The Psychological Citizen and the Two Concepts of Social Contract: A Preliminary Analysis

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A shift in focus from the logical to the psychological social contract allows us to better explore the socialization of the psychological citizen, and the relationship between identity of individuals and the socio-political order, with its particular group-based inequalities. Traditional psychological studies have provided valuable insights into certain aspects of identity, but the new narrative research is leading to novel insights into longer term processes associated with the positioning of identity. The new approach recognizes the dual nature of mental processes and the integral role of context in individual development. Illustrative examples are discussed of the role of cultural carriers in the formation of identity, highlighting the infusion of the macrolevel normative system to thought and action at the microlevel of individuals.

My first goal in this discussion is to explore some key features of the *psychological citizen*, the cognitive and behavioral characteristics people need in order to function effectively as part of, and to sustain, a sociopolitical order. I shall particularly focus on how psychological citizens come to incorporate aspects of the normative system, such as values and ideology (Feldman, 2003; Schwartz, 2007), autonomy (Dennis, Talih, Cole, Zahn-Waxler, & Mizuta, 2007), and trust and distrust (Warren, 1999), reflecting the wider sociopolitical order, within their identities. In tackling this first goal, I will necessarily take up a second: that of clarifying the difference between two concepts of the *social contract*, the idea that a central authority, government, or a state owes its origins to a mutual agreement between individuals.

The first of these concepts is the familiar treatment of social contract theory as a branch of political philosophy. A great deal has already been said about this *logical* view of the social contract theory, which brings out the logical necessary

conditions for the possibility of civil society from an analysis of a presumed historical process (e.g., Boucher & Kelly, 1994; Lessnoff, 1990). My concern here is more with a second concept, a *psychological social contract* that each individual works out in his or her own lifetime and involves the development by individuals of thoughts and actions that enable effective functioning in a particular sociopolitical order. This psychological social contract has received scant attention relative to the logical social contract, but I shall argue the psychological social contract is at least as important. Indeed, with respect to how thought and action actually takes place, in contrast to what it ought to be, the psychological social contract is more important.

The psychological social contract is not developed through the private experiences of isolated individuals. Rather, the psychological social contract evolves through active participation in collective life, and in the collaboratively constructed and collectively upheld versions of social reality that come to dominate society (following Billig, 2003; Harré, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978; and others). Nevertheless, as we shall see below, despite the social and collectively derived nature of the psychological social contract, it is fundamentally different from the logical social contract in its various forms.

In the first part of the paper I briefly review the logical social contract, in both its classical and contemporary forms. I point out that although there is considerable variation in the social contract formulations proposed both by the "classical" theorists, including Hobbes, Locke, Hume, and Rousseau, and the "moderns," including Rawls and Nozick, they have in common, first, a focus on the logical conditions for a social contract and second, a number of psychological assumptions. In the second part of the paper, I articulate a psychological basis for the social contract, including the irrationalist formulation put forward by Freud, and the more recent normative formulations of cultural researchers (see Grusec & Hastings, 2007; Moghaddam, 2002; Moghaddam, 2005, chap. 20).

The social contract has made a comeback in recent decades. This is in part through the influence of Rawls (1971) and a growing number of researchers discussing a "social contract" in the realm of business ethics (e.g., Donaldson & Dunfee, 2002; see particularly the excellent discussion of Thompson & Hart, 2006, on "psychological contracts" in the business sector), and also partly through a new tendency among politicians to use a variety of "contracts" in their political positioning. For example, in 1994 the Republican Party of the United States gained a sweeping victory in the polls, launched an ambitious legislative agenda in its "first hundred days" in power, and declared that it had a "contract with America" (Republican National Committee, 1994). When the Democrats swept to power in Congress in 2007, they put forward their own version of a "contract" with the American people, whereby they carried out certain actions within the "first hundred hours." Thus, both in academic and political spheres, the social contract is receiving far greater attention.

The Logical Social Contract

"Fear of oppression, disposeth a man to anticipate, or to seek ayd by society: for there is no other way by which a man can secure his life and liberty." Hobbes (1651/1991, pp. 71–72)

"To avoid this state of war . . . is one great reason of men's putting themselves into society, and quitting the state of nature." Locke (1690/1948, p. 14)

"This transition from the state of nature to the civil state produces a most remarkable change in man by substituting justice for instinct in his conduct, and endowing his actions with the morality they previously lacked." Rousseau (1762/1997, p. 53)

"[S]ocial contract theory is really an attempt at analysing the logical presuppositions rather than the historical antecedents of the state. . . ." Gough (1963, p. 4)

The idea of a social contract can be traced back to the golden age of Greek political thought about 2,500 years ago and developed in various forms through the middle ages (see the first five chapters in Gough, 1963). However, the political philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, working in "the great age of the doctrine of the Social Contract" (Barker, 1948, p. xi), faced a new challenge in explaining the tensions between individuals and a central authority, and how obedience to a central authority is justified. This new challenge was associated with the revolutionary movements, including the Protestant reformation, that seriously tested prevailing systems of rights and duties in both religious and civil society. The feudal order, with its emphasis on the reciprocal duties of the rulers and the ruled, was overtaken by a value system that eventually brought individual rights to the fore.

The three thinkers most closely associated with the idea of the social contract in its classical form are Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. Their ideas about the social contract were no doubt influenced by the turbulent times in which they lived. The English Civil War was the background for Hobbes writing *Leviathan*; the actual task of writing he completed in exile in France. Locke was even more directly involved in changes in social and political thinking in the seventeenth century, as evidenced by his close association with political reformers in England, and his years of voluntary exile living among Huguenot refugees in Holland. The revolutionary era of late eighteenth-century France formed the cultural context for Rousseau's writings, and specifically his work on the social contract (the origin of the term "the social contract," *du Contrat Social*, we owe to Rousseau).

Although there are important differences between the ideas of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and other major writers of their era concerning the social contract, a characteristic common to all of them is their logical treatment of the topic. This approach meant that they were not concerned with the historical or anthropological accuracy of their formulations. That is, in one form or another they assumed, less explicitly in the case of Rousseau, that sometime in the historical past an

actual contract had been agreed upon between rulers and the ruled. However, the empirical basis of this assumption was not examined.

This lack of attention to an empirical basis for the logical social contract was shared by various other writers, among the most important being Hume (1748/1948), who argued that "if we trace government to its first origin in the woods and deserts" (p. 148), it must have been "Nothing but their own consent, and their sense of the advantages resulting from peace and order" (p. 149) that led people to agree to be governed. This is because humans are fairly equal in their physical and mental abilities, so that in those early days in "the woods and deserts," it would not have been possible to compel a majority to be governed without their own consent. As to empirical evidence that such an "original contract" existed, Hume acknowledges that we will not find any traces of it, because "It preceded the use of writing, and all other civilized arts of life" (p. 149). Then, returning to the logical basis of arguments for an "original contract," Hume states, "But we trace it plainly in the nature of man . . ." (p. 149).

The logical social contract tradition was an alternative to the traditional idea of the state as an enlargement of the family, with the head of state being the "natural" caretaker and decision maker for the people, just as the father was the head of the family. The logical social contract now gave importance to the role of the ordinary people who it was assumed, sometime in the historical past, had given their consent and brought about certain arrangements for organizing society. This was a potentially radical idea, because it brought into play the "consent of the people," with the implication that their consent had mattered in the historical past and could or even should matter again. Underlying the logical social contract were also certain psychological assumptions, which we turn to next.

Psychological Assumptions Underlying the Logical Social Contract

The logical social contract categorizes people into two groups: group one, those people involved in the original decision to formulate and sign onto a social contract; group two, those people who came after the agreement had come into place, but continued to uphold the agreement (a minority presumably have rejected the agreement, but they are assumed not to be powerful enough to be consequential). Both group one and group two are assumed to be, first, rational and, second, motivated by self-interest. These two assumptions have received critical attention on the part of research psychologists.

The limits of rationality have been explored by psychologists interested in decision making and public opinion (for example, see discussions in Lupia, McCubbins, & Popkin, 2000; and the critical reviews by Lau, 2003, and Taber, 2003). First, the characteristics of our sensory capacities set limitations on the kinds and amounts of information we are able to process. For example, what we term visible light, covering wavelengths from 400 to 700 nanometers (nm), is only a small segment of the entire electromagnetic spectrum. Consequently, the

information we can receive is severely limited. Second, our ability to use information is limited by our memory systems and their biological foundations (see the discussion of long-term potentiation in Moghaddam, 2005, pp. 63–76); we tend to reconstruct the past in biased ways, using selected bits of information (Schacter, 1996). We attempt to compensate for our limited information and limited memory systems by using cognitive "short cuts"; for example, Lau (2003, pp. 30–32) discusses these under the labels *decomposition*, breaking down a decision into simpler parts; *editing*, eliminating relevant aspects of a decision; and *heuristics*, or rules of thumb for taking shortcuts.

Current research suggests that some of the cognitive short-cuts we use take place without our conscious awareness. For example, studies by Todorov and his associates demonstrate that "unreflective judgments" based on as little as 100 ms of exposure to faces of political candidates can lead to judgments of "competency" and predict the outcomes of both gubernatorial and senate races (Ballew & Todorov, 2007; Todorov, Mandisodza, Goren, & Hall, 2005). Presumably, the time of exposure to each face was not sufficient to allow for rational and conscious judgments about competency. This study is in line with a very broad array of research highlighting the limits of rationality and emphasizing the role of unconscious processes in human behavior (for example, see Wegner, 2002). The emphasis on irrationality highlights the possibility that humans are not always capable of following rational plans toward achieving self-serving and group-serving goals. For example, nations that launch wars with the self-serving goal of gaining additional resources and becoming richer often find that the costs of war outweigh the benefits, even if costs and benefits are defined according to narrow materialist criteria. Besides, biological research is showing the picture of humans as "self-serving" to be too simplistic; for example, indirect reciprocity means that humans can be altruistic toward some others, and receive help themselves from a different source (Nowak & Sigmund, 2005).

Thus, there are sound reasons to question the psychological assumptions underlying the logical social contract, at least in its classic form.

The Logical Social Contract Revived

The more recent discussions of the social contract since the later part of the twentieth century, after a two-century decline in interest in this topic, is colored by the writings of Rawls (1971) and his formulation of justice as fairness. Rawls explicitly set his theory of justice as fairness in the framework of a contract tradition, in large part because "The merit of the contract terminology is that it conveys the idea that principles of justice may be conceived as principles that would be chosen by rational persons . . ." (p. 16). But Rawls is not satisfied with the fairness of the social contract as traditionally set out, either as assumed to have been formulated in actuality or under certain assumed historical conditions.

In his articulation of the social contract, Rawls (1971) places everyone in the "original position" (p. 12) where they make decisions about principles of justice "in a veil of ignorance" (p. 12). Because they have no knowledge of their own group membership and status in the "original position," in terms of whether they are female or male, white or black, rich or poor, and so on, any bias they allow into the justice system may well work against themselves. This line of thinking is dramatically different from the classical social contract tradition in so far as the original position has now replaced the assumed historical conditions, those early days in "woods and deserts" as Hume (1748/1948, p. 148) put it, in which the original contract was supposed to have been made. However, the Rawlsian contract continues the logical tradition of classical social contract theory; far from being historical or "real," it logically assumes what self-serving, rational persons would decide if placed in a (fictional) veil of ignorance.

The logical concept of social contract continues with the major critics of Rawls, including Nozick (1974), who chastises Rawls particularly for focusing too much on the end results and not giving adequate attention to the procedures of justice. Consider, for example, a group of students who have taken an examination and received grades between 0 and 100 (Nozick, 1974, p. 199). The students gather together not knowing the actual grades each has received, and they distribute grades to one another. Given that they hold power over one another, they agree that all of them should receive the same grade. When a list of the actual grades are posted, why should the students who receive lower grades from the instructors agree to the instructor's distribution? Nozick argues that the Rawlsian scheme unfairly takes from those who are entitled, in this case the students who actually scored high on the test, and gives to those who are not entitled, students who actually scored low.

We see in the writings of Rawls and Nozik the same assumptions of rationality and self-interest that was part of the earlier, classic writings on the logical social contract. For example, Rawls assumes that only under conditions of a "veil of ignorance" about their own group membership will individuals not show ingroup bias, and once their group membership becomes hidden individuals will rationally recognize that it is in their own interests to make unbiased judgments. Of course, these are enormous assumptions, and probably wrong ones under some conditions, given that both historical experience and experimental evidence reveals many cases of humans engaged in destructive acts, including both individual and collective aggression, that do not serve rational self-interests (Moghaddam, 2008).

The debates between Rawls and his critics (reviewed insightfully by Freeman, 2007) have highlighted the important role that the logical concept of the social contract, and the assumptions on which it is based, continue to play in formulating a moral foundation for social and political arrangements. But there is need for greater attention to a second, psychological concept of the social contract.

Even if we accept the logical arguments for a social contract, what social and psychological processes are involved in people actually coming to accept a

particular social contract as legitimate, "correct," or "normal," and giving priority to it as a guide to thought and action?

The Psychological Social Contract

How do the members of a society come to acquire the psychological characteristics needed in order to function effectively in a particular sociopolitical order, so that the society they live in is sustained? A broad array of social, political, and psychological research can be harnessed to help explore this question (see Ichilov, 1990; Sears & Levy, 2003). The strongest, most consistent theme in the research has been the idea that early political socialization tends to influence political attitudes and behavior in the adult years, although the impact of family political affiliations is mitigated later in adult life as individuals confront their own issues (Niemi & Jennings, 1991). The fact that early socialization, and particularly family characteristics, influence adult political attitudes and behavior lends support to an irrationalist model, suggesting that decisions made in adulthood are actually influenced by factors that often remain hidden from the decision maker. Certainly, the political decisions taken by individuals cannot be explained simply by reference to rational pursuit of self-interest (Sears & Funk, 1991). Thus, the assumption of rationality foundational to the logical social contract is challenged by research suggesting the long term impact of early political socialization. This theme of irrationality is further developed in the writings of Freud.

The Pioneering Theories of Freud

"[C]ivilization and higher education have a large influence on the development of repression, and we suppose that, under such conditions, the psychical organization undergoes an alteration (that can also emerge as an inherited disposition) as a result of which what was formerly felt as agreeable now seems unacceptable and is rejected with all possible psychical force. The repressive activity of civilization brings it about that primary possibilities of enjoyment, which have now, however, been repudiated by the censorship in us, are lost to us. But to the human psyche, all renunciation is exceedingly difficult . . ." (Freud, 1905/1960, p. 101)

Freud made innovative contributions to our understanding of the psychological social contract, particularly through his ideas about how the unconscious develops (see Moghaddam, 2005, chap. 4). Although Freud's irrationalist model goes against the rationalist approach of the logical social contract, his ideas do serve as a useful bridge between the logical and the psychological social contract, in the sense that he shares one of the major assumptions underlying the logical social contract: the self-serving nature of individuals. He adopts a Hobbsian approach to human nature, viewing the newborn as pleasure seeking, self-

centered, and driven by egocentric, potentially destructive basic instincts. The newborn seeks instant gratification, but soon runs into the constraints set by society. Through feedback from caretakers, the infant learns the taboos of society, and begins to associate certain emotions, such as guilt and shame, with certain things (e.g., particular parts of the body), actions, and thoughts.

It is in those domains where basic instincts run up against the taboos of society, particularly in the areas of sex and aggression, that repression is strongest. Material that is repressed accumulates in the unconscious and becomes inaccessible to conscious thought (in most circumstances). However, material in the unconscious never disappears, and the tensions between, on the one hand, unconscious motives, fears, anxieties, desires, and so on, and on the other hand, the demands of society, are part of the price individuals pay for "becoming civilized." For Freud, the reason individuals obey the law is to become accepted by and incorporated into the larger society. This "need to belong" has also been incorporated in contemporary theories, but with a greater emphasis on rationality than Freud advocated (for example, as in optimal distinctiveness theory, Brewer & Roccas, 2001).

In many cases the price of becoming civilized proves to be too high and individuals develop as dysfunctional adults. For example, according to Freud their dysfunction might arise from a failure to successfully pass through one or more of the psychosexual stages, with the result that they become fixated at the anal or some other early stage (so they manifest a dysfunction, such as a high level of neuroticism, for example). Even in cases where psychosexual development takes place successfully, the individual has paid a high price in the "give and take" that eventually leads to a place in society as a functional adult.

Three fundamental differences should be noted between the logical social contract tradition of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and others, and the psychological social contract tradition influenced by Freud. The first difference concerns whether the focus is on historical time period versus the time period of an individual life. The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century version of the logical social contract has concerned historical time. The key change that Rousseau saw from a state of nature to civilization, "This transition from the state of nature to the civil state produces a most remarkable change in man by substituting justice for instinct in his conduct, and endowing his actions with the morality they previously lacked" (1762/1997, p. 53), takes place in historical time. But in Freud's writings this transition, akin to the development of the superego during a single child's socialization experiences, takes place within one lifetime.

Second, whereas thinkers in the logical social contract tradition conceived of the contract as involving collectivities, Freud's version of the social contract is negotiated by each individual, relying on her or his own resources in a single lifetime. Individuals engage in a give and take with their societies, in the struggle to find a functional niche for themselves. This negotiation is associated with psychological changes, resulting in the shaping of different levels of

consciousness (the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious). Third, Freud rejects the assumption of rationality underlying the logical social contract (although he agrees with the assumption that humans are self-serving).

Whereas the Freudian tradition gives primary importance to basic instincts, with special emphasis on sex and aggression, I give priority to cultural, narrative processes, and the story-lines presented, in line with new cultural and constructionist movements in psychology (Billig, 2003; Moghaddam, 2005, chap. 20).

The Psychological Citizen and the Social Contract

The puzzle of the socialization of the psychological citizen can be addressed through the perspective of traditional psychological research by focusing on two sets of factors internal and external to the individual, juxtaposed as opposite one another, using terms such as heredity versus environment, or dispositional versus contextual factors. Although this traditional approach, particularly when focused on the interaction between factors internal and external to the individual, can be useful, a far more promising conceptualization is offered by new cultural and narrative researchers influenced by Vygotsky (1962, 1978). This alternative research is revolutionary in that mental processes are no longer treated as private, housed and originating from individuals. Rather, greater emphasis is placed on the social origins of mental processes.

The Dual Nature of Mental Processes

"All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals." (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57)

A major breakthrough in understanding the development of the psychological citizen arose through Vygotsky's (1962, 1978) insights into the dual nature of mental processes. Rather than examining the development of individuals, including cognitive and moral development, as independent from their cultural contexts, Vygotsky recognized the essential and integral role of context in individual development. According to this view, all higher order mental processes take place at two levels, "first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people . . . and then inside the child . . . This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

The identification of the dual nature of mental processes, with the social sphere as coming first, leads to a more accurate picture of the fusion between the psychological citizen and the sociopolitical order. Styles of thinking and their associative skills that are found at the micro, individual level can be traced to their macro, social-political origins. Thus, for example, the motives recognized as central to individual experience, such as self enhancing, belonging, controlling, understanding, and trusting (Fiske, 2004), take shape through the appropriation of societal level symbols and values integral to macro processes (Schwartz, 2007).

Sedikides and Brewer (2001) have conceptualized this fusion as involving three experiences of the self, the individual self ("achieved by differentiation from others"), the relational self ("achieved by assimilating with significant others"), and the collective self ("achieved by inclusion in large social groups and contrasting the group to which one belongs . . . with relevant out-groups") (pp. 1–2). Taylor (2002) has gone further in emphasizing the primacy of the collective by conceptualizing a robust collective identity as a prerequisite for the development of a healthy personal identity. In keeping with the primacy given to human collective, shared processes, and the malleability of behavior, the Vygotskian approach conceives "self-centeredness" and "rationality" as changeable, depending on context, and thus not fixed as assumed in the logical social contract. Below I briefly discuss examples of ongoing research programs in social and political psychology that lend support to the "Vygotskian" view broadly.

A first example is the research program led by Steele (1997) on "stereotype threat." This research demonstrates that when women, African-Americans, and other minorities are reminded, even in subtle ways, of the pervasive stereotypes about their performance on a task (e.g., "women are not good in math"), their performance level declines on objective measures (such as math tests). This research highlights the essential role of the "threat in the air" posed by the stereotype, which is already present at the macro level, independent of individuals, but can be made relevant and brought to bear to regulate micro-level individual thought and action. The source of the stereotype is societal rather than individual; in Vygotskian terms the stereotypes Steele (1997) used in his research arose "first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). In conditions where the minority group members were not reminded of the negative stereotype about their group, their scores on objective tests (on subjects such as math) were higher.

The stereotypes that proved to be such a powerful influence on behavior in Steele's (1997) research are carried by movie plots, by soap operas, by popular music, and by countless other elements of the global mass media. But perhaps the most historically important carriers of such stereotypes have been *Snow White*, *Cinderella*, and the other fairy tales that continue to be an essential part of childhood (Tartar, 1992) and that continue to become transformed and effectively spread through television, the internet, and other new technologies (Zipes, 1997).

Another ongoing research program that illustrates the dual nature of mental processes is associated with system justification theory, which attempts to explain "why so many members of disadvantaged groups reject egalitarian alternatives to the *status quo* . . ." (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004, p. 908). According to system justification theory, the explanation to this puzzle is to be found in the priority that people give to *system justification*, the need to justify and legitimize "existing social arrangements" (Jost & Banaji, 1994, p. 2), over *ego justification*, the need to maintain a favorable self-image, and *group justification*, the need to maintain a favorable group image. The system justification motive is so strong that existing

sociopolitical arrangements are supported "even at the expense of personal and group interests" (p. 2).

How does the system justification motive become so strong within individuals? The explanation is to be found in the ideology and its sustaining story lines that dominate the system. In Vygotskian terms, the relationships between people and the normative system that guides relationships "out there" in the sociopolitical world constitute the first level of cognition, and the mental processes within individuals form the second level.

System justification theory is a new theory, but it has roots in a much older, critical, Marxist tradition in social theory (Moghaddam, 2008). The contemporary research of Doise and his associates on social representations (reported in Doise, 2002; Spini & Doise, 2004) is similarly rooted in classic social theory, particularly the ideas of Durkheim (1898), and this research also illustrates the dual nature of mental processes. At the collective level, there are social representations shared by people in a society about any particular issue. For example, in the United States there are shared representations about the American flag, the Alamo, Custer's Last Stand, and so on. These social representations first exist "outside" individuals, but through socialization processes they can come to influence individual cognition. Of course, at the second, micro level there are also variations across individuals with respect to how strongly they hold certain beliefs and values related to the American flag. In order to better understand how the two levels are linked, we next discuss one of the key mechanisms through which the sociopolitical order "enters into" individuals.

The Role of Carriers: The Example of the Islamic Veil

How does the normative system, reflecting the sociopolitical order in the larger world, "enter into" the individual and come to regulate personal life? Among the most important mechanisms that influence this process are *carriers*, means by which styles of thinking and doing are passed on from generation to generation (Moghaddam, 2002). Carriers are enormously varied in their characteristics, but all serve as conveyers of values, norms, rules, and other aspects of culture that regulate behavior.

A "sacred" carrier that has taken on increased sociopolitical importance on the world stage is the veil used by Muslim women to cover their heads and bodies, and in some cases their faces as well. In Muslim countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, all women are obligated to wear the veil in public. In some other Muslim countries, such as Turkey and Tunisia, women are not legally obligated to wear the veil, but many women do wear the veil, often because they are first forced to do so by their families, and later because what was forced upon them as children becomes personal conviction.

The presence of over 20 million Muslims in the European Union (for example, millions of South Asians in the United Kingdom, North Africans in

France, Turks in Germany) has meant that the veil is now a common sight in major European centers. The wearing of the veil by second-generation Muslim immigrants suggests that rather than disappear, the veil will continue to be present in Western democracies. On the one hand, this should not be problematic because, after all, the veil is only a piece of cloth. On the other hand, the veil has become problematic because it is an important cultural carrier—this "piece of cloth" has taken on considerable importance (see Scott, 2007, for an exploration of the politics of the Islamic veil).

I interviewed 30 Iranian males representing different political perspectives about the veil in Tehran during the first year after the 1978–79 revolution. This was a crucial transitional period, when the Shah's regime had collapsed, but the fundamentalists who followed "Imam Khomeini's line" had not yet gained a monopoly of power. A wide variety of political groups, representing an array of ideological perspectives, including left-wing and liberal groups, were still active in the public sphere. Women were still permitted to appear in public *be-hejab* (without the veil), as the law had not been changed from the time of the Shah when the state both allowed and encouraged women to *not* wear the veil in public. During this postrevolution period of intense political competition and turmoil, as liberals and democrats struggled to prevent a power monopoly by Islamic fundamentalists, the veil took on increased significance as a "sacred" carrier.

Two extreme viewpoints were represented among the males I interviewed. For the Islamic fundamentalists, the veil represented "honor" and pride. They talked of the "shame" associated with having Iranian women "parading *be-hejab*" in public like "pieces of meat." For them, the *hejab* (one meaning of which in Farsi is "modesty") serves as a symbol of Islamic distinctiveness and pride in the face of "godless" Western cultures.

Underlying the reasons given by fundamentalists as to why women should wear the veil, was the view that men in general have a certain "weakness" in that they are instinctively attracted to the sight of women, particularly "their long hair." Such attraction can mean men becoming distracted and losing control of themselves. Sexual attraction is fine when the man and woman in question are married, but when they are unmarried it leads to *shirk*, ungodly ways, and *fesaad*, corruption. Thus, the veil is not just a defense against sin at the personal level; it serves as a dam against the flood of passions that continually threatens to corrupt all society.

A second argument found in the narratives of fundamentalists concerned the role of the veil as a shield, a protector, so that women can enter the public sphere in safety and without shaming themselves and the men who interact with them. Whereas the first argument presented women as potent and dangerous and capable of leading men astray, because men are weak in the face of female attractions, the second argument presented women as victims, as vulnerable, and as needing protection. The veil, it was argued, provides women with a safe space and shelter.

In essence, Islamic fundamentalists argued that the veil gives women freedom, to escape being sexual objects, and to appear safely in public.

While Islamic fundamentalists interpreted the veil as representing honor, modesty, and freedom, those opposing the veil interpreted the veil as representing repression, imprisonment, and backwardness. Critics contended that the veil prevents women from being active in the public sphere and excludes them from a number of professions and pastimes. They asked, how can a women work as an engineer or be active in sports while wearing the veil? Besides, what is wrong with women attracting attention by their looks? Surely it is only natural for men to admire beauty in women.

Underlying the comments by critics was the idea that the veil represents "backwardness," because it keeps women in a traditional role as second-class citizens. Critics saw the veil as a carrier of repressive values and of "ignorance." By casting aside the veil, Iranian society would enter into the modern, enlightened era. These two conflicting "micro-level" positions reflect political and ideological rivalries at the macro-societal level, demonstrating how values, ideology, and attitudes (Feldman, 2003; Schwartz, 2007) at micro and macro levels are linked.

Just as the veil is "a piece of cloth" that men are willing to kill and die for in Iran, there are a number of sacred carriers that play an enormously important role in the United States. Consider, for example, another "piece of cloth," the American flag, "Old Glory," and the ritual of millions of children and adults "pledging allegiance to the flag." Carriers such as the veil and "Old Glory" come to acquire their pivotal role in everyday life by becoming incorporated into both personal identity, the kind of person I see myself as, and collective identity, the kind of group I see myself to be a part of. Just as the Islamic veil can become part of "the kind of person a woman in Iran comes to see herself as," so the American flag can become part of "the kind of person a woman in the United States comes to see herself." By examining the role of such sacred carriers in identity, we arrive at a better picture of how the sociopolitical order "enters into" individuals.

The sociopolitical order is also carried forward by story lines that weave through the history of different societies and carry forward certain aspects of collective identity. For example, consider the story line of the martyrdom of Hussein and the "history" of the beginnings of Shi'a Islam. When the fourth Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib was murdered (A.D. 661), there was once again dispute over the succession (the Prophet Muhammad died in A.D. 632 without naming a successor). Only a minority supported Ali's son Hussein. When Hussein and his small band of followers, including his brother Hassan, refused to yield, they were attacked and annihilated (A.D. 680) in a battle that took place near what is now Karbala, Iraq. The "martyrdom" at Karbala is celebrated by Shi'a Muslims as a glorious example of a small group standing up to a much larger force of tyranny and oppression. Now, consider the story line of the Alamo in American culture. A small band of American "freedom fighters," including Jim Bowie the famous knife fighter and David Crockett the legendary frontiersman and former congressman,

fought against a far larger Mexican force. Although the small American force lost at the Alamo, the "shrine of Texas liberty" lived on, and, according to the American story-line, Texans were eventually victorious and free. The story line of martyrdom at Karbala plays a historic role in Shi'a identity, just as the story line of martyrdom at the Alamo plays a historic role in U.S. identity.

The Centrality of Identity in the Formation of the Psychological Citizen

My maternal grandmother had personally experienced a number of changes in the policies the Iranian government adopted toward the veil. She lived to see the 1978–79 revolution, and the postrevolutionary era when all women were obligated by law to wear the veil. But she had also lived through the reign of first Pahlavi King, Reza Shah (1926–41), and his attempts particularly in the 1930s to forbid the wearing of the veil in public places (Moghaddam & Crystal, 1997). She told the story of how the Shah's police would stand guard on street corners in Tehran and pull the veil off the head of any women who dared to appear in public *ba-hejab*. This had been a traumatic experience for women like my grandmother, because they had grown up from an early age wearing the veil; it was an integral part of who they saw themselves to be. For them, irrespective of changing government policies, the veil remained a deeply entrenched and significant sacred carrier, one that was inseparable from their identities.

Through focusing on important carriers such as the veil in Islamic communities and "Old Glory" in American communities, it is possible to better understand the socialization processes through which the normative system moves from the macro to the micro level and becomes effective in personal relationships. According to Islamic tradition, girls wear the veil in public from the time they are nine years old. But learning about the veil and its role as a carrier begins at a much earlier age.

From the age of about two, when children are already able to distinguish between the roles of mother and father, girls play at putting on scarves and veils. Just as little girls in Western societies like to try on mommy's shoes, girls in families where the veil is worn learn to imitate mommy by trying on a veil. In such family contexts, I have witnessed girls as young as four and five years old playing at "going out and shopping" by first putting on a "veil," either make-believe or real. There is, then, a step-by-step process of learning about the veil as being "part of onself," as something that one would be ashamed to be without.

But we should not interpret the veil as merely another layer of clothing, or even merely an "essential" layer of clothing. For example, in Western societies there would in most contexts be shame associated with a woman going into public "topless." Being without the veil in Iran is much more than this, because Islamic fundamentalists interpret the veil as integral to collective identity of the Muslim community, and not just the personal identity of a particular woman. Moreover, a woman without the veil in Iran is seen by fundamentalists as an affront to male

honor, because males are assumed to be the prime guardians of collective honor. From this perspective, a woman without the veil in public is corrupting society and bringing shame to all of the Muslim community (of course, some Christian fundamentalists might also adopt the same interpretations of how "topless women" would influence society).

Outsiders are often surprised as to how some of the strongest defenders of the veil are Muslim women who have been "forced" to wear the veil from early childhood. From a Western perspective, the expectation might be that such women would be eager to criticize the veil, and cast it aside when an opportunity arises. However, because the veil takes on an integral role in the identity of women in traditionally religious families, such women typically are strong supporters of the veil and ensure that it is passed on to the next generation. This is similar to women who have suffered female circumcision (or "genital mutilation") insisting that the next generation should also suffer the same fate (see Abusharaf, 2007, for the wider context of the debate). As Lane (2003) has commented on the research evidence on rationality, "individuals are often mistaken about their own interests and how to pursue them" (p. 758).

Looking across cultures, we see that there is great variation in the carriers that serve to socialize the young and achieve the influence of the normative system present at the macro-societal level to the micro level of everyday practices and thinking. For example, in the traditional "pre-white" culture of the Tiwi of Northern Australia, males did not wear any clothing at all (Hart, Pilling, & Goodale, 2001, p. 55). Status and prestige was signified not by clothes, but through ceremonial spears, which were not used in hunting or fighting, and served no purpose other than to demonstrate the "surplus" wealth at the disposal of the male owner. Typically, a man would only come to own ceremonial spears after he has had enough time to accumulate multiple wives, and "The painted spears were symbols of wealth and status and roughly corresponded to white tie and tails in our culture" (p. 54). A high status man would not be seen in a ceremony without his painted spears, even though he would otherwise be "stark naked."

In the "pre-white" culture of the Tiwi, then, the painted spears served as important carriers of cultural practices and values. The fact that only older males owned and displayed these spears reflected the wider societal value system, according to which all power and status was monopolized by older males. But the spears were not separate entities; they were integral to the identity of Tiwi people, and older males particularly.

Traditional Research, Identity, and the Psychological Social Contract

Traditional psychological research has provided us with valuable insights into some aspects of identity (see Huddy, 2003). For example, laboratory experiments using the minimal group paradigm demonstrate that the mere categorization of individuals into two groups on a trivial basis, "group X" and "group Y," formed on

the basis of a dot-estimation task, for example, would lead to ingroup favoritism within a Western cultural context (see the discussion of the minimal group paradigm in Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994, chap. 4). This research was interpreted as supporting the social identity theory assertion of a need for positive and distinct social identity (for an updated assessment, see Moghaddam, 2006). Social identity theory has been tremendously influential in making identity a central issue in psychological research since the 1980s.

However, the minimal group paradigm and similar research methods used to explore identity have focused on individuals in isolation, for periods typically of an hour or so. Such research methods have neglected the long-term processes through which the identities of psychological citizens develop. It is through such long-term processes that carriers, such as the veil and the American flag, become integral to personal and social identity, and it is also through such long-term processes that the psychological social contract evolves.

While Freud emphasized sex and aggression as domains of tension between individual instincts and societal taboos, in this discussion of the psychological social contract I am primarily concerned with individual wishes and societal demands with respect to justice: How do people come to see a particular set of social, economic, and political arrangements as just? The major psychological theories concerned with justice, including equity theory, relative deprivation theory, realistic conflict theory, and social identity theory (Moghaddam, 2008; Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994), either do not assume identity to be central to this question, and/or neglect the longer term process of how the identities of psychological citizens are formed.

My contention is that perceptions of justice evolve as an integral and inseparable part of identity, the kinds of persons individuals see themselves to be. Thus, for example, when Jane expresses the attitude that "The way minorities are being treated is not right," this is integral to her identity, the kind of person she sees herself to be. Just as when Pam says that "Our system of economic rewards is perfectly fair," this perception is integral to the kind of person she believes she is. Thus, a first step is to abandon the separation of "identity" from "perceived justice" (and other such perceptions), so that we conceptualize narratives about justice as integral to narratives about the kinds of persons we think we are.

From this perspective, the carriers that are effective in appropriating the macro-normative system and its symbols into individual minds also become integral to, and inseparable from, identity. As Habermas (1979) argues, "Identity is produced through socialization, that is, through the fact that the growing child first of all integrates itself into a specific social system by appropriating symbolic generalities . . ." (p. 74). Thus, the American flag is not just a carrier in the larger American society, but an element of identity at the individual level. In his insightful analysis of *Ritual, Politics, and Power*, Kertzer (1988) notes, "Some scholars have marveled at the fact that small children often make no distinction between the abstract organization and its symbolic representation. Thus, the flag does not

simply stand for the country, but flag and country are thought of as the same thing. Yet, how different is it when they grow up and proclaim their willingness to die for the flag?" (p. 16). I push this argument further, by pointing out that through socialization processes flag and identity are fused and become the same thing.

Such a reconceptualization is also needed regarding research that assumes opinions, values, and evaluations of the world reflect identity. An example is *Identity Structure Analysis* (Weinreich & Saunderson, 2003), a key principle of which is that "A person's appraisal of the social world and its significance is an expression of his or her identity" (p. xix). Just as the American flag is integral to and inseparable from Joe's identity, Joe's appraisal of the world (e.g., "America is under attack from terrorists and we have to defend our nation") and Joe's identity are one and the same thing. A person's appraisal of the social world and its significance is not just an expression of his or her identity, *it is* his or her identity. For example, when Joe says, "This is the kind of guy I am, I'm ready to die defending America against terrorists," we should not treat this statement as an expressed attitude separate from identity, but the direct positioning of identity.

The identity that is expressed at any one time depends on contextual characteristics and what aspects of identity a person interprets to be correct to highlight in a particular context. The identity presented can also serve to dialogue with those not in the immediate context, but nevertheless participating in the political dialogue in the wider society. For example, de Fina (2003) examined how immigrants express their identities through their narratives, and discovered that "when Mexican immigrants produce argumentative stories supporting the point that Hispanics are hard working . . . they are responding to, and establishing a dialogue not only with questions posed by me as an interviewer, but also with invisible interlocutors who produce discourses about undocumented immigrants circulating in society" (p. 221). Such dialogues are integral to the psychological social contracts worked out by individuals.

Thus, identities take shape through psychological social contracts that evolve within the macro context of national political cultures. In discussing the American political culture, Wilson (1997) has noted that "Political cultures embody psychological attributes through the homology of rights and obligations with the moral standards of individuals expressed by the ethics of care and autonomy. At a deeper structural level the character of the norms of a culture mirrors the modal structural level of the moral reasoning of the members of society" (pp. 488–489). This synchronous relationship between macro political culture and micro, individual-level thoughts and actions lead to the sustaining of the sociopolitical order and explain the rarity of revolutionary change (Moghaddam, 2002). This rarity of revolutionary change continues despite the enormous and growing group-based inequalities, such as in the United States where, "Between 1972 and 2001 the wage and salary income of Americans at the 90th percentile of income distribution rose . . . about 1 percent per year . . . But income at the 99th percentile rose 87

percent; income at the 99.9th percentile role 181 percent; and income at the 99.99th percentile rose 497 percent" (Krugman, 2006).

Concluding Comment

The social contract has been a central topic of debate among political philosophers since at least the eighteenth century, but I have argued that political psychologists should now spearhead a shift of focus from the logical to the psychological social contract. The logical social contract is in an important sense psychological, because it is founded on certain psychological assumptions about human beings: rationality and self-centeredness. As we have seen, both of these assumptions are questionable and should not be used as a basis of the psychological social contract. The cultural-narrative turn in research affords a new opportunity to develop more accurate ideas about how the psychological social contract is worked out and how the psychological citizen takes on particular characteristics in relation to the sociopolitical order. Central to these processes is identity formation, and particularly the link between identity and justice: the kinds of persons we see ourselves to be in relation to what is just and fair.

Adopting a Vygotskian perspective, we can track the dual nature of mental processes through examining how carriers, such as the Islamic veil and the United States flag, are incorporated in identities at the micro level. Such carriers help construct identities that serve to sustain the sociopolitical order, with its particular group-based inequalities. We come to see as "correct" and even "natural" certain social arrangements, even at the same time that alternative social arrangements of other cultures and other historical eras seem "odd" and even "unnatural."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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