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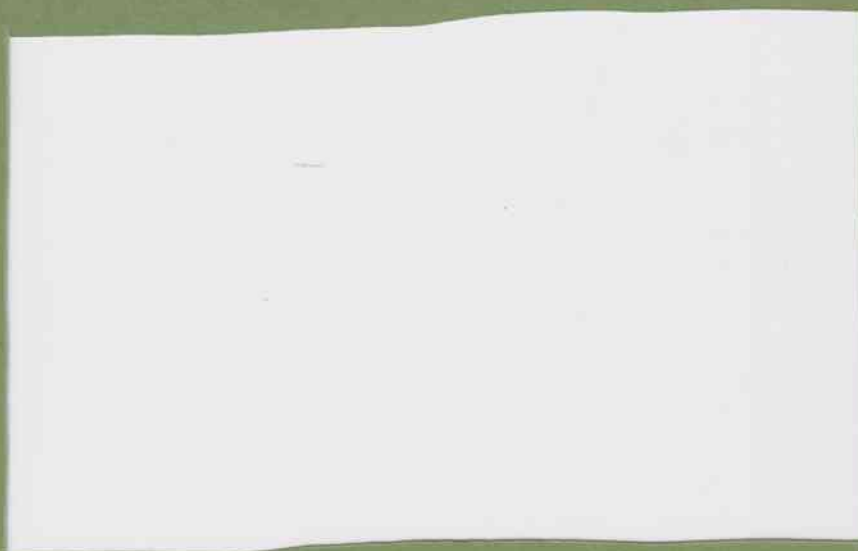
The Development of Interpersonal Moral
Reasoning: Three Studies on the Conception
of Preconventional Morality

Nr. 19/ES

Mai 1988



Beiträge aus dem Forschungsbereich Entwicklung und Sozialisation
Contributions from the Center for Development and Socialization



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The Development of Interpersonal Moral Reasoning:
Three Studies on the Conception of Preconventional Morality

Die Entwicklung interpersonal-moralischen Denkens:
Drei Studien zum präkonventionellen moralischen Denken

Summary

The three contributions are concerned with the development of interpersonal moral reasoning of children and adolescents in middle childhood from age 7 to 12 years.

In the first study we investigate reasons for hypothetical action choices and the moral evaluation of such choices with regard to argumentations about a hypothetical friendship dilemma concerning the issue of promise-keeping between friends.

The two other studies followed up on the questions raised by the first. Moral judgment was investigated using a classical moral dilemma in the Kohlberg tradition (Judy dilemma). In this dilemma the issue of promise-keeping is assessed in the framework of parent-child and sibling relationships. The results of these studies differ critically from the conceptions of preconventional moral reasoning as outlined by Kohlberg. Subjects' arguments concerning promise-keeping were only partly consistent with Kohlberg's scoring manual. With regard to the first stage they supported the notion of rule obedience in younger children but they did not support that fear of punishment functions as a moral reason. The findings were even more critical with regard to the stage 2 conception of instrumental morality. While the classical stage 2 reasons found by Kohlberg did exist they were neither exclusive nor dominant. Rather, the results showed that children are genuinely concerned with the well and woe of other persons and with the maintenance of relationships.

These results raise questions about the conception and the universal validity of the stages of preconventional morality in Kohlberg's system. They seem to suggest that loyalty and solidarity are rooted in preconventional reasoning rather than being a developmental achievement of conventional reasoning as Kohlberg's theory suggests. On the other hand, our findings support some aspects of Kohlberg's theory against a critique by Turiel. These findings suggest that types of moral reasons are a function of the moral rules children are arguing about. In the context of promise-keeping the welfare of others is a developmentally later concern than in the context of physical aggression investigated by Turiel.

Zusammenfassung

Die drei Beiträge befassen sich mit dem interpersonal moralischen Denken von Kindern und Jugendlichen im Alter von 7 bis 12 Jahren.

Die erste Studie untersucht Gründe für Handlungsentscheidungen und die moralische Bewertung einer Entscheidung anhand von Argumentationen über ein Freundschaftsdilemma, in dem es um die Einhaltung eines Versprechens zwischen Freunden geht.

Die beiden weiteren Studien untersuchen moralische Urteile anhand eines klassischen Moral-Dilemmas in der Kohlberg-Tradition (Judy Dilemma), in dem ebenfalls das Konzept des Versprechens thematisch ist, allerdings im Rahmen einer Eltern-Kind-Beziehung.

Die Befunde der ersten Studie werfen ein kritisches Licht auf Kohlbergs Konzeption des präkonventionellen Denkens. Argumentationen zur Versprechensnorm ließen sich nur teilweise in Kohlbergs Kategoriensystem einordnen. In bezug auf die erste Stufe zeigte sich zwar der Gehorsam jüngerer Kinder, nicht aber die Strafangst. Die instrumentelle Tauschmoral der Stufe 2 ließ sich ebenfalls nicht belegen. Vielmehr zeigte sich, daß auch Kinder in der moralischen Beurteilung einer Handlungsentscheidung in genuiner Weise am Wohlergehen Anderer orientiert sind.

Diese Ergebnisse ließen sich auch für das klassische Kohlberg-Dilemma bestätigen. Strafangst ist auch für das frühe moralische Denken nicht kennzeichnend. Auch die Argumente, die sich der Stufe 2 in Kohlbergs System zuordnen lassen, nehmen keinesfalls die dominante Rolle ein, die für die universelle Gültigkeit der Stufe 2 notwendig wäre.

Die Ergebnisse stellen die Konzeption und die universelle Validität der Stufe des präkonventionellen moralischen Denkens in Kohlbergs Theorie in Frage. Sie deuten vielmehr darauf hin, daß die Basis von Solidarität und Loyalität bereits im sog. präkonventionellen moralischen Denken liegt und nicht - wie von Kohlberg angenommen - im konventionellen Denken. Zugleich stützen die Ergebnisse in gewisser Hinsicht Aspekte von Kohlbergs Theorie gegenüber einer Kritik von Turiel. Sie weisen darauf hin, daß die Typen von moralischen Gründen Funktion der moralischen Regel sind, über die Kinder argumentieren. Das Wohlergehen des Anderen wird im Hinblick auf die Versprechensnorm entwicklungsmäßig später thematisch als im Hinblick auf die von Turiel untersuchte Situation der körperlichen Aggressivität.

Contents

	Page
Reasoning about Promise-Keeping: The Early Development of Interpersonal-Moral Concern (M. Keller, W. Edelstein)	1
Action Theory and the Structure of Moral Stages: The Case of Stage 2 (M. Keller, L. Eckensberger, K. von Rosen)	16
The Conception of Preconventional Morality: Some Further Doubts (M. Keller, S. Adalbjarnardóttir, K. von Rosen)	39
References	61

Reasoning about Promise-Keeping:
The Early Development of Interpersonal-Moral Concern

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Paper presented at the 15th Annual Symposium of the Jean Piaget Society, Philadelphia, June 1985.

Abstract

Piaget sees respect for moral rules as rooted in a mixture of fear and love. While the first component is evidenced in stage descriptions of moral development in the Kohlberg tradition, the second has become a favorite for alternative conceptions of morality. It is argued that the concept of justice cannot be separated from feelings and that positive concern for others play a major role in the understanding of obligations. Empirical data are presented which show that Kohlberg's description of Stage One and Stage Two of moral reasoning is too narrow to adequately represent the early development of interpersonal-moral concern.

The problem

Cognitive-structural research on moral development in the Kohlberg tradition has been variously criticized for its emphasis on concepts of justice and fairness and, as a consequence, for its neglect of other moral concerns. Moreover, justice has been interpreted as a concept detached from feelings and affective bonding in relationships. Clearly, moral feelings and bonding play a major role in Kohlberg's conception of Stage 3 moral reasoning. It is only at this stage when the person has established a moral perspective as a member of relationships and begins to uphold moral norms for the sake of relationships. According to Kohlberg, moral rules remain somewhat external to the person at the first two stages, where development proceeds from Stage 1 rule obedience backed up by fear of punishment to a prudentially motivated model of fair exchange at the second stage. Thus it seems that there are no truly social precursors of Stage 3 conceptions of interpersonal loyalty. It is this conclusion which has aroused controversies as documented in the work

of Hoffman (1982, 1984), Gilligan (1982) and others and has even led to the somewhat questionable attempt to differentiate a morality of justice from an interpersonal morality (Haan et al., 1982).

Piaget (1932) proposed that respect for rules is grounded in a mixture of fear and affection - an idea which is in basic agreement with Freud's theory of morality. While Kohlberg's data, especially when looking at the first stage, seem to represent the authoritarian half of Piaget's heritage, we want to consider the other side of the coin.

In the present research we purport to show that development of moral reasoning is intricately connected with the development of the understanding of what it means to stand in a relationship (Hamlyn, 1974) and that moral development reflects processes of affective bonding to (significant) others. The study uses promise-keeping as an example of a fundamental principle regulating human interaction in terms of fairness and care. Promise-keeping represents one of the moral issues assessed by Kohlberg as an important aspect of justice reasoning under the heading of "contract, trust and justice in exchange" (1976, 43). In two moral dilemma situations, the Joe and the parallel Judy dilemma, a promise has been given by parent to child, with the parent breaking the promise. While the moral conflict presented in that dilemma is a specific one, reasons for promise-keeping are explored in a general and decontextualized way. The two specific questions for which the recent manual gives stage-specific scoring examples are "Is it important to keep a promise" and "Is it important to

keep a promise to someone you don't know and probably won't see again". These questions are congruent with the aim to assess universal moral principles, but it neglects an important aspect of moral development: On the one hand, universal moral rules may be learned as particular, situation-specific rules with generalization itself a developmental achievement. Thus, analysis of the responses listed as criterion judgments in Kohlberg's scoring manual show that subjects at the lower stages tend to refer to aspects of the concrete situation, while subjects at higher stages provide more general reflections, mostly abstracting from the concrete moral dilemma experience. On the other hand the application of universal moral rules always requires situation specific considerations for their application. Even moral philosophy allows for the differentiation of obligations and responsibilities with regard to what we owe to everyone and what we owe to those with whom we stand in special relationships (see Richards, 1971; Rawls, 1971).

We hypothesize that the contextualization of moral rules in the specific conditions of a situation is an important factor in eliciting the reasons or motives for upholding it. Youniss' (1980) research, in agreement with Piaget's early work, provides clues that the power structure of relationships is a context differentiating moral development. While in authority (e.g., parent-child) relationships obedience to rules is the dominant regulating pattern, relationships of equality (e.g., peer relations) are characterized by reciprocity. Since Kohlberg's dilemmas assess promise keeping in the context of an authority

relationship, the question arises whether the types of reasons given for promise-keeping, especially at the lower stages, are influenced by the context of the situation. Given Youniss' results, the assessment of moral reasoning in a situation that is not structured in terms of power or authority is of special importance to broaden our understanding of the developmental roots of the morality of promise keeping.

Subjects and Procedure

30 children (15 boys, 15 girls) were interviewed longitudinally (ages 7, 9 and 12) about a hypothetical but experiential and affectively meaningful friendship dilemma based on Selman's friendship story. The protagonist has to decide whether to keep a promise given to the best friend or to accept an invitation from a third child who has only recently moved into the neighborhood. Various interpersonal-moral and non-moral aspects increase the complexity of the situation. The interview assesses descriptive and prescriptive aspects of the differentiation and coordination of perspectives with regard to various components of social and moral cognition. These include thinking about (1) action choice(s) and motivating reasons, (2) consequences of the violation of interpersonal-moral obligations for those concerned including the self (in terms of moral feelings), (3) the regulation of such consequences, and (4) the evaluation of action-choice(s) in terms of moral rightness. Three developmental levels of interpersonal-moral awareness are constructed on the basis of these components (Keller, 1984; Keller & Reuss, 1984). Consistent with Kohlberg's

(see Colby et al., 1979) and Selman's (1980) approach, these levels are organized in terms of the processes of perspective differentiation and coordination that constitute the cognitive structure underlying moral meaning making (see table 1). These levels represent the frame for the specific analyses in the present study.

Within each level two types of reasons are analyzed in detail: a) Reasons given for the action choice to go to the friend as promised and b) the moral evaluation of the hypothetical action choice (going to the movie or to friend). Level of interpersonal moral awareness was scored as either full stage or transitional between two stages. Interrater agreement between three raters varied between 80 % and 100 %.

Results

Table 2 shows the age-specific distribution of the levels of interpersonal moral awareness.

Analysis of longitudinal change patterns (table 3) evidence only two cases of regression while most children show age related progression. In what follows I shall present the types of reasons for action choices and moral evaluation of choices on each level: At level 0 - which in our data is only represented at the transitional level 0/1 - the only type of reason for the decision to go to the friend is hedonistic (fun to play with matchbox cars). Questions of moral evaluation of choices are not yet understood.

At level 1 and 1/2 three types of reasons are used to justify the decision: (a) the relationship (being friends and liking to

play with each other, (b) empathetic feelings resulting from the relationship (not wanting friend to be alone), (c) avoidance of negative consequences (friend wouldn't play with her any more if she didn't come). Having given a promise is hardly mentioned as reason for decision, while friend's expectations (because she's waiting) are referred to. With regard to moral evaluation going to the friend is evaluated as right decision. However, in most cases only global evaluations can be given (not nice, bad to leave someone out), whereas reasons for such evaluations cannot yet be provided. References to consequences do occur at times (friend would be angry).

At level 2 normative aspects of the situation such as "having given a promise" and "not wanting to betray" is one important type of reasons for the decision to go to the friend. As before, a second type refers to the nature of the relationship: The fact of being best friend and having been friends for a long time is a frequent reason for the decision, also offered as a second order reason for the wish to act as promised. Among the relationship-based reasons empathetic concerns (friend would feel unhappy, left out) and possible consequences of the decision for the relationship (unpleasant to break off the relationship) are frequently mentioned.

The same classes of reasons are given in the context of moral evaluation. They refer either to the obligatory nature of the promise or to the binding force of friendship. A few examples for both types follow: It is right to go to the

friend because she had said so; because she had firmly intended it and because it would be betrayal if she didn't go; because they are best friends; or old friends, it would not be right to betray or leave out an old friend.

At level 2/3 and 3 subjects spontaneously tend to take a moral perspective in the context of decision making. Thus reasons for decision include, or are based on, moral evaluations. Reasons refer to the obligatory character of promise-keeping (that one must keep promises, has to keep one's word). Again the nature of the relationship constitutes the background for the moral obligation: a promise given to a best friend generates a sense of moral necessity because it signals trust and dependability and thus does not admit exceptions. Not to hurt friend's feelings and not to destroy the harmony and intimacy of the relationship function as major action-guiding motives. Besides these rather general maxims situation-specific arguments begin to play a role: Friend's concrete feelings and needs (e.g., her jealousy of the new child and her need to talk about a problem) constitute both good and obligatory reasons for decision.

Compared to the preceding level at which only the decision to go to the friend was judged as right, subjects now frequently point out that it is not right to leave out the third child, who is new in the neighborhood and has no friends. However, considering the specific conditions of the situation, the obligation and responsibility toward the friend is given (moral) precedence over those toward the third person. Further-

more, at this level an understanding that obligations are negotiable begins to appear. However, achieving consensus with the friend about a potential change of the action plan is perceived as absolutely obligatory.

Discussion

The results of this study provides evidence that children's concepts of morality are part of their understanding of actions, persons and relations. The developing child becomes increasingly aware of the rules that govern interactions between persons. Moral rules such as promise-keeping become relevant on the basis of two sources of experience: on the one hand they are transmitted as explicit rules in socializatory interaction. On the other hand, their meaning is established in the very experience of interaction. Learning to understand obligations and responsibilities in a friendship may be a far more subtle process than learning explicit moral rules. According to our data a first step of moral development consists in the emergence of a basic awareness of concepts of rightness. They are understood as "quasi-obligations" which are based on the regularities of established action patterns (Keller & Reuss, 1984). At the second level concrete rules (such as having to keep one's promises) become significant in the context of the relationship.

At these first two levels the reasons for action and moral evaluation are clearly distinct from those derived in the context of the Kohlbergian dilemmas. Neither does fear of punishment play a predominant role at the first level nor do we find the

type of concrete reciprocity reasoning which is characteristic for Stage 2 justice reasoning. What we see is the emerging conception of a self which gradually comes to plan and evaluate actions with regard to the expectations and feelings of others with whom he or she stands in a relationship.

As to the next developmental level there is marked agreement between Kohlberg's Stage 3 reasoning and what we have characterized as level 3 interpersonal-moral awareness. At this level a generalized set of expectancies about behavior in relationships has developed which can be subsumed under the norm of reciprocity. The maintenance and respect for trust and loyalty to a friend are a predominant moral concern at this level.

Preliminary analysis of interviews with older children show that at the next level the application of a universal moral rule like promise-keeping is based on reflection of the particularities of the situation given. On the basis of general norms of interaction - how one ought to act in order to maintain a relationship - the legitimacy of interests and expectations of all persons involved, including the self, can be systematically weighed against each other with the goal to establish a rationally motivated consensus.

The conception of a moral self as part of the relationship which is characteristic of Stage 3 justice reasoning in our research thus can be shown to have precursors that are genuinely social and relationship-oriented. More than Piaget's and Kohlberg's work, our data show how the process of development represents the process of socialization into relation-

ships. Moreover, while Piaget (1932) attributes the dynamics of moral development mainly to cognitive conflict due to conflicting claims among equals in peer interactions, our subjects disclose an alternative source of the dynamic: the emerging awareness of obligations implied by the very nature of affective bonds between persons. This does not imply a gender specific morality of care and responsibility (Gilligan, 1982), nor does it imply that the nature of morality, in essence, is affective, not cognitive, as various authors have maintained, both in philosophical and psychological analyses. In short, our data suggest that an often overlooked source of morality is the person's realization of what it (morally) means to stand in a relationship; this realization is grounded in affection and involves the consciousness of the affective bond.

Table 1 Levels of Interpersonal Moral Reasoning

Level of friendship ^a	Interpretation of Situation	Practical Judgment (Reasons for Decision)		Consequences of Violation of Friendship Obligation		
		Consistent with Friendship Obligation	Inconsistent with Friendship Obligation: Desire; Obligation	For Other or Relationship	For Self (Moral Feelings)	Moral Discourse or Rebalancing
0. Physicalistic	Self's desires	Self's hedonistic desires	Desire: self's hedonistic desires	Object-related feelings (left out from fun)	Pragmatic concerns	No understanding of justification; compensation
1. Unilateral	Self's desires or other's desires or feelings	Anticipated consequences of action for friend	Desire: weighing of choices in terms of hedonism; obligation: avoidance of negative feelings	Interpersonal feelings (left out from interaction); termination of interaction	Empathetic concerns (consequences of action for other); fear of consequences (physical action)	Justification as informing about action; concealment of action; material compensation
2. Fair-weather cooperation	Self's obligation or other's expectation (quality of relationship)	Self's obligation related to promise; friendship	Desire: exceptionality of situation (good opportunity) obligation: obligation to help	Violation of expectations (feeling betrayed); termination of friendship	Interpersonal or normative concerns (guilt over betraying reciprocity or veridicality); fear over termination of friendship	Perceived necessity of information; asking permission, asking forgiveness; concealment of action (explicit lying)
3. Intimate friendship	Self-other relationship of mutual concern over time, trust, loyalty (psychological particularities of situation)	Self's obligation related to moral self and ideal of friendship (being a trustworthy person or friend)	Exceptionality in context of relationship (hypothetical role switch) desire: opportunity obligation: to integrate into friendship	Betraying as violation of friendship loyalty; moral evaluation of actor's personality; diminution of friendship	Guilty conscience over breach of trust in relationship; shame over moral inadequacy of action	Perceived necessity of negotiating decision, of justifying decision through reasons, or of reassuring of solidarity in communication

^a From Selman, 1980.

From: Keller, M. (1984). Resolving conflicts in friendship: The development of moral understanding in everyday life. In W. Kurtines & J. Gewirtz (Eds.), *Morality, moral behavior, and moral development*. New York: Wiley, 140-158.

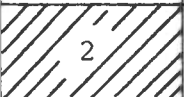
Table 2


Age distribution of levels of interpersonal-moral awareness
at three successive measurement occasions

levels of moral awareness	Measurement occasions			N
	7 year olds	9 year olds	12 year olds	
0				
0/1	4			4
1	12			12
1/2	5	7		12
2	9	19	12	40
2/3		4	13	17
3			5	5
N	30	30	30	

Table 3

Levels of interpersonal-moral awareness: developmental progression, stability and regression at three measurement occasions

Levels 7 year olds	Levels 9 year olds			N
	1/2	2	2/3	
0/1	3	1	0	4
1	2	8	2	12
1/2	0	5	0	5
2	 2	5	2	9
N	7	19	4	30

Levels 9 year olds	Levels 12 year olds			N
	2	2/3	3	
1/2	5	1	1	7
2	7	8	4	19
2/3	 0	4	0	4
N	12	13	5	30



regression cells

Action Theory and the Structure of Moral Stages:
The Case of Stage 2

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Revised version of a paper presented at the International
Conference on Cross-Cultural Psychology, Istanbul, Turkey,
July 1986.

Abstract

In cross-cultural research the validity and universality of stages of preconventional reasoning in Kohlberg's theory of moral development has been taken for granted, while in developmental research a growing bulk of research gives hints for the inadequacy of stage assumptions. Data from Icelandic and German subjects were analyzed. Only those subjects were taken into account who scored stage 2 global score in Kohlberg's Joe/Judy dilemma. Qualitative analyses of subjects' reasoning showed a substantial amount of arguments which could not be matched to Criterion Judgments given in the scoring manual. Structurally these arguments could be interpreted in terms of stage 2 reasoning. With regard to content they evidenced genuine normative and relationship concerns which do not fit the instrumental exchange notion of stage 2.

An action theoretical framework is proposed in order to achieve a reformulation of preconventional morality. The findings propose that cross-culturally there might be more variety in early moral reasoning than demonstrated by research hitherto.

The problem

This paper examines the validity of the conception of the preconventional stages of moral reasoning in Kohlberg's (1981, 1984) system. The data presented below are interesting from a cross-cultural perspective, because they demonstrate that cultural variation even within Western societies may provide opportunities for testing the fit of a developmental theory and the data. From a more general theoretical perspective, however, we want to argue that the anomalies which we have observed cannot be easily accommodated to Kohlberg's theory as it presently stands. Instead, we argue that a more basic reconceptualization of the theory as a whole is indicated, and propose an action theoretical framework, which seems to be most fruitful in this respect.

In a recent comprehensive review on the cross-cultural validity of Kohlberg's theory, Snarey (1985) draws the following conclusion:

The combined cross-sectional and longitudinal data indicated that stage 1 to stage 3/4 or 4 were in evidence virtually universally, when we took into consideration the age range and sample size of the population under study ... The presence of stage 4/5 or 5 was extremely rare in all populations (p. 226).

In similar form, Edwards (1981) concludes:

A number of longitudinal and cross-sectional studies provide preliminary support for the cross-cultural validity of the stages and their sequence. The findings suggest that the first three moral stages (those most closely linked to the psychological stages of role taking) are found in a wide variety of cultural settings ... The greatest problem arises with respect to Kohlberg's highest stages, which seem to be found much more commonly in complex than in simpler cultures (p. 523).

These statements reflect a common view on Kohlberg's theory. While the stages of postconventional reasoning have been widely discussed, the conception of the preconventional and conventional stages is mostly taken for granted. A critical appraisal of these stages is the goal of our paper.

Outside the Kohlberg tradition, within and outside the cross-cultural context, there exists a broad discussion concerning the nature of moral reasoning. This discussion yields first cues for a necessary revision of the stage conception that bear on preconventional and early conventional moral reasoning.

Eckensberger and his coworkers specifically criticized the definition of structure in Kohlberg's theory (Eckensberger & Reinshagen, 1980; Eckensberger, 1984, 1986; Eckensberger & Burgard, 1985, 1986). They propose to use the structural aspects of action-conflicts with regard to goals, means, results and consequences to explicate the deep structure of stages and reanalysed Kohlberg's stages in these terms. On this basis they conceptualize the first three stages as stepwise reconstructions of the interpersonal social space. In their model others are seen as acting subjects pursuing their own goals and thus will be respected already at stage 1/2. At stage 3 they will be perceived as subjects who on the one hand are autonomous actors and who, on the other hand, feel mutual respect towards each other.

Similarly, Keller and Reuss (1984) in an action theoretical reconceptualization of interpersonal moral reasoning traced the interpersonal roots of moral understanding. Keller (1984, Keller & Edelstein, 1985; Edelstein & Keller, 1985) challenged the contention that in Kohlberg's system loyalty and moral feelings like empathy, or prosocial concerns and non-instrumental affective bonding to others are exclusively a phenomenon of conventional morality and thus are not manifested before stage 3. Their findings show that genuine moral and relationship concerns are evident in Icelandic children's social and moral reasoning

about promise-keeping in a friendship. This criticism is consistent with the results of other research:

Turiel (1983) has claimed that very young children's moral reasoning is not exclusively based on punishment and obedience or on instrumental concerns. He argues that already young children are able to differentiate conventional and moral rules and see the latter as based on the avoidance of harmful consequences for others and self. Youniss (1980) and Damon (1984) further argue that stage 1 obedience has little in common with the "other morality of the child" based on principles of equality, cooperation, and reciprocity which can easily be seen in operation in peer contexts. From research on prosocial moral reasoning, Eisenberg (1982) concludes that preschoolers' reasoning about their own prosocial behavior contains a good deal of empathic references to others' needs. Her research on reasoning about hypothetical prosocial dilemmas shows that preschool children frequently use non-egoistic need oriented and empathic reasoning which in terms of Kohlberg's theory should not occur before stage 3 in early adolescence. This finding has been confirmed also in a cross-cultural study by Eisenberg et al. (1985).

Closer to the Kohlbergian tradition, Gilligan (1980) has argued that the morality of justice must be complemented by a morality of care and responsibility, also to be described as a developmental structure.

The main thrust of argumentation in the research mentioned above is towards a genuinely internal and interpersonal root of moral understanding, towards the contention that empathy, moral feelings, solidarity and relationship concerns are major components in the emergence of morality. In a recent review of Gilligan's book, however, Colby and Damon (1983) replied to critics that the final version of the scoring manual does indeed contain examples of interpersonal concern at the preconventional stages. Therefore, they conclude, the criticism is no longer valid. Since these concerns reflect the main argument of our

paper, we will show that the revision mentioned by Colby and Damon (1983) does not really respond to the criticism, whether at the level of operational definitions as given in the manual (Colby et al., 1984) or at the level of theory construction and/or modification. Furthermore, we will show that such criticism is difficult to counter given the present stage conception. Rather, a reformulation is required which in our opinion can be accomplished in an action theoretical framework as proposed by Eckensberger and his colleagues and by Keller and Reuss.

In order to clarify our position, we shall briefly recall the central ideas of the level of preconventional reasoning with a focus on stage 2 in comparison to the adjacent stage 3 conventional reasoning (see table 1 in the appendix).

According to Kohlberg (1976, 1984), the individual at the preconventional level has not yet come to really understand and uphold rules, expectations, and conventions of authority and society. These rules and expectations exist outside the self. In comparison, the conventional self is identified with or has internalized the rules of others, authority, and society. The cognitive structural difference between the two levels is described in terms of the underlying social perspective. Stage 2 is characterized by a concrete or isolated individualistic perspective. The person at stage 2 is aware of other points of view but sees others as pursuing their own interests. Unless people are involved in making a deal, each person will put his or her own interest first. Pragmatic conflict resolution serves the aim of maximizing satisfaction of the self's needs and desires while minimizing negative consequences for the self. The mutual awareness that each person is operating in quest of his or her own welfare leads to "an emphasis on instrumental exchange as a mechanism through which individuals can coordinate their action for mutual benefit" (Kohlberg, 1984, p. 626). In other words: The welfare of others is taken into account only as far as it affects the person's own interests.

The description evidences that there is no room at this stage for a genuine care for other's concerns for his or her own sake. According to Kohlberg, these positive moral "virtues" are due to the achievement of a perspective of the relationship. This perspective is seen as the social cognitive prerequisite of stage 3. It is only at this level that sympathy, empathy, and genuine moral concerns play a major role.

Kohlberg (1976, 1984) describes stage 3 in terms of a "third-person" or "member of a group" perspective. This is the perspective of the average good person perceiving situations from the point of view of the relationship between two or more individuals, relationships of caring, trust, and respect. Moral norms and expectations are generalized across persons and situations, with an emphasis on being a good, altruistic, or prosocial personality. In contrast to the pragmatic mode of moral conflict resolution characteristic of stage 2 that precedes it, exchanges are evaluated in relation to standards of morally adequate and good conduct. Genuine moral feelings of gratitude and loyalty as well as conscience are major constituents of the conventional level.

Starting from this brief and general description of stage 2 as compared to stage 3, we shall now take a closer look at the empirical definitions as they are presented in the scoring manual (Colby et al., 1984). As our empirical research deals with the "Judy dilemma" (see below), we shall focus on examples of criterion judgments (CJ) for reasoning about contract and authority but will include examples of other norms from the famous "Heinz dilemma" in order to emphasize our point. In this dilemma the penniless husband of a woman dying of cancer has to decide whether to steal a drug to save her life or to abide by the law.

In spite of the claims by Colby and Damon (1983) in the article

mentioned earlier, a brief check of criterion judgments for stage 1 shows that no affiliation norms are in evidence at that stage - a fact which is not surprising given the definition of this stage. At stage 2 the affiliation norm is nowhere in evidence in the Judy or the parallel Joe dilemma. However, an example from reasoning about the life issue in the Heinz dilemma will suffice to highlight the argument.

Example stage 2: Stealing the drug is seen as justified if Heinz needs, loves or likes his wife or wants her to live (CJ 7).

According to the general description given for each stage such a statement is scored as stage 2 only if Heinz sees his wife as "instrumentally valuable for future exchanges, past or anticipated benefits and sees pragmatic difficulties in her replacement".

Example stage 3: Heinz' decision to steal is seen as based on the concrete and particular love and concern for his wife, on feeling close to her and the relationship (CJ 12). This concern may be generalized to all human beings (he should steal the drug even if he doesn't love her, just because she is a human being, CJ 9).

Compared to the previous stage, stage 3 reasoning is characterized as the "evaluation of life in terms of relationships of love, concern, closeness, and attachment between persons and the capacity for deep emotion".

Here it is apparent that at stage 2 affiliation is viewed exclusively in terms of a self-interested, egoistic orientation as opposed to the genuine relationship concerns evidenced at stage 3. The same structure of argument is in evidence with regard to the contract issue in the Joe/Judy dilemma.

Example stage 2: Promise-keeping is seen as a function of the

instrumental value which it may have for the self in terms of future rewards (e.g., keeping a promise so that the other will keep a promise to the self), anticipated disadvantage, or retaliation (CJ 8 and 11)

Example stage 3: The main arguments given for promise-keeping refer to the maintenance of the relationship, the preservation of trust and faith between people involved in a relationship (CJ 18). Other aspects refer to a concern with the good person who shows consideration of the feelings of others (CJ 21) and with the impression the self will leave with others (CJ 22). Violation of others' feelings and expectations results in the disapproval of the self as expressed in moral feelings, e.g. feeling bad inside (CJ 25).

Again we can conclude from these examples that interpersonal concerns at level 2 are interpreted as basically instrumental and egoistic. They become socially and morally transformed at level 3, with the transitional level 2/3 as the starting point of such reconstruction. Only the stage 3 person is concerned with a good relationship "for its own sake", that is: without a self-serving instrumental interest.

But while stage 2 is relatively homogeneous in its instrumental orientation, the stage 3 indicators present a quite heterogeneous picture across various issues. Thus, the following arguments are scored at stage 3: Non-generalized feelings referring to particular persons with whom the self is perceived as standing in a relationship (Heinz should steal because he feels close to his wife, CJ 12); generalized arguments referring to the person in a role position (a good and loyal husband ought to steal for his wife even if he doesn't love her, CJ 9); arguments generalized to all human beings (looking at it from a human viewpoint, showing compassion for another human being, CJ 9). This heterogeneity may result from the fact that in Kohlberg's theory genuinely

interpersonal and non-egoistic concerns are not permitted before stage 3. Thus, by necessity, all these arguments have to be included under this heading independent of the degree of generalization they reach. Therefore the rather strict theoretical formulation of the stage is not realized when empirically matching arguments to stages, a reason which led Burgard (1986) and Eckensberger and Burgard (1986) to differentiate the particular and the generalized aspects of concern for others into two stages (3 and 3/4).

We now purport to demonstrate the existence of precursors of genuine moral and interpersonal reasoning which in view of the structure of reasoning involved must be scored at stage 2 or even stage 1/2. We will show a) that at these stages a conception of a relationship does exist, and b) that there is an internally based normative understanding of relationships, which represents the normative underpinnings of moral understanding.

Method

Sample.

The analysis is based on two samples of interviews scored globally at stage 2 (Colby et al., 1984) only. The first sample comprises 23 Icelandic interviews out of a total of 80 interviews with 7, 9, 12, and 15 year olds, equally distributed according to sex.¹ The selected stage 2 interviews include the following number of subjects from the age groups: 7 yrs.: N=2; 9 yrs: N=5; 12 yrs.: N=12; 15 yrs.: N=4 . The second sample consists of 8 German interviews out of a total of 103 conducted within a cross-sectional study of German male subjects aged 10 to 30 years. The

¹This research is part of project Child Development and Social Structure carried out by the Center for Development and Socialization in the Max Planck Institute for Human Development and Education in West Berlin in cooperation with the Department of Social Science of the University of Iceland.

stage 2 German subjects ranged from ages 10 to 15 years.²

Moral interviews and scoring.

Both samples were presented with a slightly modified version of Kohlberg's "Judy and Louise dilemma" in which a mother has given a promise to the daughter (Judy) to permit her go to a rock concert with money Judy had earned herself. In the last minute the mother withdraws the permission and requests that Judy use the money to buy school accessories she needs in school. Judy decides to lie about the money she earned and to go to the concert anyhow. Her sister who knows about this has to decide whether to tell her mother.

In the case of the Icelandic sample the modification of Kohlberg's version consists in confronting Louise with the dilemma of telling on her sister under the pressure from mother's questioning her about Judy's whereabouts, instead of just telling on her - without such pressure - after the fact. In case of the German sample only the sex of the actors (sisters) was changed. Since only boys were interviewed, the story was about two brothers (Hermann and Hans). Interviewer questions in both studies refer to subject's moral reasoning about the action choice and the alternative choice, about promise-keeping, sibling and authority relationships as well as about consequences of choices. For stage scoring the most recent available scoring manuals were used. Interrater reliability ranged from 80% to 86% agreement for different age groups for the Icelandic data. It was $r = .91$ (Spearman) or 87% agreement (difference of one half stage accepted) for the German data.

Data analysis.

Since it is our interest primarily to highlight a theoretical argument by demonstrating the existence of moral arguments not accounted for in Kohlberg's theory, we shall focus on the

²This research was carried out at the Fachrichtung Psychologie of the University of the Saarland. It was supported by a grant from the Volkswagen Foundation.

qualitative analysis of the data.

Results

The analysis of the Icelandic data showed that only about half of the scorable statements could be matched with criterion judgments in the Kohlberg manual. For the other half no match examples could be found either at stage 2 or at stage 3, neither did these statements fit the theoretical formulation of stage 2. However, they do contain stage 3 interpersonal concerns in a structurally simpler form, referring to normative concerns which in Kohlberg's system are not expressed before stage 3 as indicators of internalized morality. In the German interviews which could be reliably scored at stage 2 in terms of Kohlberg's theory, these types of normative and interpersonal concerns were found in each of the eight interviews at least once.

Examples of interpersonal and normative concerns which function as stage 2 precursors of stage 3 reasoning are presented in table 2 in the appendix.

Conclusion

The main question raised by these findings concerns the stage structure of the arguments presented by the subjects. Are we justified in classifying the arguments cited as indicators of stage 2 reasoning? If so, what does this imply for the Kohlbergian conception of stage 2?

Empirically, our strategy was to use Kohlberg's manual to identify a sample of protocols scorable at stage 2 (global scores) within Kohlberg's system. In these interviews we found a variety of examples which could not be matched with criterion judgments in the scoring manual. The fact that the same type of reasoning was found both in the German and the Icelandic samples excludes the possibility to interpret the Icelandic data either

as emic phenomena or as specific results of the modification of the dilemma, which conceivably might have produced more arguments related to mutual concerns (mother worrying about Judy's absence). We therefore argue that the definition of stage 2 as formulated in the most recent version of Kohlberg's theory (Kohlberg, 1984, p. 626f.) does not allow to treat any of these arguments as representing stage 2 reasoning. However, in terms of the social perspective some of the arguments, e.g. the awareness of others' feelings as consequences of action decisions, fit the description of stage 2. The crucial theoretical difference is that the concern for other's feelings does not stand in an instrumental, self-serving context. The relationship concerns (because they are siblings; because she is fond of her sister) are inconsistent with Kohlberg's structural descriptions since according to Kohlberg there exists no relationship perspective at stage 2. Further, a genuine normative argumentation (e.g. it would be betraying) is not possible at stage 2 according to the theory. Yet, our data show that both concerns are used as moral arguments in a form that, being less advanced than stage 3 reasoning, does not fit the structure of that stage.

While it is theoretically plausible and consistent with the findings cited in the introduction to expect precursors of stage 3 interpersonal and moral concerns at earlier stages, our findings call into question whether stage 2 is adequately described by the structure of instrumental exchange. In this sense, these findings cannot be fitted easily into the present theoretical stage conception. Thus, to paraphrase Edwards (1981) if new information does not represent "bad news" for a theory, our findings may at least represent critical news. A "more adequate and pluralistic understanding of universality and variety in socio-moral development" (Snarey, 1985) in our view requires a reformulation of the stages of preconventional and early conventional thinking. To respond to this challenge, we propose an action theoretical framework (Eckensberger & Reinshagen, 1980; Keller & Reuss, 1984). Within such a framework socio-moral development is understood as the development of intentional subjects striving to coordinate and possibly

negotiate mutual acceptance of intentions, motives, goals, and consequences. In the case of the Judy dilemma the action theoretical structure of the conflict involves at least two levels which the subject has to reconstruct: The first level refers to the interpersonal conflict between Judy and her mother (Fig. 1), the second level, however, refers to Louise's intrapersonal conflict between contradictory moral responsibilities to be truthful to her mother or loyal to her sister Judy (Fig. 2).

On the first level (interpersonal conflict) both actors (Judy and the mother) have specific goals (Judy: going to a concert; mother: buying school clothes) and less immediate superordinate goals, e.g., maintaining a good relationship. The immediate goals are related to subgoals, keeping (Judy) or achieving (mother) ownership of the same (limited) money. These subgoals are reached by different means, by lying (Judy) or by breaking the promise (mother). These means in both cases lead to the desired result of satisfying the respective needs and thus the intended consequence: Judy can go to the concert or alternatively, she buys clothes for school in accordance with her mother's request. However, the result in both cases implies the unintended consequences of violation of truth (Judy) or violation of promise-keeping (mother): Both impede upon the relationship between mother and daughter. Unintended consequences thus conflict with the superordinate goal to maintain a good relationship between mother and daughter.

On the second level (intrapersonal conflict) Louise has two conflicting goals; goal A to act in accordance with mother's claims, goal B to take the sister's claims into account. Louise's dilemma-specific means are either telling her mother what she knows or hiding the truth. These means are necessarily exclusive. As a result of this choice the mother is either informed or not with the consequence that either the claims of the mother or of the sister are met. Therefore, in order to meet the claims of the mother, by necessity those of the

sister are simultaneously violated or vice versa. These consequences, however, are not only mutually exclusive, but are also mutually intended and nonintended. Hence, there exist both positive and negative psychological and relational consequences for all three persons involved in this dilemma: Each of the persons concerned can be affected by Louise's decision, e.g., feeling disappointed, betrayed, angry or content. The relationship can also be affected, e.g., strengthened, complicated or sustained.

Moral reasoning requires both the adequate reconstruction of the dilemma's structure regarding the interpersonal-moral meaning and the coordination of conflicting goals, means, motives, and norms in order to find morally acceptable solutions. In this respect the action theoretical model highlights how subjects consider the other's psychological world and self-other relationship in order to establish intersubjectively and morally adequate solutions to the conflict.

Since it is beyond the scope of this paper to present a detailed description of the stages of moral development in the reformulations by Eckensberger and his colleagues and by Keller and Reuss, suffice it to point out here that both approaches permit an adequate interpretation of the data. According to Eckensberger (1984, 1986; Eckensberger & Burgard, 1985, 1986), the structural description of stage 2 centers on the fact that others are constructed as actors whose goals (interests) should receive equal attention in the resolution of a moral conflict. The resolution itself is primarily based on a flexible construction of new means for action which are not restricted to instrumental exchange (as in Kohlberg's theory). Empirically, in most cases compromises represent the ideal solution, i.e. both

partners should gain or lose equally.

According to Keller and Reuss (1984.) at stage 2 perspectives can be coordinated from a moral point of view, including self and other as partners in a relationship. The subject begins to understand that standing in a relationship leads to obligations concerning how one ought to act towards others. Again, the notion of instrumental exchange as precursors of interpersonal loyalties seems inadequate to capture this development achievement.

We conclude with a remark concerning the cross-cultural context of this paper. The choice of subjects from cultures as different as Iceland and Germany provides some cross-cultural validity to our findings. At present, these preliminary findings seem to pose an interesting question: Did the kind of arguments found in Icelandic and German children's reasoning not occur in American research, or in research in other cultures? Or did researchers not pay attention to them, because they did not fit the scoring manual? It is our hope that our paper may stimulate researchers to give old data a fresh look.

Appendix

Table 1: Summary description of Kohlberg's stages 2 and 3

Stage 2

- concrete, isolated, individualistic perspective
- rules, expectations outside the self
- others seen as pursuing their own interests
- maximizing satisfaction of self's needs
- instrumental benefit (fair deal)

Stage 3

- "third person" and "member of relationship" perspective
- average good person seeing things from the perspective of the relationship between two or more individuals
- sympathy, empathy, genuine moral concerns
- internalized moral rules (conscience)
- relationships of caring, trust, respect
- exchanges regulated in relation to standards of moral awareness
- genuine moral feelings of gratitude, loyalty

Table 2: Examples of (a) normative and (b) interpersonal/relationship concerns at stages 1/2 and 2 not contained in Kohlberg's scoring manual and not covered by his theory.¹

Stage 1/2: Normative/fairness concerns

Mother-daughter relationship

(sister should tell mother)

- she doesn't want to lie to her mother
- it's just not right not to tell, she just feels bad

(sister should not tell mother)

- because mother had given a promise and a promise is a promise, it just means you have to do it (just because she said so)

Stage 1/2: Interpersonal/relationship concerns

a) mother-daughter relationship

(sister should tell mother)

- this is her mother, she'd rather do that

b) sibling relationship

(sister should not tell)

- because they are sisters, just because

Stage 2: Normative concerns: Contract/truth/conscience

a) mother-daughter relationship

(sister should tell mother)

- because she doesn't want to deceive her mother like this
- because she would then be going behind her mother's back and that isn't nice

¹All examples listed were probed but no further explanations were available from the subject. Instead of giving names of persons figuring in dilemma stories we refer to their role relationships (daughter, sister).

- because she doesn't want to fool her mother
- because this would be like sneaking away from this

(sister should not tell mother)

- because it was unfair of mother to break her promise like this
- mother promised, it shouldn't be broken, it's betraying her promise
- mother gave her a promise and she should stick to it
- she will feel bad if she realizes that she disobeyed or if mother finds out

b) sibling relationship

(sister should not tell mother)

- because otherwise she will betray her promise or she'll betray her sister
- because she gave her sister a promise and she should stand by that or stick to it, she's bound to it
- because she doesn't want to break her promise to her sister
- because she gave her sister her word and she doesn't want to betray that

c) general reflections on promise-keeping

- one should keep a promise, otherwise the other will be disappointed and mad, and he has a right to be angry
- those you have given a promise will be concerned that you keep it
- it is unpleasant to trick, betray others, it's bad to let people down
- you have to keep it to be a good boy, not to be a bad child

Stage 2: Interpersonal relationship concerns

a) concern with mother's feelings

(sister should tell mother)

- mother will be angry, sad or unhappy if she hears that her daughter didn't tell her of this
- it's unpleasant for mother if her daughter lies to her

- because it's not nice for her mother if she finds out that one of her daughters lied
 - because otherwise mother worries about her or will be afraid for her
 - because mother wants to know where the sister is
- b) concern with sister's feelings
(sister should not tell)
- the sister will become angry, sad or unhappy if her sister breaks her promise
 - it's unpleasant for the sister if her sister breaks her promise
 - because it's not nice for her if her sister tells their secret or breaks her promise
 - to save Jona from getting into trouble, getting a scolding or having problems with mother
 - to protect her sister from getting punished or into trouble with their mother
- c) sibling relationship
(should not tell)
- because they are siblings, sisters or friends
 - because she is fond of her, cares for her or feels sorry for her sister
 - because this is her sister or friend and she wants to help her and save/defend her from this
 - because she should help, take care, watch out for her sister
- d) mother-daughter/family relationship
(most important in familiy relationship)
- that she's more fond of her mother (sister) than sister (mother)
 - that she spends a lot of time with her mother or parents or family, that they get together a lot
 - that everything is good between all of them (no explanation when probed)
 - that they are all nice or pleasant to each other

- that they are all in agreement on what to do
- because they may have a good relationship between all of them
- because otherwise they will be angry at each other, the daughter at her mother, mother at her, mother at other daughter, and this would be unpleasant for the relationship between all of them
- because then mother would be against them, and the sisters wouldn't be friends anymore following this.

Figure 1: Action theoretical graphic representation of interpersonal conflict (between Judy and Mother)

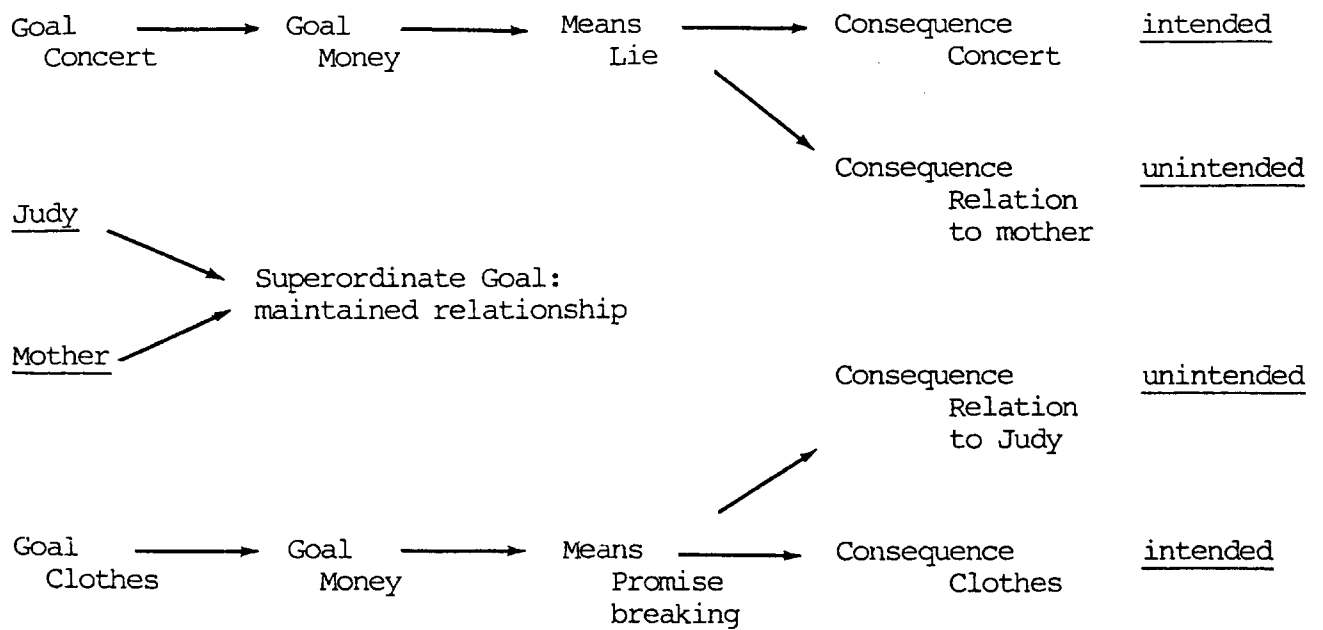
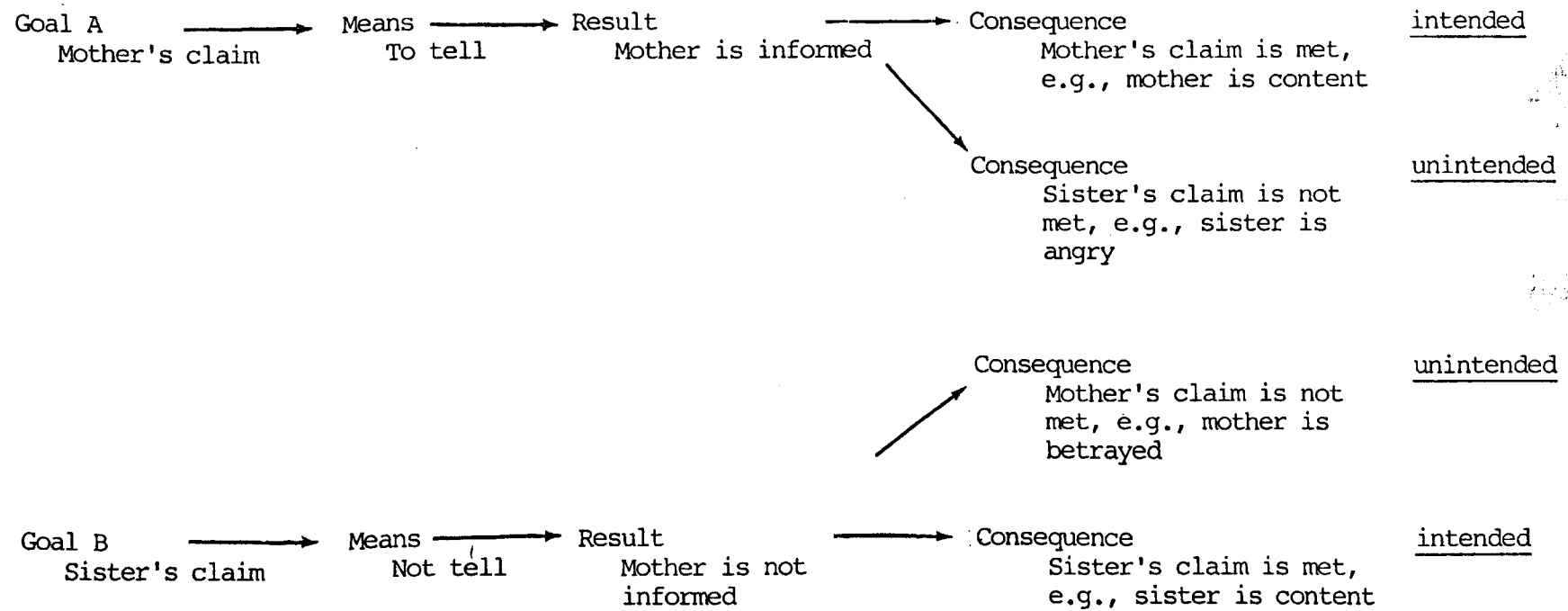


Figure 2: Action theoretical representation of intra-personal conflict (Louise's loyalty to Mother and loyalty to Sister)



The Conception of Preconventional Morality:
Some Further Doubts

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Abstract

This research follows up on questions about the conception of preconventional moral reasoning in Kohlberg's cognitive developmental theory. 60 subjects were assessed (20 each age 7, 9 and 12) with Kohlberg's Judy dilemma.

Our findings indicate that even when reasoning about a Kohlberg moral dilemma children at the preconventional level use genuine fairness arguments as well as arguments of concern for the welfare of others. Our findings support only part of the conception of stage 1 reasoning. While children seem to derive validity claims of moral rules from unquestioned rule obedience they do not confound punishment with rule validity. With regard to stage 2, arguments of the instrumental type represent only a subgroup of arguments which include genuine normative and interpersonal concerns. Thus, contrary to Kohlberg's assumptions a dimension of interpersonal loyalty and normativity seems to be part of moral reasoning from early on. It is argued that these findings require a more adequate formulation of early moral reasoning.

In recent years there has been a growing interest in the structure of the early stages of moral reasoning. Kohlberg (1969, 1976, 1981) following Piaget (1965/1932) emphasized the physicalistic aspect of an adult-authoritarian orientation in preconventional reasoning at the first stage of development. According to this, children are seen as judging behaviors out of a unilateral respect for the sacredness of adult rules. Adult rewards and punishments are taken as major cues for the judgment of actions as morally right or wrong. Correspondingly, avoidance of punishment serves as a predominant motive for upholding moral rules. The second stage of preconventional reasoning in Kohlberg's theory is characterized by an instrumental exchange orientation. The moral rightness of acts is justified with a predominant concern for the self's interests. Other's needs, interests and welfare are taken into account only as far as they affect advantages or disadvantages to oneself. Thus, in Kohlberg's conceptualization of stages of moral reasoning the emergence of genuine moral feelings, empathy and concerns for the welfare of others is viewed as an achievement of the conventional level of morality.

Contrary to the controversy about the higher stages of Kohlberg's model, the stages of early moral reasoning have been taken rather for granted. Snarey (1985; Edwards, 1981) supplies evidence for the cross-cultural validity of the models's basic assumptions. Yet a closer look at the research in this field (see also Rest, 1983) shows that most

studies in the Kohlberg tradition have been concerned with the higher stages of conventional and postconventional reasoning. This holds true for Kohlberg's longitudinal study as well (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs et al. 1983). The study by Gibbs & Widaman (1982) is one of the few studies which elaborates on the preconventional stages. While their approach is distinct from Kohlberg's in using written material - a method which can be questioned in its adequacy for young children - their results basically confirm Kohlberg's model of preconventional reasoning.

Outside of the Kohlbergian tradition, studies of moral reasoning in young children have increasingly raised doubts about the general validity of the basic assumptions underlying the conception of preconventional moral reasoning in Kohlberg's theory. One such criticism centers upon the punishment orientation in young children's moral reasoning. This is debated by Siegel (1982) and Turiel (1983). Turiel (1983) questions Kohlberg's contention that children confuse morality with prudence in defining the rightness or wrongness of an action by punishment. Rather, punishment can be seen as the consequence of the moral transgression. Similarly, Jensen & Hughston's (1973) study indicates that children as young as four to five years of age judge moral transgressions as being bad irrespective of whether the act is punished or rewarded. Secondly, Turiel (1978) and Nucci & Turiel (1978) question Piaget's and Kohlberg's claim of the child's unilateral respect

for adult rules. Their studies indicate that young children judge moral transgressions to be wrong even in the absence of governing rules. Therefore, Turiel (1983) claims that young children's moral reasoning is based on the intrinsic effect an action has upon the well-being (welfare) of others.

The genuine concern of young children for others' welfare is also indicated by studies by Eisenberg (1979, 1982; Eisenberg et al., 1985). Children at the ages of four and five rarely refer to punishment or authorities when justifying prosocial moral behavior. Rather, they show an empathic concern for other's physical and psychological needs. This result is consistent with Damon's (1983) findings for young children's distributive justice reasoning. Theoretically, Hoffman (1976, 1984) argued for the importance of empathy and altruism in moral development. This idea has been recently emphasized by Gilligan & Wiggins (1985) who suggest that the experience of attachment to others profoundly affects the child's understanding of how one should act toward other people.

In a series of studies we followed up on this ongoing controversy, findings by Keller (1984; Keller & Edelstein, 1985; Edelstein & Keller, 1985) evidenced that on the one hand, children around the age of seven express a non-questioned rule orientation when reasoning about promise-keeping in a friendship, while a concern with punishment as motive for upholding the rule is practically absent. On the other hand, genuine moral

or fairness concerns as well as non-instrumental concerns about the relationship are expressed in the age groups between 7 and 12 years. Based on these findings we argued against the contention in Kohlberg's theory that moral reasoning about fairness issues at the preconventional stage 2 level can be characterized as an exclusive instrumental exchange (Colby, Kohlberg et al., 198). Other authors argue however that children's moral arguments at this stage seem to reflect the process of affective bonding to others and their growing awareness of what it means morally to stand in a relationship (see Youniss, 1980). These results were confirmed in a further study by Keller, Eckensberger & von Rosen (1986) using a classical Kohlberg dilemma (Judy dilemma) to assess moral reasoning in 12 and 15 year olds. Even when utilizing a prototypical Kohlbergian fairness dilemma only 53 % of arguments could be scored according to the criterion judgments given in the Standard Scoring Manual for the preconventional level.

The study presented here follows up on questions which could not be fully answered by the Keller, Eckensberger & von Rosen study. The study of older age groups did not allow us to explore whether stage 1 punishment and obedience as well as stage 2 instrumental exchange arguments occur more frequently in early as compared to middle childhood. Yet contrary to Turiel's (1983) findings, we expect that the younger children will show a substantive amount of rule obedience. Since we are exploring the understanding of psycholo-

gical rules (i.e., promise-keeping or truth telling) compared to rules relating to physical well-being (e.g., hitting) we expect that the awareness of the meaning of these rules will depend on social cognitive abilities which are not yet available to the young children. Therefore, we posit a crucial and qualitative difference between the type of moral rules assessed by Turiel and the type of psychological rules assessed by Kohlberg. While the first type of moral rule requires an awareness of the consequences of an action for another person's physical well-being, the latter requires an individual to first understand the obligatoriness of a verbal statement (to promise) and second to assess the consequences of rule-violation with regard to the psychological welfare for others.

Concluding from our earlier results the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Children will express genuine fairness and interpersonal concerns at the level of preconventional moral reasoning.

2. While children's moral reasoning at stage 1 may be characterized by unilateral respect for rules or unquestioned rule obedience, a punishment orientation will not represent a predominant concern.

3. Moral reasoning at stage 2 cannot be explained exclusively by the model of instrumental exchange. Rather, children's arguments will show genuine concern for the welfare of others and an acceptance of moral rules in order to protect the psychological well-being of others.

Method

Subjects and interview

Our analysis is based on a cross-sectional random sample of 65 urban children aged 7, 9 and 12 years. (There were 20 subjects at ages 7 and 9, respectively, 10 male and 10 female, and 25 twelve year olds, 12 girls and 13 boys).¹

Subjects were presented with a slight modification of Kohlberg's Judy dilemma in which a mother has given a promise to the daughter (Jóna) to let her go to a rock concert with the money the daughter earned herself. In the last minute the mother withdraws her permission requesting the money in order to buy things necessary for school. The daughter decides to lie about the money she earned and to go anyhow. On the critical day the sister (Lilja), who knows about this, is asked by the mother where her other daughter is. Questions refer to the moral reasoning about the decision chosen and its alternative, to promise-keeping, property rules, the sibling and authority relationships as well as about consequences of choice(s) and strategies of conflict resolution.

Scoring was carried out by two independent raters consulting the Standard Issue Scoring Manual Forms A and B (Colby, Kohlberg et al., 1984) for each sample independently. The interrater reliability of this scoring procedure was tested utilizing 50 interviews from a total of 240 interviews from

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This research is part of the Project Child Development and Social Structure carried out by the Center of Development and Socialization in the Max Planck Institute for Human Development and Education in West Berlin.

a longitudinal study presently being carried out at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development and Education in West Berlin showing 80 to 90 % agreement for 12 and 15 year old samples.

Results

The analysis of the data shows that a substantial amount of morally relevant arguments (66 %) could not be matched to the Criterion Judgments in the Standard Issue Scoring Manual (Colby, Kohlberg et al., 1984). This holds true even after consulting the scoring manual regarding scoring criteria for the parallel Joe-dilemma as well as for the Heinz-dilemma. More importantly, the efforts to classify and score these alternative arguments as supplementary content units in accordance with the preconventional stage structural criteria and definitions represent a significant challenge to and extension of the Kohlbergian theoretical conception of these earlier stages.

Although many of these alternative arguments reflect content areas foreseen by the Kohlberg model from Stage 3 onward, e.g., concerns for non-instrumental or empathic relations to others, interpersonal welfare, moral rules, or conscience (cf. Table 1), we argue that they represent sociomoral structures of a simpler preconventional type. In accordance with the theoretical guidelines outlined for the sociomoral perspectives (Kohlberg, 1984) these arguments do not yet require a mutual third person perspective which is the prerequisite

for criterion judgments at the conventional level. A quantitative as well as a qualitative analysis of our data serve to exemplify this point.

1. Quantitative analysis

Figure 1 presents a preliminary verification of the stability of our classification procedure: The stage distributions of all 3 samples demonstrate an expected age-specific spread.

In examining the proportion of "Kohlberg" Criterion Judgments versus alternative content units across the 3 samples it was interesting to note a sequence from mostly alternative arguments in the earliest age group to a more even distribution of "Kohlberg" and alternative arguments in middle childhood. Figure 2 illustrates a rather unbalanced relationship of 27 % Kohlberg type arguments to 73 % non-Kohlberg arguments within the 7 year old sample, an emerging shift in the 9 year old sample with 34 % to 66 % and a more evenly weighted distribution of 47 % "Kohlberg" arguments to 53 % alternative content units demonstrated by the 12 year old sample.

This trend can also be observed in the stage relevant distribution of "Kohlberg" versus alternative arguments presented in Figure 3. A shift from the predominance of alternative arguments in the earlier stages (cf. Stage 1; 7 yrs.) towards a more even representation of both types of arguments when approaching Stage 3 (cf. Stage 2/3; 12 yrs) is suggested in this breakdown.

2. Qualitative analysis

The qualitative analysis of the arguments which could not be scored in Kohlberg's system (cf. Table 1) indicates that in addition to traditional Kohlbergian criterion judgments a consistent expression of Moral Rule/Conscience and Relationship concerns were demonstrated in all three samples across both preconventional stages observed. This holds true when arguing about sibling as well as authority relationships. These supplementary arguments did not fit the content aspects of the preconventional stages, but are in keeping with the theoretical guidelines outlined for the sociomoral perspectives of these stages (cf. Kohlberg, 1984).

With regard to Stage 1, physical sanctions in terms of punishment play a minimal role while absolute obedience to either undifferentiated, global rules or authority constitutes a predominant type of reasoning (e.g., reference to absolute, unquestioned obedience to rules, parents, sibling or God). On the other hand, stereotypical evaluations (it is bad, it is not nice, it is not good to lie) which subjects are unable to justify further frequently occur.

Already at Stage 1/2 the awareness of psychological consequences of rule violation begins to function as a moral reason (e.g., mother and daughter or siblings may have problems, may quarrel or become 'bad friends' or enemies); undifferentiated internalized conceptions of moral norms (e.g., wanting to tell truth, keeping a promise because a promise is a promise

or because you'll have bad dreams) and non-instrumental concerns for the relationship and the welfare of other persons (e.g., not tell mother because they are sisters or keeping promises because then everything will be so much better).

At Stage 2 the "classical" type of instrumental "tit for tat" reasoning does not play the predominant role in moral reasoning. This type of justification appears subordinate to genuine moral and interpersonal concerns emerging at this stage (e.g., fairness/fidelity: it is unfair of mother to break her promise, one should stand by a promise, shouldn't betray it; conscience: may feel this is better, most right or betraying makes you feel badly afterwards; relationship: because she is fond of or cares for her sister or mother, it's unpleasant for sister or mother, makes her sister or mother unhappy, sad or angry.)

Finally at Stage 2/3 generalized functional normative and mutual interpersonal concerns begin to emerge more in keeping with the Kohlberg tradition. However, in addition to supplementary examples of the foreseen transitional concerns with normative concepts (e.g., keeping promises is important to keep your friends or because others won't believe or trust you again), we observed an emerging genuine commitment of the self to generalized normative concerns (e.g., bound to keeping one's promise), moral feelings and conscience (e.g., mother will feel she had not done right and talk of her feelings, Jona will feel badly inside if she realizes she disobeyed,

or clears her conscience not to lie) and interpersonal concerns (e.g., need to talk to each other, help take care or watch out for her sister, or others are hurt if she breaks her promise). These arguments are not yet Stage 3 in that they do not represent the complex perspective coordination of mutual intentions of actions nor a full understanding of stereotypical good roles or models in terms of the Stage 3 Golden Rule ideal as exemplified in an example from the scoring manual: tell mother to get her to understand that she was selfish or to get her to understand Judy's reasons for lying and see the situation from her point of view.

Discussion

The results of this study in connection with the critical findings of the research mentioned in the introduction represent a serious challenge to the basic theoretical assumptions underlying Kohlberg's theory of moral development. In this theory the preconventional level is characterized by the following criteria: a) Rules and expectations are outside the self, b) the perspectives of persons are individualistic and isolated and c) coordinated through the basic mechanisms of instrumental exchange. It is the conventional level at which the perspective of an enduring relationship emerges and morality becomes internalized. This view of a shift from externality to internality is a frequent assumption in socialization theory.

While our results clearly refute the assumption of a punishment orientation in the young child, they support the idea of an unquestioned respect for rules. Thus, regarding the psychological moral rules assessed here, the intrinsic effects of an action on the psychological well-being of others cannot be inferred at the first stage of development. Yet, already beginning at the transitional level between Stages 1 and 2 we can observe a rudimentary understanding of psychological consequences as a motive for the upholding of moral rules. At the second stage social cognitive abilities are available which allow a fully elaborated empathic understanding of psychological consequences of norm violations for others concerned. The genuine normative and interpersonal concerns evidenced at this stage are inconsistent with the instrumental exchange model found in Kohlberg's data. The arguments given here fit the description of Stage 3 reasoning in content but not in terms of structural complexity. They clearly transcend the individualistic and isolated perspective which is seen as characteristic of Stage 2 in Kohlberg's model. Rather, persons are seen as standing in relationships in which the actions of one person affect the psychological well-being of the other (Youniss, 1980). Consequently, the awareness of psychological consequences of norm violation in the sense of preventing harm to others serves as a fundamental moral motive.

Presently we cannot report to what extent these data are specific to the Icelandic society. Yet, if they are indeed culture bound, they still present a case against the universality of the preconventional stages in Kohlberg's theory. Our study furthermore shows that within a complex field such as moral development the exclusive reliance on a preset scoring system serves the non-intended function to inhibit further development of the theory. It seems that openness and not closure is needed for future research.

Table 1

Examples of Moral Arguments (Content Units)

Observed in 7, 9, and 12 year old
Icelandic Samples (N = 65)

STAGE 1: physical sanctions & absolute, undifferentiated
obedience to power/authority, hedonistic gratifi-
cation

KOHLBERG CRITERION JUDGMENTS:

- lying is bad, you'd be a liar
- you would get punished, hit
- mother is boss, bigger, stronger

ALTERNATIVE CONTENT UNITS:

Individualistic/Hedonistic Concerns:

- not think about this any more, forget it
- she wants to go also, OR, it's no fun

Moral Rule Concerns:

- it is not nice/not good to lie
- should tell because she wasn't
allowed to go
- should not lie
- should just obey
- just because
- has to, must do it

Relationship Concerns (authority/sibling):

- siblings shouldn't fight, tease, hit, pinch, pull,
hair
- sister is bigger, stronger
- siblings always play together
- obey because God or parents
own you

STAGE 1/2: psychological consequences, automatic stereotypical or global/undifferentiated reference to authority relationships, global concern for norms and inter-personal welfare

KOHLBERG CRITERION JUDGMENTS:

- Lilja might get into trouble, or punished, or scolded
- Judy might get scolded or punished

ALTERNATIVE CONTENT UNITS:

Moral Rule/Conscience Concerns:

- a promise is a promise
- she doesn't want to lie
- parents decide so children won't spend their money on nonsense
- keep a promise, OR, not fool/lie because you will have bad dreams
- Lilja feels better telling the right thing
- Lilja feels badly/sulks and doesn't know what to say
- it is irreligious to lie
- a lie/promise is a sin/rule and a sin/rule is a sin/rule
- God wants that, thinks it's not nice/sad

Relationship Concerns (authority/sibling):

- Lilja doesn't want to do what parents say
- Judy/mother might quarrel, have problems with Lilja
- this is her mother, sister or family
- so they may become, OR, stop being friends, bad friends, enemies
- (relations) would be bad/good/nice
- because everything will be so much better

STAGE 2: genuine and instrumental concerns for reciprocity/fairness/fidelity, emergence of concern for welfare of others/care/empathy, genuine normative moral/emerging conscience concerns, interpersonal concerns and moral feelings

KOHLBERG CRITERION JUDGMENTS:

- Jona/mother has, OR, may do a lot, keep quiet for Lilja in the past/future
- this is Jona's money, she worked for/earned it
- mother would take Jona's money OR not let her go out for a long time
- so the other person will keep a promise to you
- Jona might try to get away with lying/deceive all the time
- Joe will be sad if he doesn't go to camp
- this is none of her business
- parents let children have/do what they want
- parents have done a lot for them

ALTERNATIVE CONTENT UNITS:

Moral Rule/Conscience/Fairness Concerns:

- it's unfair of mother to break the promise/change her mind
- she doesn't want to deceive, fool or go behind mother's back
- a promise shouldn't be broken, should stick/stand by it
- otherwise she will betray her promise, OR, her sister
- she may feel this is better OR the most right
- betraying makes one feel badly afterwards

Relationship Concerns (authority/sibling):

- mother may have a talk with her (ask her not to do it again)
- no one wants to be with you if you're always lying
- it's unpleasant/not nice for sister/mother OR makes her unhappy, sad, angry
- otherwise mother will worry, be afraid for Jona
- so the family/sisters/mother-daughter are in agreement OR everything is good between them
- Lilja is (more) fond of/cares for/feels sorry for sister/mother
- because they are friends/close
- because they get together/talk a lot
- because it is a secret between them

STAGE 2/3: generalized functional normative concerns, emerging mutual (3rd-person perspective) relationship concerns, elaborated moral conscience and feelings

KOHLBERG CRITERION JUDGMENTS:

- others have expectations/looking forward to what promised
- others won't believe OR trust you again
- Jona deserved to go, worked hard for something mother promised
- others help you out in ways you really appreciate
- conscience bothers, OR, hounds you
- mother brought her up, raised, educated her
- he and his father should stick together, help each other

ALTERNATIVE CONTENT UNITS:

Moral Rule/Conscience Concerns:

- bound to your promise
- more convenient to lie because she's only thinking of herself
- clears her conscience not to lie/break a promise
- mother will feel she had not done right, talk of feelings
- Jona will feel bad inside if she realizes she disobeyed

Relationship Concerns (authority/sibling):

- loney if not trusted
- other is hurt if she breaks her promise
- mother doesn't want them lying when she brings them up
- need to talk with each other
- because her sister may learn something by this
- help take care, watch out for sister

Relative Frequencies of Moral Stages 7, 9, and 12 years (N=65)

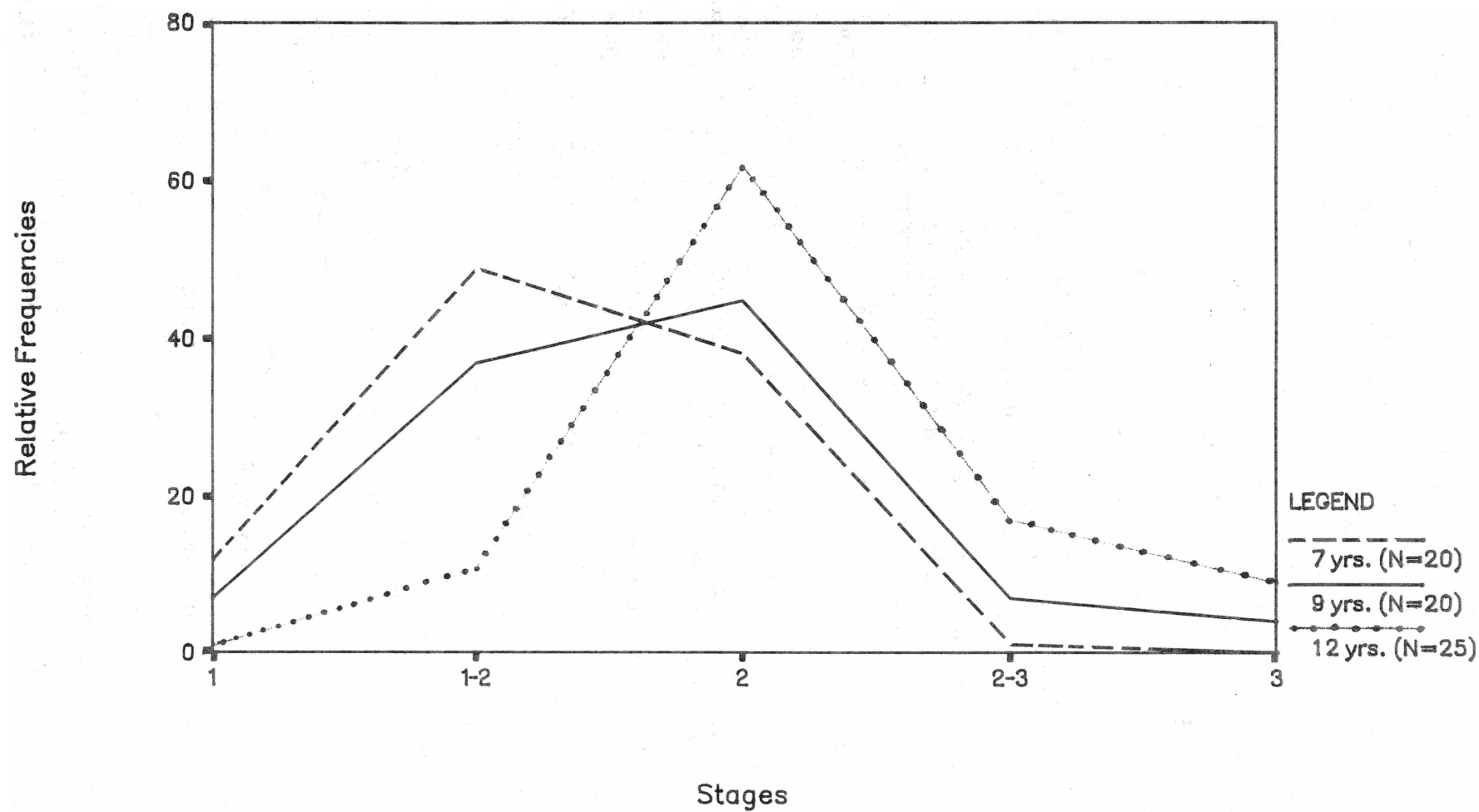


Fig. 1

Figure 2

Relative Frequencies of Content Units at Ages 7, 9 and 12 years

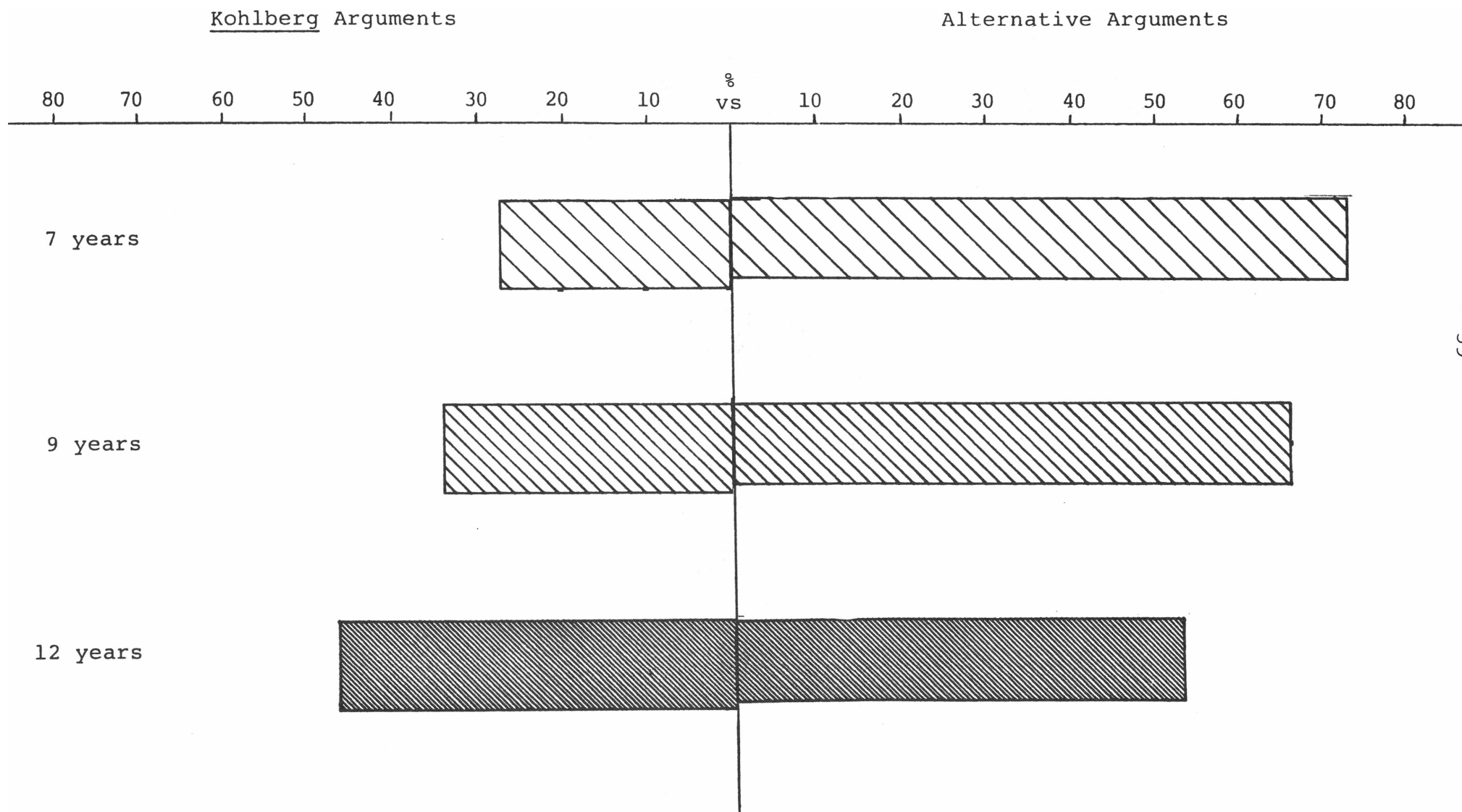
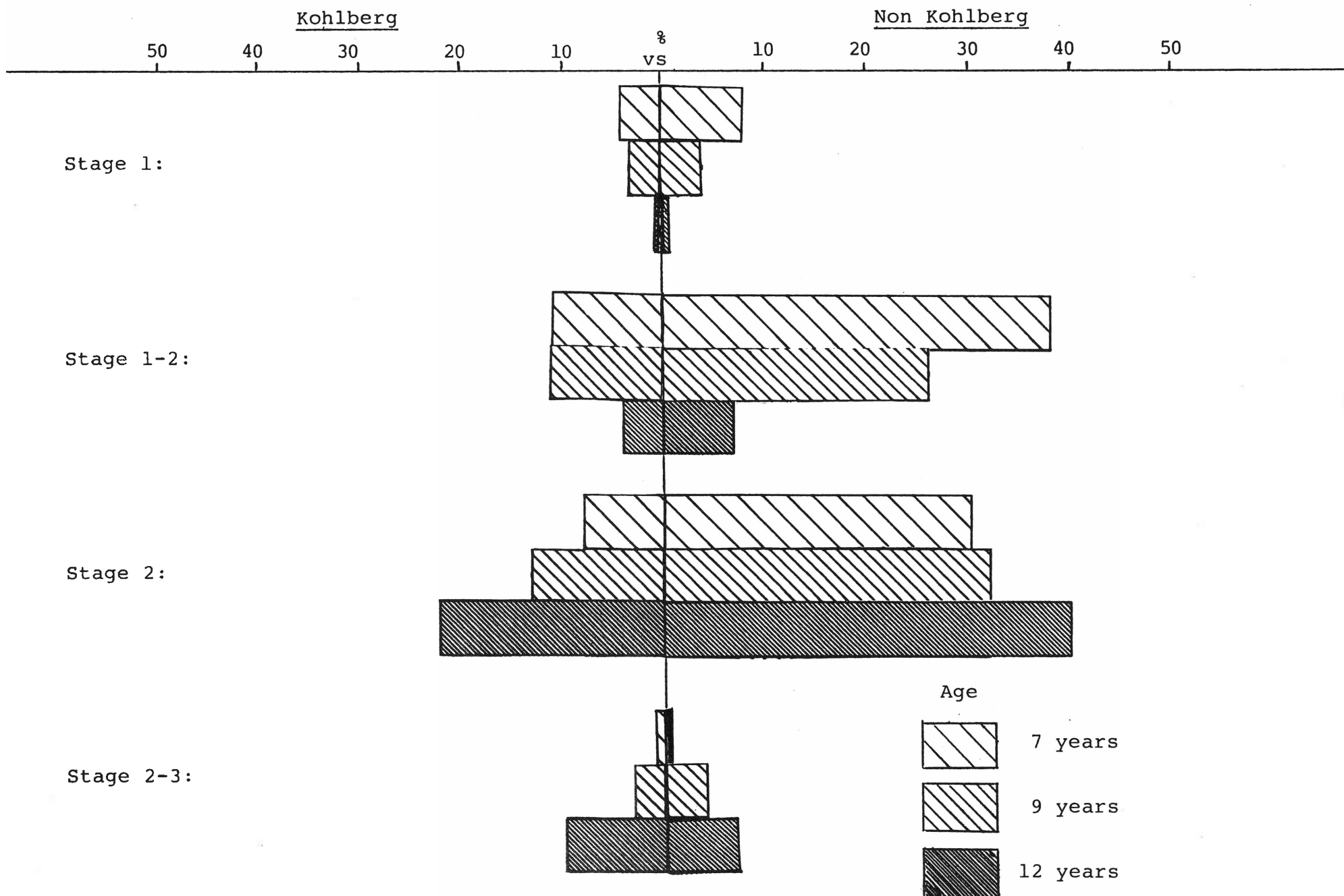


Figure 3 Age Specific Distributions of Content Units across Stages (Relative Frequencies)



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