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Psychological Limitations To Political Revolutions: An Application of Social Reducton Theory

(Plus ca change plus c'est la même chose)

Introduction

History is a many faceted temporal concept. It is dominated in its many applications by the fundamental temporal concept of change. That concept, in its turn, is logically complex, involving the concept pair 'same' / 'different'. This is a notoriously tricky dichotomy in that in every application some assumption as to the respects in which similarity judgments are made is involved. Kant pointed out that the concept of 'change' can be applied only in circumstances in which the concept of 'permanence' can also be applied. Noticing differences is insufficient as a condition for talking of 'change'. Those differences must be set against a background of something remaining the same. The notion of 'political revolution' offers itself as an ideal touchstone for our understanding of some of the dimensions of temporality that are implicated in the social sciences, and that are revealed in the brief analytical sketch above.

The very idea of 'social revolution' includes the idea of social difference. But that idea is equivocal, between differences in the macrostructure of social orders and differences in the patterns of everyday commonplace interactions among ordinary people, the customs and practices of the daily round. Revolutions are intended by their proponents and initiators to overleap the logical conditions on the use of the concept of change, enunciated by Kant, for they are intended to sweep away the whole of the social past, so that there is no sameness against which the revolution could be called a difference, and so a change. In the aftermath of a revolution all is supposed to be new. Instead of a dialogue between the past and the future, the revolutionary moment is meant to initiate a monologue in a wholly new idiom. Yet, when we look at revolutionary moments and their aftermath we seem to see more sameness than difference. We seem to see change rather than creation *ab initio*. Our argument and analysis is devoted to opening up ways in which this seeming paradox might be explained. A revolutionary needs to have had a sense of historical change, of difference, and thus of history, for without difference there is no history, only the anthropology of the present. But at the same time the designer revolutionary is aiming at the ending of the continuities that have made the differences visible. And yet that very revolutionary must also be aiming at bringing the sequence of differences to an end, since it is inevitably a centre tenet of revolutionary doctrine that this revolution will be the last.

The Paradox of Revolution

We start then from the observation that political revolutions rarely bring about fundamental changes in social behavior, and the changes they do bring about are achieved at a much slower rate than changes in political and economic systems. The same discrepancy is evident in Third World development, where social behavior patterns have been found to persist despite major and often speedy political and economic transformation. Our goal in

this paper is to build on previous discussions of differences in the rate of change in politico-economic and socio-psychological levels (Harré, 1993; Moghaddam, 1990), by introducing and applying social reduction theory.

The first proposition of this theory is that change at the political and economic levels is possible at a faster rate than change at the psychological level. We do not mean to imply that psychological change will always take place at a slower rate than change at the political and economic levels. There are cases where this obviously does not happen (for example, changes in everyday sexual behavior came about fairly quickly during the 1960s, so that changes in legal, religious, and political codes lagged behind). Rather, our focus is on the maximum speed of change possible at the different levels, and our contention is that this maximum speed is slower at the psychological level.

Second, psychological change is structured by *social reduction systems*, these being inter-connected networks of locally valid practices, implemented through implicit norms and related social skills that realize social relationships in particular domains. For example, "family relationships" are realized in a social reduction system that implements norms and employs skills relating to husband-wife relations. The political and economic structure of society may change radically and suddenly, without there being a parallel change in the social reduction system realizing husband-wife relations.

Third, social reduction systems are composed of inter-connected social reductions, each being an elementary practice, implementing a norm and requiring the exercise of a related skill that bears directly on a social relationship. An example is the unified pattern of practices implementing the norm "mothers are more responsible for child care than fathers," which may be resistant to change even when political and economic shifts have taken place at the macro level in society resulting in an equally active role for mothers and fathers in the world of work outside the home.

Fourth, social reduction systems are maintained by *carriers* that are embedded in culture and have an influence on individuals through childhood socialization. Such carriers include myths, stories, songs, poems, proverbs, local and national traditions, all forms of artistic expression (music, film, painting, photography) and discourse, as well as the arrangement of the built environment (architecture, urban planning, landscaping).

Through the carriers, social reduction systems come to reside in social interaction skills. We do *not* suppose that there are transcendental norms, which cause practices to display a common and repeated pattern. It is not norms that are transmitted but practices, in which there can be seen immanent norms. So attempting to change society by teaching new norms as explicit principles of conduct is a hopeless enterprise.

An implication of this theory is that social change is best achieved through schemes to influence social reduction systems, rather than by focusing on "motivation" and other psychological "causes" assumed to exist inside individuals. Thus, for example, the McClelland type view of social change is too limited, because it sees change as arising from a "need for achievement" that exists inside individuals. The personal characteristics that we believe are relevant to social change concern skills to identify, appropriate, and use social reduction systems toward achieving particular objectives. Such skills are *social* in the sense that they are embedded in the larger culture and are appropriated by individuals through socialization processes, in which it is practices rather than norms which are learned (Moghaddam & Harré, in press). It may seem as if norms are being taught because practices, necessarily subject to assessments of correctness, propriety etc., embody norms immanently.

Primary and Secondary Revolutions

As a first step in trying to find an explanation of the resistance of human psychology to change we can make an analytical distinction between two levels or degrees of revolution. In a primary revolution macrostructural changes are brought about by deliberate acts of policy making. Such policy making can involve dramatic changes in political systems, such as the abolition of monarchy and the establishment of an Islamic Republic in Iran in 1979; and also the transformation of ownership and decision-making in economic spheres, as in the dissolution of the aristocratic estates in the Russian revolution, the transfer of decision making in the investment of funds in industry from government committees to private owners in Thatcherite 'privatization' programs and so on.

It is easy to see in real cases that in fundamental respects revolutions at this level leave essentials of a social formation unchanged. However we need to account for the seemingly mysterious fact that the revolutionary society is in many major respects just like that it displaces. Stalin became a new Czar, Mao a new emperor, Napoleon a new Louis XIV. and so on. One macro-social process leading to the reproduction of the old social order in new guise is the phenomenon of 'mirroring'. In order to overcome the existing state apparatus the revolutionary movement must match it institution by institution. But it is in the persistence of small-scale informal practices that we observe the most resistance to change.

What are those stable fundamentals? They are the almost unattended practices of everyday life, forms of greeting, pronoun systems, ways of walking in the street, how pets are treated and children disciplined, how traffic is managed, and so on. Great revolutionaries have seen the importance of these practices to their project of redesigning human life. For example Saint Simon and Marat realized that their revolution would be deep only if such matters as forms of address, names of the days and months, which side of the road traffic moved, the daily practice of religion and so on could also be changed.

So we had 'Citizen' and 'Citizeness', traffic on the right or proletarian side of the track, months like 'Brumiere', and the rites of reason proclaimed by a topless goddess of rationality from the high altar of Notre Dame. Mao's second 'Red Guards revolution' was aimed at the same kind of deep changes in the seeming 'small change' of everyday life. For example people were not allowed to put their names to research papers, everyone was to wear identical clothes and so on.

Sometimes secondary revolutions succeed, more often they fail. Why have they so frequently failed when set about as deliberate acts of policy? Somewhere in the human form of life there must be some very stable and persistent reservoirs where such daily practices are maintained. We believe that two such reservoirs are detectable.

There are inbuilt patterns of human ethology, including perhaps a tendency to create hierarchies of respect and contempt, to express social relations in handshakes and kisses, together with some coarse grained gestures expressive of body states such as cries of pain, smiles of delight and frowns of puzzlement. Perhaps of greater importance are the social and 'administrative' practices of the closed, autonomous social worlds of childhood. These are very difficult to explore systematically, but when glimpses have been obtained of the culture of this strange tribe in our very midst it displays some very interesting and significant features.

One must not confuse research into childhood social worlds with developmental psychology. In that field there is a teleology of research since it is assumed that what children do are stages on the march towards some adult level of competence. This pattern domi-

nated Piaget's thinking and his research program. It was once the dominant pattern of theory and research in anthropology, particularly in the era dominated by Tylor and Frazer, the former severely criticized by Malinowski, the latter by Wittgenstein. We now realize that other cultures are not way stages on the route to Western Civilization. But this pattern of thought has persisted in developmental psychology.

However some researches have stepped back from received ideas to ask whether perhaps there is not an autonomous childhood culture, which is not a way stage on the path to somewhere else, but exists in its own right. The classic work in this framework of thought is that of Opie and Opie (1972). They have revealed some remarkable phenomena. Children, within their own self-reproducing worlds, have practices for the management of the ownership of property by the performance of ritual formulae, of the formal sealing and breaking of friendships, of the management of games, of the control of proper and improper personality displays through the use of nicknames (Morgan, O'Neill and Harré, 1977) and so on. The Opies found that many of these practices have persisted unchanged for hundreds of years. For example English children and children in the 'old Dominions' still use Norman French words for gaining sanctuary ('fainights'), for the acts of games of marbles and so on. The language from which these words were taken ceased to be the mother tongue of the upper classes of the inhabitants of England about five hundred years ago.

No wonder neither Robespierre nor Mao could achieve permanent changes in the minutiae of everyday life. It is reasonable to assume that French and Chinese children teach each other the rituals and conventions of autonomous forms of life just as much as do English children. We know little about these since in neither culture has there been research on the massive scale as that conducted by Ilona and Peter Opie. Amongst the elementary practices of these childhood worlds we should be able to detect stable and persistent reductons.

However some revolutions have succeeded, though they have rarely if ever been the result of deliberate planning. For example the spread of television viewing and the proliferation of cars in the 'developed' countries have led to deeply different ways of life, in particular through the decay of much of the everyday practices and ways of urban life. Innovations of this sort have transformed everyday social relations. Just consider the novel and now permanent reductons that have grown up around the use of electronic communication technologies. We think, however, that the major transformation in these elementary practices took place when the telephone superseded the letter as the main means of informal communication. Faxes and information networks are based on reductons that are still drawn from the age of pen and ink. The novel conventions of writing in use in the networks can be seen as minor transformations of an existing code. However television and the car have wrought more radical changes in our repertoires of reductons. For example travellers by horse or by carriage could readily talk to one another as they went along. But the car was a communication prison. Now, with car phones and CBs we are returning to the pre-automotive days. It would be interesting to carry out a historical study of the similarities and differences of the communication reductons upon which horsemen organized their talk and those that reign in the cell-nets.

In some contemporary revolutions we must ask who is the more susceptible to change, the revolutionaries or the reductons they inherit from the previous regime? In the case of the Iranian revolution, the mullahs have changed more than any other social group. How, we might ask, could that have been possible since surely the point of the revolution was to establish an Islamic Republic through the instrumentality of the local religious leaders?

By seizing control of the TV and other mass media the mullahs have themselves been seized. To use these implements of public opinion one must adopt the reductons which make them possible. These media were regarded as sinful before the revolution. It seems now that this objection was not so much against the technology as such as against its content, though it was presented by some in Luddite terms, that is as if the technical means of information dissemination had been themselves sinful. In a deep sense the Iranian revolution has failed to bring about fundamental changes because the new rulers are enmeshed in the very same daily practices as are the old. The secondary revolution has also failed.

The very fact that the new rulers of Iran live and work in the same built environment (the same ministry buildings, parliaments, palaces) and largely the same bureaucratic/organizational environment (the same hierarchical structure in organizations) as inhabited by those they replaced, leads to continuity in authority relations. In this sense, the built environment and the hierarchical structures of organizations function as “carriers” of social reducton systems. This is far from being a novel idea, since a number of Islamic revolutionaries in Iran recognized the continuity created by their architectural and organizational surroundings and attempted to break out of the “traditional” mould to no avail and at considerable personal risk.

The Paradox of Revolutions

We can now formulate the paradoxes of the primary and secondary revolutions. Primary revolutions, those intended to transform the large or macrostructures of a society, necessarily fail, since in order to overcome the existing society they must match each of its major instruments. For every White Army there must be a Red Army, for every Cheka a KGB and so on. We shall call this the paradox of ‘mirroring’. But primary revolutions must fail in another way, a way we have been bringing to light in this section. Stable reductons persisting in the small change of everyday life frustrate or nullify the intent of the primary revolution. But because of the necessity of mirroring and the rooting of most reductons in the impenetrable practices of childhood, there can never really be a genuine secondary revolution. In short ‘designer revolutions’ are impossible.

We turn now to a close examination of one of the most recent attempts to manage a secondary revolution, the Iranian revolution.

What are Reductons?

We have so far introduced the concept of a reducton quite informally, as the minimal unit into which a social practice can be analyzed such that that unit is still a social practice. One reason for preferring this way of treating social psychology is that it helps us to retain an essentially dynamic treatment of social activity. It insulates us to some extent from the prevailing tendency to abstract static ‘entities’, such as ‘attitudes’, ‘attributions’, or ‘personalities’ as the topic of investigation. Our focus is on *practices*. Let us now try to make the notion of ‘reducton’, the elementary unit of social analysis, more concrete. Among the species of this analytical genus are Wittgenstein’s ‘language-games’, patterns of skilled action in which words play an indispensable part. For example the procedure by which a judge passes sentence is a language-game, a judicial reducton. It is an elementary practice, which, together with many other elementary practices, constitutes the judicial form of life.

There are two research dimensions with respect to these elementary units. Along one their role, placing, creation and extinction and so on can be studied. Along another their internal structure, the conventions for correct and incorrect performance, those that Austin (1962) called the 'felicity conditions', can be investigated. A reducton extracted from the autonomous world of childhood would be the practice by which ownership is achieved. Children do not accept the principle that possession goes to the strongest or most aggressive. Ownership is achieved by verbal rituals, each of which is a social reducton. Among English children the one who first manages to say 'Bags I' gets undisputed rights of ownership over the object in question. Ownership by ritual utterance or writing of verbal formulae is as much part of adult life as of childhood. We believe that it is the childhood reducton that, persisting into adulthood, shapes the adult practices and endows them with authority. To understand what an elementary social practice might be we need to link up this idea with two further ideas, the idea of a procedure and the act-action distinction.

We shall take it that all social practices are in a general sense 'procedures', that is they are performed for some purpose or other. Their performance brings something about, facilitates something, or serves to transform the *status quo* in some acceptable manner. This need not imply that in every case in which someone is involved in carrying out a procedure they have in mind the purpose for which that procedure is effective. Actions can be intentional without the actor having a conscious intention 'before the mind'. Social procedures can range from the very formal to the quite casual. Typical of formal social procedures are those ceremonies through which social changes are brought about in some official or bureaucratic way, such as judicial proceedings. Typical of casual procedures are the ways that people manage passage through some confined space without pushing and shoving in an "unacceptable" way and with the preservation of a degree of sociality.

Every reducton is a procedure. But more of the inner nature of reductons can be extracted by a closer analysis of particular instances. Every procedure, be it elementary or complex, consists of the performance of a sequence of actions, publicly observable activities, that are taken to be done intentionally by the actor. Shaking someone's hand is an action. Signing a document is an action. Saying a ritual formula is an action. However it is a commonplace of social psychology that the same action, considered with respect to its physically observable properties, may be the performance of one of several acts, depending on the context of its performance, the status of the actor who does it, and of the people to whom it is directed. Shaking hands can be an act of congratulation, an act of greeting, an act of sealing a contract, a formal beginning to a match and so on. Every reducton will consist of one or more actions, but the performance of these actions will achieve just one act. How acts are to be individuated and identified is a large topic and cannot be entered into here. (C.f. Harré, 1993). For our purposes we need only note that reductons are intentional procedures, comprising actions through the performance of which elementary acts are accomplished.

Finally it is perhaps worth pointing out that reductons are, in the terminology of Wittgenstein (1953), elementary language-games, some loosely bounded cluster of which go to make up a form of life. Further developments of the idea of a reducton and their place in the dynamics of social activity could be based on developing the Wittgenstein connection further. How do the reductons that constitute the basic elements of social activity exist? In general they must be maintained as dispositions to action, that continue to exist when they are not being exercised. Clearly they could not exist as dispositions grounded only in biology. One natural way of accounting for such dispositions is in terms of actors' knowledge of systems of rules. We must be careful in using this notion though, since it is also clear that in most cases people produce

reductons without conscious thought. Rarely do they do so by consulting a rule-book (say a manual of etiquette or a set of rules that they remember, and then act in accordance with the rule). 'Rule' is a concept that we, as social observers, social instructors or social critics may employ to express, in succinct form, our intuitions as to the norms that are immanent in the actions that are performed and the acts that are accomplished in this or that context. Sometimes reductons are grounded not so much in individual social knowledge and habits but in the complex ways that the social habits of a group of people can encapsulate a set of rules, though no one individual could say what they are. The concept of a 'set of rules' is, however, indispensable to the social psychological project of making the foundations of social action explicit.

Islamic Iran: An Attempt to Control Social Reductons

The revolution of 1978–79 eventually brought to power an Islamic regime intent on transforming Iranian society and bringing about an "Islamic culture." In order to achieve this goal, the Islamic government of Iran has in particular focused on social relations in everyday life. The objective has been nothing less than a major shift in social reducton systems, particularly those pertaining to gender relations and power hierarchies.

Whereas revolutionaries in many other societies have had to invent new normative systems, the revolutionaries in Iran already had available an Islamic platform from which to launch their campaign, a well-articulated set of rules of conduct going back to the era of Mohammed himself. As such, this Islamic platform was well known to the vast majority of the population, although since the 1960s, Westernization had made it far less visible. But the revolutionaries in Iran did not just attempt to "turn back the clock" in Iran, because the Islamic society they attempted to create was in many ways new.

A major advantage enjoyed by revolutionaries in Iran is that Islam may be interpreted not only as a religion, but also as an all-pervasive set of ordinances, one that regulates even the tiniest details of everyday interactions. In short, it includes a set of social reductons, intended to be definitive of a form of life. An indication of this is that ayatollahs who gain a wide enough following write what might be described as etiquette books on "correct conduct" for the guidance of their followers. Such books typically go into considerable detail about micro-social interactions of daily life, even covering the details of how one should wash oneself and greet other people. In addition, Islam can be interpreted as encouraging the faithful to act out their faith in social/public ways, rather than in individual/private manners. For example, the faithful are encouraged to pray in public and in a group, rather than alone and in private. This emphasis on the "public" is characteristic of the new Islam of the ayatollahs. Here are a number of specific ways in which the revolutionaries attempted to bring about change in everyday social relations.

Name and Title Changes

All names and titles that were related to the previous regimes, or to non-Islamic political movements before and after the revolution, or to "nationalism" rather than Islam, were changed and brought in line with the new regime. For example, the name of a major road in Teheran was first changed from Pahlevi (the Shah's family name) to Mossaddegh (the name of a nationalist prime minister who ousted the Shah in 1961), and then finally to an Islamic name. The name of the National University was changed to "Shaheed Beheshti" (an Islamic revolutionary) University.

The names of shops and all public and private businesses were changed, to make them Islamic. For example, boutiques with names like “La Mode” had to find suitable Islamic names.

During the 1960s and 1970s, it had become popular for Iranian children to be given Western names. After the revolution, they had to be given Islamic names.

Anyone who already had a name that was offensive to the revolutionaries was obliged to adopt a new name. For example, family names such as “Shahdoost” (“Shah lover”) quickly changed. Instead, family names such as “Islami” (Islamic) sprung up.

Also dropped were titles that referred to the royal court in any way, of either the Pahlavi regime or the previous Ghajar regime.

The revolutionaries attempted to make mandatory the use of the terms “brother” and “sister” for communications in both public and private domains. Here we see the intentional character of reductions and their act-action structure very clearly exposed, at least in the reforming schemes of the revolutionaries. But, in the nature of social reductions, while the actions can change, the acts they perform may be quite unaltered.

Constancy Within Change

These name changes did not alter relationships in a fundamental way, because the key power difference between those who enjoyed power and those who had little power was maintained. And this sealed the fate of the primary revolution. Now, those with Islamic titles enjoyed more power: The Ayatollahs had displaced the royal court officials, the leaders of the Islamic Guards had replaced the army generals. This illustrates the “mirror” thesis – the revolutionary regime will create structures that mirror the regime deposed, but will give them different names. This is reflected in the persistence of basic social reductions. Acts of condescension and deference will be accomplished still but achieved by the use of different titles. There can be no secondary revolution.

The “mirror” effect comes about through social reductions, which in this case embody norms and realize related skills concerning how one should behave toward authority figures that define acceptable social *acts*. Consider, for example, the concepts of “service” (“*khedmat*” in Farsi) and “allegiance” (“*vafadaari*” in Farsi), which are both important in relations with authority figures. By providing services to an authority figure and expressing allegiance to this person, one can be taken under his wing. The services provided may include material gifts, as well as paying homage and becoming part of the authority figure’s “entourage” – thus adding to his status. For example, accompanying the authority figure on ceremonial trips, and paying one’s respect by calling on the authority figure on certain special days (such as a birthday of a prophet).

Both before and after the revolution jobs have routinely been gained through the influence of authority figures. Although the criteria for becoming an authority figure have changed, the relation between an authority figure and others has not changed. This explains the “one change, all change” feature of life in Iran (and in some other societies). Since jobs are attained mainly through allegiance to an authority figure, rather than through meritocratic procedures, as soon as the “top person” changes, the protective umbrella is taken away and there is a sudden change in “personnel” (in this sense, Iran is more like the USA than Europe). “Patronage” is widespread, with each authority figure having a large array of resources to be divided up between “followers.”

The essential point is that “relations” between authority figures and the general population have remained fairly stable, with the revolution making no significant impact. Why is

this? Our explanation that because the hierarchy-engendering social reductions have persisted unchanged.

Gender Relations

Most Westerners have an idea that women in post-revolution Iran are required to cover themselves in public, but they have little notion that this is only a small part of a much larger change that is being attempted in the broad domain of gender relations.

First, it is important to keep in mind that "hejab", the term popularly used to refer to the veil used by women, refers to much more than outer garments. Both men and women are required to dress in a way that covers their body fairly completely, and in the ideal modesty of dress should be matched by modesty in behavior and thought. Also, "hejab" is not supposed to be restricted to the public domain. The most tiny details of family and private life are regulated by a demand to maintain "hejab". For example, in the home, a young woman should maintain hejab when interacting with the males of her family, including brothers. Only her husband is exempt.

Women are not allowed to wear any kind of cosmetics or perfumes in public, but they can ornament themselves in any way they want when they are alone with their husbands.

The revolutionaries attempted to bring into effect a number of rules concerning more fine-grain interactions between the sexes to implement precisely defined practices as basic reductions. When men and women meet, they must not shake hands or touch each other in any other way. Direct eye contact must be avoided, as must laughing out aloud and making other noises that could be sexually arousing. Modesty must be maintained in movement, also, so that a person who walks in a "sexy way" would be reprimanded. The actions of the gender reductions have been successfully changed. But have the acts? Do the new actions perhaps accomplish the same acts? It is clear that they do in at least some domains, because interpersonal attractiveness can be achieved even when outwardly "hejab" is maintained fully.

As far as possible, the sexes have been segregated in both public and private space. For example, in schools and universities, males and females are separated in class rooms. In sporting events, they are not allowed to watch the opposite sex compete. Women singers are not shown on TV. In mosques, there are separate sections for males and females. Even in private family gatherings in homes, males and females should be separated. This includes wedding parties and other celebrations.

Re-evaluating Changes in Gender Relations

Did these changes in the rules governing male/female relations change anything fundamental? Yes, in so far as women have a revised and in important respects a more limited role in the public domain – in education and work settings particularly. Also, the type of women who could be active in the public domain changed after the revolution: "Islamic" women supported by "Islamic" men could be active. But this points to a subtle constancy in the situation: both before and after the revolution, women needed the support of men to be active in public life.

The loss of prestige and power in the public domain did influence private life, also. For example, the greater power of men meant that they could divorce women more easily, and also marry a second (or even a third or fourth wife). However, as a general rule, gender-

relations have not altered drastically in the private domain, as yet. The acts have not been radically transformed up to this point.

How are we to interpret changes in gender relations in Iran after the revolution? There certainly have been changes in the public domain, but what do these changes signify? Our interpretation is that these changes should be considered in the context of the longer history of events in Iran. The historical relationship between males and females was entrenched when Reza Pahlevi, the last Shah's father, attempted to change them through political and economic reforms. After seizing power in 1921 and being crowned in 1926, he decreed Western style dress for men in 1929 and for women in 1936. The change in dress code for women was by far the most dramatic and the "forced unveiling" of Iranian women met with considerable resistance. Further political and economic transformations took place during the reign of the last Shah, and these did alter the status of women in the public domain. Women enjoyed more Western style freedom, and made progress in education and work sectors. However, these "revolutions" were resisted by social reductons embedded in the traditional culture.

Perhaps nothing symbolizes the stability of gender roles and authority relations before and after the revolution as well as the issue of "hejab". Whereas Reza Pahlevi had attempted to forcibly unveil women and to put both men and women in Western clothing, the Islamic revolutionaries forced women to return to the veil and to force men to at least symbolically move away from Western style dress. For example, men are not allowed to wear neck ties or bow-ties. Although on the surface gender and authority relations seem to have changed, at a deeper level they are stable: men in authority decide correct behavior for both the majority of men and women.

Concluding Comments

A close examination of ideas emanating from insightful revolutionaries reveal that what we have put forward in this paper is not new. Others before us have distinguished between revolutions at different levels, and highlighted the importance of initiating change of the almost unnoticed practices that go to make up the micro level of social relations, rather than just bringing about new structures and relations at the macro level. For example, Islamic revolutionaries have distinguished between "Jahad Askar" and "Jahad Akbar", referring respectively to a revolution that is "public", but of lesser significance, compare to the latter which is "personal" but "greater". It is acknowledged that the public revolution is more easy to achieve than the "private", but the latter is of far greater significance because it involves the transformation of personal values and life-style at the micro level.

What we are advocating is also in line with the discoveries of fine-grain anthropological studies of societies experiencing political revolutions. For example, in her detailed study of social relationships in China, Mayfair Mei-hui Yang (1994) has identified the fundamental importance of *guanxixue* in continuities in social relations in Chinese society. *Guanxixue* involves "the exchange of gifts, favors, and banquets; the cultivation of personal relationships and networks of mutual dependence; and the manufacture of obligation and indebtedness" (Yang, 1994, p. 6). Through these social practices, Chinese people can cut through official lines of authority and achieve their goals, whether it be buying a new bicycle or getting hold of a needed vaccine, via personal relationships. Obviously, *guanxixue* gives priority to personal rights and responsibilities, rather than those recognized for the collectivity by the state.

Attempts were made to end *guanxixue* during the years of the cultural revolution in China, so that the slogan of the time became: "Do nothing to benefit yourself; devote yourself to benefiting others."

However, the practice of *guanxixue* survived, and Yang (1994) reported that "... the popular saying that people in the 1980s were more likely to subscribe to is this: When people do not look out for themselves, heaven will expel and earth will destroy them" (p. 57).

Why is it that the Maoist revolution failed to eradicate social practices, such as *guanxixue*, that strengthened individualism and the "self help" ethic associated with free-market economies? Part of the answer may be in the perpetuation of social reduction systems that allowed Mao to enjoy absolute authority in the first place. At the heart of such reduction systems are everyday social practices that reinforce traditional authority relations. A final example from Yang (1994) will suffice to illustrate this point. Describing everyday events at the height of the Maoist "revolution", she reports:

"Each morning in every home, family members would wake up and go to the portrait of Chairman Mao. They would each bow three times and tell the Chairman what efforts they would make for the Revolution that day. Then each night before they went to bed, they would again bow to the Chairman and report on their accomplishments or failures for the day and their resolutions for the next day" (p.250).

It is not difficult to see parallels between the relations people had with "Chairman Mao" and those they had previously had with the "Emperor gods" of China. Such parallels continue through micro-level social practices, and are not just abstract ideologies "in individual minds."

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