abstract objects, or whatever else they might be. If, for instance, a group is best understood as a mathematical object like a set, then we could translate talk of stages constituting groups into talk of ordered pairs of sets and times being the elements of a group.[18] I do find it helpful to learn from the ways we analyze ordinary objects, in order to clarify features of groups. But I hope that most of the results we develop will apply regardless of one's view on the appropriateness of that analogy.[19]

To analyze a kind of group K, then, a central task is to find generalizations about how K-groups are constituted by their stages. (I will use the term "K-group" to abbreviate "group of kind K.") For instance, take a particular stage s. What conditions does s need to satisfy, in order to be a stage of a K-group? Or take two stages, s_1 and s_2. Suppose that both s_1 and s_2 are stages of K-groups. What additional conditions do s_1 and s_2 need to satisfy in order for them to be stages of the *same* K-group?

We can use stages to analyze the constitution or membership of groups of a given kind K, as well as to formulate criteria of identity. But we also will need one more bit that does not always involve stages: formulating the conditions under which a group of kind K comes to exist at all, and the conditions under which it continues to exist. Sometimes these are a function of the group's stages, but often they involve other factors.

3.2 The four parts of a construction profile

Thus there are four formulas to fill in, in order to characterize how groups of a given kind are built—at a given time, over time, and across possibilities.[20]

[16] Using stages to explicate properties of groups should not be confused with "stage-theories" of persistence. In this paper, I am not committing to any theory of persistence. Inasmuch as this discussion uses the tools of a particular theory, it can be translated into your favorite theory of persistence.

[17] This may be imprecise way of putting what constitutes what. It may be better to regard a collection—not a stage—as constituting-at-t a given group (see, for instance, Baker 2000). In that case, the collection in question is the one of which the stage is a snapshot. I use stages because they make it easier to see how to treat the dynamic constitution of groups over time, but the same formulas can be restated in terms of collections at times. I am grateful to Arto Laitinen for pointing out this issue.

[18] See Effingham (2010) for one way of doing this, though see Ritchie (2013) for fairly conclusive arguments against this approach. Ritchie thinks of groups as realized structures; on her account, the equivalent to a stage is a structure occupied by people at the nodes at a time t in world w (as seen in her criterion of identity, discussed in Sect. 1 above). See footnote 10 above for some problems with structures; in Sect. 5.2 I also raise an issue regarding defining structures in terms of binary rather than multi-place relations.

[19] I am grateful to an anonymous referee for raising this issue.

[20] Here I state these as biconditionals. In Epstein (2015, chapters 11 and 13), I give more precise formulations of related principles using the "grounding" relation. That formulation is superior, but introduces complexities that would be distracting for present purposes.

Coming to exist in a world: A new K-group comes to exist at t in w if and only if…
Continuing to exist in a world: Given a K-group g that came to exist at t_0 in world w and a time $t > t_0$. Then, g exists at t in w if and only if…
Constitution in a world: Given a K-group g and a time t and world w. Then, stage s constitutes g in w at t if and only if…
Identity: Given K-groups g_1 and g_2, and given that s_1 constitutes g_1 in w_1, and s_2 constitutes g_2 in w_2. Then, a minimal requirement to guarantee that $g_1 = g_2$ is that s_1 and s_2 stand in relation…[21]

In certain cases, these can be slightly redundant with one another, but mostly they are not.[22] And in any case, it is almost always illuminating to fill in all four. Without being excessively detailed, let us give at least approximate answers for the four groups K1–K4 I profiled above.

As we work through these sixteen questions—four questions for four kinds of groups—it becomes obvious that kinds of groups vary enormously along many dimensions. Existence conditions are all over the map. Constitution conditions are all over the map. Identity conditions are all over the map. Even if you disagree with the answers I give to specific questions, you will probably find that your improved answers are even more textured and varied than mine. The dimensions along which kinds of groups differ will give us rich material for classifying groups and building taxonomies.

This, however, is not the only value of working through the examples. With the profiles—construction, extra essentials, anchor, and accident—I hope to provide and illustrate a template for analyzing any given kind of group one is interested in. Without several examples, it would be hard to see how to apply these profiles to new cases. And there are practical benefits to fully profiling a kind of group one is interested in; it is not just a curiosity for metaphysicians. If, for instance, one wants to model the decisions of K2-groups (Tufts faculty committees), then one may want to model their creation and dissolution, how they gain and lose members, and ensure that distinct committees are modeled as distinct. For building models, that is, the construction profile matters. Similarly for the other profiles. We may want to model their rights and obligations, or how existence and membership conditions can be changed, or how rights and obligations come to be acquired, or perhaps even various accidental properties that the groups have over time. My aim in working through the detailed examples is largely to help illustrate the parts and applications of the profiles.

3.2.1 The conditions for a stage to constitute a given K-group

Within the construction profile, I will start with the constitution conditions—i.e., the conditions for a stage s to be a stage of a given group g at time t in world w. Those

[21] This relation can of course be external, not just internal to s_1 and s_2. In the discussion below, I write criteria of identity not just in this "two-level" form, but also in the "one-level" form. I discuss this difference briefly in the section below; for more, see Noonan and Curtis (2017).

[22] In Epstein (2015, pp. 194–195), I discuss how we can sometimes derive the criterion of identity from other conditions.

are often the most interesting and important ones for understanding the makeup of a group.[23]

To work them out, we need to recall that stage *s* is an instantaneous snapshot of a collection of people. So the constitution conditions will largely be a matter of the people in that collection having the right characteristics at time *t*. It can be useful to think separately about the synchronic and the diachronic characteristics of the people. What do the people need to be doing at *t*, and what history must they have had, in order to be part of a stage of the group at *t*? Further, we need to think not only about what it takes for stage *s* to be a stage of *some* group of that kind, but to be a stage of group *g* in particular. All this needs to be included in the constitution conditions.

Consider, for instance, some examples of K1-groups (i.e., street musician groups). Suppose group *a* plays at 500 Boylston Street on Monday from 10 a.m.–2 p.m., and group *b* plays at 500 Boylston Street on Tuesday from 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Consider some stage *s*—e.g., a snapshot of a collection of people playing on Tuesday at noon. What conditions does *s* need to satisfy in order to be a stage of group *b*? Some of the conditions on *s* are synchronic: the people in *s* need to be standing and playing together at 500 Boylston, and perhaps also have collective intentions regarding their performance. But that much only guarantees that *s* is a stage of *some* K1-group, not that it is a stage of group *b* in particular. (As opposed, for instance, to being a stage of the distinct group *a*.) To ensure that, it is also necessary that *s* be part of an unbroken sequence of stages stretching back to the origin of *b*.

Already with this example we can start to see why this detail is crucial for understanding groups, and why highly idealized categorizations are inadequate. Are all groups held together by collective intentions? Should we divide groups up into those that are held together by collective intentions and those that are not? The reality is more complicated than this. Here is at least a tentative analysis of the constitution conditions for groups K1–K4:

Suppose we have a K-group g, a time t, a world w, and a stage s that is a snapshot of a collection of people at t in w. Then, s constitutes g at t in w if and only if…

K1 (street musician): *g* exists at *t* in *w*, and *s* is a snapshot of a collection of people performing with one another and with the relevant collective intentions, and *s* is part of an unbroken sequence of stages with those characteristics going back to and including the time of origin of *g* in *w*.

K2 (faculty committee): *g* exists at *t* in *w*, and *s* has gone through the legislated rotations and processes for its members, and *s* is part of an unbroken sequence of stages with those characteristics going back to and including the time of origin of *g* in *w*.

K3 (social class): *g* exists at *t* in *w*, and *s* is a snapshot of the collection of all the people at *t* who have performed the functional role with which *g* was formed

[23] On the other hand, while the analysis of a kind's constitution is important, it is often regarded as the entirety of the metaphysics of that kind. This is an unfortunate error: the membership conditions for a group are just one part of the metaphysics of the group as a whole. (The same error often occurs in the analysis of other kinds as well, not just kinds of groups.)

(e.g., the role of the bourgeoisie) within some reasonable period of time before and after t.

K4 (DICD): s is a snapshot of the collection of all the people that have property P_g at t in w (where P_g is the property whose first instantiation at t_0 formed g).

What makes a stage constitute a group varies enormously from group to group. For some groups, s must have collective intentions, or play a functional role, and for others not. Sometimes s being a stage of g is a synchronic matter: it only depends on what is going on at that time t. Much of the time it is a diachronic matter: the membership of a group depends on what precedes or follows t.

For many groups, being a stage of g depends on the stage's relation to other stages in the path stretching back to the group's origin. This is why many of these analyses of constitution conditions make reference to the origin or formation of the group. (How K-groups are formed is discussed just below, in Sect. 3.2.2). The distinction between synchronic and diachronic conditions does not line up with any distinction between "organizations" and "features": some groups with no organization have historical membership conditions, while others have synchronic ones. And the same options apply to functional-role groups, committees, and groups that join together to play music on the street.

There is only one thing we can say in general: for s to be a stage of g at t, it is always required that g exist at t. This is not at all an empty condition. In fact, for two groups g_1 and g_2 of kind K that coincide with one another—that is, that have the same members at the same time—then how those groups originally come to exist is often the most important thing for distinguishing them from one another.

3.2.2 The conditions for a K-group to come to exist

I divide the existence conditions into two parts: the conditions for a K-group to come to exist at time t_0, and the conditions for it to continue to exist at time t. Here is a tentative analysis of the conditions for K1- to K4-groups to come to exist:

A new K-group comes to exist at t_0 in w if and only if...

K1 (street musician): a collection of people playing music together on the street begins at t_0 in w. (That is, playing did not continuously occur at that place prior and leading up to t_0.)

K2 (faculty committee): the appropriate process of voting and setup by the faculty takes place leading up to t_0 in w.

K3 (social class): a nation's economic system becomes structured in a particular way at t_0 in w, with this group playing one of the relevant functional roles.

K4 (DICD): there is a property P that is, in w, instantiated for the first time at t_0. If there are n properties $P_1, \ldots, P_n$ with distinct intensions that are simultaneously instantiated for the first time at t_0, then n DICD-groups $g_1, \ldots, g_n$ come to exist in w at t_0.

In these answers, we can see that groups of certain kinds come to exist as soon as an activity takes place. Groups of other kinds come to exist when a functional role is filled

by a collection of people, or else when a collection is assigned to be members.[24] With K4-groups, a new group comes to exist in a world whenever a property is instantiated for the first time in that world.

We can also see, in these answers, how existence conditions like these help us explain the possibility or impossibility of coinciding groups of a given kind. Many street-musician groups can exist at a given time, but only in separate locations. Many faculty groups can be created and coincide with one another, if the faculty has gone through the appropriate setup repeatedly. There are several kinds of K3-groups, and once they are formed they do not get formed again. And distinct K4-groups can coincide in a given world, but not in all worlds.

3.2.3 The conditions for a given K-group to continue to exist

In general, this other part of the existence of K-groups is simpler. Here is a tentative analysis for K1- to K4-groups:

> *Given a K-group g that came to exist at t_0 in world w and a time $t > t_0$. Then, g exists at t in w if and only if…*

K1 (street musician): musical performing has continuously occurred at that place from t_0 to t in w.
K2 (faculty committee): from t_0 to t in w, the college has continued to exist and the faculty has not disbanded g.
K3 (social class): the global economic system is structured in the relevant way at t in w.
K4 (DICD): there is a time $t' \geq t$ such that some person has property P_g at t' in w (where P_g is the property whose first instantiation at t_0 formed g).

Some groups continue to exist only while an activity continues without break, some allow breaks, and some exist in perpetuity or until they are expressly disbanded.

I have labeled K4-groups "discontinuous": this is because a group g of this kind persists even during times when no one has property P_g. Once it is formed, it continues to exist until P_g is exemplified for the last time in that world, and then ceases to exist. So even if there are times when the DICD-group of people with the top 1% of wealth does not exist at all (for instance, if everyone in the world is economically equal for some period), nonetheless people who are in the 1% before and after that period are members of that same one group. A different kind in the same family is *continuous constitution-dominated* groups: groups of this kind must be continuously constituted, so the before and after groups of the top 1% would be distinct groups.

3.2.4 The criterion of identity for groups of kind K

The fourth part of the "construction profile" of kind K is its criterion of identity. We should note, however, that criteria of identity often add less information than one might

[24] It may also be possible for groups of some kinds to come to exist even before there are members. I discuss the possibility of empty groups and how to denote them at the times they are empty in Epstein (2015, chapters 11 and 12).

suppose, even for complicated kinds of groups. The idea of a criterion of identity is to give a minimal relation R between two groups that guarantees that *if they are both K-groups* and stand in that relation R, then they are the same group. (This is a "one-level" criterion of identity. A "two-level criterion" gives a minimal relation R between two *stages* that guarantees that *if they are both stages of K-groups* and stand in that relation R, then they are stages of the same group.)[25] The reason criteria of identity are often not very informative is that so much work is done in those antecedents. The criterion only gives the *additional* requirements to guarantee that $g_1 = g_2$, once we are given that that g_1 and g_2 are both K-groups. (And "two-level criteria" only give the additional requirements once we are also given that s_1 and s_2 are stages of g_1 and g_2.) If there are not very many groups of kind K, then it need not take much to guarantee that $g_1 = g_2$.

Here are rough criteria of identity for the four examples. For K1, K2, and K4, one-level criteria are simpler, and for K3, a two-level criterion is simpler:

Given K-groups g_1 and g_2. Then, a minimal requirement to guarantee that $g_1 = g_2$ is that…

K1 (street musician): the time and place of origin of g_1 is similar (within some reasonable tolerance) to the time and place of origin of g_2.

K2 (faculty committee): g_1 and g_2 originate in the same formation act.

K4 (DICD): for all worlds w and all times t, g_1 and g_2 have the same members in w at t.

Given K-groups g_1 and g_2, and given that s_1 constitutes g_1 at t_1 in w_1, and s_2 constitutes g_2 at t_2 in w_2. Then, a minimal requirement to guarantee that $g_1 = g_2$ is that…

K3 (social class): s_1 and s_2 both play the same functional role (among the roles of various social classes).

Criteria of identity only give us interesting information about the nature of K when there are many instances of K that need to be discriminated from one another. If we were to choose a kind K for which there was only one K-group, then when we start with two stages of K-groups, it is already guaranteed that they are stages of the same K-group. So in that case, the "criterial relation" between the stages to guarantee identity can be completely empty. How much work the criterial relation must do depends on how finely individuated K's instances are. For faculty committees, the faculty can form new ones each time it performs the appropriate formation act. Therefore, to discriminate them from/identify them with one another we need to trace the stages back to those acts. For street music groups, they are distinguished from one another roughly based on their placement in space and time.[26]

K4-groups are individuated according to their "intensions": given K4-groups g_1 and g_2, g_1 is identical to g_2 just in case g_1 and g_2 have the same members in all

[25] See Epstein (2015, Ch. 12) for a more generalized treatment of criteria of identity and the idea of a "cross-identifying criterion."

[26] Perhaps they are distinguished from one another by other features of the music groups as well, such as instrumentation.

worlds. But DICD-groups are just one in a family of constitution-dominated kinds. Other kinds in that family individuate groups more finely or more coarsely.

The construction profile of a kind K is only part of the profile of the nature of K. But it alone answers many of the questions we started with. It gives us the persistence and identity conditions for groups of kind K, and it tells us how such groups get created. Comparing construction profiles for various kinds of groups expands our understanding of the variety of ways groups can be constructed. And it gives us ideas about the various cross-cutting ways we might classify kinds of groups.

4 Constitution and social groups in general

It is worth pausing to consider whether there is anything we can say about the nature of social groups in general. In Epstein (2015) I propose this characterization: *x is a social group if and only if x is an entity constituted by and only by people.*[27] On this understanding, social groups are a broad and inclusive category. This characterization does not accommodate *every* social entity; not by a longshot. In fact, most social entities are not social groups—not money, not corporations, not universities, not economies, not nations, not borders, not laws, not languages, not artifacts. Still, my characterization is inclusive, rejecting a particular "mark of sociality" for something to count as a social group.

Effingham (2010) worries about accounts of groups that "overgenerate": that is, accounts that mistakenly count "mere collections of people" to be social groups. But I regard "undergeneration" as far more serious: it is more common for theorists to overlook a variety of kinds of social groups in their attempts to circumscribe the overall category. As I have argued above, when we analyze the kinds of social groups, we find that they are constructed in heterogeneous ways. Different kinds of social groups have little to unify them aside from their being built of people. In the following sections, a similar heterogeneous range will be seen in other characteristics—in what powers and norms they have, in what anchors them, and in their accidental properties. If we are to make room for this heterogeneity, we need to avoid an overly restrictive understanding of social groups.[28]

Analyzing groups in terms of constitution also gives us resources to talk about groups that coincide with one another, using some of the same machinery we use for talking about coinciding material objects. Much like the widely discussed statue and lump of clay that constitutes it, a social group may be distinct from a collection of people that coincides with it, and two distinct social groups may have the same

[27] Uzquiano (2004) was the first to apply constitution to groups, in proposing an analysis of a "group-constitution" relation. I discuss and criticize his proposal in Epstein (2015, chapter 10), and I also introduce a different analysis of the constitution relation.

[28] Amie Thomasson proposes (p.c.) that we might instead "give up the idea that there is anything very interesting and informative to say about 'social groups' as such, and turn our attention to other matters (like what function particular social group terms serve for us)." I am sympathetic to this, but I do think it is important to provide at least something of an alternative to the prevailing much narrower characterizations of social groups, if only to counter that narrowness. The functions of social groups of various kinds (not just terms but the groups) is, in my view, one important part of their analysis; this is part of the topic of the "anchor profile" discussed in Sect. 7.

members over the duration of their existence. The constitution relation is not the only way to address these phenomena, but regarding groups as ordinary objects in the world lets us draw on a useful toolkit.

Effingham (2010), Ritchie (2015) and Thomasson (2016) explicitly consider the "constitution" view of social groups, and raise three objections that I should respond to. First, Thomasson cites Ritchie as raising the following objection to my analysis: there are other ways groups could be constituted than just by people. A team could be constituted by teams, for instance.[29] If so, then that appears to contradict my condition that groups be constituted "by and *only* by people." However, this objection misreads my proposal. When we say that a sample of water is constituted by and only by water molecules, or a bunch of asparagus is constituted by and only by stalks of asparagus, we know what that means. It is true, of course, that a bunch of asparagus is *also* constituted by larger things, such as three-stalk-collections of asparagus. And it is true that a sample of water is also constituted by smaller things, such as electrons, protons, and neutrons. But the fact that many things stand in the constitution relation does not negate the point about a sample of water being exhaustively constituted by (that is, by and only by) water molecules, and a bunch of asparagus by and only by stalks of asparagus. To be perfectly explicit, we can write it this way:

x is a social group if and only if:

(1) for each world w and time t, if there is any object y such that y constitutes x in w at t, then there is a collection z consisting of and only of people such that z constitutes x in w at t, and
(2) there is some world w, time t, and object y such that y constitutes x in w at t.

Condition 1 states that wherever x is constituted, it is (also) constituted by a collection consisting only of people. Condition 2 just ensures that x is constituted by something somewhere, so as to keep immaterial (or otherwise non-constituted) objects from vacuously satisfying the definition.[30]

Second, Effingham and Ritchie criticize the constitution view as taking groups to be *"sui generis"* entities.[31] They object—mainly on grounds of parsimony—to Uzquiano's proposal that groups are a "relatively unfamiliar category" distinct from sets or mereological fusions (Uzquiano 2004, p. 147). While Effingham and Ritchie may be right that Uzquiano's proposal does not maximize parsimony, I am not persuaded that his or other constitution views are nearly so mysterious as the accusation suggests. The term *'sui generis'* is typically applied to objects that are fundamental or ungrounded, and in the literature on social entities, it seems to be connected to a

[29] Thomasson (2016, fn. 5).

[30] It occurs to me that this definition improperly admits an obscure case: an object that is a group at some times or in some worlds, and that is unconstituted (e.g., an elementary or fundamental particle) at another time or world. Such an object satisfies the second condition, and also vacuously satisfies the first. To rule this out would involve complicating the definition further (or finding a more elegant formulation altogether).

[31] Their criticism is directed specifically at Uzquiano, but I assume it is meant to apply to constitution views more generally—or, at least, those constitution views that reject the identification of groups with entities such as sets and fusions. (Some theorists, for instance, may hold that groups are some other "more familiar" kind of entity and that those entities are constituted by another familiar kind of entity.) I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for raising this issue.

sort of dualistic holism about the social world. But the refusal to identify groups with sets, fusions, or similar kinds of entities does not entail any of that.[32] My own view, certainly, is not that groups are ontologically fundamental.

We do need to explain the essential and accidental properties of groups, and also how groups are set up to have these properties. This is what we have begun in the preceding discussion, and will continue shortly. But none of it entails that we identify groups with some other "more familiar" kind of object. To be sure, contemporary metaphysics remains embroiled in controversies regarding the nature of ordinary kinds (like statues and lumps of clay) quite generally.[33] At some level, we will not fully understand social groups until these problems are solved. Perhaps the study of social groups will even contribute to unlocking the solution more generally. But this is a general problem of metaphysics, not one that is any more urgent for social groups than for any other kind of object.

Third, Thomasson objects that the constitution view of social groups does not do very much for us—it does little to illuminate the nature of groups, and certainly does not solve the "overgeneration problem." On this point I agree: merely to say that social groups are constituted by people does not constrain them much. But that is what we should expect of a generic umbrella category like *social groups*. That category is dynamic: inasmuch as there is a line between social groups and mere collections, it is a product of the kinds of social groups that have been set up at a given time. As I discuss in Sect. 7 below, kinds of social groups are set up or "anchored" in a variety of ways. Interestingly, as societies and environments change, we do not only set up new kinds of social groups, but we also develop new *ways* of setting up kinds of social groups. Before we had formal legal systems, for instance, new kinds of groups did not arise via legal enactments. Now they can. The introduction of such "anchoring" methods, together with the kinds introduced using those methods, expands the category of social groups. The line between social groups and mere collections of people is not eternal and universal, and so we should not expect too informative a characterization of the umbrella category.

5 The extra essentials profile

I began this paper with the observation that today's social groups are the beneficiaries of thousands of years of innovation and experimentation. Much of that innovation has been coming up with new ways for social groups to be constructed. How do we originate groups in different ways, so that they accomplish our goals? How do we set up membership conditions so that group members are responsive to other people? However, perhaps the most innovative elements of group design are *not* a matter of what makes a group come to exist or to be constituted as it is. In addition to innovation in construction, we have also developed and evolved ways to set up, or "anchor," groups to have other kinds of properties: abilities, powers, rights, responsibilities, norms. We anchor these features to be essential to groups of a given kind, separately from the

[32] Nor does Uzquiano (2004) actually claim that groups are *sui generis*.

[33] See, for instances, the papers in Rea (1997).

construction features treated in the last section. (I present anchoring in Sect. 7 below. And in Sect. 5.3, I discuss why the "extra essentials" are not part of the "construction" of a kind of group.)

Just as important as the powers, abilities, norms, etc. that we set up groups to have are their limitations. We anchor groups to have abilities, for instance, only under very limited conditions. The creative ways we limit those conditions affect group actions nearly as much as do the abilities they have.

5.1 Varieties of "extras"

A Tufts faculty committee (i.e., a group of kind K2) may not seem to have a particularly complex design—just appoint some people to it and let it go—but that is deceiving. Tacitly and explicitly built into that kind are abilities, rights and obligations, and relations to people, other groups, and things in the world. These are the product of generations of evolution, experimentation, and weeding out failures. All of these abilities and powers have limitations and constraints. It is the texture of these, and how they are triggered and circumscribed, that largely determines how and when a faculty committee acts, and what effect it has when it does.

Some but not all of these features are deontic. Many groups have rights, obligations, ways the group or members should behave, or ways they should be treated. But not all groups have deontic properties, nor are all these extra essentials deontic. For instance, certain groups are set up to have abilities—to do things like call meetings, create subgroups, and enact rules. (There is a difference between being able to do something and having the right or obligation to do it.)[34]

Another powerful innovation is to anchor powers, abilities, rights, and obligations not to the group as a whole, but to individual members. These can be *equal* for all members (such as the right to assert one's opinion in a faculty committee), or they can apply *differentially* for different members (such as the responsibilities of the secretary versus the responsibilities of the treasurer). A particular kind of differential treatment of members is to arrange them into hierarchies or reporting relationships (such as when certain members have the obligation to obey the orders of others).

Make no mistake, these powers, abilities, norms, etc. do not need to be beneficial to society or to a group's members. Such properties can be innovative in their ability to oppress or promote injustice. Consider, for instance, the powers and norms anchored for different racial and gender categories.

The innovative ways we attach powers, norms, etc. to social groups make them potent and effective. But they also create complexity when it comes to understanding or analyzing kinds of social groups. Perhaps the biggest complication is this: sometimes they are included among the construction conditions, and sometimes they are not. For instance, it may be a condition for being a member of the group *women* that one is subject to certain oppressive norms (Haslanger 2000). In that case, the norms are among the constitution conditions for the group. Alternatively, there may be norms

[34] John Searle conflates these in his accounts of institutional facts; see, for instance, Searle (2010, pp. 8–9, 123ff).

essentially attached to groups that are not included among any of the construction conditions.

Think, for instance, about the conditions for a pair of people constituting a married couple: signing papers, or going through a ceremony, or whatever. The satisfaction of those conditions is what it takes to make the married couple exist and for those people to constitute the couple. At the same time, however, marriage brings along with it many other powers and limitations, rights and obligations. These other essential properties are separate from and supplementary to the construction conditions.[35]

This point can be puzzling, especially to those of us in metaphysics who are trained to analyze objects mostly or entirely in terms of how they are constituted. It also seems puzzling to philosophers who assume that all the essential properties of a kind must figure into the kind's criterion of identity. No doubt, the idea that there are such "extra essentials" might seem radical: these are *essential* properties—i.e., properties that a group necessarily has at all times and in all worlds. Even so, these essential properties are neither part of the constitution conditions nor the existence conditions nor the criterion of identity.[36] In Sect. 5.3, I clarify this point further: how there can be extra essential properties that are not included in the construction properties. But first let us fill out some examples.

5.2 Organizing the "extra essentials" profile

The "extra essentials" are a catch-all category for those essential properties that groups are set up to have, but that are not included among the construction properties. Many groups have none of these supplementary properties. There are groups with no abilities, rights, obligations, or norms beyond those of the collection of people constituting them. The constitution-dominated groups (such as K4, the DICD-groups) are among these. And many kinds of groups have abilities, rights, and so on, but these properties are not supplementary: instead, they are included among their construction properties. Still, many kinds of groups do have extra essential properties.

As we did above, we can write a profile to characterize group-kinds with respect to these features. To organize the profile, I will characterize the various powers, limitations, and so on, that apply to the group as a whole, and then separately those that apply to the members of the group. Among the ones that apply to the members are those that apply equally among all members, those that apply differentially among members, and those that apply to specific people.

Those essential to any K-group g:

K1 (street musician): These are governed by certain norms: a K1-group g owes respect to its surroundings in certain ways and is owed respect in certain ways. For instance, g should not block traffic, play too loudly, or disrupt businesses

[35] The construction profile of a kind K can be understood to give essential properties of K-groups. It is not, of course, essential that a given K-group exists, nor that a given stage s is a stage of a given K-group g. What are essential are the conditions by which K-groups come to exist, continue to exist, and the conditions that s must satisfy to be a stage of g, as well as the criteria of identity for the kind.

[36] This point is related to the argument in Fine (2003), but goes beyond it.

or pedestrians excessively. Conversely, listeners may ignore g, continue their conversations nearby, but if standing near g may clap or participate at certain points and not others, and should not disrupt the performance. (These norms, I should point out, are not derivable from moral norms that we owe individuals on the street. Instead, they are anchored by the intersection of practices regarding musical performance and practices regarding behavior on the street, as well as historical practices and perhaps laws regarding street performance in particular.)

K2 (faculty committee): A group of this kind has a number of abilities, such as creating subcommittees, issuing rulings, and conducting meetings. It also has the ability to choose some of its own functions and to set up certain rules and norms for itself and for other people and events. It also has limitations and restrictions on its abilities: these committees are often held to specific timetables and activation dates, require approvals, and so on. And it has obligations to perform certain actions, to conduct meetings in certain ways, and so on.

K3 (social class): Rights and powers involving control over the deployment of capital and influence over its regulation. (A topic to investigate is the extent to which these rights and powers are supplementary, or whether they are among the construction conditions for capitalist social classes.)

K4 (DICD): None.

In addition to those applying to the group, there are also extra essentials that apply to members of a group, either all equally or differentially to different members.

Those applying to members of a K-group g:

K1 (street musician): Applying equally: there are norms applying to all members regarding behavior on entering and leaving the group, responding to others appropriately, meshing play with that of others, how and when to take control for a solo, not dominating the performance, and so on.
Applying differentially: norms differ according to the type of instrument being played, and if there is a leader then certain rights and obligations apply to the leader, and others to non-leaders.

K2 (faculty committee): Applying equally: voting rights, rights to speak, call meetings, rights to information, obligations to attend.
Applying differentially: based on the assignment of distinct roles and duties, for the chair (setting agenda, calling meetings, reporting responsibilities), for people who are not the chair.

K3 (social class): Applying equally: individual members of the class have rights and powers involving control over the deployment of their own capital.
Applying differentially: special rights may accrue to the wealthiest members.

K4 (DICD): None.

Ritchie points out that many groups are essentially structured. Her notion of structure can be understood as the differential possession of functional role properties by individuals and binary relations between members of the group.[37] But group structure can involve more than what Ritchie's node-edge structure suggests: the properties can include more than functional-roles, and the relations can be multi-place, not just

[37] Ritchie (2013, pp. 268–269), Ritchie (2015, p. 316).

binary.[38] Hierarchies are a special subcase of this sort of structure, involving certain relational powers and norms among members. And again, while some groups have structure like this, many do not. Many kinds of "organizations," for instance, do not involve differential powers and abilities.

5.3 Distinguishing the extra essentials from the construction profile

How is it possible that a group's essential properties are not already included in the criterion of identity or other parts of the construction profile? And how do we tell when an essential property is among the construction conditions and when it is not?

To answer the first question, it is helpful to clarify exactly what a criterion of identity for a kind K accomplishes. Consider the canonical form of a one-level criterion: *for all x and y such that x and y are both of kind K, xRy iff* $x = y$. To satisfy this formula, the criterial relation R needs to be reflexive when applied to objects of kind K, and also to be a minimal guarantee of identity if we already are given that x and y are of kind K. That means that the criterial relation does not need to include all the essential properties of K. After all, it is already given that x and y are of kind K. So R just needs to include enough texture to distinguish groups in K from one another. It is true that x and y must have the extra essentials in order to be groups of kind K. But those are not part of K's criterion of identity.

Nor are the extra essentials captured in the other components of K's construction profile. To see this, consider the following example. Suppose we have two group-kinds K5 and K6. Let us set up these kinds to be very simple. Suppose there is only one group of kind K5—call it G5—and one group of kind K6—call it G6. Suppose further that groups of both kinds have exactly three members, Alice, Bob, and Carol, and exist from January 1 to January 31, 2017. The groups exist in and only in worlds where Alice, Bob, and Carol all exist at least for that duration. Let the only difference between the group of kind K5 and the group of kind K6 be an extra deontic power that the respective groups have. The group of kind K5 has the right to assign spaces in the faculty parking lot, whereas the group of kind K6 has the right to assign faculty mailboxes. These essential characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

In this example, G5 is the only member of K5 and G6 the only member of K6. Groups G5 and G6 exist at the same times and worlds as one another and are always constituted by the same people. The criterion of identity for K5 groups is the same as the criterion for K6 groups, as are their construction profiles. Still, they are distinct kinds, and G5 and G6 are distinct groups having different essential properties from one another.

Though this example is artificial, it is not just a weird thought-experiment. In fact, there are real examples of this in the actual world. In Epstein (2015) I discuss two actual coinciding groups—the board of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and the board of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. These two groups are set

[38] This is a reason for doubting that groups are usefully modeled with any particular kind of mathematical object. The value of modeling objects with mathematical analogues is typically to derive inferences from the structural constraints the objects in question share with the analogues. But the potential relations among group members are subject, in general, to few constraints.

Table 1 Two kinds with the same construction profile but different extra essentials

	K5	K6
In all and only the worlds in which Alice, Bob, and Carol exist from at least Jan 1 to Jan 31 2017, a new group of the kind comes to exist at 12:01 a.m. on Jan 1 2017	Yes	Yes
Given a group g of the kind and a world w in which g exists, g exists in w continuously through Jan 31 2017, and then ceases to exist	Yes	Yes
Given a group g of the kind and a world w in which g exists, for any time t from Jan 1 through Jan 31 2017, g is constituted in w at t by the snapshot at t of the collection consisting of Alice, Bob, and Carol	Yes	Yes
For any groups g_1 and g_2, if g_1 and g_2 are both groups of the kind, then $g_1 = g_2$	Yes	Yes
For any group g of the kind, g has the right to assign spaces in the faculty parking lot	Yes	No
For any group g of the kind, g has the right to assign faculty mailboxes	No	Yes

up such that they coincide with one another. Yet they are distinct boards with distinct powers.[39]

Turning to the second question: How do we tell which profile a given property belongs to? Take a given group power, member power, deontic property, norm, structure, or hierarchy. Is it among the construction conditions? Or is it an extra essential? The answer will vary from case to case. We might set up a group-kind such that a condition for Alice's membership in a group of that kind requires that she have a certain deontic power. Or as we did with K5 and K6, we might set up a group-kind such that the possession of a deontic power is separate from the constitution conditions. The way to tell where the properties belong is to work through the profiles.

In both the construction profile and the extra essentials profile of a K-group, we are enumerating essential properties of groups of that kind. Together these profiles are simply a way to characterize all the essential properties of K-groups. Still, it is valuable to keep these profiles separate. There is more to the analysis of essential properties of groups than how they come to exist and are constituted, and certainly more than criteria of identity. Explicitly separating the construction profile from the extra essentials helps us analyze the properties of group-kinds accurately and comprehensively.

Moreover, keeping these profiles separate can also be helpful in analyzing categories such as races, sexes, and genders. Membership in such groups can sometimes be a matter of possessing a physiological marker, and yet the category essentially carries with it social norms as well.

[39] Their metaphysics is discussed on pp. 139, 146–149, and differences between their respective actions on pp. 225–229.

6 A comment on group agency

Central to many people's interest in social groups is the question of whether and how groups can perform actions and have intentional states, such as beliefs, desires, intentions, plans, knowledge, and reasoning. Some theorists also identify sociality with agency: the only kinds of groups that count as social groups are those that are group agents. As I argued earlier, this is too strong a condition for most real-world groups. Nonetheless, even though the category of group agents is only a small subset of groups, it is an interesting one.

Surprisingly, however, most discussions of the topic skip over a distinction that has long been central to work on individual agency: should we assess the agency of a thing by considering only the characteristics of that thing itself? Or rather, should we understand the agency of a thing in terms of the characteristics of the *kind* of which it is an instance?

A common approach to thinking about group agency is from the perspective of functionalism. We start with humans as a template for how the functions of an agent are performed. Humans can be understood to implement a system of practical activity, in which we employ our beliefs, desires, knowledge, intentions, plans, reasoning, etc., as parts of a system of acting in the world. We can describe that system as an abstracted or high-level set of interacting modules, each of which plays a functional role in a larger system. There may be many ways of implementing such systems. Dogs, Martians, and robots could each implement a system of practical activity in different ways. If one of these performs actions radically differently than humans do, we might not consider it to be the same functional system. But for the ones that have the same modules arranged in the same functional structure, we consider those different implementations of a single functional role. That role is complex, involving many modules and interactions and sub-roles. But we can think of it abstractly as the functional role of agency.

Call that functional role F. Many people have argued that it is not only humans, Martians, dogs, and robots that can implement such a system, but groups as well. Thus a number of theorists have worked to cash out what it is for a group to implement part or all of F. What it is, for instance, for a group to have a group intention, or group reasoning.

Missing from much of this discussion, however, is a distinction at the center of functionalism: between role-kinds and realizer-kinds.[40] The first is a kind defined by the *role* itself: g is an instance of kind K if and only if g performs role F. And there is another kind defined by having essential properties P such that groups having P normally perform role F, or such that the properties are chosen for that reason. That is, being a kind that actually *realizes* the function (within certain tolerances). For this sort of kind, g is an instance of kind K if and only if g has property P (even if g itself is not performing F).

[40] I discuss the role/realizer distinction as an illustration, because it most straightforwardly conveys how group agency may be functional in a sense, and yet not a functional-role kind. There are, of course, many other accounts of functions as well. For instance, teleofunctional theories (see Buller 1999; Ariew et al. 2002) give a different approach to the relation between roles and the tokens of functional kinds. But the simpler distinction between roles and realizers illustrates the key points for present purposes.

It is rare for us to classify objects into pure role-kinds. We typically consider something an instance of a functional kind at times when it is not performing that function, or not able to perform that function. I, for instance, am an agent even when I am asleep. Even if we are functionalists about human agency *and* regard agency as essential to humans, that does not mean that we must perform (or be able to) the functional role at all times.

Moreover, we count humans as agents even if they *can never* implement function F. Consider Alice, who is fully mentally capable but unable to move, and hence to act. Or Bob, who has beliefs and desires, but is incapable of forming any intentions whatsoever. Alice and Bob are nonetheless agents, since they are humans and realize at least certain relevant states. Alice's intentions and Bob's beliefs are genuine intentional states, despite their not ever being able to play the relevant roles in the system of practical activity. The reason is that this is the way these states are implemented in humans, and *human* is a realizer-kind of F.[41]

How does this apply to *group* agents? If we want to preserve the analogy between a functionalist approach to individual agency and a functionalist approach to group agency, then we should not understand group agency to be the performance of functional role F by a group on its own. Rather, we might better understand it in terms of realizer kinds. This means that we do not, at first, assess groups one-by-one for whether they are group agents. What we assess is group kinds, to see if they are realizer-kinds of F. We find, for instance, that groups of kind K2 normally realize F in the actual world. Tufts faculty committees, that is, may have the right kind of constitution and powers so that they normally realize a modular system of practical activity. Now we find a particular K2-group g. Is it a group agent? To evaluate this we do not assess g on its own, but rather as a member of K2. Whether or not g is a group agent is parasitic on the fact that K2 is a realizer-kind of F.

We can find group agency in "functionally misfiring" groups just as we might in individual agents. Bob cannot form intentions, so his system of practical activity never works. Yet on a realizer-kind account of belief, Bob does have beliefs; he can be in one of the brain states realizing belief in humans. Being in that realizer-state suffices for him to have a belief, even though that belief will never play a role for Bob in performing F. Similarly, even if g cannot successfully perform all the interlocking functions of group agency, it still might be able to be in a "group belief" state or a "group intention" state. What that state is, for a K2-group, depends on how K2-groups realize those states. Since g is a K2-group, it may count as having a "group belief" just by being in the appropriate state, even if g is incapable of integrating that state into a system of practical activity.[42]

The point is not to argue for a functionalist theory of individual minds or group minds. Rather, it is to highlight several things. First, in trying to analyze group agency, we make a mistake if we merely look for a special property common to individual groups that are group agents. Second, it highlights that when we begin to work on

[41] This puts things simplistically, and of course also casts things in terms of a controversial assumption about functionalism regarding the human mind. The point, however, is to illustrate how this approach can understand the possession of intentional states.

[42] For more detailed discussion of group attitudes and actions see Epstein (2015, chapters 14–16).

understanding and classifying social groups more generally, we need to think first about the nature of kinds of social groups. And third, it motivates looking into the profile I discuss next: profiles not just of the essential properties of groups, but also of *what makes* a group of a given kind have the essential properties it does.

7 The anchor profile

In the preceding sections, I have discussed essential properties of groups of various kinds. The conditions for a stage s to constitute a given street music group at t are very different from the conditions for s to constitute a given faculty committee at t, as are the powers and deontic properties of groups of these respective kinds.

But there is another fundamental difference between groups of these kinds: the source or metaphysical basis for these kinds of groups to have the properties they do. Think, for instance, about the conditions for membership in the faculty committee. We captured those conditions in the "construction profile." But *why* are these the conditions for membership? What *makes* them the conditions?

One way to answer this question is with a causal explanation. We can give a history or genealogy for why the membership conditions were set up the way they were. Maybe the faculty senate at Tufts did a survey of universities nationwide, learned about the pros and cons of various membership strategies, and chose to follow this one. That tells a causal story about why these membership conditions were enacted.

But there is also a *constitutive* explanation.[43] Why are the membership conditions for K2 what they are? Because the faculty enacted those conditions. That enactment—consisting of intentions, speech acts, majority votes, and so on—is the metaphysical reason K2 has the membership conditions it does. K1's membership conditions, on the other hand, have a different metaphysical explanation. Again, *what* the membership conditions are are captured in K1's "construction profile." But in the case of K1, there was no formal enactment. Instead, the category K1 and its associated membership conditions are set up in a more organic way. K1 and K2 differ from one another not only in what their membership conditions are, but also in what makes them have the membership conditions they respectively do. The membership conditions for K1 are, in other words, *anchored* by different facts than are the membership conditions for K2.[44] And the same goes for other properties of these groups.

The anchor profile of a kind of group is a list of facts that metaphysically put in place various properties of that group. Even for a given kind of group, some properties may be anchored in one way, while others are anchored in a different way. Take, for instance, kind K2, the Tufts faculty committee. For each of the components of the previous profiles, the anchors are those facts that set the conditions up as they are:

> *Conditions for a K2-group coming to exist*: anchored by the actions that enacted Chapter 1 of the Tufts Faculty Handbook
>
> *Conditions for a K2-group g continuing to exist*: anchored by the actions that enacted Chapter 1 of the Tufts Faculty Handbook

[43] See Haslanger (1995), Epstein (2016) for discussions of the causal versus the constitutive.

[44] I discuss the anchoring relation also in Epstein (2015, 2016).

Conditions for stage s constituting K2-group g at t: anchored by the enacting of the subsections of the Tufts Faculty Handbook dedicated to elections
Criterion of identity for K2-groups: anchored by historical patterns regarding the individuation of formally established committees
K2-group g having the power to create subcommittees: anchored by the enacting of subsections of the Tufts Faculty Handbook dedicated to the powers of standing committees
K2-group g having quorum restrictions on taking certain actions: anchored by the enacting of the subsections of the Tufts Faculty Handbook dedicated to the powers of standing committees
Etc.

As this example shows, even for a single kind of group, different properties may be anchored in different ways. Still, we may be able to generalize about how kinds of groups are anchored. For instance, both the construction profile and the extra essentials profile for K2 are anchored largely by explicit enactment. That may not be strictly true: some essential properties of K2 are at least partly anchored by habits, practices, and more. After all, explicit enactments leave out a lot of detail, which is filled in by patterns of historical practice and more. Even so, it may be fair to regard K2 as mostly anchored by enactments.

In contrast, the conditions for being a member of a street performance are not to be found in any bylaws, nor are they anchored by explicit choices or enactments. That does not mean they come out of nowhere. We have a long history of musical performances, activities on the street, and people joining together in crowds. There are thousands upon thousands of tokens of such events, and we also have attitudes toward these various events. It is facts like these that anchor the conditions for *s* being a stage of a street performance.

It is common to talk as though kinds of groups are consciously designed or chosen or set up. That is partly a consequence of the typical choice of examples. It is easy to talk about faculty committees, because they *are* largely set up by explicit choices and enactments, and their properties written down in the faculty handbook. But other kinds of groups are not like that: a much wider range of worldly resources figures into setting up their construction conditions, powers, limitations, and so on. With the caveat that these are rough, we can loosely generalize about the anchors for the construction and extra essentials of our four examples of group-kinds.

K1 (street musician): anchored by functional intentions, practices, regularities in the environment
K2 (faculty committee): anchored by agreement, enactment
K3 (social class): anchored by functional niches, practices, regularities in the environment
K4 (DICD): anchored by practices and regularities

In short, the essential properties of group kinds may be anchored in diverse ways. Some may be anchored by enactment or legislation, some by a functional role that they realize, some by the fact that they work in inductions, some by pat-

terns. Presumably there are other ways of anchoring properties of group kinds as well.[45]

In thinking about anchors, it is crucial to keep them separate from the *causal* reasons for setting up a kind as we do. Thomasson (2016) points out that in order to understand groups, we need to understand *why* we have the group categories we do. This is surely correct—I would only add that this question needs to be systematized and clarified, that it will have different answers for different kinds of groups, and that we especially need to distinguish the metaphysics of how group categories are set up from the causal histories of why we have set them up the way we have.

8 The accident profile

When it comes to explaining and classifying groups, we are not only interested in their essential properties. The accidental properties of groups can be equally or more important to understanding what groups are, and to classifying them or developing typologies.

To understand social groups, we want insight into how they actually work, what they are for, what characteristics they have. This is part of what it is to understand any kind of thing: for instance, if we are in the business of analyzing kinds of *birds,* we may be able to give a full account of their constitution and identity conditions without singling out that they fly. But we have hardly given an illuminating answer to the question of what birds are if we leave flight out of it.

Profiling the accidental properties of a kind of group might include anything at all. They can include properties that groups of the kind actually have in all or most cases, properties that members have, historical properties, size, location, and so on. Among the accidental properties are also various causal properties: the causes by which they came to exist, the causes for them to have the actual memberships they do, the causes for exercising various powers.

There are also the causes for the anchors to be in place. We might construct a typology of groups according to whether their anchors were influenced by the U.S. Constitution, or by the institution of slavery, or by bribes from interest groups.

There is no reason for a classification based on accidental properties to be of less typological interest than one based on essential properties. The question is the practical aims toward which we are putting the typology. Writing an accident profile for a given kind of group involves a choice of the properties of interest, and empirical investigation into the exemplification of those properties by actual groups. That means that the categorization will be tied to the actual world. But that's fine, since we live in the actual world, and are categorizing groups for actual purposes.

To keep track of the elements of the profiles, it may be helpful to summarize them in one place. Table 2 lists all the components of the four profiles, which can be filled in for any given kind K of social group. This template can be a tool for analyzing a group kind, as well as for assessing how to place it in various systems of classification.

[45] I discuss some varieties of anchoring schemas in Epstein (2014).

Table 2 Profile template for group kind K

1. "Construction" profile		**3. "Anchor" profile**
a. Coming to exist	A new K-group comes to exist at t in w if and only if…	a. The fact **A new K-group comes to exist at *t* in *w* if and only if such-and-such.** is anchored by the following facts…
b. Continuing to exist	Given a K-group g that came to exist at t_0 in world w and a time $t>t_0$. Then, g exists at t in w if and only if…	b. The fact **Given a K-group etc., then g exists at *t* in *w* if and only if such-and-such.** is anchored by the following facts…
c. Constitution	Given a K-group g and a time t and world w. Then, stage s constitutes g in w at t if and only if…	c. The fact **Given a K-group etc., then stage *s* constitutes *g* in *w* at *t* if and only if such-and-such.** is anchored by the following facts…
d. Criterion of identity	Given K-groups g_1 and g_2, and given that s_1 constitutes g_1 in w_1, and s_2 constitutes g_2 in w_2. Then, a minimal requirement to guarantee that $g_1=g_2$ is that s_1 and s_2 stand in relation…	d. The fact **Given K-groups g_1 and g_2 etc., a minimal requirement to guarantee that $g_1=g_2$ is that s_1 and s_2 stand in such-and-such relation.** is anchored by the following facts…
2. "Extra essentials" profile		
e. For group as a whole	Any K-group *g,* has the following extra essential properties E_1–E_n (i.e., in addition to those captured in the construction profile)… E.g.: It is essential to g that it has the following right / obligation / ability under the following conditions…	e. For each property E_i in $\{E_1,\ldots,E_n\}$: The fact **For any K-group *g,* it is essential to *g* that it has E_i (i.e., such-and-such a right / obligation / ability / etc. under such-and-such conditions).** is anchored by the following facts…
f. Applying equally to all members	Given a K-group g and a person m who is a member of g, m has the following extra essential properties F_1–F_n… E.g.: It is essential to g that m have the following right/obligation/ability under the following conditions (that do not distinguish m from others in the group)…	f. For each property F_i in $\{F_1,\ldots,F_n\}$: The fact **Given a K-group *g* and person *m* etc., it is essential to *g* that *m* have F_i (i.e., such-and-such a right / obligation / ability / etc. under such-and-such conditions).** is anchored by the following facts…
g. Applying differentially to group members	Given a K-group g and a person m who is a member of g, m has the following extra essential properties G_1–G_n… Example: It is essential to g that m have the following right/obligation/ability under the following conditions (that distinguish m from others in the group)…	g. For each property G_i in $\{G_1,\ldots,G_n\}$: The fact **Given a K-group *g* and person *m* etc., it is essential to *g* that *m* have G_i (i.e., such-and-such a right / obligation / ability / etc. under such-and-such conditions).** is anchored by the following facts…
4. "Accident" profile		
	h. All (or most or certain) groups of kind K actually have the following accidental properties…	i. The anchors for such-and-such a property of K-groups have the following causes or other accidental properties…

9 How to classify kinds of groups

How should social groups be categorized, or organized into taxonomies? The profiles we have developed give us many options. They can be classified according to the components of their construction profile: according to how they are brought into existence, or what sorts of conditions people must satisfy in order to be members,

or according to their criteria of identity. Social groups can be classified according to their extra essentials, such as the norms or abilities they have that are not part of their construction conditions. Or we can classify groups without regard for whether the properties that interest us are part of the construction conditions or the extra essentials. For instance, we might classify groups according to whether they are organized in hierarchical structures, regardless of where the norms and abilities fit into the profiles.

We might conceive of typologies of social groups much as we would a typology of foods or recipes. There is a long list of dimensions—cuisine, nutritional values, taste, cost, appearance, calories, skill to make, number of ingredients, types of ingredients, etc.—from which to choose. A useful typology can divide dishes up according to a single dimension, a set of dimensions, or cut across all the dimensions in one way or another, depending on the purpose.

We classify foods according to accidental properties, as well as to essential ones. We might, for instance, classify kinds of foods according to the caloric content of their actual instances. Similarly with social groups: we can classify them according to how long they tend to persist, or how effective they are at achieving their aims, or how ethnically diverse their memberships are.

It is also interesting to classify kinds of groups according to how their properties are anchored. We can classify group-kinds, for instance, according to how their existence conditions or their construction conditions are anchored. Sometimes, as I pointed out in Sect. 7, we can loosely generalize about the anchors for many of the essential properties of a given kind of group. For some group-kinds, their construction and extra essentials are anchored largely by agreement or legislation. For others, they are anchored largely by functional roles in a context, or by patterns of practices.

Yet another basis for classifying kinds of groups is according to the accidental properties of their anchors. For instance, we might classify kinds according to whether their anchors are caused by historical injustice, or by certain economic conditions.

There are so many ways to construct typologies of groups that it is difficult to say much in general. But let me provide a bit of detail to show how we might get started. I will look at the construction profile for K2-groups (Tufts faculty committees).

To begin, we can distill or tabulate the elements of a profile for a given kind of group. Table 3 depicts a tabulated construction profile of K2. The columns, labeled along the top, separate the four components of the construction profile, and the rows are one (somewhat arbitrary) way of dividing properties into different kinds. The cells indicate whether a given kind of property is part of a given component of the construction profile, and whether what is included is the property manifested synchronically (marked "s"), diachronically (marked "d"), or both (marked "s&d"). In columns B, C, and D, the notation "$\rightarrow$ +" in the cells is to remind us that the earlier columns are included in the later ones. The factors listed in column C, for instance, are the additional ones in virtue of which s constitutes g at t, but only once it is given that g exists at t, which involves the factors listed in columns A and B.

To go through an example, consider row 8, the attitudes of other people (that is, people other than group members). The attitudes of other faculty members at t_0 and preceding t_0 (such as their intentions in the course of enacting the committee's existence) figure into creating a faculty committee g at time t_0. In addition to that, historical

Table 3 Tabulating elements of the construction profile for K2

Kind K2: Faculty committee g	A. g comes to exist at t_0	B. g exists at t	C. s constitutes g at t	D. Criterial relation R s.t. $R(s_1, s_2) \rightarrow g_1 = g_2$
1. Intrinsic properties of stages of g	No	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (s&d)	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (s&d)	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (s&d)
2. Attitudes of people in stages of g	No	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (s&d)	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (s&d)	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (s&d)
3. Actions of people in stages of g	No	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (s&d)	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (s&d)	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (s&d)
4. Collective attitudes of g	No	$\rightarrow +$ No	$\rightarrow +$ No	$\rightarrow +$ No
5. Actions of g	No	$\rightarrow +$ No	$\rightarrow +$ No	$\rightarrow +$ No
6. Self-identifying of people in stages of g	No	$\rightarrow +$ No	$\rightarrow +$ No	$\rightarrow +$ No
7. Spatial positions of stages	No	$\rightarrow +$ No	$\rightarrow +$ No	$\rightarrow +$ No
8. Attitudes of other people	Yes (s&d)	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (s&d)	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (d)	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (d)
9. Actions of other people	Yes (s&d)	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (d)	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (d)	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (d)
10. Non-individualistic physical factors	Yes (s&d)	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (s&d)	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (s&d)	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (s&d)
11. Norms regarding g	No	$\rightarrow +$ No	$\rightarrow +$ No	$\rightarrow +$ No
12. Stages of g playing causal role	No	$\rightarrow +$ No	$\rightarrow +$ No	$\rightarrow +$ No
13. Intrinsic properties of originating event of g	Yes (s&d)	$\rightarrow +$ Nothing more	$\rightarrow +$ Nothing more	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (s&d)
14. Object dependent properties of originating event of g	Yes (s)	$\rightarrow +$ Nothing more	$\rightarrow +$ Nothing more	$\rightarrow +$ Yes (s&d)

and current attitudes of others are involved in g's existence at a subsequent time t (for Tufts to continue to exist, for instance). For a stage s to constitute g at t, the appropriate rotations need to have taken place prior to t, which involves attitudes prior to t. And the identity of g_1 and g_2 can be guaranteed by their respective stages tracing back to one originating act, which involves historical attitudes.

To extract patterns for classifying kinds of groups, we would need to tabulate many different kinds, not just K2. Then we could see whether it is preferable to classify groups according to whether intrinsic or extrinsic properties are involved in various construction conditions, or whether synchronic or diachronic properties are involved, or according to some other component of their existence, constitution, or identity conditions.

Even looking at this one kind of group, though, makes it clear that no simple typology is likely to be too informative. And that there is not likely to be any simple way of circumscribing the social groups. Social groups are just too heterogeneous, along too many dimensions.

10 Conclusion

When we analyze kinds of social groups in their detail, we see the many spectra along which they lie. Even the membership conditions for different kinds of groups vary enormously. Some involve intrinsic properties of members, some involve extrinsic properties, and some involve properties that have little to do with the members at all. Equally diverse are the conditions under which groups of various kinds come to exist, and continue to exist, and the ways groups are individuated. Kinds of groups may have a range of norms, powers, and abilities, some of which are among their construction conditions and some supplementary. And they are carved out the way they are for a variety of reasons as well, both metaphysical and causal.

At some level, we should have expected this variation. After all, human societies have been around for as long as there have been humans; and from the beginning, the ways we arrange ourselves and get arranged—consciously and unconsciously, accidentally and purposefully, beneficially and maliciously—have evolved nonstop. I suppose there was a remote possibility that all the various kinds of groups would neatly divide into vast kingdoms, as biological kinds divide (even if imperfectly) into plants, animals, fungi, and the others. But as it turns out, there is not the slightest evidence that this is so.

Careful analysis of group kinds can be immensely profitable. We can construct models with confidence and precision about their building blocks. We can design new kinds of groups with a fuller understanding of all the options and choices we have developed through the years, rather than revisiting the same small subset of design options over and over. And we can approach thorny issues like group agency and responsibility without flailing atop a muddy understanding of the objects whose agency and responsibility we are assessing.

Even with this framework, there remains a great deal of work to be done in understanding social groups. Each of the four profiles needs more exploration: the construction profile may be reasonably complete, but the others are only a start. These profiles need to be filled out, and patterns assessed, for many kinds of groups beyond the few examples I have sketched. Useful ways of classifying group kinds deserve more investigation. And more work needs to be done on interesting families of group-kinds. The family of "constitution-dominated" kinds, for instance, deserves attention, and groups that have traditionally been considered "feature groups" need to be re-examined.

It may also be fruitful to consider whether these four profiles, and the general approach to the metaphysics of groups, can be applied to other sorts of objects. This inquiry has been informed by insightful work by metaphysicians on constitution and ordinary objects. Perhaps we can return the favor. The results in this paper, derived from scrutinizing groups, in some ways mirror current treatments of ordinary objects, in some ways extend them, and in some ways depart from them. Perhaps these extensions and departures can help inform a better understanding of objects more generally.

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