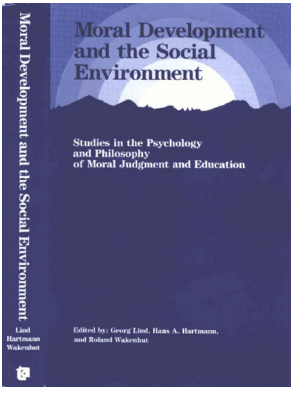

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The Theory of Moral-Cognitive Development
A Socio-Psychological Assessment

Georg Lind

For some decades in psychology, morality has been understood either as the individual's behavior evaluated on the basis of given socio-moral norms, or as any behavior which is determined by morally good motives and affects. Behavioristic psychology has focused primarily on the question of whether individuals comply with given rules of conduct, whereas affect psychology has regarded this behavior as determined exclusively by inner dispositions, that is, by motives, drives, or the like, which in their turn have been traced to a wide array of causes, including human genes, nursing behavior, and environmental pressures. Accordingly, intervention strategies for education and therapy treatments have been designed, in the first case, to weaken conditioned links between stimuli and socially disapproved responses, or, in the second case, to lessen "negative" affects (hate, envy, aggression) and to strengthen "positive" affects (love, justice, guilt, shame).

Both the behavioristic and the affect perspectives on moral behavior have recently been challenged by the cognitive-developmental approach, which postulates that moral behavior cannot be truly understood unless we also examine the cognitive-structural aspect of human behavior. This approach does not lose sight of the fact that human behavior is continually evaluated on the grounds of socio-moral rules, norms, laws, etc., nor does it deny that affective components are involved in every human behavior. But it points out that moral behavior also depends on the individual's ability to see the moral implications of a situation and to organize and consistently apply moral rules and principles to concrete situations. Concrete situations usually imply more than one rule to be observed, and these multiple demands are likely to conflict with one another. Moreover, social evaluations of a person's behavior may deviate considerably from each other and may themselves have to be critically evaluated on ethical grounds. To cope with such situations

the individual must be endowed not only with moral affects but also with *moral judgment competence,* that is, with the ability for reflective thinking and rational discourse. Hence, psychological intervention must also–or even primarily–be concerned with the cognitive aspects of moral behavior as well as with the instilling of moral affects.

Cognitive-developmental extensions of these once important models of moral conduct have been suggested by a number of psychologists since the turn of the century, e.g., by Levy-Suhl (1912), Moers (1930), Hetzer (1931), and Piaget (1977/1932). Piaget was one of the first to develop systematically a theory of moral-cognitive development. His research concentrated on children's development of autonomous moral judgment in the ages 5 to 12, particularly in regard to rules of children's games. More than twenty years later, Kohlberg took up and considerably furthered this approach to the study of morality. On the basis of longitudinal research of adolescents' and young adults' moral judgment, he suggested an elaborate set of hypotheses about the nature and course of moral-cognitive development (for instance, see Kohlberg, 1958, 1969, 1979, 1984). Especially through Kohlberg's work, the cognitive-developmental theory of moral judgment has attracted much attention from academics as well as from practitioners. In the field of psychology it has stimulated an immense amount of empirical research, not only in the United States and Canada but, since the seventies, also in Europe, particularly in Great Britain (cf. Weinreich-Haste & Locke, 1983) and in West Germany and Switzerland (for example, cf. Döbert & Nunner-Winkler, 1975; Habermas, 1976a; Portele, 1978; Bertram, 1978; Lind, 1978a; Eckensberger, 1983; Oser, 1984).

In this essay I shall discuss the concepts and assumptions of cognitive-developmental theory as it has been formulated by Kohlberg, and, on the basis of my own research, suggest some modifications and extensions to improve the consistency, the scope, and the empirical validity of the theory. Above all, I shall offer two suggestions: first, that "structural wholeness" is a methodological criterion and not an empirical hypothesis, and second, that Kohlberg's stage model is truly supplementary to Piaget's phases from heteronomy to autonomy and is not a substitute for them. Finally, I shall discuss some implications of cognitive-developmental theory for the relation of individual moral development to the social environment, concerning, for instance, the concept of interaction of person and social environment, the relation of individual moral judgment competence and social position, and the role of selection mechanisms in socio-moral development.

FROM "EXTERNAL EFFECT" TO "INTERNAL STRUCTURE"

Although the study of moral behavior has a long tradition, there is still much debate about its concepts and its methods. Psychological studies of moral behavior were already part of the "empirical study of the soul" *(Erfahrungsseelenkunde)* of the 18th century and the flourishing of "moral statistics" in the 19th century (Laplace, Quetelet, Dufau, Drobisch). As early as the first half of this century, a number of psychological experiments were made concerning the conditions for and the development of morality (surveyed in Neumann, 1931; Pittel & Mendelsohn, 1966).

Many of these studies made a careful differentiation between physical behavior considered merely as localized in space and time, social behavior that is evaluated in regard to external standards, and moral behavior considered as possessing socio-psychological meaning. However, in most of these studies a "behavioristic" point of view prevailed. In these studies–more often in their research methods than in their theoretical premises–the social-evaluative and psychological-cognitive aspects of moral behavior were excluded from consideration. This research perspective is well represented by the studies by Hartshorne, May, and their collaborators under the supervision of the learning theorist Thorndike. As do many of their heirs, Hartshorne and May (1928-30) assessed moral behavior as a physical phenomenon without reference to socio-psychological categories. They argued that

> No progress can be made . . . unless the overt act can be observed and, if possible, measured *without* reference, for the moment, to its motives or its rightness or wrongness. (p. 10, italics added)

The rationale behind this "pragmatic orientation" (Burton, 1978) was that psychology could acquire a scientific reputation only if it focused its research on purely methodological considerations. Measurement should be as "objective" and free of "subjective" elements as it is, for example, in physics, and this could be achieved only if a physical conceptualization of behavior was adopted. However, this *physicalistic behaviorism* confused concept with methods: to use the words of Adorno (1980, p. 84), it turned the objectivity of the behavioral concept into the subjectivity of the research method. In attempting to avoid value judgments, psychologists actually stripped behavior of any socio-psychological meaning. In impinging

upon the measurement of the physical aspects of behavior, it failed to assess what it intended to study. The morality or immorality of human acts cannot be adequately described without recourse to socio-psychological properties of behavior, that is, external social norms or individual motives and thoughts. *Moral actions*, as Blasi (1983) explains, "are responses to situations, as defined by and interpreted according to moral reasoning structures, that is, to a set of criteria determining the morally good" (p. 196).[1]

Although today there seems to be little disagreement over the fact that any research concerning moral behavior needs to take reasoning structures or moral criteria into account, the question remains as to which ones we should choose "to determine the morally good." Basically, there are two perspectives of research: one, already mentioned, conceives of moral behavior almost exclusively from the social-evaluative perspective, and the other does so from the point of view of the individual's motives. Allport (1961) has aptly labeled these two perspectives the *external effect approach* and the *internal structure approach*, respectively.

The external effect approach categorizes an individual's behavior according to socially given norms, laws, or regulations. This implies that behavior is categorized according to traits which are common to all individuals of a group or sample of persons (*common trait* approach). Though often the rationale of the measurement process is not made explicit but is hidden behind the implicit assumptions of the research method, in this approach behavior is judged according to whether it conforms to, or deviates from, social norms and expectations, that is, whether social rules and laws are transgressed or obeyed. In a typical research design the psychologist assesses a subject's behavior according to external social categories like deceiving/not deceiving, stealing/not stealing, killing/not killing. Pittel and Mendelsohn (1966) have shown in their review of half a century of psychological research on moral behavior that most methods of assessing moral behavior are indeed based

> on normative or other evaluative standards of "correctness" determined by societally defined criteria. Thus, responses in agreement with norms established by the investigators are scored as moral, while those not in agreement lower the overall measure of strength of moral attitude or conscience . . . Even when scoring criteria are not explicitly linked to normative or societal standards, subjective scoring procedures and ratings . . . frequently rely on the same sort of external standards of evaluation. (p. 33)

The external effect approach to moral psychology can be criticized on several accounts. But, as Pittel and Mendelsohn (1966) noted, "perhaps the greatest single shortcoming underlying each of the specific criticisms discussed is the failure to view evaluative attitudes as subjective phenomena whose measurement is best achieved independently of a concern with the relationship of those attitudes to conventional and normative standards of moral valuation" (p. 34).[2] Because it is confined to the tacit evaluation of behavior according to the socially given norms, the external effect approach fails to assess the cognitive and affective aspects of individual behavior. When studying moral behavior from an external point of view, one must assume that the system of norms is monolithic, and that these norms have an immediate effect upon behavior, that is, that there is no need to assume mediating processes on the side of the individual. This view overlooks the fact that only when the individual accepts moral principles and orients his behavior to them do these principles become *actual.* Therefore, we may dismiss the external effect point of view as too narrow.

In opposition to the prevailing view, Allport (1961) has already demanded that psychological analysis of the individual personality should focus on the *internal structure* of human behavior. Similarly, Pittel and Mendelsohn (1966) have called for a change in the approach to moral behavior; for them "it is important to assess at an individual level the content, strength, and patterning of the subjective attitude of evaluation *per se*" (p. 34). Modern psychology seems to be ready for a psychological interpretation of the term "behavior," which "includes much of that which in other places is designated as thoughts, feelings, or ideas" (Cohen, 1984, p. 3).

It seems that the cognitive-developmental theory of human behavior has indeed succeeded in working out a research program on the basis of the internal structure point of view. The change in the research paradigm is marked by the change of terms from "moral behavior" to "moral judgment" or "moral judgment competence." But the concept of behavior or performance has not been completely abandoned because, as Habermas (in this volume) has succinctly noted, "competence by itself cannot be shown to exist except in its concrete manifestation, that is, through phenomena of performance." As an empirical science psychology is closely linked to the observation of behavior, because every empirical hypothesis concerning the content, structure, and development of moral reasoning must be verifiable or falsifiable by referring to a manifest pattern of judgment behavior (cf. Kohlberg, 1979). Nevertheless, we

usually prefer to speak of "moral judgment" rather than "moral behavior" because the reference of the former term is more obviously restricted to behavior that can be related to the individual's own moral categories.

The differences in outcomes of the external effect and the internal structure points of view are marked if one considers, for example, the moral behavior of children. Children are often seen as lacking morality. But this is true only if morality is defined with regard to the norms of adults. For example, it is true that "honest" behavior becomes more frequent as children grow older, as does "dishonest" behavior in some children (Hartshorne et al., 1928-30; Block, 1977, p. 40). However, if one considers the reasons for behavior beyond particular social norms and the point to which the cognitive aspect of moral behavior has developed, it becomes clear that even in young children behavior is consistently organized according to rules, although these may be individual rules, that is, widely varying and not socially approved. Moreover, moral behavior becomes not only more consistent and integrated with age but also more differentiated. Thus a child who has attained significant autonomy regarding the moral principle "Thou shalt not lie!" will no longer judge a violation of this rule as always wrong. Rather, the child will also consider the circumstances, in consequence judging, "It depends." For example, children who at first consider lying to be generally prohibited later consider it to be all right if they can keep a friend out of trouble by lying (Bull, 1969, p. 210). Similarly, in the course of the child's cognitive-moral development, the rule of "returning like for like" is differentiated by the idea of mitigating circumstances (Piaget, 1977, pp. 321ff.). To the casual observer, those cases may appear to be morally regressive, whereas a cognitive-developmental psychologist would recognize in them progress in the child's development.

The fact that the terms "moral behavior" and "moral judgment" often indicate two fundamentally different ways of viewing morality in psychology rather than two different types of human behavior renders the study of their interrelation particularly difficult (Blasi, 1980; Eckensberger, 1983; Kohlberg & Candee, 1984). This has been aptly pointed out by Don Locke (1983a, 1983b, 1983c), who described the basic difference between the external and the internal approaches as the choice between an "evaluative" and a "neutral" definition of moral action: "We can either define moral action with reference to our own attitudes about what is right or wrong, good or bad . . . ; or we can define it by reference to the attitudes and beliefs

of the agent" (1983a, pp. 112-113). He convincingly demonstrates that the evaluative definition of morality cannot provide a satisfactory basis for psychological research (nor for educational practice). Therefore, he proposes "to work towards a neutral definition, always bearing in mind that moral action in this sense will not necessarily be action that we would ourselves regard as good or bad, right or wrong" (p. 113).

Thus, if we want to understand the individual, two extremes must be avoided: that of defining personality structure solely from the "outside," and, at the other extreme, giving a purely idiosyncratic definition in which people are considered totally unique and therefore ineligible for comparison. People are bound to society, without which they would become "total abstractions" (Adorno, 1980, p. 197). However, they are also capable of assuming responsibility and exercising critical judgment on the basis of moral principles. We may therefore assume that, beyond the particular characteristics demanded by the situation, there are general personality characteristics on the basis of which people can be meaningfully compared without restriction to conventions. In this interactionist conception, "personality" is neither a purely external nor a purely internal category; rather it is that which is characteristic of the *relationship* between the individual and the social environment (see below). This relationship is twofold. On the one hand, moral behavior presupposes a cognitive structure: moral principles, norms, and values have to be balanced off against each other and in light of the specific circumstances of a decision situation. On the other hand, competence in moral judgment, that is, the ability to integrate and differentiate moral principles and apply them to everyday decisions, has a developmental character and so must be placed in reference to the individual's life experience (ontogenesis) and to the state of the socially developed strategies for solving problems (phylogenesis).[3]

ASSESSMENT OF THE THEORY

There is no theory of morality, moral behavior, and moral development that is fully elaborated and empirically proven. As Lakatos (1978) has shown, there can be only preliminary theories which are subject to alteration and error. Nevertheless, we can identify and deal in a critically constructive manner with a number of core concepts and assumptions, which have been empirically well supported and which we may provisionally call the *theory of moral-cognitive development.* This theory arose out of the tradition of Kant,

Baldwin, Janet, and Dewey, and has been elaborated upon extensively by Piaget and expanded and repeatedly varied by Kohlberg, on the basis of numerous creative as well as critical studies.[4]

Although like Kohlberg we will use the terms "theory" and "approach" interchangeably, we prefer to speak of an approach rather than a theory to make clear that our concern is not only with empirical hypotheses but also with the conceptual framework which provides the "positive heuristics" (Lakatos). The concepts and the hypotheses of any theory have to be analyzed in different ways and must not be confused. Concepts provide the basis for measurement and empirical testing, but they cannot themselves be empirically tested in a meaningful manner. Thus concepts may be assessed as to their usefulness in enlarging our intellectual capacity and discovering new facts and in regard to their internal consistency and absence of contradictions. Hypotheses in which these concepts are used to make statements about (causal) relations in the empirical world can be analyzed in two ways. First, they can be assessed with respect to their *information content* or *Gehalt*, that is, the degree of their unforeseeability and a priori unlikeliness (cf. Popper, 1968; Lind, 1978b, 1985d). As we shall see below, hypotheses with high a priori probability are–even if empirically true–of little theoretical and practical interest because they are likely to be supported by chance, and provide no information which deserves to be empirically tested and conserved in a scientific theory. Second, informative hypotheses can be assessed in regard to their empirical validity. Critics as well as defenders of cognitive-developmental theory have not always been aware of this distinction, a fact which has caused some confusion in the recent discussion about the value of this theory (cf. Kohlberg, 1976; Phillips & Nicolayev, 1978; Lapsley & Serlin, 1984).

In this presentation we want first of all to examine the central concepts and schema of cognitive-developmental theory and then to consider the extent to which the fundamental hypotheses of this approach have proven to be empirically valid–or may have to be treated as concepts which cannot be empirically tested. In particular, we want to make four points. The first is that, as has already been indicated above, the cognitive-developmental theory has provided very useful concepts for the study of moral behavior and thus has enabled us to make new discoveries in the field of moral psychology. The second point is that, in comparison to other psychological approaches, the empirical hypotheses (e.g., about the invariant sequence of moral-cognitive development, preference order of moral stage-types, and moral-cognitive parallelism) are both highly infor-

mative and well supported by empirical data. The third point is that the central concept of structural wholeness should not be construed as implying empirical predictions, but should be set up as the criterion against which the theoretical validity of the measurement of moral competence can be evaluated. Our fourth, and perhaps most important, point is that Kohlberg's stage schema of moral development does not include and replace that of Piaget, but rather succeeds in supplementing and extending it in regard to the social dimension of individual development.[5]

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: STRUCTURES AND STAGES

In cognitive-developmental theory, the cognitive-structural aspect of moral judgment and the stage scheme of moral development assume the position of core concepts. Sometimes they have been treated as empirical hypotheses which they certainly are not. Although their meaning has not yet been completely clarified, these concepts obviously cannot be dismissed without giving up the cognitive-developmental approach altogether. When we discuss them, we must keep in mind the fact that both concepts are frequently used in many different ways and have quite different connotations outside this approach (cf. Boesch, 1984; Entwistle, 1979; Glaserfield & Kelley, 1982).

Structures

In cognitive-developmental theory the concept of cognitive structure is usually juxtaposed with the concept of affective content (cf. Kohlberg, 1958, 1969; Lind, 1985d, 1985e). Kohlberg claims that, whereas traditional psychology has focused mainly on the content of moral behavior, his theory is dealing with its structure. It is often considered one of the major tasks, if not achievements, of this approach to distinguish both components and to devise an instrument which makes it possible to measure the structural aspect of moral judgment competence in addition to, and apart from, its content aspect. Although this topic has already been discussed, one can still reasonably ask, "Exactly what is structure and what is content?" (Lickona, 1976, p. 13). Is it the difference between opinions about concrete action dilemmas and the moral reasons given for them? Is it the difference between moral beliefs and moral attitudes? Or does content denote observable behavior, whereas structure is something "behind" behavior and therefore unobservable?

For cognitive-developmental theory the *structure* of moral judgment behavior reflects the organization and process of moral thinking, the way in which and the degree to which moral maxims or principles are brought to bear in specific situations. The concept of cognitive structure refers to Kant's concept of *Urteilskraft* (power of judgment) which is required

> partly in order to decide in what cases [moral maxims] apply and partly to produce for them an access to man's will and an impetus to their practice. For man is affected by so many inclinations that, though he is capable of the idea of a practical pure reason, he is not so easily able to make it concretely effective in the conduct of his life. (Kant, 1949/1788, p. 52)

This implies that moral action requires both "power of judgment" and real acceptance of moral maxims, that is, the cognitive ability to understand how a rule is to be applied in concrete situations *and* the motivation or will to base one's action on rational insights (Habermas, in this volume). Accordingly, Kohlberg defined moral competence as "the capacity to make decisions and judgments which are moral (i.e., based on internal principles) and to act in accordance with such judgments" (Kohlberg, 1964, p. 425); he defined the otherwise neglected cognitive and structural aspect of moral behavior as "the degree to which any of an individual's judgments approximate the criteria of a moral judgment" (Kohlberg, 1958, p. 7). Furthermore, the criteria which suffice for the categorical imperative are "impersonality, ideality, universalizability, pre-emptiveness, etc." (Kohlberg, 1971b, p. 215).

Thus, the organization of a person's moral judgment behavior is not characterized solely by the moral norms it serves (or fails to serve), which we may call the affective content of behavior, nor solely by the formal properties of the individual's reasoning, that is, the consistency or structure of reasoning. In other words, it is only by referring to content that one speaks meaningfully of behavioral *consistency*. There is no consistency of behavior as such; it is always consistency *in relation to* a criterion or principle. Consistency is a bivalent relation concept. Whereas purely formal structures, as found in physical and chemical nature, are arrangements of elements without dynamic-affective meaning, *dynamic* structures refer to human actions which possess a meaning, e.g., to behavioral elements which are characterized through a teleological, affective content and their relationship to this and other affective contents (Figure 1). For this reason we cannot define moral behavior without reference to particular moral principles. Yet, following D. Locke's *neutral defini-*

tion of morality, we should refer to the subject's own moral principles rather than to those of an external judge.

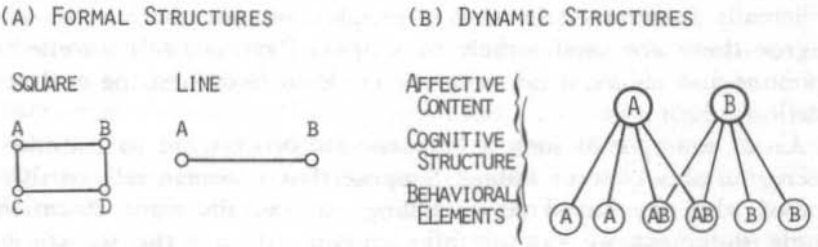


Figure 1. Purely Formal vs. Dynamic Structures

Some psychologists–even cognitive-developmentalists–tend to view these two aspects as separate faculties of the mind, a tendency which is evident not so much in theory as in concrete research methods. If we define the formal structure merely as a "system of inner relationships," these relationships are themselves purely formal and so lack an affective, dynamic dimension. Formal structures suffice for a mechanistic image of humans taken from associationist psychology, but a psychological definition of cognitive structures requires a teleological content (cf. Reese & Overton, 1970).

According to our model, affect is provided in a supplementary fashion by the moral contents–moral norms, issues, principles. These moral contents render a *behavioral* structure "comprehensible" by scientific analysis (Kohlberg, 1979, p. 14). Moreover, they direct and motivate the development of the cognitive aspect of moral judgment (Weinreich-Haste, 1975, p. 208). Therefore, Kohlberg's occasional insistence that cognitive-moral stages are, or are to be, defined solely by formal aspects deserves to be criticized, as we shall see below.

Does this imply, as Glaserfield and Kelley (1982, p. 157) and others have maintained, that structures are merely heuristic devices in the head of the observer but are not themselves observable? I do not think it does. There are examples, even in psychology, of conceptualizing a behavioral structure as an observable entity and measuring it directly. Of course, a single act, such as expressing an opinion on a particular dilemma, cannot be used by an observer as a basis for relational inferences. At least two acts are needed to suggest a relationship. Moreover, a single act is usually the result of an individual's reaction to the multiple demands of a complex situ-

ation. Hence, to make valid inferences on the content and structure of moral behavior, we have to make use of relational information and observe a whole pattern of acts in a particular behavior context and the reasons that justify them. To adequately understand which moral attitudes a person has and to what degree his or her behavior is actually determined by such principles, or, alternatively, to what degree these are used merely to support ("rationalize") unreflected opinions and habits, a hermeneutic circle of hypothesizing and verification is required.

As an example of such a hermeneutic process, let us consider a discussion about mercy killing. Suppose that a woman tells us that a doctor who committed mercy killing was morally right. From this single statement we cannot infer whether or not the woman has based her judgment on moral concern, and so we must ask for reasons. In the ensuing discussion, she expresses a high acceptance for a Stage 5 argument. We now know a little more, but we still cannot be sure that she actually reasons at Stage 5. Her acceptance of the argument may be determined by several considerations, of which the moral quality of the argument is only one among many. For instance, she may accept it because the argument is presented by an authority such as a doctor or a psychologist, or she may accept it because the argument supports her independently established opinion on euthanasia. We would be more confident of the latter interpretation if it turned out that she did not accept at least some of the other arguments presented in the discussion (especially those below Stage 5), and if she accepted the same moral reason even on occasions when it was at variance with her intuitively based opinion. If this were not the case, we would be inclined to say that her judgment was not determined by the moral principle on which the argument was based. In basically the same manner, this everyday process of probing to advance and eliminate competing explanations for a person's action is also employed in tests of moral judgment competence (cf. Colby, Kohlberg, et al., in press; Lind & Wakenhut, in this volume).

We may summarize so far by saying, first of all, that the two aspects of moral behavior, namely, cognition and affect, are both attributes of the same behavior. They can be differentiated only analytically and cannot be regarded as two ontologically separate entities. We shall refer to this basic claim as the *Non-Separability Axiom*, whose corollary is that the cognitive aspect which refers to the structure of judgment behavior must always be determined in relation to moral content (see also Lind, 1985a, 1985e). Secondly,

both aspects, affective content as well as cognitive structure, are observable in principle; in cases in which this is not possible in practice we have to refrain from making an assessment. Thirdly, if acting according to principles involves equilibration, rationality, freedom from contradiction, and suitability, then structural wholeness of reasoning cannot mean a simple consistency or rigidity; concrete behavior which truly reflects the multitude of moral implications of a situation for an individual's value system necessitates integrated and differential judgments (Kohlberg, 1958, pp. 8-9; 1969, p. 348). Fourthly, the cognitive-developmental concept of cognition is at odds with those treatments which discuss cognition not as a set of general structures and processes, but rather as particular contents, such as beliefs or mental achievements. Fifthly, the notion of structural transformation as distinguished from merely attitudinal change improves our understanding of the development of moral behavior; it is the cognitive rather than the affective aspect of moral behavior which develops sequentially and invariantly (cf. Lind, ch. 8, in this volume).

Stages

To provide a conceptual framework for analyzing moral-cognitive development, Kohlberg has constructed six stages, and three levels each of which includes two stages of development. These are well known and need only be briefly summarized here.

Each of the Kohlberg levels of moral-cognitive development is primarily defined by the "socio-moral perspective" which the actor takes in making decisions on socio-moral problems (cf. Kohlberg, 1976). On Level I, the individual assesses a situation from the "concrete individual perspective." The morally right or wrong is determined by the material consequences of an act; the guiding principle is to avoid punishment and to satisfy one's needs. On Level II the person takes over the "member of society perspective" from which the maintenance of social relations and order becomes an important principle for assessing a dilemma situation. On Level III the actor makes judgments from a "prior to society perspective," that is, on the basis of general principles which are not tied to a particular social group or society but to humanity and human life as a whole. These three levels are further subdivided by Kohlberg into two stages, yielding the six stages of moral-cognitive development which are reproduced in Table 1. We have adopted the description of the six stages from Kohlberg and Turiel (1971, pp. 415-416)

because these seem to be among the clearest of the many formulations given (cf. Lind, 1976, p. 125; Krämer-Badoni & Wakenhut, 1978a, p. 218; Montada, 1983, p. 7).

Table 1

Stages of Cognitive-Moral Development

PREMORAL LEVEL

Stage 0. Subject neither understands rules nor judges good or bad in terms of rules and authority. Good is what is pleasant or exciting; bad is what is painful or fearful. Has no idea of obligation, should, or have to, even in terms of external authority, but is guided only by can do and want to do.

I. PRECONVENTIONAL LEVEL

At this level the child is responsive to cultural rules and labels of good and bad, right and wrong, but interprets these labels in terms of either the physical or the hedonistic consequences of action (punishment, reward, exchange of favors) or in terms of the physical power of those who enunciate the rules and labels.

Stage 1. The punishment and obedience orientation. The physical consequences of action determine its goodness or badness, regardless of the human meaning or value of these consequences. Avoidance of punishment and unquestioning deference to power are valued in their own right, not in terms of respect for an underlying moral order supported by punishment and authority (the latter being Stage 4).

Stage 2. The instrumental relativist orientation. Right action consists of that which instrumentally satisfies one's own needs and occasionally the needs of others. Human relationships are viewed in terms similar to those of the market place. Elements of fairness, reciprocity, and equal sharing are present, but they are always interpreted in a physical or pragmatic way. Reciprocity is a matter of "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," not of loyalty, gratitude, or justice.

II. CONVENTIONAL LEVEL

At this level, maintaining the expectations of the individual's family, group, or nation is perceived as valuable in its own right, regardless of immediate and obvious consequences. The attitude is not only one of conformity to personal expectations and social order, but of loyalty, of actively maintaining, supporting, and justifying the order and of identifying with the persons or group involved in it.

Table 1 (Continued)

Stage 3. The interpersonal concordance or "good boy–nice girl" orientation. Good behavior is that which pleases or helps others and is approved by them. There is much conformity to stereotypical images of what the majority perceives as "natural" behavior. Behavior is frequently judged by intention: "He means well" becomes important for the first time. One earns approval by being "nice."
Stage 4. The law and order orientation. There is orientation toward authority, fixed rules, and the maintenance of the social order. Right behavior consists of doing one's duty, showing respect for authority, and maintaining the given social order for its own sake.

III. POSTCONVENTIONAL, AUTONOMOUS, OR PRINCIPLED LEVEL

At this level, there is a clear effort to define moral values and principles which have validity and application apart from the authority of the groups or persons holding these principles and apart from the individual's own identification with these groups.
Stage 5. The social-contract legalistic orientation. Right action tends to be defined in terms of general individual rights and of utilitarian standards which have been critically examined and agreed upon by the whole society. There is a clear awareness of the relativism of personal values and opinions and a corresponding emphasis upon procedural rules for reaching consensus. Aside from what is constitutionally and democratically agreed upon, the right is a matter of personal values and opinion. The result is an emphasis upon the legal point of view, but with further emphasis upon the possibility of changing the law by appeal to rational considerations of social utility, (rather than on rigidly maintaining it in terms of Stage 4 conceptions of law and order). Outside the legal realm, free agreement and contract are the binding elements of obligation. This is the acknowledged morality of democratic government and constitution.
Stage 6. The universal ethical principle orientation. Right is defined by the decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen ethical principles appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality, and consistency. These principles are abstract and ethical (the Golden Rule, the categorical imperative) and are not concrete moral rules like the Ten Commandments. At heart, these are universal principles of justice, of the reciprocity and equality of human rights, and of respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons.

Despite numerous variations in publications by Kohlberg and others over the last two decades, the stage schema has remained the same in its essential components (cf. Bergling, 1981; Kohlberg, 1983). Among the changes was the introduction of a so-called Stage 4½, so as to incorporate unexpected regressions in passing from Stage 4 to Stage 5 (this modification was subsequently abandoned in large part; today Kohlberg regards this problem as a coding error),

and the attempt to expand the model to include a seventh stage (Kohlberg, 1973; Habermas, 1976a), which was set aside when Kohlberg, in response to academic criticism, omitted Stage 6 from his research program (but cf. Kohlberg, 1984, 1985, for his subsequent rethinking of Stage 6). In addition to these changes in the basic stage concept, the problem of assigning persons to stages on the basis of complex responses, the need for a more finely graded scale of moral-cognitive development, and the problem of relating moral thought to action have led Kohlberg and his associates to add a number of mixed stages and substages whose theoretical meaning is mostly unclear and which seem to contradict the central assumption of "structural wholeness" (which is true if this assumption is understood to be an empirical hypothesis; I will return to this point below). I believe that the differentiation into *A* and *B* substages is one of most important changes in the stage model (for an extensive account see Kohlberg, 1984).

However, this differentation necessitates a revision of our view of the relation between the models proposed by Kohlberg and Piaget. Kohlberg had postulated that his schema of moral-cognitive development substitutes for Piaget's model and extends it upwards (Kohlberg, 1958, pp. 151-228; Weinreich-Haste, 1975, p. 206), by which he means that Piaget's phases of heteronomy and autonomy are equivalent to his Stages 1 and 2 respectively. Stages 3 to 6, he supposed, extend beyond Piaget's developmental scale. This position can be justified only if (1) it is true that the moral judgment competency of a person manifests itself simultaneously in all areas of life, and (2) the age grouping in Piaget's two phases and Kohlberg's Stages 1 and 2 are indeed the same (cf. Kohlberg, 1958, pp. 70, 377-383; Kohlberg 1969; Bergling, 1981).

But both assumptions are questionable. First, "structural whole" does not in the least have to mean that moral autonomy is acquired all at once in all areas of life in relation to all moral issues. Even if his notion of "horizontal décalage" seems to imply the opposite, Piaget stated clearly that "there are no global stages that would characterize the complete psychological life of a subject at a particular time in development" (1973, p. 91). Second, I do not believe that it is permissible to set Piaget's phase of moral autonomy as equivalent to Kohlberg's Stages 2 ("hedonistic instrumentalism") or 3 ("group conformity"). We need not invoke Piaget's concept of logical development to see that the phase of moral autonomy more closely resembles Kohlberg's stage of principled morality and postconventionalism, even though they appear in completely different age

groups because of the different issues and norm contents involved. Kohlberg seems to have been aware of this ambiguity when he once equated the phase of moral autonomy with both Stage 2 and Stage 6 (Kohlberg, 1969, Table 6.3, p. 377).

Therefore, I suspect that, as Weinreich-Haste (1975) has suggested, the two concepts do not substitute for but instead supplement each other. Exactly how they relate to one another may become clear if one analyzes the way in which the affective and the cognitive aspects of moral judgment are connected.

Cognitive and Affective Aspects of Moral Stages

In his dissertation, Kohlberg considered two dimensions of moral-cognitive development, the cognitive-structural dimension represented by the three levels, and the affective dimension represented by the six stages. In fact, in the newer versions of his model, he still defines the "structural" stages by moral content rather than by formal categories (cf. Kohlberg, 1976; also Table 1, above). Even abstract moral principles such as equality, justice, and universality are not in themselves structural but are contents if they are conceived of merely as deontic principles to which a subject *refers* in his or her argument. These criteria can be called "formal" only if the subject's judgment actually *matches* the principles of justice and universalizability. This fine, yet important, distinction seems to be taken up by Kohlberg through the introduction of *A*- and *B*-substages. The *B*-substages assume characteristics very similar to the main Stages 5 and 6, the level of principled morality and moral autonomy, and both criteria are indeed highly correlated in the examples provided by the Kohlberg interview manual (Rest, 1979a, p. 43; Eckensberger, 1984; Lind, 1985e). Moreover, the correlation shows also in the Milgram experiment on obedience, in which for 6 out of the 8 subjects who could be unambiguously assigned to stages, the two classifications coincided (Kohlberg & Candee, 1984, p. 69). Interestingly, this study also shows that the *A*/*B* distinction helps us better than does the stage distinction to understand the behavior of the subjects in Milgram's experiment on obedience. Whereas only 2 out of 7 substage *B* persons executed the order to torture another person in spite of his screams of pain (which they did not know were faked), all 9 subjects on substage *A* obeyed this inhuman order.

In accordance with our two-aspect model of moral behavior, and to account for the inadequacies of Kohlberg's stage model, I have

suggested two distinguishable, albeit not ontologically separable, dimensions of moral-cognitive development (Lind, 1978b, 1984e; see also ch. 8, in this volume). Accordingly, moral-cognitive development may be understood as a two-dimensional process, in which Piaget's phases describe a recurring sequence of cognitive transformations on each of Kohlberg's stages. Whereas Piaget focused on conflicting norms of children's games, Kohlberg concentrates on norms of secondary groups and on universal moral principles and values of human life, replacing the child society studied in Piaget's work with the adult society. Hence, with his six types of moral issues, which are related to social institutions such as market rules, family and friendship norms, law, and moral principles, a completely new dimension of development has emerged: the differentiation of the affective aspect of moral judgment according to six types of socio-moral perspectives (see Figure 1).

In his recent writings, Kohlberg acknowledges the *A*- and *B*-substages as theoretically equivalent to Piaget's phases of heteronomy and autonomy (Kohlberg, 1984, pp. 652-683), though he interprets these substages in a somewhat different manner than I do. When he says that this distinction lies "midway between form and content" (Kohlberg & Candee, 1984, p. 44), he apparently views it as a new entity which is separable from both moral content and structure. This multiplication of psychological entities is, in my view, not necessary, and could be taken as a degenerating problem shift. As I have noted above, cognition and affect are distinguishable aspects of moral behavior but are not separable. The theory of an integral moral-cognitive development is distinct from approaches which either presuppose that the two developmental dimensions cannot be distinguished at all, or attempt to conceptualize two or more ontologically separate components or factors of development.[6]

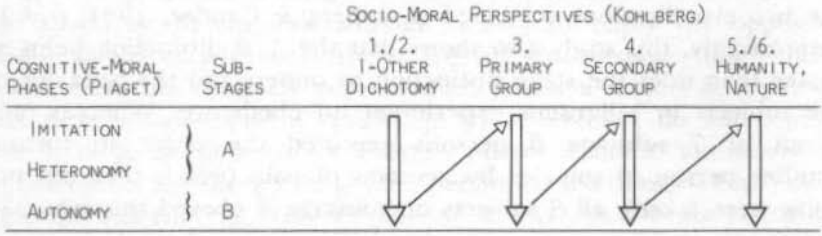


Figure 2. An Integration of Piaget's and Kohlberg's Models of Moral Development

EMPIRICAL VALIDITY AND INFORMATION VALUE OF THE THEORY

The fruitfulness of Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental theory is documented through the wide array of new empirical hypotheses which could be formulated within this conceptual framework. Four hypotheses are especially noteworthy here, concerning as they do (1) the invariant succession of the developmental stages, (2) the structural whole, or organization, of moral judgment, (3) the hierarchical order or preference order of moral reasoning types, and (4) the parallelism between the development of the cognitive and the affective aspects of moral judgment. In the following I want to analyze what these hypotheses imply, whether they can be confirmed empirically, and to what extent they have been empirically validated.

Invariant Sequence

The most central hypothesis of cognitive-developmental theory is that there are qualitatively different stages of moral development which form an *invariant sequence;* social factors can accelerate or slow down the development but cannot change its sequential order (Kohlberg, 1969, p. 352; 1971b, p. 181; Colby et al., 1983, p. 1). This implies that "a single case of longitudinal inversion of sequence disproves the stage theory, if it is not a manifest case of measurement error" (Kohlberg, 1973a, p. 182).

This hypothesis is highly informative or testable, a fact which is not adequately reflected in the usually reported percentages, correlations, and tests of statistical significance, because these figures do not take into account the *Gehalt* (information content) of a hypothesis (cf. Popper, 1968; Meehl, 1978). A high *Gehalt (G)* means that there is a high a priori probability that the hypothesis is *not* confirmed by pure chance. For example, the a priori probability that an individual person will pass through the six stages in exactly the sequence prescribed by the theory is only $p = 0.0014$ and thus the *Gehalt* and information content of such a hypothesis is $G_1 = 1 - p = 1 - 0.0014 = 0.9986$ (maximum: 1.0).

The *Gehalt* of the hypothesis that, for example, 50 persons will develop as the theory states thus is extremely high; it is very close to 1; it is $G_{50} = 1 - 0.0014^{50}$ (power of fifty).

In comparison, the *Gehalt* of a vague but very common hypothesis like "variable x somehow influences variable y" is close to zero. For

further details on this method of evaluating scientific hypotheses, and for an exact definition of p and G, see Lind (1984a). A similar method has recently been suggest by Turner (1980). However, his index is based on a mixture of a priori probability and empirical frequency. It is important to note that G is based purely on a priori or logical probability implied by the hypothesis.

Although the hypothesis of invariant moral-cognitive development is so highly informative and easily falsified by empirical data, it has by and large been corroborated by longitudinal studies. Infrequent deviations from this hypothesis were mostly found in short-term studies and in studies using special kinds of measurement. In the most important study by Kohlberg and his collaborators, which lasted more than twenty years, the developmental sequences anticipated have occurred with only a very few exceptions. Of the 58 persons interviewed every three to four years, only 14 out of 193 passages (7%) were reversed (when measured on a scale divided into 13 interval substages; cf. Kohlberg, 1979; Colby et al., 1983). The invariant sequence hypothesis could also be supported in studies measuring somewhat different aspects of moral judgment. In studies with Rest's *Defining Issues Test,* it has been shown that for persons between 13 and 22 years of age the consistency with which postconventional arguments are preferred to other kinds increases considerably (about 20 percentage points; see Rest, 1979a, p. 140). In our ongoing longitudinal study we found that the consistency of evaluating arguments with regard to moral principles grows with increasing age and educational experience, and the tendency to rationalize one's opinion by reference to moral reasons decreases (cf. Lind, 1985a, 1985d).

The small number of regressions, as well as the fact that only a few Stage 5 subjects and virtually no Stage 6 reasoners could be found, has stirred up a debate over how these anomalies should be dealt with. Following simple falsificationism, some tend to regard cognitive-developmental theory as falsified by these anomalies and thus argue for an enlargement or fundamental change of the theory. But following Lakatos (1978), I prefer to search first for methodological imperfections which can be remedied on the basis of an unchanged theory before inventing auxiliary hypotheses and thus reducing the *Gehalt* of cognitive-developmental theory. Besides, we should not give up a good theory before we have a better one at hand (cf. Lakatos, 1978; Kohlberg, 1979; Lapsley & Serlin, 1984).

The observed cases of regression may indeed be cases of measurement error which, however, can be determined in different ways. A

classical psychometric way is to select a particular sample of people and assess their stage scores twice within a time span to calculate the correlation between these assessments (the so-called test-retest reliability), which provides an estimate for short-term variations (standard error of measurement). On the basis of this criterion, Colby et al. (1983) could show that in their longitudinal sample the number of downward movements over a three-to-four-year interval (approx. 7%) was clearly lower than the number of changes within one month. This is undoubtedly an impressive result. Nevertheless, I would like to question the adequacy of such psychometric criteria. The size of the standard error of measurement depends very much on the distribution of the stages in the sample (Colby et al., 1983, p. 26, report the standard deviation was here as small as 7/10 of a stage), and from a structural point of view one may rightly question the basic assumptions of classical psychometric theory (cf. Kohlberg, 1976, 1979; Lind, 1982b).

For this reason, we have pursued another way of determining possible sources of measurement error in moral judgment research. Kohlberg and his colleagues have taken great pains to improve the scoring method, but little attention has yet been paid to the design of the instrument itself. There are in particular three indications that the design of the assessment method could indeed be improved in regard to its theoretical validity. First, if one reviews the original Kohlberg and Kramer (1969) cases of regression, one finds that these cases are almost exclusively confined to the initially higher stage subjects, which indicates, as already noted above, that there may be a deficiency of the method in dealing with high stage reasoning. Second, as Broughton has found in an unpublished analysis of a severe case of regression, some regressions may reflect a lack of probing in the interview. Third, if one analyzes not only the number of times in which a subject reasons on each stage but also which (relative) weights he or she attaches to these reasons, as is done, for example, through the *Moralisches Urteil Test* (cf. Lind & Wakenhut, in this volume), then we find that persons with an initially high judgment competence accept Stage 5 and 6 reasoning slightly less after one year, but this decrease is relative only to the person's own initial acceptance; his or her absolute preference for high stages of moral reasoning remains much higher than that of the subjects with lower judgment competence (cf. Lind, 1985a); so here again the regression phenomenon seems to be caused by the developmental restrictions imposed upon the data by the research instrument.

As far as the lack of Stage 6 moral judgments and the infrequency of Stage 5 judgments in the research data are concerned, similar methodological considerations apply. To a certain extent, our present methods seem to be biased against moral reasoning at post-conventional stages. This may be due to a lack of probing, to the computation of average stage scores (favoring the scoring on Stages 3 and 4), or to the kind of moral issues involved in the research instruments.

In sum, our analysis shows that we can consider the invariant sequence hypothesis as empirically valid. True, there are some data which are apparently at variance with this statement, but there is no compelling reason to give up the core hypothesis of cognitive-developmental theory or to narrow its range of applicability as some authors have suggested (cf. Bergling, 1981; Gibbs, 1977; Kohlberg & Kramer, 1969; Kohlberg et al., 1983; Rest, 1979a). Such alterations may considerably diminish the *Gehalt* (information value) of the theory and should be undertaken only after the above-mentioned possibilities of methodological improvement have proven unsuccessful.

Structural Wholeness

Cognitive-developmental theory states that each of the stages of moral judgment forms a structural whole that unifies an individual's judgment behavior. This assumption is usually taken to imply a consistency of answers over different aspects. Moral orientations should appear "as a logical and empirically related cluster of responses in development" (Kohlberg, 1969, p. 353). As a confirmation of this hypothesis, Kohlberg points to the fact that a person uses moral principles largely independently of the specific dilemma, and that, in regard to this, the differences between persons are highly stable.[7]

Although in most studies considerable variation in individual judgment–that is moderate consistency–has been found,[8] this finding could be greatly improved by introducing new concepts and structural criteria. "The basic developmental concept underlying the revised stage sequence is the level of socio-moral perspective, the characteristic point of view from which the individual formulates moral judgments" (Colby et al., 1983, p. 6). This means that one cannot expect all judgments relating to moral dilemmas to be alike but that, if one follows an individual's reasoning to its roots, one will eventually find that he or she argues from a unique socio-moral

perspective which is characteristic of his or her moral-cognitive development.

However, this finding does not yet fully support the original claim of the cognitive developmental theory. The fact of mixed stages, of substages, and of the grading of stages into one hundred developmental points involved in Kohlberg's assessment method still contradicts the proposition of whole stages of judgment. The introduction of *A*- and *B*-substages partly accounts for this. Finally, the interpretation of structural wholeness as response consistency is too narrow. It disregards differentation, which is also an important outcome of moral-cognitive development. To overcome this problem, it has been suggested that the six-stage model be replaced by a "more complex stage model" which would do more justice to a specific data state. The "complexity" hypothesis, however, is too imprecise and has little *Gehalt,* since it cannot be disproved empirically.

Considering these problems, I suggest that this assumption involves–as Austin has called it–a *descriptive error.* Structural wholeness as the description of a state is misunderstood; it has to be understood as a norm for an approach to the subject and as a norm for the methods used in dealing with the subject (for a discussion of this problem in respect to psychology in general, see Hartnack, 1962, p. 91). If we regard structural wholeness as a methodological criterion of cognitive developmental theory, the degree and kind of consistency with which a person brings a moral rule to bear in his interaction with social situations will gain the status of manifestations of judgment competence (Beilin, 1971, p. 173; Lind & Wakenhut, in this volume). As Piaget and Kohlberg have noted, structures have not always been present in the individual and do not emerge all at once, but are constructed through the individual's interaction with his or her social environment.[9]

At this point a problem may arise because of the right interpretation of the terms "integration" and "differentiation." If, within the trait model of personality, we translate integration with increasing and differentiation with decreasing consistency of judgment, two mutually exclusive assumptions result, namely that in the course of development, judgment becomes consistent and inconsistent at the same time. This contradiction is resolved only when "consistency of judgment" is defined explicitly in relation to the orientation to which judgment is consistent or inconsistent. If one analyzes the context that defines the consistency of judgment, then it appears that the consistency *decreases* in relation to "opinion conformity" (see Lind & Wakenhut, in this volume), so that judgment becomes more *differen-*

tiated. In contrast, consistency increases in relation to the moral quality of the arguments (the "Stage factor") so that it is simultaneously *integrated.* Earlier orientations are seldom abandoned; rather they are differentiated according to a new priority rule. It all depends on not losing the ability to make decisions while developing the capacity for moral reflection. One continues to form opinions about concrete moral dilemmas, but these opinions are reflective commitments, which are open to modification through arguments.

Thus both conditions must be met for a moral judgment to be called mature: it must be made on the basis of universally valid moral principles (integrated judgment) and, at the same time, it must attend to the particularities of the circumstances of each dilemma and to their specific moral implications (differentiated judgment).

Preference Order

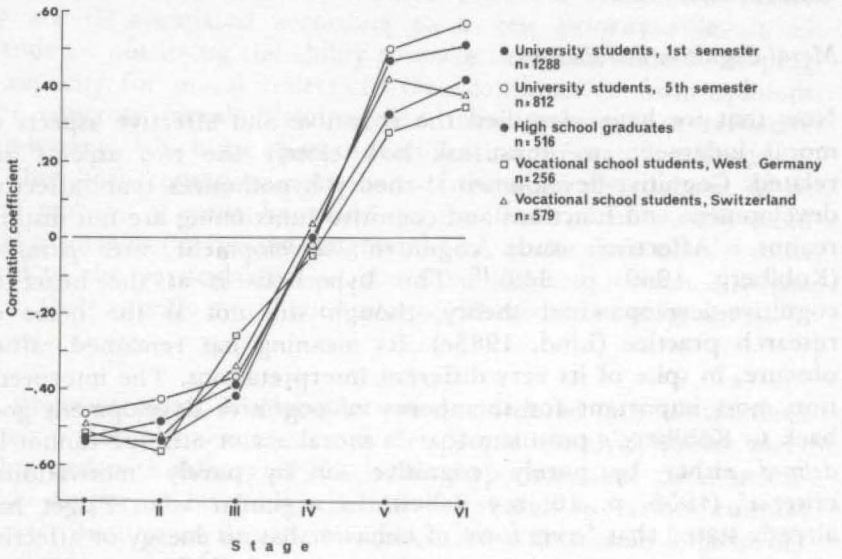
The stages of moral development are not ordered only on the basis of their philosophical adequacy; in fact people intuitively prefer them in this order (Kohlberg, 1969). This hypothesis has been unanimously supported by a high number of studies in various cultural contexts. Because of this the hypothesis of a universally valid order of preferences for the stages of moral reasoning may seem to be a trivial one, but it is not. First, I think this coincidence of philosophical reasoning and "everyday" moral philosophy is most remarkable. If empirically warranted, it would provide the best and possibly the only constructive way to enter a moral discourse with another person–which is especially important for parents and teachers who are concerned with moral education. Second, this assumption, like the first hypothesis, has a comparatively high information content. If the order of preference is determined randomly, the six types of moral rules may be ordered in 720 different ways. Hence the information content of the prediction that a person or a group of persons will prefer the six types in the theoretically expected order is as high as $G = 1 - 0.0014 = 0.9986$. Third, the hypothesis of preference order may explain why the invariant stage-wise development of moral competence is found universally. The affective component of moral judgment may be considered a pacer for the development of the cognitive aspect of judgment: "The disposition to prefer a solution of a problem at the higher level available to the individual partially accounts for the consistency postulated as our third (structural whole) criterion" (Kohlberg, 1969, p. 353). It has been found in many studies that the preference for the morally highest stages is indeed

much sooner developed than the ability to use these stages in an everyday argument in a consistent and differentiated manner (Rest, 1979; see also Lind, 1985d).

Moral-Cognitive Parallelism

Now that we have identified the cognitive and affective aspects of moral judgment, we must ask how closely the two aspects are related. Cognitive-developmental theory hypothesizes that "affective development and functions and cognitive functioning are not distinct realms. 'Affective' and 'cognitive' development are *parallel*" (Kohlberg, 1969, p. 349).[10] This hypothesis is at the heart of cognitive-developmental theory, though still not at the heart of research practice (Lind, 1985e). Its meaning has remained rather obscure, in spite of its very different interpretations. The interpretation most important for the theory of cognitive development goes back to Kohlberg's postulate that "a moral act or attitude cannot be *defined* either by purely 'cognitive' or by purely 'motivational' criteria" (1958, p. 16; my italics). In a similar vein, Piaget had already stated that "*every* form of behavior has an energy or affective aspect and a structural or cognitive aspect" (1976, pp. 7-8; my italics). Because this hypothesis had not been dealt with adequately in the design of research methods, it had not yet been submitted to empirical investigation (disregarding attempts in which the cognitive aspect has been operationalized as a separate mental faculty). To render it possible to test empirically the hypothesis of parallelism, a new research design was needed. We have suggested such a design with the *Moralisches Urteil Test* (MUT; cf. Lind & Wakenhut, in this volume). Through measuring simultaneously the affective and the cognitive functions as aspects of a particular pattern of judgment behavior, we are now in a position to test the hypothesis of affective-cognitive parallelism directly and non-tautologically.

Indeed, all studies with the experimentally designed MUT have shown a clear parallelism between the affective and the cognitive aspects, that is, between the content and the structure of moral judgment. The greater consistency is in relation to moral categories, the stronger the acceptance of the "higher" stages of moral argumentation and the rejection of the "lower" stages. In all studies, the pattern of correlations between the two aspects is surprisingly consistent with the theory of moral-cognitive development (Figure 3; see also Lind, 1985e).



Sources. University students: "University Socialization," a research project conducted at the University of Konstanz. German vocational students: H. Heidbrink (personal communication, see this volume). Swiss vocational students: HASMU, a research project of F. Oser and his collaborators (cf. Lind, 1985c).

Figure 3. Affective-Cognitive Parallelism: Pattern of Correlations Between the Preferences for the Six Stages and the Response Determination by Stage

MORAL JUDGMENT AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

Turning to educational practice, we see that the theory of cognitive development has been increasingly confronted with the problem of the relationship between individual moral judgment and the social environment. As we have seen, this problem has always assumed a prominent place in the work of Piaget and Kohlberg. However, as Bertram (1980) has noted, the working-out of precise hypotheses and the incorporation of them into practical research plans has been incomplete and unsystematic. One exception is the domain of pedagogical intervention, which has already been frequently discussed (see Higgins, 1980; Leming, 1981; Scharf, 1978; Oser, 1981b). But until now other important fields have been largely neglected, for

example, the relationship between the individual and the environment from the angle of the interaction of the person with the environment, the cognitive-moral import of positional differentiation in social institutions, and the role that social selection plays in moral development.

Interaction of Person and Social Environment

Hartshorne and May's *Studies in the Nature of Character* (1928-30) is still the best-known attempt to settle the controversy between personalism and situationism. These broadly planned studies were supposed to answer the question of whether people are really guided in their behavior by stable character traits or whether situational factors can be held responsible for "immoral" behavior, such as lies or deceit. In order to deal with the character trait of "honesty," children were brought into "natural" performance situations and their behavior was observed.

What were the results of these studies? There were few children who were honest or dishonest in all classes of situations, and few situations in which all children reacted in the same way. From this the authors of the studies concluded that the position of personalism is untenable, because human behavior is not determined by inner motives or attitudes but rather by the specific situation in which it appears. This conclusion has evoked a lively and long-lasting debate (see e.g., Allport, 1929-30; Asch, 1952; Bem & Allen, 1974). From an interactionist point of view, the results actually call both positions into question.

It has been attempted post hoc to save the (external) trait model of personalism by the hypothesis of measurement error. Thus, Burton (1963) tried, adhering entirely to psychological conventions, to explain the deviations by arguing that some of the situations in which the children were studied had led to "unreliable" measurements and that these situations ought in consequence to be eliminated from the analysis. But little is gained by this argument, since the alternative approach of situationism can also be verified by such a post hoc "explanation." The measurement error hypothesis can also be evoked for this position, if, following Burton's own procedure, one eliminates the "unreliable" persons from the analysis, that is, if one eliminates those cases which call the situationist approach into question and thus confirm this position "empirically."

Schematically simplified, the results of the Hartshorne and May study indicate the following pattern. In several situations there are

no differences in moral behavior among the persons (in the matrix below: Situation A and B), whereas in others the person's behavior is differentiated (Situation C and D). Some children are honest (or dishonest) in all situations (Person 1 and 2), others vary in this respect from situation to situation (Person 3 and 4). Thus, without Situations A and B–between which there is no correlation (due to the lack of variance) and which, by convention, are labeled "unreliable"–there remains in the findings a pattern that confirms the position of personalism. Without Persons 1 and 2, between whom, likewise, no correlation exists, there remains in the results a pattern that confirms the opposite position of situationism.

	Situations				
	A	B	C	D	
Persons					
1	h	h	h	h	Behavior:
2	h	h	h	h	h = honest
3	h	h	d	d	d = dishonest
4	h	h	d	d	

Thus, a purely statistical treatment can support either position and, therefore, is unsatisfactory (cf. Olweus, 1976). The number of correlations and the proportion of variance accounted for by the person, the situation, or the interaction of both in a statistical sense cannot be a criterion for the model with which we try to understand moral behavior. The question is whether person and situation lend themselves at all to being contrasted in this way. In behavior, obviously, both person and situation are always involved. The individual and his environment can be clearly distinguished, but neither can be conceived of without reference to the other. The German term for behavior, *Verhalten,* indicates this, as it refers intrinsically to behavior which is not a solitary event but rather is part of the relation *(Verhältnis)* of persons to their environment. Accordingly, from the viewpoint of cognitive interactionism, as Kohlberg (1971b) has succinctly pointed out, "moral judgments and norms are to be understood ultimately as universal constructions of human actors . . . rather than as passive reflections of either external facts . . . or internal emotions" (p. 184).

Positional Fragmentation

The universality of the stages of sociomoral perspective may be due in part to transcultural commonalities of social institutions and posi-

tions therein. "All societies have many of the same basic institutions of family, economy, social stratification, law, and government. In spite of great diversity in the detailed definition of these institutions, they retain certain transcultural functional meanings" (Kohlberg, 1969, p. 397). The institutions of society furnish definitions of situation that constitute the life-world of the individual (cf. Krämer-Badoni & Wakenhut, in this volume). Since, however, social institutions are finite, historical, and thus incomplete, they intrude at the time of moral development as requesting and supporting obstacles. Freud calls them the third element, the source of social suffering from which the "discontents of civilization" are derived. Obviously, it is possible and even probable that the real moral atmosphere of a social institution will deviate from the idea upon which it is based (Piaget, 1977). Consequently some authors de-emphasize the educational significance of the ideas on which such institutions are based, or dismiss them as "unreal" ideology. Nevertheless, the moral ideology of social institutions is real and, therefore, can provide an opportunity for criticism and renewal of these institutions in that it makes possible an appeal to moral ideas even if, or just because, they are not fully realized in institutions (cf. Habermas, 1976a).

In modern bureaucratic systems, the relationship between the individual and society is characterized by social positions and memberships in social institutions. Max Weber assumes that the understanding of society by its members is "fragmented" accordingly (1968, pp. 472-473). Weber distinguishes between the understanding of a "client," who regularly obeys because of rewards and punishments; that of a "profiteer," who conforms by being reliable in the eyes of his superiors in order to gain recognition and social advancement; that of an "administrator," who enacts procedural rules and regulations in order to ensure institutional stability and smooth operation; and, finally, that of an "initiator," who chooses ethical principles, goals, or values freely so as to apply them universally and consistently in existing and future social institutions. The concept of positional fragmentation implies a developmental sequence analogous to cognitive-developmental theory. The individual's sociomoral perspective may be seen to develop through the perspectives of the client (Kohlberg's Stages 1-2), the profiteer (Stages 3-4), the administrator (Stage 5), and the initiator (Stage 6). Note that in this developmental scheme the phases of "institutionalization" and "complete approval of collective norms" are understood as leading to greater moral autonomy on the part of given institutional groups and thus

are closer to Piaget's view than to Durkheim's. For a further discussion of the relationship between individuals and institutions see also Lavoi and Culbert (1978), Spence (1981), as well as several chapters in this volume.

Social Selection

A number of results from research in moral psychology allow the interpretation that the development of moral judgment is also bound up with processes of social selection, and that the environment determines through selection which forms of judgment are to be found within it. Kohlberg (1958) showed that children with a higher level of moral judgment were preferred by their friends (p. 75). Findings such as these are considered, for the most part, as proof of the causal significance of social participation in the process of moral development. This relationship, however, can also indicate the opposite causal relationship, that is, that the possibility for participation depends on the moral development. If this holds true, the selection (other or self) organized according to the individual state of development has far-reaching consequences for the constitution of society and changes within it.

Selection processes apparently play a remarkable role–be it a positive or negative one–in individual as well as social development. Studies have shown that the state of a child's moral development has little influence on mere participation in social activities. But its significance is related to social prestige in the eyes of classmates and teachers (Keasey, 1971). Furthermore, teachers are quite capable of estimating the moral level of their pupils (Kohlberg, 1969, p. 394; Peck & Havighurst, 1962, p. 183). What consequences this has for the person upon whom judgment has been passed is difficult to tell. Some studies show that children tend to choose as their leaders persons showing a comparatively high moral stage (Keasey, 1971; Peck & Havighurst, 1962, p. 198). This finding coincides with the idea that "leader positions require . . . 'rules and justice' forms of role-taking" (Kohlberg, 1969, p. 399). The higher the social position of an individual, the more he is objectively responsible for decisions in society and "the more he must take the roles of others in it" (p. 399).

Social selection along moral lines seems also to be involved in admission policy at the level of large social institutions. Portele (in this volume) has found that there is a close relationship between the standardization of fields of study and the moral consciousness of

academics. In our studies we found that this relation is not due only to university socialization; these differences exist in part even before people enter the university. Likewise, the differences in moral judgment competence among soldiers, officers, and conscientious objectors seem to be linked only partly to the effects of their social environment. In part the differences exist even before they enter into these environments (Lind, 1984a; see also Lippert, 1981). In any case, important questions are hinted at that concern the working together of socialization and selection processes.

CONCLUSIONS

After enjoying a euphoric and uncritical initial reception, the theory of cognitive development, as formulated by Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, has in recent years come up against opposition of an often undifferentiated and irrational nature. Especially in Kohlberg's work–typical of new, creative research paradigms–there are more than a few contradictions and inaccuracies that offer critics abundant points of attack.

The analysis presented here of the basic assumptions in cognitive-developmental theory and of the current findings to date show that we are concerned with an approach which should, in fact, be taken seriously. In several respects the tendency to immunize the theory has been rightly criticized. We do not, however, see any scientific reason that would justify referring to the cognitive-developmental approach as a "degenerating research program" or as a sterile approach. On the contrary, as the body of accumulated empirical research shows, the cognitive-developmental approach has very *informative* hypotheses at its center that are–with some exceptions–*verifiable* and *verified.* Therefore, we should regard the cognitive-developmental approach on the whole as a very "courageous speculation" which has proved to be of great significance for progress in moral psychology, even in the areas where it fails.

The most important innovation of the cognitive-developmental theory, in my view, is of a conceptual nature. It renders the concept of behavior more psychological by recourse to its affective and cognitive qualities, and it renders the cognitive aspect of moral judgment assessable in practice. I view as its core assumption a cognitive-affective parallelism in the development of moral thought and action, which presupposes a two-dimensional model of development. The differentiation of the developmental model into two dimensions or aspects should, however, be strictly distinguished from a bifurca-

tion of cognitive-moral development, in which both aspects are conceived of (and operationalized) as separate faculties of mind. Moral content and moral structure are not composed of insulated behavioral acts which are accessible in an isolated state. Instead they are, as the concept of structural wholeness indicates, characteristics of a behavioral totality and thus have to be dealt with as an inseparable entity.

The methodological and pedagogical consequences of this theory have hitherto not received the attention they deserve. Two such consequences seem especially noteworthy. First, in the field of moral psychology we have to think about a new psychometrics which takes into account simultaneously both the affective and the cognitive aspects of behavior rather than interpreting cognitive characteristics as "errors" of the measurement instrument. We have dealt with this elsewhere in this volume, as well as in Lind (1982b; 1985e). Second, in the field of education, the distinction of the two aspects may help us better understand the cognitive nature of within-stage development and the best ways to foster this. Although modern pedagogy wants to refrain from the indoctrination of moral contents, it is seen to be responsible for stimulating the cognitive aspect of moral growth, that is, for the development of integrated and differentiated judgment.

NOTES

1. See also Moers (1930), who stated that behavior "becomes good or bad only through its motivation" (p. 441), because "the act that is without real insight and conforms to ethical norms only because of chance events in one's education or adaptation is not yet a truly good act" (p. 440). Similarly, Hartshorne and May (1928) postulated that "the essence of an act is its pretense" (p. 101), though this remained a play on words which had no real consequences for their research methods.
2. Piaget is exempted from this critique by Pittel and Mendelsohn (1966). Kohlberg's work was not included.
3. See Habermas, 1976a; Schluchter, 1979; Hartmann, in this volume.
4. For an overview and critical evaluation of recent moral judgment research we refer primarily to Bergling, 1981; Bertram, 1980; Blasi, 1983; Broughton, 1978; Colby et al., 1983; Eckensberger, 1983; Habermas, in this volume; Kohlberg et al., 1983; Lempert, 1982; Portele, 1978; Rest, 1979a.
5. Piaget's approach to the relationship of morality and environment has been revived by Bertram, in this volume, and Oser, 1981b.

6. See, above all, the complex "spiral model" by Eckensberger (1984; also Eckensberger & Reinshagen, 1980), the "two-factor model" by Nisan (1984), and the two-component model by Lempert (1982). I cannot discuss these sophisticated models as extensively as they deserve, but I should mention my concern that they also tend to multiply entities and thus to view content and structure–affect and cognition–as separate things rather than as two aspects of one and the same behavior (see also Lind, 1985e).
7. "Factor analysis indicates a single 'stage' factor cutting across all moral situations and all aspects of morality on which the individual is assessed" (Kohlberg, 1971b, p. 177). See also Kohlberg, 1958, pp. 11, 338; 1969, pp. 368, 389; 1976, p. 47; 1979, p. 21; Rest, 1979a, pp. 50-51.
8. Kohlberg, 1958, p. 104; 1969, p. 387; 1979, p. 21; Turiel, 1969; Rest, 1973.
9. Piaget, 1976, pp. 69-76, 1977; Kohlberg, 1969, p. 348.
10. See also Kohlberg, 1969, p. 434; 1971b, p. 186; Piaget, 1977; Lind, 1985e.

Notes

New publication on this topic:
G. Lind, 2016. How to teach morality. Promoting deliberation and discussion. Reducing Violence and Deceit. Berlin: Logos.

The Moral Judgment Test (MJT) has in meantime be renamed "Moral Competence Test" (MCT).