

EVOLUTIONARY STRATEGIES OF ETHNOCENTRIC BEHAVIOR

Darwinian Politics:

The Evolutionary Origin of Freedom

Paul H. Rubin

New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002

Paper \$25; Cloth \$60

223 pp.

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Early on in *Darwinian Politics*, Paul Rubin writes that his purpose is to analyze “the extent to which political institutions allow humans to fulfill their own [evolved] preferences, rather than impose my preferences on them” (p. x). To some extent, Rubin has achieved that purpose. By omitting some key preferences, however, he creates a deeply distorted picture of human preferences—but one that fits well into his libertarian political beliefs and his views on how human societies ought to be organized.

IS INDIVIDUALISM A HUMAN UNIVERSAL?

Rubin argues that because the individualism of contemporary Western societies reflects our common evolutionary past as hunter-gatherers, Western societies, in particular the United States, come closest to satisfying our evolved preferences. Rubin argues that humans evolved as hunter-gatherers living in small, face-to-face groups with limited status differences and no centralized governmental structure, and that this has shaped our evolved political preferences. The hunter-gatherer hypothesis suits Rubin’s overall purpose because it provides an evolutionary basis for individualism and thus the libertarian ideals that he champions. However, Rubin fails to note that, although the hunter-gatherer form of social organization was undoubtedly an element of the common human evolutionary past, it was superceded in many parts of the world by much more tribally based kinship groups as economies moved beyond the hunter-gatherer form of social organization.

Indeed, there are major contrasts in social organization between different culture areas.¹ I have argued that a critical factor for understanding the origins of European culture is that Europeans are part of the North Eurasian and Circumpolar culture area.² This culture area derives from hunter-gatherers adapted to cold, ecologically adverse climates. In such climates there is pressure for male provisioning of the family and a tendency toward monogamy, because the ecology did not support either polygyny or large groups for an evolutionarily significant period. These cultures are characterized by bilateral kinship relationships which recognize both the male and female lines, suggesting a more equal contribution for each sex, as would be expected under conditions of monogamy. There is also less emphasis on extended kinship relationships, and marriage tends to be exogamous, i.e., outside the kinship group. These cultural traits have produced the Western tendency toward individualism and the other accouterments of modernization—uniquely among the stratified societies of the world.

All of these characteristics are opposite those found in the Middle Old World culture area, comprising the lower part of Eurasia and including Jews and similar Near Eastern groups. The point is that Rubin is uncritically generalizing the characteristics of the

underpinnings of European culture to all human groups. Whereas individualist cultures are biased toward separation of the individual and family from the wider society, individuals in the collectivist societies of the Middle Old World culture area have a strong sense of group identity and group boundaries based on genetic relatedness as a result of the greater importance of group conflict during their evolutionary history. These societies are highly collectivist—individual interests are submerged in and controlled by the wider kinship group—and they are deeply ethnocentric. None of these cultures has produced the type of individualistic society characteristic of the West, with democratic and republican political institutions and individual rights against the state.

The historical record shows that these cultural tendencies of Middle Old World societies are very robust, suggesting that these cultures existed for an evolutionarily significant period. We are finding out just how entrenched these tendencies are in our effort to impose Western cultural forms on Iraq.

As a result, Rubin's prescription for the United States as an individualist society composed of many different ethnic groups is problematic at best, at least for its European ethnic base—a point I will return to below. The individualistic tendencies of the Europeans encounter the ethnocentrism and group consciousness of other groups in the society. Many of these groups, like the Muslims and Jews, derive from the Middle Old World culture area and are unlikely to assimilate and adopt the individualist ways of Western societies. Only a Pollyanna could be optimistic about the long-term effects of this state of affairs on Europeans.

WHAT PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS UNDERLIE HUMAN GROUP AFFILIATION?

The second major thesis of Rubin's argument involves his understanding of the evolutionary psychology of groups. Without using the term, Rubin subscribes to social identity theory as a complete catalog of the mechanisms underlying the psychology of group identification. Social identity research shows that people are highly prone to identifying with ingroups, which they see as composed of superior individuals, and discriminating against outgroups, seen as a non-differentiated mass of inferiors. Social identity theory fits well with Rubin's general perspective because ingroups and outgroups need not be based on ethnic differences and because there is a lot of flexibility in the groups with which we identify. We are fans of football teams, as well as members of political parties or tennis clubs, and we identify to some extent with all of these groups. For example, Rubin identifies himself as “an *American*, a *male*, a *member of a family*, a *professor* who is an *economist* of *Jewish* descent teaching at *Emory University* with *Libertarian* political tendencies and living in *Atlanta, Georgia*” (p. 34, italics in text). Group loyalties “can change almost immediately” as would happen if, for example, Rubin got a job at a different university or moved to a different city. As an economist, Rubin argues that the main reason group membership can change is because of shifts in the price of group membership. For example, the new job may pay more, or people might change their political party preference if they think it will help them economically or socially.

This analysis is good so far as it goes. Social identity mechanisms of the sort described by Rubin are indeed an important component of our evolved psychology of groups. Indeed, I have stressed social identity mechanisms as important processes underlying the psychology of ethnic conflict, including anti-Semitism.³ However, there is a great

deal of research implicating other mechanisms related to ethnocentrism and group conflict that Rubin fails to mention; this research suggests that ethnic status is not as fluid and flexible as Rubin supposes.⁴ Ethnicity is not unique in calling for theoretical pluralism. Pluralism of mechanisms devoted to solving the same adaptive problem is common, especially for systems designed to solve problems with very high potential costs or benefits to the organism.⁵

In particular, Rubin does not mention research on Genetic Similarity Theory, which proposes that humans are able to assess phenotypic similarity as a marker for genetic similarity.⁶ This body of theory implies that people who share similar ethnic ancestry would be relatively attracted to each other, more compatible with them, and more likely to cooperate with them compared to people from a different ethnic group. Nor does Rubin consider the evidence for a “human kinds” module designed to categorize people in racial and ethnic categories—categories that are highly relevant to personal identity and not easily changeable by the person.⁷ In other words, there is evidence that categories like “a citizen of Atlanta, Georgia” or “professor of economics at Emory University” are far more flexible and changeable than being Jewish or having some other racial or ethnic identity.

Genetic similarity mechanisms and the proposed human racial/ethnic kinds module imply a genetically based assessment of genetic distance, whereas social identity mechanisms do not. Mechanisms that do not assess genetic distance seem unable to account for the extraordinarily stubborn continuity of ethnic consciousness in many parts of the world. It is perhaps revealing that Rubin is deeply concerned about the negative potential of an ethnically homogeneous United States, a fear that he shares with prominent spokespersons for Jewish activist organizations that have been the main force in altering U.S. immigration laws in favor of multiethnic immigration.⁸ He is much less concerned about strongly identified groups of football fans or aficionados of stamp collecting or playing bridge—i.e., unnatural groups that provide social identification but are completely harmless.

Rubin says that humans are entirely flexible in their group affiliations, but ethnic affiliations are extraordinarily robust and politically volatile. And, as Pierre van den Berghe notes, many ethnic groupings are remarkably stable; the Flemings and Walloons of Belgium are “almost exactly where their ancestors were when Julius Caesar wrote *De Bello Gallico*.”⁹ It is difficult to imagine how the social identity mechanisms utilized by Rubin could produce such stability and such emotional intensity given that social identity mechanisms are triggered even in arbitrarily created groups. Mechanisms for assessing genetic distance, as proposed by Genetic Similarity Theory and built into the proposed racial/ethnic human kinds module, are the most reasonable candidates to explain the persistence and intensity of the ethnic phenomenon. There is substantial evidence for direct kin recognition mechanisms in a variety of animals and plants.¹⁰ Ethnic groups composed of genetically similar others are indeed natural groups, and it is mechanisms of genetic similarity and, quite possibly, a racial/ethnic human kinds module that account ultimately for the staying power of ethnicity as a human grouping.

Besides social identity mechanisms, Rubin proposes that rational choice mechanisms are important for assessing the costs and benefits of group membership. I agree with this. Humans do possess rational choice mechanisms able to make cost/benefit calculations aimed at adaptively attaining evolutionary goals in novel environments.¹¹ Applied to the issue of group membership,

such mechanisms enable people to join or leave groups opportunistically, depending on immediate cost/benefit calculations. For example, the promise of financial rewards might incline a person to abandon one group for another (e.g., those who converted to Islam during the Turkish occupation of the Balkans). Jewish religious law has highly elaborated regulations regarding Jews who inform on other Jews or endanger the lives of other Jews; these laws were invoked in a steady stream of cases against Jews who betrayed other Jews, often for personal profit.¹²

Rational choice mechanisms also underlie defining and pursuing group interests in constantly changing environments, as, for example, in navigating the complex multiethnic environment of the contemporary United States. An obvious strategy for maximizing individual genetic interests in the contemporary world would be to use rational-choice problem-solving mechanisms to discover ideal patterns of association with others depending on their genetic distance from self. Ethnic groups are breeding populations; individuals have genetic interests in ethnic groups by virtue of having a greater concentration of inclusive fitness in their own ethnic group than other ethnic groups.¹³

For example, population genetic studies show that the various European populations are much closer genetically to each other than to continentally separated races. Moreover, the genetic distances between the races correspond approximately to what a reasonably well-informed historian, demographer, or tourist would expect. All things being equal, Scandinavians have greater overlap of genetic interests with other Scandinavians than with other Europeans, and Europeans have a greater genetic interest in other Europeans than in Africans or with people originating in the Middle East. The point is that whatever the fuzziness that characterizes genetic distances, people can creatively decide how best to strategize to promote their genetic interests in the current environment.

IS ETHNIC CONFLICT RATIONAL? HISTORICAL DATA

Rubin argues that my analysis of historical anti-Semitism “misses the key point...that this resource competition will generally provide economic benefits to gentile society overall, even if it does harm some segments of gentile society” (p. 51). I have responded to Rubin’s comments at length elsewhere¹⁴ and summarize these comments here. An important point is that at the psychological level people did not evolve to be interested in the welfare of the society as a whole or the welfare of other members of the society (apart from relatives)—a point that Rubin acknowledges but does not apply consistently to the historical data. Because our psychological mechanisms are designed to promote self-interest rather than the good of the entire society, it is not in the least surprising, for example, that the Polish merchants displaced by Jews from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries would have had negative attitudes toward Jews as ethnic outsiders perceived as compromising their individual interests. Their attitudes would not have changed had they been told with absolute certainty that the society as a whole benefited by their losing their livelihoods or accepting a lowered social position.

Rubin’s point does raise the interesting question of whether ethnic hostility and competition are rational. That is, even though my psychological analysis of the roots of historical anti-Semitism is correct, one might ask if the society would have been better off as a whole if non-Jews had accepted Jewish economic activity rather than directing

their hatred toward them. In his analysis, Rubin ignores the issue of ethnic hierarchy and its implications for reproductive success. He presents an idealized model of ethnic group interactions in which the interests of the entire society are maximized by taking advantage of specialization and the division of labor in an atmosphere of free trade. One ethnic group would specialize in making, say, hats and does so with great efficiency, while another ethnic group specializes in making swords and weapons. These two groups then benefit from trade and would suffer from erecting trade barriers.

However, throughout history the most extreme, widespread, and socially disruptive examples of anti-Semitism and other forms of ethnic hostility have occurred when one group has been seen as having an economically dominant position in general—when it has been perceived as being at the top of the ethnic hierarchy or as dominating wide areas of commerce at a time when economic success was tied to reproductive success. Hostility has been especially likely to occur when the ethnic group operated as middlemen in exploitative economic systems in collaboration with elites who were dominating a subject population—a common pattern of Jewish history.¹⁵ Perceptions of ingroup/outgroup competition are exacerbated in situations where one group is higher in status, wealthier, and far more likely to be in a supervisory role relative to the other group. Such conflicts have been common throughout Jewish history, and a similar situation has occurred in Southeast Asia where there are conflicts between the indigenous peoples and the economically dominant overseas Chinese.¹⁶

But being in a superior trading position had other social consequences besides triggering evolved psychological mechanisms of ethnic hostility. It had genetic consequences as well. Rubin claims that separatist behavior would have hurt the Jews to the extent that it inhibited free trade and that it would have harmed them more than non-Jews (p. 53). Rubin provides no data supporting this point, but he ignores a great deal of data showing that Jewish populations repeatedly became wealthier than their non-Jewish neighbors in European societies from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century—the “economic domination” theme of traditional anti-Semitism.¹⁷ Not surprisingly, this economic wealth was linked to increased reproductive success—the stock-in-trade of any evolutionary analysis. Amazingly, he dismisses the issue of reproductive competition by simply noting that “most populations at issue, Jewish and gentile, were growing over the relevant time period” (p. 53)—ignoring a great deal of evidence that during many of the most important instances of historical anti-Semitism, as in Poland from the early modern period up to the twentieth century or in Spain in the fifteenth century up to the period of the Inquisition, Jewish population growth was substantially greater than non-Jewish population growth.¹⁸ Exchange was competitive, and winning the battle had economic and genetic consequences for the winner.

Rubin also ignores the fact that many examples of historical anti-Semitism involved animosity resulting from the oppressive nature of economic relationships between the ethnic groups—from a perceived need for greater reciprocity and less exploitation. Having merchants and moneylenders may be necessary, but lowering the fraction of total income of moneylenders and their aristocratic patrons would be in the interests of debtors and may also conform to normative notions of economic justice (especially if these are well-paid occupations). Historically, Jews were often concentrated in ethnic niches such as moneylending, tax farming, and estate management—occupations that were exploitative. In traditional societies these activities were not part of a market economy but an aspect of exploitation by elites. For example, Rubin treats moneylending as a service to debtors benefiting the society as a whole—on the model of

buying a house in the suburbs or starting a business with a predictable economic surplus and at rates of 5–10% interest over a number of years. However, in the Middle Ages and down to the twentieth century in much of Eastern Europe, the great majority of loans were made to people living at or near subsistence, and they were made at exorbitant rates. There was often no free market in moneylending; typically, moneylenders obtained the right to engage in these activities as a result of being granted a franchise by a nobleman or a city which received a portion of the profits. The moneylenders then charged whatever they thought they could obtain from their customers, with the exception that interest rates were sometimes capped because of complaints by ruined debtors.

Loans made at interest rates common in the Middle Ages (oftentimes 33%–65%) are simply exploitative, and there is little wonder that they caused hatred on the part of ruined debtors and deep concern on the part of the Church. Moneylending under these circumstances did indeed benefit moneylenders and their aristocratic backers, but, as with loan-sharking today, it simply resulted in destitution for the vast majority of the customers—especially the poorer classes—rather than economic growth for the society as a whole. Loans were made to the desperate, the unintelligent, and the profligate rather than to people with good economic prospects who would invest their money to create economic growth; they were made “not to the prosperous farmer...but the farmer who could not make ends meet; not the successful squire, but the waster; the peasant, not when his crops were good, but when they failed; the artisan, not when he sold his wares, but when he could not find a market. Not unnaturally, a century of such a system was more than any community could stand, and the story of Jewish usury is a continuous alternation of invitation, protection, protestation and condemnation.”¹⁹

Another exploitative Jewish economic niche was the *arenda* system in Eastern Europe, in which Jewish estate managers were motivated to exploit their subjects as much as possible during the period of the lease. In the *arenda* system, a Jewish agent would lease an estate from a nobleman. In return for a set fee, the leaseholder would have the right to all the economic production of the estate and would also retain control of the feudal rights (including onerous forced labor requirements) over its inhabitants:

In this way, the Jewish *arendator* became the master of life and death over the population of entire districts, and having nothing but a short-term and purely financial interest in the relationship, was faced with the irresistible temptation to pare his temporary subjects to the bone. On the noble estates he tended to put his relatives and co-religionists in charge of the flour-mill, the brewery, and in particular of the lord's taverns where by custom the peasants were obliged to drink. On the church estates, he became the collector of all ecclesiastical dues, standing by the church door for his payment from tithe-payers, baptized infants, newlyweds, and mourners. On the [royal] estates..., he became in effect the Crown Agent, farming out the tolls, taxes, and courts, and adorning his oppressions with all the dignity of royal authority.²⁰

Such a system approximates slavery, the only difference being that serfs are tied to the land while slaves can be freely bought and sold. In such systems, there is little motivation to work, and productivity is relatively low.²¹ Slave economies are notably less productive than non-slave economies.²² Moreover, temporary leaseholders would also have no motivation to make capital improvements because they are only temporary

holders of the property. It seems likely that such a system would not benefit society as a whole compared to a society where there were free markets in labor, and in any case, it is easy to see that such a system would lead to anti-Jewish attitudes as well as hostility to the non-Jewish elites who employed Jews in the manner. These negative attitudes would be exacerbated because the arendators were from a different ethnic group. It is not at all obvious that these attitudes are irrational, either psychologically or from the standpoint of the best interests of the society as a whole.

Rubin suggests that ethnic monopolies would be impossible to maintain because of the free-rider problem (i.e., it would always be possible for outsiders to enter the market at a lower price and thereby break the monopoly). Again, this ignores the historical evidence. Data from Southeast Asia and elsewhere show the difficulty of breaking ethnic monopolies.²³ This was particularly the case among Jews because Jewish religious law prevented Jews from challenging monopolies held by other Jews, and these laws were observed.²⁴ Moreover, Jews typically developed vertical monopolies, such as monopolies in raw materials that reinforced monopolies in manufactured products and in retail operations. Given the difficulties in breaking monopolies held by ethnic networks, it seems unlikely that they are typically efficient monopolies. Rubin fails to provide any actual data showing that such monopolies were efficient and therefore ideal for the society as a whole.

Rubin argues that anti-Semitism itself is maladaptive for society as a whole, using the Inquisition and Nazism as examples. There are certainly cases where anti-Jewish actions have damaged society as a whole. The clearest examples are situations where anti-Jewish actions have made enemies of Jews who have then actively opposed the interests of the anti-Jewish government, such as during the Inquisition in 15th–17th-century Spain, and in Russia under the tsars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the latter case, Jews were a critical component to the success of the Bolshevik revolution that toppled Tsar Nicholas II and unleashed a horrifying reign of terror in which twenty million Soviet citizens lost their lives.²⁵

Rubin cites my comment that the Inquisition had a chilling effect on intellectual inquiry in Spain to support his view that anti-Semitism has negative effects on the society as a whole (p. 53). Intellectual stagnation may indeed have a negative influence on society, but it is more difficult to show that, apart from the actions of Jewish groups as described above, anti-Semitism has typically had negative effects for the society as a whole. Despite boycotts initiated by Jews in other countries, the early years of National Socialism in Germany were marked by what has been termed an “economic miracle” that eliminated unemployment without inflation and resulted in widespread popular support despite state-sponsored anti-Semitism.²⁶

Similarly, the age of Spanish conquest and exploration began soon after the Inquisition was launched in 1481 and extended well into the seventeenth century despite the opposition of the exiled Converso merchants and traders to Spanish interests. The expansion of England as a world power occurred after the Jews had been expelled in 1290. Even after their readmission by Cromwell, Jews were not an important force in the rise of England. If, as in Eastern and Central Europe, Jews had won the economic competition in middle class professions, the nascent native middle class of England may well have been suppressed, as has occurred in the last 150 years throughout Southeast Asia as a result of competition with the Overseas Chinese.

In fact, this suggests the counter argument that because of the importance of ethnicity as a social category, competition between ethnic groups inhibits the development of market economies and other aspects of the Enlightenment. Individualism is far more conducive to optimal (individual) utility maximization, but is unlikely to occur if people from one ethnic group fear losing in competition with those from another ethnic group.²⁷ In the present U.S., affirmative action and set-asides for “underrepresented minorities” are good examples of the subversion of market economies by ethnic conflict. Similarly, Spain during the period of the Inquisition was an unlikely place for the development of capitalism because the Jewish ethnic outgroup was seen as disproportionately benefiting from any sort of economic individualism. As noted by Américo Castro, the Enlightenment could not develop in a Spain fraught with ethnic conflict between Jews and non-Jews: “From such premises it was impossible that there should be derived any kind of modern state, the sequel, after all, of the Middle Ages’ hierarchic harmony.”²⁸ The ethnic homogeneity of Western European societies was much more conducive to the development of the Enlightenment. Several historians have commented that conflict between Jews and non-Jews effectively inhibited the advance of Enlightenment ideas in Eastern and Central Europe.²⁹

This argument suggests that increased ethnic competition resulting from immigration in the United States will tend to undercut all aspects of individualism in the long run, including not only the subversion of economic individualism by ethnic conflict, but also science as it applies to human differences and ethnic conflict. We are already seeing powerful forces preventing the open discussion of racial and ethnic issues related to IQ, criminality, and minority group ethnocentrism. Indeed, Rubin opposes affirmative action because of its likelihood of increasing resentment among those excluded on the basis of merit. But he offers no corrective. How can an ethnically diverse society with enormous genetically influenced group differences in intelligence and other traits conducive to upward mobility design social policy in a way that satisfies all the groups in the society without either creating resentment among talented groups who are excluded in favor of the less talented or creating resentment among underachieving groups who see themselves relegated to the lowest rungs of the society? Given his economic arguments, Rubin would probably maintain that affirmative action should end and that underachieving groups should just accept their lot because it is good for society as a whole. I view this as a psychological impossibility.

ETHNIC CONFLICT IN THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

Rubin emphasizes how ethnic conflict can be lessened by changes in social policy, using as examples the “decreasing racism” (p. 46) in U.S. immigration policy and the series of changes inaugurated by school desegregation in the South. Indeed, according to Rubin, while all Western societies are superior because they are committed to economic individualism and other elements of personal freedom that put us in touch with our evolved preferences, the U.S. is superior to other Western societies because, unlike European societies, it “does not have any dominant ethnic group, and so the risk of one group seizing the government and using it to impose undesirable predatory ethnic or racial policies is low” (p. xi). For Rubin, then, ethnic diversity is the greatest strength of the United States.

It is questionable (at best) whether these changes have resulted in less ethnic conflict or whether indeed ethnic diversity is an important asset. The media is brimming with

accounts of conflicts over affirmative action, interethnic interactions involving the police or courts, and the unfairness of ethnic differences in socioeconomic status, representation in high-income professions, education, medical care, etc. More importantly, it is doubtful whether present levels of ethnic conflict will remain unchanged in the future as European-Americans continue to lose political and cultural power. As Rubin himself notes, groups that perceive themselves as endangered tend to coalesce and adopt a more belligerent stance toward outgroups, although to this point the main response of European-Americans has been “white flight” away from areas populated by non-European immigrants.

Rubin retains the faith of a social engineer that ethnic conflict can be prevented by social pricing in which European ethnic consciousness is priced out of the market by, for example, enforcing economic sanctions (job loss, social ostracism) on ethnically conscious European-Americans. Much of this social pricing is, of course, already in place, but it remains to be seen how effective social pricing will remain as European-Americans are increasingly excluded from political and economic power. In the contemporary U.S., this social pricing does not apply to other ethnic groups which are encouraged to have strong ethnic identification—La Raza, Kwanzaa, and the major ongoing effort in Jewish communities to raise Jewish ethnic consciousness, prevent intermarriage, and rally support for Israel as a Jewish ethnostate. Indeed, developing a strong ethnic consciousness is a common feature of the multitude of ethnic studies departments at universities. Having an ethnic consciousness is a critical asset for the many jobs created throughout the government, the universities, and the private sector which minister to the needs of particular ethnic groups.

There is certainly no dearth of ethnic conflict in the modern world, so there can be no guarantee that Europeans will not at some point begin to develop ethnic consciousness and assert their ethnic interests. Strategies of ethnic conflict in the modern world include manipulating the census, engaging in pro-natalist policies in order to achieve force of numbers (a tactic that is especially effective in democracies), assimilation (including forced assimilation), population transfers (including various forms of ethnic cleansing), boundary changes, economic pressures (including discrimination in employment and education), harassment, selective tax policies, different wage rates, and different ability to own property.³⁰

Rubin’s economic analysis leads him to discount everything except the benefits of trade. In his view, larger populations augmented by immigration lead to larger markets, greater specialization in production and consumption, and greater technological innovation. We have seen that historically ethnic competition did have payoffs for the winners in terms of greater reproductive success and wealth. Does it still pay off in the contemporary world?

Obviously ethnic conflict does not pay if enormous costs are imposed by law, as in the costs currently imposed on ethnic consciousness among European-Americans. But what about a free market situation—that is, a situation in which the state does not influence the cost structure of discrimination and conflict, and in particular refrains from imposing punishment for these things? It is important to think about this type of situation because the social costs currently imposed on ethnic consciousness among European-Americans may be altered unpredictably in the future. It is therefore of great theoretical interest to determine how ethnic groups can maximize their interests in the modern world.

According to Rubin, even without punishment, ethnic conflict over land does not pay off because “land is only one valuable asset among many” (p. 48) and because our psychological mechanisms did not evolve to maximize our fitness anyway. Neither of these arguments is convincing.

First, land is indeed only one asset among many, but an ethnic group able to control an area of land is able to organize the state in a manner to maximize ethnic group interests. Ethnostates are able to regulate immigration policy to ensure that they retain control over their territory and to ensure that they do not suffer a decline in fertility due to immigration. (There is considerable data showing that immigration lowers native fertility.)³¹ Ethnostates can encourage ethnic pride by influencing the educational system and media messages. They are able to influence fertility by encouraging a high birth rate, subsidizing families, paying for fertility treatments of citizens, and limiting immigration. They can discourage intermarriage with people from other ethnic groups—partly as a result of discriminatory immigration policy. They can regulate scarce resources to favor their own people over ethnic outsiders living as minority groups with the state. They can develop close relationships with co-ethnics in other countries to influence policies that affect them. All of these tactics are in fact used by ethnostates. (One wonders whether Rubin would apply his ideas in the case of Israel, where his own ethnic group dominates; Israel has adopted all of these policies.)

Secondly, it is indeed the case that our psychological mechanisms did not evolve to maximize our fitness, but, as Rubin himself notes, we are not restricted to mechanisms that evolved to deal with recurrent past challenges. As described above, we are able to use rational choice mechanisms to figure out the best ways to structure our ethnic coalitions in the modern world. Even though we did not evolve to maximize fitness directly, it does not follow that fitness is not a worthwhile goal. Indeed, from an evolutionary perspective, it is the only goal; fitness was an indirect but necessary outcome of our evolved psychology during our evolutionary past. In the modern world the relative costs and benefits of adopting an ethnic group strategy may be assessed using rational choice mechanisms—the same mechanisms used to design the cost structure of ethnic discrimination in contemporary society.

This implies that an ethnic group may act to influence the cost structure itself. That is, it can design a system so that the ethnic group would benefit from discrimination and conflict, as in the example of Israel mentioned above. Similarly, in the United States a coalition of ethnic groups that had attained a majority as a result of a cost structure that penalized ethnic discrimination by European-Americans may then have enough power to alter the cost structure to discriminate in favor of its own people—affirmative action writ large. Thus European-Americans might well be concerned that the cost structure of ethnic discrimination that facilitated their own demise would be altered if a coalition of other ethnic groups obtained power and wished to discriminate against European Americans. Indeed, Rubin’s analysis implies that ethnic conflict may be quickly reignited when it becomes profitable for one or more ethnic groups to promote conflict. And the cost structure of ethnic conflict may well change as the United States shifts from a country with a large European-derived majority, with its strong tendencies toward individualism, to a country where Europeans are a nascent minority and thus in a much less powerful political position.

As noted above, ethnic groups are breeding populations, and individuals have genetic interests in ethnic groups by virtue of having a greater concentration of inclusive fitness in their own ethnic group than other ethnic groups.³² The problem, then, is how to best create strategies, including control of land areas, that promote ethnic genetic interests in the current environment. There is no precise or entirely natural way to establish the best boundaries for such an endeavor, but it certainly does not follow that such boundaries are arbitrary. It is the sort of problem that is solvable with rational choice mechanisms. For example, in the United States I propose that a grouping of people deriving from Europe, including Eastern and Southern Europe, would be far preferable to a strategy in which there were a large number of separate European groups (e.g., Danish, Scottish, English, Italian, etc.) each acting independently of the others.

Some groups are already organized effectively to pursue their interests in the modern world. For example, Jewish groups around the world maintain an elaborate network of ethnic interest organizations aimed at countering intermarriage, promoting the interests of Israel, advocating self-interested positions on church-state relations, immigration, etc.³³ The means used to attain ethnic interests in contemporary postindustrial societies utilize rational-choice problem-solving mechanisms: knowledge of the political process, how to raise money, how to utilize social science research to influence media messages, how to utilize or censor the Internet, etc. Groups with a relatively high IQ, such as the Jews, are able to attain relatively high levels of economic success; they thereby have the resources to fund ethnic activist organizations and to influence political parties, which are then utilized to advance evolutionary goals. European groups would be well advised to emulate Jewish groups rather than to adopt the policies advocated by Paul Rubin.

Acknowledgement: I thank Edward Miller (Department of Economics and Finance, University of New Orleans) for his assistance.

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ENDNOTES

1. See Burton et al., 1996.
2. MacDonald 1998/2004; 2002.
3. See MacDonald 1998/2004, ch. 1 for a summary of this body of theory from an evolutionary perspective.
4. See MacDonald 1998/2004, preface to the paperback edition.
5. Ibid.
6. Rushton 1989, 1999.
7. See MacDonald 1998/2004, preface to the paperback edition.
8. MacDonald 1998/2002, ch. 7.
9. van den Berghe 1999, p. 31.
10. Pfennig & Sherman 1995.
11. MacDonald 1991; 1998/2004.
12. Shahak & Mezvinsky 1999.
13. van den Berghe 1999; Salter 2002.
14. See MacDonald 1998/2004, preface to the paperback edition.
15. MacDonald 1994/2002, ch. 5.

16. Chua 2003; MacDonald 1994/2002, preface to the paperback edition; 1998/2004, Ch. 2.
17. MacDonald 1994/2002, ch. 5; 1998/2004, ch. 2.
18. MacDonald 1994/2002, ch. 5.
19. Parkes 1976, 360.
20. Davies 1982, 444.
21. E.g., Sowell 1983, 1998.
22. Sowell 1998, 168.
23. See, e.g., Landa 1994.
24. See MacDonald 1994/2002, ch. 6.
25. See MacDonald 1998/2004.
26. Haffner 1979, 27; Noakes & Pridham 1984, 296; Peukert 1987, 69.
27. See MacDonald 1994/2002, ch. 6; 1998/2004, ch. 5.
28. Castro 1954, p. 497.
29. See MacDonald 1998/2004, ch. 5.
30. Bookman 1998.
31. See MacDonald 1998/2004, preface to the paperback edition.
32. Salter 2002.
33. MacDonald 1994/2002, 2002.