

Focussing on the Group: Further Issues Related to Western Monogamy

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**(This is my reply to the comments by Laura Betzig, Monique Borgerhoff Mulder, James A. Brundage, Ulrich Mueller, Frank Salter, John M. Strate, and David Sloan Wilson on my article “The Establishment and Maintenance of Socially Imposed Monogamy in Western Europe.” *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 14, 3–23).**

## Focussing on the Group: Further Issues Related to Western Monogamy

I thank the commentators for raising a number of issues which require clarification or expansion. There is agreement that the development of monogamy in Western Europe is an important topic and that much more work needs to be done in the area.

*Criticisms of the Theory.* My argument is that we need to focus on internal political processes of social control in understanding the historical development of monogamy, and there is certainly nothing in Borgerhoff Mulder's comments to indicate that I was wrong in pursuing this perspective. Her point is at best a terminological quibble regarding the meaning of the term “behavioral ecology.”

Borgerhoff Mulder refers approvingly to an article by Boyd and Richerson (1992b) but apparently fails to realize that my work is entirely within the spirit of their perspective. Surprisingly, Borgerhoff Mulder characterizes my account as an attempt to “discredit evolutionary accounts,” when my emphasis is on exactly the types of internal political processes studied by game theorists and theorists of group processes (see Wilson's commentary and Boyd & Richerson, 1992a,b). My argument is that on empirical grounds we must go beyond an exclusive focus on deterministic optimization models, such as those of Alexander and Betzig, which posit particular external ecological variables (external threat, the possibility of defection consequent to industrialization) as resulting in monogamy as an optimal, individually adaptive response for elite males. As a terminological issue, I can agree that my theory of monogamy as a group-level phenomenon resulting from indeterminate internal political processes is properly considered to be within the field of behavioral ecology, but to assert that I have somehow attempted to “discredit evolutionary accounts” is, to use one of Borgerhoff Mulder's phrases, an “alarmingly odd chain of logic.”

Borgerhoff Mulder states that my type of analysis “could well be developed within an evolutionary ecological framework” but fails to indicate what should be added to my account to make it qualify as behavioral ecological. I want to make clear that my account is squarely within the evolutionary tradition. Wilson's comments highlight the central importance of game theory, and particularly the work of Boyd and Richerson, to conceptualizing how indeterminate internal political processes apply to historical phenomena. (See also Salter's discussion of social technology theory as implying the same result.) Boyd and Richerson (1992b) emphasize, as do I, the importance of happenstance, indeterminacy, and slight variations in initiating conditions in producing qualitatively different historical outcomes. In the target article, I emphasize the importance of happenstance in the face of highly similar initiating conditions in understanding variations in marital property law in

England and France (see also MacDonald [1990]) for further examples). For the same reasons I also emphasize the theoretical indeterminacy of military engagements, and in his commentary Strate makes the important point that the reproductive institutions of Europe would have been entirely different if the Muslims had not been stopped at the gates of Vienna. One might make the same point with regard to the much earlier the Battle of Tours, the halting of the Mongol invasions in the 13th century, and the Christian Reconquest of Spain. The eventual superiority of Western political and social organization emphasized by several commentators (see below) was not at all apparent for a very long period of European history. Indeed, Western Christian societies were replaced by societies characterized by intensive polygyny in a wide area of North Africa, the Near East, and Southeastern and Eastern Europe as a result of Muslim expansionism which ended only in the 17th century. It is thus reasonable to suppose that the continuity of Western reproductive institutions was dependent on only very slight differences in military capability, as well as events, such as the conversion of Constantine, which can only be described as happenstance (see MacDonald, 1990).

Moreover, by adding social interactions to formal models, Boyd and Richerson show that there may be multiple stable equilibria. Particularly important here is that, as Boyd and Richerson (1992a) have shown and as Wilson emphasizes in his comments, monogamy (or any other social condition) can be evolutionarily stable if group members punish non-monogamists and punish those who fail to punish non-monogamists. The actual social institutions regulating marriage may thus be an indeterminate outcome of internal political processes which punish non-monogamous behavior.

These theoretical results fit well with my emphasis on social controls as of critical importance in understanding monogamy in Western Europe. The social controls described in the target article essentially act by punishing non-monogamous behavior, with the punishments ranging from hanging (for adultery) to social ostracism and paying fines. While this type of perspective is compatible with the importance of external ecological variables, it certainly does not require them. As Boyd and Richerson (1992b) note, differences between societies do not make it necessary to search for external environmental differences as an explanation.

Betzig subscribes to a theory of social controls and internal political processes in her proposal that the power struggle between the Church and aristocracy over marriage resulted from within-family conflicts of interest in which younger brothers attempted to wrest control of family resources from their older siblings. As Salter notes, Betzig's theory may be viewed as the crowning touch in a long line

of theories which highlight the exploitative nature of the medieval Church. There are overwhelming difficulties with such a theory:

(1) Betzig fails to provide even one case in which a younger brother benefitted from these social controls in the manner proposed, much less evidence to suppose that ecclesiastical policy was systematically formulated and carried out by disgruntled younger brothers. This was certainly not the case for the main architect of ecclesiastical ascendancy, Pope Gregory VII. At least prior to the 11th century reforms, accounts indicate far more nepotistic cooperation among family members than competition between family members (e.g., bishops giving Church properties to their relatives who provided them with their office [Tellenbach, 1993, p. 85]). This type of nepotism never ceased entirely up through the 19th century.

(2) Betzig does not answer the objection that the same ecclesiastical influences which inhibited older brothers from having heirs would also apply to the younger brothers should they inherit. In order for the behavior of the younger brothers to be adaptive, the Church cannot be seen as opposing the interests of the aristocracy as a whole. However, accounts of the reform movements around the period of peak ecclesiastical power (see target article) uniformly stress the conflict between an aggressive papacy and other sectors of the ecclesiastical establishment versus an oftentimes corrupt and nepotistic secular clergy with close ties to the aristocracy. In stressing the independence of ecclesiastical and aristocratic interests, my account is squarely within the mainstream of historical research. Thus, in addition to the regulation of mating, the increasing demarcation between Church and laity, and the lessening of secular control over Church offices, the Church actively and successfully encouraged bequests in land and other wealth from the aristocracy. The result was that secular authorities and non-inheriting relatives initiated attempts to prevent this drain on their wealth (Goody, 1983). How would younger brothers benefit from this increasing ecclesiastical power and wealth even if, contrary to anything we know, they eventually inherited the estates of their brothers? While my theoretical perspective is certainly compatible with maladaptive strategizing, in the absence of strong empirical data supporting the importance of this process, it seems wildly premature to suppose that this was an important mechanism.

(3) Betzig supposes that even though marriage was monogamous, polygyny occurred in the medieval period not only among the nobility but also among the clergy. Apart from overwhelming empirical difficulties with such a proposal (considered below), this claim is typical of Betzig's failure to appreciate the theoretical importance of social controls regulating the legitimacy of children

conceived outside of monogamous marriage, a failure also apparent in her work on Roman mating (see Betzig 1992a,b). As Brundage notes in his commentary (see also MacDonald, 1990), the legal status of slaves and their children was an important aspect of the fundamentally monogamous mating institutions of Roman civilization. It is simply not enough to state in reference to public criticisms of Charles II's sexual behavior that "(i)t was always thus," and cite Ronald Syme's comment on social pressures on the sexual behavior of elite Romans, as if her awareness of social pressures penalizing non-monogamous fertility constitutes an adequate theory of these controls or somehow renders these controls illusory. It was indeed always thus (in prototypical Western societies), and this fact is of critical importance in understanding Western sexual behavior.

Contrary to Betzig's claim, canon law was about *both* the production of heirs *and* the production of bastards (the latter being a highly immoral act in the eyes of the Church and an act whose resulting social illegitimacy eventually had a strong influence on the social status and mortality of these children). Indeed one wonders how these two issues could fail to be linked. The most important difference between Western societies favoring monogamy and a society such as classical China with a truly polygynous marriage system is that males were not free to determine their own heirs or the social status of their offspring conceived outside monogamous marriage. Betzig completely fails to realize the theoretical importance of a situation where such children often could not inherit property, were likely to be held up to public contempt, suffered very high levels of mortality, and had markedly lowered chances in life.

*Adequacy of the Data.* Borgerhoff Mulder characterizes my theory as a "black boxing of explanatory processes," choosing to focus only on my claim that personal ideologies may be insensitive to self-interest. Similarly, Mueller misreads the target article as proposing that the ultimate explanation for Western monogamy is the ideology of Christian religious belief.

However, ideology was only one type of process which I discussed. The amount of space devoted to ideology is two paragraphs—less than 5% of the space devoted to the incredible array of social controls on the reproductive behavior of the elite and the interests and psychological mechanisms which maintained these controls. Moreover, my account is far from a "black boxing of explanatory processes," as suggested by Borgerhoff Mulder, since it attempts to describe the great many different processes that actually took place, ranging from the role of evolved psychological mechanisms (see also Salter's comments) to a particular emphasis on actual social controls, including the workings of ecclesiastical courts, the vigilance of neighbors, and the machinations of divorce

lawyers. One of these processes was the very widespread and apparently deeply held ideology that sex outside monogamous marriage was morally reprehensible and would result in eternal damnation in the next life. On the face of it, such an ideology is maladaptive for individuals who could benefit from a truly polygynous mating system, and its existence certainly bears mentioning. Nevertheless, it is obvious from the paper that I place far more importance on processes of social control and the role of certain evolved psychological mechanisms than on ideology. Given the central tendencies of human behavior and in the absence of the types of ecological circumstances proposed by Alexander and Betzig, I would suppose that an ideology of monogamy would quickly fail without powerful mechanisms of social control, and indeed, in my treatments of ideology I have always emphasized that there is a powerful tendency for ideologies to become intertwined with social controls (MacDonald, 1983, 1988, 1990, 1994a). In the present case, the social controls enforcing monogamy and inhibiting non-monogamous fertility were deeply embedded in a rationalizing ideology which was radically incompatible with the reproductive interests of elite males. And at a theoretical level, dominant social ideologies, such as medieval Christian views of sex and the theory of ecclesiastical superiority over secular authorities, have exactly the same status as social controls: They are the outcome of indeterminate political processes best understood within a game-theoretic context.

Betzig raises the most wide-ranging objections to the empirical adequacy of the data used to support my claim that monogamy was effectively established by the end of the 12th century, preferring instead to date the rise of Western monogamy to “the last few centuries” as a result of industrialization. It is important to note that my account of the social regulation of marriage practices represents a mainstream account which is widely accepted among historians. (See especially Brundage's commentary, and note that, with the possible exception of Borgerhoff Mulder, the other commentaries do not dispute the central result that the triumph of monogamy dates from the end of the 12th century.) As a result, Betzig has a very large burden of proof to establish her position.

(1) Betzig displays an astonishing lack of concern for the timing of her examples of polygyny. She discusses data from widely separated times and places, much of it long prior to the period when, in the mainstream view, monogamy was established. Thus, she cites a study of 9th-century census records indicating an excess of women in monasteries. Even if one were to suppose that this suggests that 9th-century women living in monasteries were really harem ladies and that the monastic movement was really a clandestine ruse camouflaging systematic polygyny—a bizarre claim for which there is absolutely no evidence, such a claim is irrelevant to my claim that monogamy was established

by the end of the 12th century. In previous work (MacDonald 1990), I have shown that resource polygyny was widespread among the emerging European aristocracy, certainly including the 9th century, and this conclusion is reiterated in the target article. Betzig also refers to the Bavarian and Alamannic Codes which established fines for lying with other men's maids. These codes date from the mid-eighth century at the latest (Wood, 1994). The existence of these codes is highly consistent with my reading of the evidence that indeed there was a massive shift in marriage practices culminating during the period of the High Middle Ages and that a major aspect of the triumph of Church policy was to successfully destroy the traditional tribal social structure of the Germanic peoples, including resource polygyny by high-ranking males.

(2) Betzig notes that large numbers of young females were in service in early modern England. But such a finding no more shows that women in service were systematically conceiving large numbers of bastards by their employers than does the fact that in contemporary times the employment of large numbers of women in male-owned companies implies that these women are normatively conceiving bastards by their employers. Accounts of master-servant sexual relationships (e.g., Fairchilds, 1984; Maza, 1983; Stone, 1977; Turner, 1962) indicate that such relationships typically encountered the disapproval of the master's wife (who often had considerable power), that they were secretive (although sometimes they led to marriage), often (at least in England) involved non-reproductive sexual activity, and were often strongly resisted by the servants and regarded very negatively by the families of the servants and society in general. The goal of the vast majority of these women and their families was marriage within their social class—a goal that would be severely compromised by an illegitimate pregnancy.

While close to 50% of lower class women aged 20-24 were in service in early modern England, the illegitimacy rate was usually far less than 3% until after 1750 (Laslett, 1977). In all studies, lower class males, especially male servants, were more likely than masters to be the fathers of the illegitimate children of female servants both in France and England (Depauw, 1976; Fairchilds, 1984; Maza, 1983; Turner, 1962). Moreover, Fairchilds (1984) notes that master-servant relationships resulting in illegitimate births were far more common in small households than among the high nobility in France and that wives were especially likely to discharge servants made pregnant by the master, with the result that the woman would often commit infanticide and/or descend to the lowest levels of society.

Moreover, similarly high percentages of young males were in service during this period, so that sexual exploitation of females cannot be the whole story. Indeed, rather than assume that in general the

servant system is a sign of normative polygyny by the wealthy, there are suggestions that the system as a whole functioned to benefit the lower classes. Stone (1977, p. 107) writes of wealthy estates serving a sort of holding function for the children of the lower classes, supporting them and receiving services from them for a ten year period until they could get married. Since the wealthy could not normally utilize these females as mates, this pattern actually involved the redistribution of resources to the less wealthy.

Conceptually this practice may therefore qualify as another example of socially imposed or customary altruism occurring in traditional English society (see target article). The practice of taking in unrelated servants is unique to the simple household system characteristic of Northwestern Europe. The practice pervaded all groups, so that individuals would have their children go to work as servants elsewhere while at the same time taking in unrelated servants (Hajnal, 1983; Stone, 1977). This suggests a deeply ingrained cultural practice, probably predating Christianity, which resulted in a high level of non-kinship based reciprocity and even altruism by the wealthy that is highly consistent with the general perspective developed in the target article. In any case, it is completely inadequate to simply assume that any situation where nubile females are under the control of wealthy males implies that there must be sexual exploitation involved.

(3) The data from the 15th-century Florentine *Catasto* do not imply polygyny but only support the point which I make in the target article (citing the same study) that until quite recently, wealth has been associated with reproductive success throughout European history. Indeed, the fertility of the wealthiest quartile is nowhere near a level which could only be explained by polygyny, and Herlihy (1985) attributes the lower fertility of the other quartiles to birth control or higher infant mortality.

(4) Some examples of aristocratic polygyny cited by Betzig are real, but they fail to indicate a general pattern. Betzig emphasizes the case of the prolific Count Baldwin V (a case which I also mentioned in the target article; see Note 11). As is typical of her methods, however, Betzig ignores the general trends and concentrates on examples which support her preconceptions. One can also find examples of noblemen who were entirely monogamous or even saintly (such as Louis the Pious (814-840), Saint Louis (1226-1270). \*Indeed, another Count Baldwin, Count Baldwin VI of Hainaut, is described as having “led a chaste life, spurned all other women and loved only Marie with ardent affection” (in Bumke 1991, 384). In developing the target article I attempted to go beyond citing particular cases by concentrating on a systematic study of the English kings, a group of wealthy males whose reproductive behavior is well-known.

(5) The fact that some clergy had children and that the Church tacitly or openly approved of the practice hardly constitutes evidence for normative polygyny among the clergy any more than the contemporary practice of marriage in the Anglican Church is evidence for polygyny. As many commentators have noted, the clergy who were most likely to be married or engaged in concubinage (i.e., monogamous informal marriage) were at the lowest rung of the ecclesiastical ladder working in rural parishes where they were under less scrutiny by the higher clergy and where the extra help of a mate was often indispensable. Moreover, the reforms beginning in the 11th century severely restricted the extent to which a clerical career could be a viable family strategy, and marriage and concubinage were unknown among the higher clergy in England during the 13th century. One wonders how the Church could have commanded such intense popular support during the medieval period if the higher clergy was systematically engaged in intensive polygyny with lower status women. And one wonders why wealthy parents of the mendicant friars opposed the intentions of their children to enter these orders if being a friar was a good strategy for attaining high levels of reproductive success. As in the case of aristocratic polygyny, Betzig ignores the clear secular trends (in this case, the trend toward real clerical reform immediately prior to and during the period of peak ecclesiastical power) in favor of a static picture in which the behavior of an earlier age or the behavior of a few non-conformists is uncritically generalized into a normative pattern characteristic of all periods.

(6) Literary evidence is extremely weak evidence for normative polygyny, especially when we have actual data on illegitimate fertility for an important set of aristocrats—the English kings. As in the contemporary world, literary tales involving sex and seduction are excellent devices for sustaining interest. But no one would suppose that the fact that tales of sexual intrigue are able to yield high profits to the modern media is a sign that the tales are either true or that they constitute an adequate portrayal of contemporary society. \*It is worth noting in this regard that in fact the desirability of combining love and marriage was the predominant theme of medieval courtly literature (Bumke, 1991, p. 389ff). It does not follow that love was actually an important consideration for marriage among the vast majority of medieval nobility, and indeed it was not.

Betzig concludes her presentation of countervailing “evidence” with the claim that “it's all the evidence we've got.” Such a claim is possible only by completely ignoring all of the empirical data summarized in the target article and the interpretations of mainstream historians. Nowhere are we given any indication that the English kings actually had many more illegitimate offspring than was represented in my sources. No data are presented showing that it was a normative practice of bishops

and mendicant friars during the High Middle Ages to have multiple concubines. When the mendicant friars, many of whom were scions of wealthy families, are depicted by historians as engaging in acts of extreme asceticism, we are implicitly invited to suppose that they also sired dozens of illegitimate children with their many secret concubines. And we are implicitly invited to suppose that while appearing before his subjects in sackcloth and wearing a hairshirt, while flagellating himself as penance for his sins, and while conducting his crusades to liberate the religious sites of the Holy Land, St. Louis was also siring dozens of bastards in his secret harem.

I believe that Betzig creates her empirical fantasyland because of her commitment to an extremely narrow conception of evolutionary thinking. Following the pioneering work of Mildred Dickemann (1979), Betzig (1986) documented an extraordinary convergence in reproductive patterns among the stratified societies of the world. Indeed, the convergence goes far beyond reproductive patterns. To expand on an example discussed by Boyd and Richerson (1992b), when Cortez arrived among the Aztecs in 1519, he found a great many similarities with his own society, including a hereditary nobility, priests, warriors, craftsmen, and peasants. There was thus an overwhelming convergence between the societies, despite the fact that Aztec society had developed independent of Old World influences. But Cortez did not find a society where the religious establishment claimed to be superior to the secular establishment and was successfully regulating the reproductive behavior of the secular elite.

When confronted by an overwhelming convergence among all stratified societies combined with a possible point of divergence, the temptation is to argue, as Betzig does, that the divergence is illusory and to date the divergence to a much later period when there was a clear ecological difference between Western and non-Western societies (i.e., industrialization). In developing such a position, Betzig is forced to maintain a completely heterodox interpretation of available data, propose a very fuzzy dating of Western monogamy to “the last few centuries,” and develop an extremely speculative theory for the eventual origins of Western monogamy. Note that although Betzig reiterates her theory in her commentary, she fails to mount a defense of the theory against the theoretical and empirical objections raised in the target article. However, by accepting the theoretical framework developed in the target article—a theoretical framework which is squarely within the mainstream of current evolutionary thinking about humans—there is no reason to suppose that high levels of convergence among all of the traditional stratified societies of the world could not be accompanied by an important point of divergence in the case of Western societies.

*Monogamy and Modernization.* Mueller, Strate, and Wilson note that Western societies and their social institutions have been extraordinarily successful and that monogamy may well have been a critical component of this success. As I note in the target article, the development of socially imposed monogamy constitutes a group-level phenomenon which may well have resulted in between-group selective processes which benefited Western societies. I agree with the commentators that this point certainly deserves to be expanded in future work, and in particular, as Wilson suggests, we must clarify the status of monogamy as part of the “necessary architecture” of modernization. Particular attention needs to be paid to possible mechanisms linking monogamy with all of the factors associated with European modernization, including democracy (as suggested by Strate), egalitarianism (as suggested by Salter), individualism, science, technology, and industrialization. Particular attention should be paid to issues linking monogamy and the family (see MacDonald, 1988), including the rise of high investment parenting (as also suggested by Mueller), the rise of the affectively based nuclear family as the fundamental unit of social organization, and the decline of extended kinship relationships—the latter two of which were clearly the focus of ecclesiastical policy beginning in the Middle Ages.

Nevertheless, as indicated by the cultural parity or even superiority of Muslim societies over a very long period of European history, proof that monogamy is centrally related to other Western cultural practices or to the eventual success and diffusion of Western institutions is likely to be quite difficult. As an example of this type of analysis, there are sound reasons for supposing that monogamy was a necessary condition for the peculiarly European “low-pressure” demographic profile described by Wrigley and Schofield (1981). This demographic profile results from late marriage and celibacy of large percentages of females during times of economic scarcity. The theoretical connection with monogamy is that monogamous marriage results in a situation where the poor of both sexes are unable to mate, whereas in polygynous systems an excess of poor females merely lowers the price of concubines for wealthy males. Thus, e.g., Wrigley and Schofield (1983) find that at the end of the 17th century approximately 23% of individuals of both sexes remained unmarried between ages 40-44, but that, as a result of altered economic opportunities, this percentage dropped at the beginning of the 18th century to 9%, and there was a corresponding decline in age of marriage. Like monogamy, this pattern was unique among the stratified societies of Eurasia (Hajnal 1965; 1983; Laslett 1983; MacFarlane 1986; Wall 1983; Wrigley and Schofield, 1981).

In turn, the low pressure demographic profile appears to have had economic consequences. Not only was marriage rate the main damper on population growth, but, especially in England, this

response had a tendency to lag well behind favorable economic changes so that there was a tendency for capital accumulation during good times rather than a constant pressure of population on food supply:

The fact that the rolling adjustment between economic and demographic fluctuations took place in such a leisurely fashion, tending to produce large if gradual swings in real wages, represented an opportunity to break clear from the low-level income trap which is sometimes supposed to have inhibited all pre-industrial nations. A long period of rising real wages, by changing the structure of demand, will tend to give a disproportionately strong boost to demand for commodities other than the basic necessities of life, and so to sectors of the economy whose growth is especially important if an industrial revolution is to occur. (Wrigley and Schofield 1981; p. 439; see also Hajnal, 1965; MacFarlane, 1986)

There is thus some reason to suppose that monogamy, by resulting in a low pressure demographic profile, was a necessary condition for industrialization rather than its consequence, as proposed by Betzig. It is this type of argument which suggests that monogamy may indeed be a central aspect of the necessary architecture of Western modernization.

*The Church as Representing the Interests of Artisans and Merchants.* Mueller makes several interesting points which require discussion. In the target article I point out (and Mueller would apparently agree) that the ultimate source of Western monogamy is not Christianity but rather the institutions of the Roman Republic and Roman Empire—a subject which I have previously addressed (MacDonald, 1983; 1990) but which was beyond the scope of the target article. The mechanism of the origin of socially imposed monogamy during the Roman period was undoubtedly quite different than later Western monogamy (see target article), but there are remarkable similarities in the mechanisms for the maintenance of monogamy, including laws on the legal status of offspring born outside monogamous marriage, customs opposing divorce, negative social attitudes toward non-conforming sexual behavior, and an ideology of monogamous sexual decorum. Mueller also points out that monogamy has thus far survived the secularization of Western society. I completely agree, and indeed a major focus of the target article was on mechanisms, such as divorce laws, public opinion, attitudes and controls related to illegitimacy, and the maneuverings of politicians and lawyers which have supported monogamy after the period of ecclesiastical hegemony.

Mueller proposes a theory of post-antiquity Western monogamy as resulting from “the persistence of the classes of artisans and merchants in the fragmented political structure, which characterized European history from antiquity, which was the economic and technological fundament of the spiritual power which forced the class of big landowners—the nobility—into monogamy.” I am aware of no evidence indicating that ecclesiastical attempts to control the aristocracy derived ultimately from the interests of artisans and merchants. The consensus view is that the motivation for the ecclesiastical campaign to exert control over society and, in particular, the sexual mores of the aristocracy must be sought in the desire for power by the central actors in this campaign—the reforming popes and their intellectual and political supporters within the Church. Nevertheless, there is indeed reason to suppose that merchant and artisan classes benefited from Church policies.

Economic historians (e.g., Gilchrist, 1969) have shown that Church economic policies were highly compatible with the development of a mercantile economy. Moreover, the period of ecclesiastical predominance coincided with a period of unprecedented economic and demographic expansion in Western Europe lasting into the 14th century—another indication that medieval cultural institutions were highly adaptive at the level of the group. In addition, Church policies coincided with the interests of the mercantile and artisan classes against the nobility by combatting the economic competition represented by Jews to the emerging Christian middle classes. The friars, who spearheaded the 13th-century Christian reform movement as well as the anti-Semitism of the period, derived mainly from the newly created urban middle- and upper-middle classes, and Cohen (1982, p. 43) emphasizes that these classes viewed the Jews as a competitive threat: “By the thirteenth century, the Jews of Europe were engaged almost exclusively in commercial activities, especially the lending of money; their success and influence in the marketplace set them among the chief competitors of the new Christian bourgeoisie.” Cohen notes that “it was not sheer accident” (p. 41) that both the Dominicans and the Franciscans developed a Christian theology of commerce and trade or that St. Francis was often described as the patron saint of merchants.

The medieval Church had a strong sense of Christian group economic interests *vis-à-vis* the Jews, and often worked vigorously to exclude Jews from economic and political influence and to prevent social intercourse between Christians and Jews (Cohen, 1982; Cohen, 1994; Jordan, 1989; MacDonald, 1994a, 1995; Parkes 1976). The Church often sided with popular sentiment by combatting the repeated tendencies of rulers to favor Jews for their own ends, especially with regard to Jewish moneylending. The Church, in alliance with popular elements including merchants and artisans, was

also instrumental in the expulsions of Jews from England, France, Spain and several parts of Germany. In Germany up until the 19th century, Jews were regularly excluded from Church lands and regularly admitted to secular lands where they were utilized as a source of income for the feudal lord (Harris 1994, p. 15). There is therefore, some reason to suppose that the medieval Church represented in part a wide-ranging political, economic and reproductive campaign to significantly curb the interests of the nobility in favor of the newly emerging Christian middle classes.

*The Unity of the Medieval Church.* Regarding the comments of Professor Brundage, the main point is that there is no disagreement with my interpretation of the dating, the course, and most of the mechanisms resulting in socially imposed monogamy in Western Europe. I agree completely with his claim that the lowered status of unions with slaves was an important aspect of the institutional support of monogamy in the Roman world (see also MacDonald, 1990) and with his view that the ideology of valid marriage as indissoluble is of critical importance in understanding Western monogamy and one deserving of even greater attention than I gave it. And one can agree with Brundage's claim that prohibitions on adoption were not an important mechanism for the maintenance of monogamy without imperiling the status of the other mechanisms outlined in the target article.

As is apparent in Brundage's comments, the Church's alteration of the laws on slavery in the direction of elevating the sexual relationships of slaves to the status of marriage was not a blow against monogamy but rather an attempt to develop a uniform institution of monogamous marriage at all levels of society—an aspect of the Church's program of imposing the same rules of sexual and domestic conduct on the rich and the poor noted by Herlihy (1985). Indeed, Brundage's entire account of the intricate relationship between ecclesiastical and secular authorities is the precise sort of complex and “messy” internal political dynamic involving the regulation of mating behavior that is unique to Western societies and that results ultimately from the fact that the Church was a real source of power throughout a very long period of Western history. While the present social interactionist perspective is highly compatible with a role for such “messy” political processes, Brundage's comments also indicate that the search for the types of external ecological variables sought by Betzig is likely to be fruitless.

Brundage states that I have overdrawn the medieval Church as “a unified institutional entity.” His comment does not vitiate my claim, based on consensus among historians (including Brundage), that the Church played a central role in the establishment of monogamy during the medieval period. Brundage's statement is rather directed at my claim that medieval Western civilization can be understood as a unified *societas christiana*—a collectivist society in the sense of Triandis (1990);

1991). The extent to which this clearly articulated cultural ideal of society as an organic, corporate unity encompassing all Christians was realized is a difficult historical question. There was certainly historical change in the gap between ideal and reality—a gap which increased in the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance. An evolutionist should not be surprised to find gaps between theory and reality in an institution with an ideology of hierarchical harmony among all social groups \*(including a well-developed ecclesiastical and secular ideology of the just, compassionate, and generous ruler (Bumke 1991, p. 310ff)), of secular subservience to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, of chastity among religious personnel, and of mating restricted to monogamous, indissoluble marriage even for the secular elite. Even if Gregory VII's collectivist *societas christiana* was indeed achieved at any point in history, an evolutionist would expect it to be inherently unstable because of the centrifugal forces resulting from conflicts of interest between social groups and between group and individual interests.

The important question for future research is to better document the suggestions that medieval society is indeed analyzable as a collectivist society with a strong sense of group identification and commitment. In addition to indications of a clear sense of Christian ingroup economic interests *vis-à-vis* the Jews as an outgroup outlined above—interests which were incompatible with the individualistic tendencies of the aristocracy to favor the Jews, there appear to have been high levels of reproductive altruism, particularly among the mendicant friars, many other religious personnel, and eventually the secular elite, the latter mainly the result of coercion but also, as in the case of St. Louis, influenced by voluntary restraint. (In this regard it is interesting that St. Louis was not only a paragon of proper Christian sexual behavior but also had a powerful sense of Christian group economic interests *vis-à-vis* the Jews [e.g., Chazan, 1973; Jordan, 1989].) In addition, medieval society, and especially the 13th century which represents the apogee of ecclesiastical power, was also characterized by historically high levels of charity to the poor which were not matched until the present century (Gilchrist, 1969; Tierney, 1959). Moreover, there was intense group identification and group commitment to Christianity among all levels of society, as indicated, for example, by the multitudes of pilgrims and the outpouring of religious fervor associated with the Crusades.

The proposal that there was an important degree of unity, cohesiveness, and collectivism to medieval Christian society renders the relatively high levels of medieval altruism and group identification and commitment more comprehensible, since it is compatible with supposing that an important factor underlying these medieval phenomena was the triggering of evolved facultative mechanisms related to group identification and cohesion (MacDonald, 1994a,c; 1995; Wilson & Sober,

1994). These mechanisms imply a strong psychological sense of Christian ingroup membership and a corresponding perception of outgroups as hostile and threatening. The psychological salience of Christian ingroup membership and of non-Christian outgroups (particularly Muslims and Jews) perceived as powerful and threatening has long been apparent to historians of the medieval period (e.g., Lynch, 1992; pp. 161-164).

And it must be remembered that whatever the gaps between the ideal of a unified Christian society (characterized by hierarchical harmony, ecclesiastical hegemony, and sexual restraint) and the actual workings of the medieval world revealed by contemporary historical research, these gaps must be balanced by the recognition that many medieval Christians, and especially the central actors in medieval society such as the monastic movements, the mendicant friars, the reforming popes, the fervent Crusaders, the pious pilgrims, and even many elite aristocrats, perceived themselves to be part of a highly unified, supranational collectivity. It is this fundamental psychological orientation—so foreign to contemporary Western life—which, in conjunction with contemporary psychological theories of social identity processes (Hogg & Abrams, 1987) and individualism-collectivism (Triandis, 1990; 1991), renders the high levels of group commitment and altruism characteristic of the medieval period comprehensible in psychological terms.

This intense group commitment certainly does not imply altruism at all levels of society. As Salter notes, there is a long history of theories that imply that medieval peasants were dupes of an exploitative Church or that celibate medieval religious personnel were tools in an exploitative despotism formally analogous to the eunuchs who guarded the harems of Eastern potentates. The contrary view represented in the target article is that medieval society represented the reproductive interests of a very wide range of the population, certainly including the peasantry and the emerging middle classes. And as indicated minimally by the economic and demographic expansions of the period, medieval cultural institutions were highly compatible with increasing the reproductive success of the group as a whole. Medieval religious celibacy, therefore, far from being an aspect of reproductive despotism and exploitation, was, from the present standpoint, an integral part of the “groupness” of medieval society, a phenomenon which rendered plausible the perception of a great many persons of all social classes that they each had a valuable role to play in a unified corporate *societas christiana*.

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