

On Consent to Social Contracts

The story goes that a very young wife was asked by her husband why she always cut the tail off the turkey before cooking it. Her reply was “that’s how my mother did it.” No further explanation was given. Some time later the wife asked her mother why. Her mother’s reply was “because the pan wasn’t big enough.”

While anecdotal, this story goes far to explain the “just because that is how it’s done” society we live in. We live in a social contract supposedly created by the Constitution just because our parents, and their parents, and so on did. There’s just one sticky point: the “consent of the governed” line in the Declaration of Independence. When did I consent to this contract?

The proponents of this arrangement have given many examples of consent: taxes, voting, being born. The problem is that all of these examples are ones of implied consent. No contract is valid to states that a uninvolved third party has implied to consent to the contract and therefore must abide the rules. It would never hold up in court.

Going back to the story, it is assumed that the wife stopped cutting off the tail of the bird because there was no point to it with her larger pan.

Now that we know that we have not consented to the “social contract” we live under, what are we going to do?

~ Eric